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Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 16, 2024

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker: It is my duty to inform the House that the following member has been appointed as a member of the Board of Internal Economy for the purposes and under the provisions of section 50 of the Parliament of Canada Act, namely: Mr. Perron, the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé, replacing Mrs. DeBellefeuille, the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît, as a representative of the Bloc Québécois caucus.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

The House resumed from December 13 consideration of the motion, of the amendment as amended and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Speaker: The full period of 10 minutes remains for questions and comments on the speech by the member for Calgary Shepard.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing we continue to see from the Conservative Party is a multi-million dollar game in which the leader of the Conservative Party is arguably in contempt of Parliament.

I do not say that lightly; at the end of the day, the self-serving interests of the Conservative Party are being put ahead of the interests of Canadians. We have seen that for six weeks now. The question I have for the member opposite is this: When can Canadians anticipate that the Conservative Party will start to put Canadians ahead of the self-interests of the party? It is long overdue, by weeks now. When is the Conservative Party going to stop playing this multi-million dollar contempt-like game?

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was hoping that the parliamentary secretary would perhaps begin with less partisanship. This is quite a solemn day, with the Deputy Prime Minister now having resigned.

I will note we are not playing politics; in fact, it is the member's government playing politics. In the same Deputy Prime Minister's resignation letter, we read, "They know when we are working for them, and they equally know when we are focused on ourselves."

She is speaking, of course, of the Liberals. I believe they are playing politics right now.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about \$440 million and 186 points of conflict of interest. For the parliamentary secretary to stand up and say what he said earlier is like the pot calling the kettle black.

With the sudden departure of the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister, what is going to happen with the fall economic statement that was supposed to be delivered this morning?

• (1105)

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member asks an interesting question.

In fact, hundreds of millions of dollars were corruptly spent via the green slush fund, by appointees of the Liberal government. Hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes were taken away from constituents of mine and his as well, so they could be corruptly dispensed. We see the potential that, later today, the fall economic statement will show billions more being spent on what the Deputy Prime Minister has called election gimmicks in her own resignation letter.

They can pick any one of these members who has not given a speech yet in the House to give his maiden speech.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in which, on the eve of the fall economic statement, the Prime Minister announces privately he is going to deep-six his finance minister. Now she has quit.

We are seeing an ongoing level of the dysfunction and the failure of all political parties to stand up for Canada at a time of uncertainty. We have now seen the Conservatives spend three months filibustering their own motion in order to stop Parliament from working; they do so because they do not care about defending the Canadian people. We have a Prime Minister who is missing in action as his ship is hitting the rocks.

Privilege

It is really like watching kids in a sandbox throwing sand at each other as the tsunami comes. Everyone is warning that the tsunami is coming, but they would rather throw sand at each other. The world needs to know whether Canada is ready to stand up to Trump. We certainly know that the guy who lives in Stornoway will never show up. The Prime Minister has failed the Canadian people in a significant way today.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member said that the Prime Minister has failed, the Deputy Prime Minister has quit and the housing minister has quit. Still, when it comes time to vote on confidence in the government, we know that the member and his entire caucus will again vote to support a crumbling government.

Mr. Kyle Seebach (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have seen that the former deputy prime minister and finance minister has no confidence in the Prime Minister and the government; somehow, the NDP seems to have more confidence in the Liberal government than she does. Does the member have any insight into that?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, the member for Dufferin—Caledon makes a great point. When I talk to my constituents back home or to any Canadians, when I meet them all across Canada, I hear that the NDP caucus has been singularly focused on one issue this fall. The New Democrats have been completely, 100%, working extremely hard on it. It has not been housing affordability. It has not been getting rid of the carbon tax. It has not been fixing the budget. It has not been voting on crime bills that would actually stop criminals from victimizing more Canadians. The NDP has been singularly focused on the NDP leader's pension.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to just read a bit from the resignation letter that was put out by the finance minister this morning. It states, "Our country today faces a grave challenge. The incoming administration in the United States is pursuing a policy of aggressive economic nationalism, including a threat of 25 per cent tariffs."

It also states, "To be effective, a Minister must speak on behalf of the Prime Minister and with his full confidence. In making your decision, you made clear that I no longer credibly enjoy that confidence and possess the authority that comes with it."

It appears that the former finance minister has lost confidence in the Prime Minister. Why does the NDP continue to support a crumbling government?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Of course, Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. He read directly from the finance minister's resignation letter. The government is in complete free fall on the day of the fall economic statement, which the Liberals have been touting as a restart and the answer to all that ails them. The only things that ail them are their polling numbers, which are really the only thing that they are looking at, and the crumbling leadership of the Prime Minister, who is completely out of touch.

It is not us saying it. It is the former finance minister saying it. It is a person who had the title of deputy prime minister attached to her. The number two person in the government, who chaired the most senior cabinet committees, is gone suddenly on the morning of the fall economic statement. It is not us saying that these are election gimmicks coming up in the fall economic statement; this is

in the letter. The former finance minister herself said that this what it was going to be. In the letter, she says that the government members are in it for themselves, and they are using the fall economic statement to further their own political interests.

Who has been there every step of the way to help the Liberals out? It is the NDP caucus, with every single confidence vote making it possible.

• (1110)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we need to bring it back to what we have been seeing over the last number of weeks. I have argued that, ultimately, the leader of the Conservative Party was once the parliamentary secretary and sat around the cabinet table of Stephen Harper, who was the only prime minister to ever be held in contempt of Parliament. Now what we see is that the leader of the Conservative Party continues to thumb his nose at Canadians by refusing to get the security clearance in order to deal with the issue of foreign interference. That is a serious issue.

What is the member's leader hiding that is actually preventing him from getting the security clearance?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, on the day of the fall economic statement, the parliamentary secretary is again engaging in more talking points; the Liberals are in it for themselves. It is not us saying it. It is the now former deputy prime minister and finance minister, who suddenly resigned and shut the door. She said in her resignation letter, "They know when we are working for them, and they equally know when we are focused on ourselves. Inevitably, our time in government will come to an end." On behalf of the residents of my riding, that cannot come too soon.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are in uncharted territory. I do not believe there has ever been a time when a finance minister has resigned on the day of a budget or a fall economic statement. The current government and the Prime Minister have totally lost control. The Prime Minister has lost the moral authority to govern, yet the NDP leader, after purportedly ripping up his agreement, has taped it back together.

How much does the member believe the NDP leader is prepared to sell out to secure his \$2.3-million pension?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, I think the NDP leader will go as far as he needs to go. There is only a singular issue that the New Democrats could be counted on to vote for, and it is on behalf of not all Canadians, but one Canadian. They have been singularly focused on ensuring that their leader is eligible for that pension. No other Canadians in Canada believe anything they have to say. I would not be surprised if, later today, we saw the leader of the NDP become Canada's next finance minister.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to say that I, my colleagues and opposition members in the House have been thrown a curveball would be an understatement. I had originally thought that I would be talking for the third time about the green slush fund and the various amendments to the motion brought before the House, trying to impress upon my Liberal colleagues, for one last time in this calendar year, why they should finally relent and release the unredacted documents so that we can get back to the business that the people here in Canada elected us to do. However, to my colleague from St. Albert—Edmonton, we are definitely in uncharted waters. It is historic, it is unprecedented and it deserves the attention of my intervention today.

However, before I do that, I want to start on a happy note. As I indicated, this is my last official speech intervention in the House for 2024. I want to take the opportunity to wish the Speaker and his family a very merry Christmas and a very prosperous new year. I wish all the chair occupants, individually, as well as all of our fine clerks, our House staff, our pages and my colleagues, a very merry Christmas and a happy new year. I wish for them time to reflect and have a relaxing time with their families in their ridings. I offer the same greetings to all my opposition colleagues and to members of the government, as well as to the Liberal caucus. We all play a pivotal role here in the exercise of democracy, but it is important to take a step back and thank those who assist us in that process.

However, getting back to the reality of the situation, I know some of my colleagues have read out various excerpts of the deputy prime minister's official letter of resignation, but I want to take the time to actually read it out and to reflect upon it for a moment. This is dated with today's date:

Dear Prime Minister,

It has been the honour of my life to serve in government, working for Canada and Canadians. We have accomplished a lot together.

On Friday, you told me you no longer want me to serve as your Finance Minister and offered me another position in the Cabinet.

Upon reflection, I have concluded that the only honest and viable path is for me to resign from the Cabinet.

To be effective, a Minister must speak on behalf of the Prime Minister and with his full confidence. In making your decision, you made clear that I no longer credibly enjoy that confidence and possess the authority that comes with it.

For the past number of weeks, you and I have found ourselves at odds about the best path forward for Canada.

Our country today faces a grave challenge. The incoming administration in the United States is pursuing a policy of aggressive economic nationalism, including a threat of 25 per cent tariffs.

We need to take that threat extremely seriously. That means keeping our fiscal powder dry today, so we have the reserves we may need for a coming tariff war. That means eschewing costly political gimmicks, which we can ill afford and which make Canadians doubt that we recognize the gravity of the moment.

That means pushing back against 'America First' economic nationalism with a determined effort to fight for capital and investment and the jobs they bring. That means working in good faith and humility with the Premiers of the provinces and territories of our great and diverse country, and building a true Team Canada response.

• (1115)

I know Canadians would recognize and respect such an approach. They know when we are working for them, and they equally know when we are focused on ourselves. Inevitably, our time in government will come to an end. But how we deal with the threat our country currently faces will define us for a generation, and perhaps longer. Canada will win if we are strong, smart, and united.

Privilege

It is this conviction which has driven my strenuous efforts this fall to manage our spending in ways that will give us the flexibility we will need to meet the serious challenges presented by the United States.

I will always be grateful for the chance to have served in government and I will always be proud of our government's work for Canada and Canadians.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues as a Liberal Member of Parliament, and I am committed to running again for my seat in Toronto in the next federal election.

With gratitude,

The [Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance]

The letter simply validates the rumours that have been circulating for weeks, if not for months, that the Prime Minister was at odds with his Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in terms of the governance of this particular country and how we are going to achieve that by way of economic policies. It confirms what we have always believed, all along, in this particular Prime Minister, which is that his self-proclaimed credentials of being a proud feminist were always fake. It is all about gimmicks; it is all about virtue signalling.

I have lost track of how many strong, effective women have been elected as Liberal members of Parliament and have gone on to be appointed to very senior roles in government. Jody Wilson-Raybould is one example. I was proud of the fact that, at the time of her election and appointment as Canada's first female indigenous justice minister and attorney general, I was in the ranks at that point, provincially, as a Crown attorney. I know that she did her best. She put her heart into that job, and she stood by principles, which have governed lawyers upon their call to a particular bar, of integrity, of knowledge, of confidence.

The ordeal of the SNC-Lavalin affair highlighted the integrity and the confidence that Jody Wilson-Raybould maintained in that particular role, because she was not going to be bullied, which is the appropriate term for the actions of the Prime Minister. She was bullied, threatened and intimidated to make a decision that not only compromised her role as the attorney general, but also compromised her sense of right and wrong, her integrity and her ethics. She refused to carry the water for the Prime Minister to ensure a sweetheart deal for a Quebec-based company under the proviso of terms, which turned out to be completely false, as advanced by the Prime Minister and by the Liberal government. She said no. She spoke her words: "truth to power".

• (1120)

She will forever be remembered for the courage that she displayed, but that courage, which should be lauded, should be encouraged and should be supported by a true leader of a G7 country, was dismissed so summarily by this fake feminist. The Prime Minister has let down women across this country, time after time. He turned an event a couple of weeks ago into a partisan event at Equal Voice here in Ottawa. He used it as an opportunity to, again, criticize the same country he is trying to work with and trying to avoid a 25% tariff. He takes it as an opportunity to lament the fact that Americans, twice now, did not elect a female president. That is not how to negotiate.

Privilege

It is no small wonder that, in the newspaper, I think today's or yesterday's Toronto Sun, there was Brian Lilley's headline: "Lilley: Premiers are stepping up to do the job Trudeau won't". They are taking active steps to deal with the border issues—

• (1125)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member, I think through self-awareness, knows that he is not supposed to use personal names.

The Speaker: I do thank the hon. parliamentary secretary, as it was something that passed by me. Even if it is contained in an article, it is important for members to make reference to the title or to the riding that the person holds, not to their last name.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, that is fair enough.

However, the article goes on to show, apart from the Prime Minister and various ministers talking about a team Canada approach, what they have actually accomplished. What measures have they stipulated to the House and to Canadians? What steps are they going to take to address the concerns raised by President-elect Trump about the dangers of our porous borders? Apart from making that announcement, he has done nothing. It is reflective of the Liberal government: Make an announcement, but do not follow through, time after time.

The article goes on to describe what Ontario is doing. It goes on to describe what Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, Manitoba Premier Wab Kinew and Quebec Premier François Legault are doing. They are taking all immediate effective steps in the hope that they show the leadership that the Prime Minister is most assuredly lacking.

To the point about the Prime Minister's fake feminist credentials, this is not just any old minister of finance. We know that he has lost two ministers of finance since 2015. The former minister of finance, the member for University—Rosedale, was the deputy prime minister. She carried an extremely important portfolio and carried clout. She was his biggest cheerleader. She withstood numerous complaints and concerns. She was forever loyal to the fake feminist Prime Minister. What did she get in return? She was left dangling in the wind, literally, all of last week, when the rumours were circulating that she wanted to deliver the fall economic statement in a direction that was not approved by the Prime Minister. Political staffers started to leak stories to the press. It is understandable why opposition members would use that as an opportunity to clearly demonstrate how the Prime Minister has lost not only the confidence of Canadians but also the confidence of his own cabinet.

The former deputy prime minister listened. She was not supported at all by the Prime Minister. He said nothing to highlight her credentials or to telegraph his support for her. The writing was literally on the wall. In fact, I think only one other female minister came to her aid last week, and demonstrated her credentials and what she has done for this country. I will disagree until I am blue in the face about the failed direction she has taken this country, and it is not only Conservative members who agree with that statement, but also Canadians. Canadians, for years, have lost complete faith and trust in our federal institution. They have lost faith and trust in the Prime Minister. They had no faith and trust with the former deputy prime minister and minister of finance.

If we look at what is happening in this country, the Prime Minister has made a mess and has broken everything. He is weak on immigration. He is weak on our borders. He is weak on economic policy. He is weak with respect to criminal justice reforms. He tries to champion this manna from heaven, this GST holiday on goods, which might make a minute difference in some lives of some Canadians. On a grander scale, is that the best that the Liberal government can do?

On the weekend, I was really shocked that the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development introduced a series of infomercials on her social media, while millions of Canadians are struggling. They are not struggling to buy Christmas presents, but struggling to put meals on their tables, to feed their children, to keep roofs over their heads, to put clothing on their children's backs, to pay their taxes and utilities. A Liberal cabinet minister was smiling away, in various aisles in a department store, highlighting that there was no GST on car seats or on teddy bears, and then she pulled out a bottle of wine, saying there was no GST on that.

• (1130)

Tell that to the two million Canadians who are not going to be enjoying a glass of wine. They will be lucky if they get tap water, or maybe some orange juice. They are not going to be enjoying what the Liberal cabinet minister wants to demonstrate is going to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Canadians.

In a long about way, I can go back to the green slush fund. I can talk about the substantial millions of dollars of waste, which is projected to be at least \$400 million, if not higher. When we take a look at all of the scandals the government has been involved in since 2015, I bet we could surmise that we are talking about over a billion dollars, and that the mismanagement and fraudulent disbursement of taxpayer funds has been the hallmark of the Prime Minister, the government and the failed Liberal Party of Canada.

These are real taxpayer dollars that could have made such a substantial difference in the lives of Canadians. On health care alone, we are paying more to service our debt than we transfer to provinces and territories for health care. We can take a look at where the \$400 million in the green slush fund alone could have gone. The RCMP has opined that could have made a substantial difference for frontline officers. The CBSA agents at our porous borders are struggling to inspect all those containers coming in. As the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada stated last week, which was confirmed by the CBSA, 1% of those containers are inspected. That is where taxpayer dollars could be better spent. That is how a common-sense Conservative government would listen to and deliver for the people of this country once and for all.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it might be the last time before the holidays I am on my feet, so I would like to wish everyone celebrating in the riding of Waterloo, across Canada and around the world a merry Christmas and the best during the holiday season. I look forward to seeing them in the new year.

Privilege

The member spoke to a lot of different issues that demonstrate some of the concerns and comments I have been hearing from constituents within the riding of Waterloo. It demonstrates that we have a lot of work to do in this place and that we could be having healthy debate.

Right now, we are actually debating a subamendment on a question of privilege put forward by the Conservatives. The Conservatives have moved multiple subamendments because they are part of the tactics they are using. The Conservatives show disdain for this place. Over the weekend, it was interesting to communicate with some of my constituents, and the very few who do watch this chamber were quite flabbergasted by the Conservatives' approach, especially when it comes to women ministers. Two constituents mentioned to me they remember the days of Jody Wilson-Raybould being in minister roles and how Conservatives used to speak to her and of her, including tweeting about wanting to see her gone. Now that she is no longer in this chamber, they have put her on a pedestal, as they are doing now with the former deputy prime minister and minister of finance.

Could the member please share with the House what the subamendment is that we are currently debating in this chamber?

• (1135)

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, I am appalled the member opposite would spend about a minute and a half to talk about just dribble that actually has no application to what Canadians are talking about. We brought forward this particular motion and several subamendments to finally deliver a message to the government that it needs to be accountable for its actions, needs to demonstrate integrity and needs to stop playing political games when it comes to the Speaker's order to deliver those documents, all of those documents, unredacted. It is about confidence, and that member, her government and the Liberal caucus continually, by blocking the release of those documents, demonstrate the lack of confidence they have in Canadians.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, let the record show that the Conservative member does not know what the subamendment is.

The Speaker: That is more debate.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, frankly, it pains me to see, in what is supposed to be a functioning democracy, a government that is in complete and utter collapse today. It is no secret that many in the House have lost confidence in the government. In fact, Canadians have lost confidence in the government. The only ones who seem to have not lost confidence in the government are its NDP coalition partners. The leader of the NDP holding off to get his pension is probably one of the most contemptible things I have seen in this country in a long time.

I want the hon. member's comments on the fact that we need an election now. We need to return to some sense of normalcy, decency and morality in this country, which a common-sense Conservative government could do.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, if I did not make this emphasis known in my intervention, I certainly want to emphasize it in my

response to my colleague's question. This is the final nail in the proverbial coffin of the leadership of the Prime Minister and the government. They have lost all moral and legal authority to govern. My colleague is absolutely correct. This is what I hear day in and day out from constituents in my riding, as well as from the constituents across the country who follow me on social media. They are not concerned whether the leader of our party is getting a security clearance. They want an election now. That is what everyone is talking about.

It is time to restore the promise this country once offered, which the Prime Minister and his government have destroyed. The leader of the NDP and his caucus need to show a backbone and put Canadian interests first. They need to put the needs of Canadians first, not the NDP leader's own selfish reasons.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what has not changed is the Conservative Party of Canada's attitude toward what the member just finished saying. They have consistently made character assassinations of government members, and they have called for an election for over two years now. It is a joke for the member to try to give the impression that the time is now when he has been saying the time is now for the last two years.

We are not moving forward on a number of initiatives because the Conservative Party, in its self-interest, continues to filibuster on a motion, a motion about which I do not think the member knows what is supposed to be being debated right now. The motion, which we have been debating over the last six weeks, is to defer the issue to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. That is what the debate is about.

Could the member provide his thoughts on why the Conservatives are continuing to play this multi-million dollar game?

• (1140)

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, what an absolutely insulting remark from the member of the Liberal Party. It is insulting to Canadians.

In 2021, Canadians gave the Liberals a minority government. They did not give them the plurality of the votes. We would be onto a different mandate by now if the Liberals did not have an unholy allegiance to the NDP. Are they on, or are they off? Are they dance partners, or are they waiting in the wings? Canadians did not vote for that, and that is what the member needs to be reminded of day in and day out.

Yes, I will continue to argue that we need an election now, every single day that I proudly represent the citizens of Brantford—Brant.

Mr. Don Stewart (Toronto—St. Paul's, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to say happy holidays to the people of Toronto—St. Paul's and also give a shout-out to my father, who got out of the hospital this weekend. I wish him a speedy recovery.

Privilege

I have been in this place for three months today, but that does not mean that I am three months old. I have been watching the government heading toward a crash like this for the better part of a year. It is surprising that it took this long to happen. When I look at the former minister of finance's letter, she says we must keep "our fiscal powder dry" to accommodate for an unknown shock, which may or may not come in the future. This would give some flexibility to the government to react.

Is the SDTC slush fund, which used up lots of taxpayer dollars, endemic of a government headed for a crash anyway, and the former finance minister is only now admitting to it?

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, as I articulated in my intervention, the government has demonstrated the complete opposite of what it promised Canadians. The Prime Minister wrote an open letter to Canadians shortly after his election in 2015. He promised to be a good economic steward of the taxpayer funds. He promised Canadians that the government would be open by default, as well as transparent and accountable.

Let us take a look at what has happened since 2015. It would take me probably another two minutes to outline the numerous scandals, the amount of government waste, the amount of misspent, misused, misappropriated and defrauded taxpayer funds, which I estimate to be well north of \$1 billion. That is not exercising the public good, and it is not appropriate. This is why we need a carbon tax election now.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, could the member comment on the fact that Canadians are being held hostage by an erratic Prime Minister and the leader of the NDP, who is putting his \$2.3-million pension ahead of the country?

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, I cannot disagree with that. These are selfish economic interests, and it is putting personal interests above the needs of Canadians.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for two and a half months, the House has been seized with this privilege motion. We are still waiting on documents that were ordered by the House months ago, documents that would shed light on the misuse of taxpayer dollars through the Sustainable Development Technology Canada green slush fund. Despite a clear parliamentary order, the Liberal government has refused to comply, obstructing the vital work of Parliament and undermining the principles of transparency and accountability.

Meanwhile, Canadians are hurting and the NDP-Liberal government is failing them. The issues facing Canadians are only growing more and more severe, yet the Liberal government persists in its efforts to evade transparency and accountability. From the skyrocketing costs of housing and basic necessities to the ever-increasing food inflation, the pain felt by everyday Canadians is undeniable, yet instead of tackling these issues head-on, the government has chosen to prolong its cover-up of ethical failures. Canadians are left to suffer while the Prime Minister and the Liberal government are busy protecting their own.

After nine years of the Prime Minister's leadership, the price of groceries has skyrocketed and food insecurity has become one of the most urgent issues facing Canadians. Food Banks Canada re-

ported that in March of this year, there were more than two million visits to the food bank. That is a staggering increase of 90% since 2019. Canadians are already struggling with the cost of food, but unfortunately, things are set to get even worse. This was confirmed by Canada's Food Price Report 2025. The average Canadian family of four will have to spend \$800 more on food in the coming year. That \$800 is on top of the year-over-year increases on food, bringing the average total family spend on food to \$16,833.

Meat and vegetables are expected to see an even higher price hike, with the cost of meat rising from 4% to 6% and vegetables by 4% to 5%. The rise in costs for nutritious food are particularly alarming given the growing number of reports of scurvy here in Canada. It has gotten so dire that doctors in Canada have been warned to consider scurvy as a potential diagnosis for their patients.

In northern Saskatchewan, 27 cases of scurvy have been diagnosed. In all of these cases, the patients had one thing in common: a lack of fresh fruits and vegetables in their diet. This was once a disease that was associated with sailors on long sea voyages and is now a growing concern in Canada due to limited access to affordable and nutritious food.

To be clear, the NDP-Liberals' two-month tax trick on chips and chocolate is not going to provide vulnerable Canadians with the nutrition they so desperately need. Scurvy should be unimaginable in Canada but that is the Prime Minister's record. The rise in food insecurity is a direct result of the Prime Minister's carbon tax. Food prices have risen 36% faster in Canada than in the United States, where there is no carbon tax.

The reality is simple. If we tax the farmer who grows the food and the trucker who ships the food, ultimately we end up taxing the family who buys the food.

• (1145)

Instead of giving Canadians tangible, permanent relief, the NDP-Liberal government is preparing to hike the carbon tax again next year. In the middle of a persistent affordability crisis, it is hell-bent on making life more expensive for Canadians. The carbon tax-obsessed Prime Minister is determined to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ per litre by 2030. Canadians want a carbon tax election, but the NDP-Liberal coalition continues to hold the interests of Canadians hostage. With its lust for power and backroom deals, the NDP-Liberal coalition is refusing to face the consequences of its policies at the ballot box.

Privilege

Canadians cannot afford to wait any longer for relief from the damaging policies of the government. That is why, in light of the fall economic statement being delivered today, Conservatives have one simple demand: to stop. The government needs to stop all planned tax hikes, especially the carbon tax hike that would further increase the cost of food, gas, home heating and basic necessities. It needs to stop fuelling inflation by cutting wasteful inflationary spending, like the 390 million dollars' worth of contracts handed out through the Liberals' green slush fund. That includes the 58 million taxpayer dollars that went to 10 ineligible projects, the 334 million taxpayer dollars that went to 186 projects that involved conflicts of interest and the 58 million taxpayer dollars given to projects without ensuring the terms of the contribution agreement were met.

However, that is not enough. The Liberal government needs to stop adding to Canada's debt. Conservatives are calling for a dollar-for-dollar law that requires new spending be offset with an equal amount of savings. This afternoon's fall economic statement should confirm that the deficit for this year and last year has not risen above the already reckless \$40-billion guardrail the former finance minister promised in this year's budget. Unfortunately, there is no reason to believe the Prime Minister or Mark Carney, the phantom finance minister, will heed our common-sense recommendations or, at the very least, maintain the already reckless so-called fiscal guardrail.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has said the deficit could be as high as \$46.5 billion. The Prime Minister's former budget director has come out and said, "over the past few years, the federal government has consistently prioritized short-sighted decisions over long-term fiscal and economic stability." The Prime Minister's own former budget director does not have faith that the government will show the fiscal restraint that is needed in the fall economic statement.

It is far from just the former budget director raising concerns with the anticipated fall economic statement. This morning, the deputy prime minister and the minister of finance resigned from cabinet. She has arguably been the most loyal cabinet minister to the Prime Minister, but even she is now raising alarm bells in the face of the Prime Minister's bullish tactics to spend taxpayer dollars rashly in a reckless attempt to save himself. The now former finance minister has admitted that excessive spending drives inflation. Her letter of resignation this morning confirms the Prime Minister's decisions are short-sighted.

Today's decisions will have long-term repercussions for Canadians. That is why the former budget director also warned, "You can't pick and choose fiscal anchors as you go, and renege on a commitment you made only a year ago.... The fact of the matter is this government is losing control of public finances and Canadians are noticing." Canadians are indeed noticing. Canadians cannot help but notice because it is Canadians who will always pay the price for the Prime Minister and his costly failures.

- (1150)

It is Canadian taxpayers who are on the hook for the waste and the mismanagement in the green slush fund, but it is not just for the green slush fund. The Liberal government's mismanagement is a

pattern. The Auditor General has now revealed that the Liberal government's \$50-billion CEBA program is its latest boondoggle. The Liberals paid out \$3.5 billion in taxpayers' money through the CEBA program to over 77,000 recipients who did not meet eligibility requirements. That means 9% of the program's recipients were ineligible.

The Auditor General's report determined that the Ministry of Finance failed to provide effective oversight of the CEBA program. Even worse, the Liberal government awarded 92% of the total contracts to Accenture in a non-competitive process. Accenture took that money and then performed much of the work in Brazil instead of Canada. That work was done in Brazil, despite the Liberal government's claims of supporting Canadian jobs.

This is a government that has no regard for taxpayers' hard-earned money. The NDP-Liberal coalition's failures are not just numbers on a spreadsheet; they are real costs to Canadian families who are already struggling with skyrocketing costs of living. The Liberal government's high-tax and high-deficit agenda is fuelling inflation and it is the most vulnerable who are the hardest hit. Lower-income Canadians are disproportionately suffering from the government's inflationary policies. It is time for a government that puts Canadians first, not its own political interests. Canadians need a prime minister who understands the economic realities they are facing, who is focused on the long-term prosperity of Canadians, yet what have we heard from the current Prime Minister? "I'll let the bankers worry about the economy." That recent display of incompetence from the Prime Minister follows memorable comments like budgets balance themselves and "you'll forgive me if I don't think about monetary policy."

After nine years of his failed leadership, it is no wonder Canadians are struggling to keep a roof over their head and food on their table. Everything is broken. The NDP-Liberal government has doubled the debt, doubled housing costs, caused the worst inflation in 40 years and sent two million people to the food bank. Canada's GDP per capita is smaller than it was when the Prime Minister took office. Canada has the most indebted households in the G7, with the worst housing inflation, and food prices have risen 37% faster in Canada than in the United States.

Privilege

Our economy is teetering on the brink of collapse and now Canadians are faced with a threat of 25% tariffs on our shrinking economy. Canadians need a prime minister with the brains and the backbone to stand up for Canada. Canadians deserve a prime minister who actually worries about the economy, who will work for their future and who will take action to fix the mess the current government has created, a prime minister who will restore the Canadian promise that hard work leads to powerful paycheques and pensions that buy affordable groceries and homes in safe neighbourhoods.

The clock is running out on the NDP-Liberal coalition's backroom deals. Canadians will go to the polls in the coming year and they will have a clear choice: a choice between the NDP-Liberal coalition, which will continue to tax Canadians' food, punish their work and let crime spiral out of control, or the common-sense Conservatives, who will axe the carbon tax, build affordable homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. Our common-sense plan is one of opportunity for all Canadians, a plan that rewards hard work, not who someone knows.

• (1155)

While Canadians have been struggling with rising costs over the last nine years of the Prime Minister's leadership, the only people who seem to have gotten ahead are Liberals and Liberal insiders. The issues surrounding the Liberal's Sustainable Development Technology Canada green slush fund are far from isolated incidents; they have been part of a disturbing pattern of mismanagement, lack of accountability and outright disregard for hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

That is the legacy of the Liberal government: an increasing cost of living that is making it difficult for Canadians to afford basic necessities, while demonstrating a blatant disregard for transparency and accountability. Canadians cannot afford the corruption of the NDP-Liberal government. The failure to provide the documents ordered by the House is not merely an obstruction; it is also an affront to the very principles of transparency and accountability that are essential to the proper functioning of our democracy.

It is not just a matter of parliamentary procedure; ultimately this comes down to the health of our democracy. That is why Conservatives are persistent with our demands. The Prime Minister could bring the months-long debate to a close if he respected the motion passed in the House and delivered on the production of documents. The refusal to fully release the requested documents is a deliberate attempt to prevent the Canadian public from understanding the full extent of the Liberal government's corruption and mismanagement. With the refusal, the people responsible get to evade accountability.

The Liberal government has shown time and time again that it values protecting its own interests over the interests of Canadians. Whether it is allowing the \$400 million in misused funds to go unchecked or failing to address the growing economic hardship faced by millions of Canadians, the government's actions, or lack thereof, speak volumes. Canadians cannot afford to continue down this path of unchecked spending and hidden truths.

Accountability is not a luxury; it is a necessity in a democracy. The time for cover-ups and evasive behaviour is over. Canadians deserve a government that upholds its duty to them and a government that ensures that every dollar is spent responsibly and that the

people responsible for mismanagement are held accountable. The green slush fund scandal is just one example of how the NDP-Liberal government's lack of transparency has eroded public trust. The longer it continues to obstruct the production of documents, the deeper the damage to our democracy.

It is time for the Liberal government to stop protecting insiders and start listening to the Canadians who elected its members. It is time for the Prime Minister and his government to stop hiding and to start facing the reality of their actions. It is time for them to end the cover-up, restore trust in our public institutions and begin putting Canadians first. Canadians need transparency, accountability and, most of all, a government that works for them and not for itself. It is time for a carbon tax election.

• (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is important to emphasize to people following the debate and what Conservatives have been saying inside and outside the chamber for years now that, quite simply, Canada is not broken and that in fact Canada is still the best country in the world to call home.

If we look at interest rates compared to the rest of the world, we see that Canada is doing exceptionally well. With respect to inflation, compared to the rest of the world, Canada is doing exceptionally well. With respect to the hard jobs numbers, there are more than double the number of jobs than under Stephen Harper, with the leader of the Conservative Party sitting in his cabinet, in the same time period. There are all sorts of national programs, from the school food program to a pharmacare program and a dental care program. There are lots of wonderful things actually happening.

Canada is not broken. I am wondering whether the member opposite would at the very least acknowledge that Canada still is the very best place in the world to call home and that in fact, contrary to what her leader says, Canada is not broken.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, Canada is, in my opinion, the best country in the world. We do have the best people.

I go home every weekend and I speak with Canadians who had never used a food bank before but are now using one, and with Canadians who are losing their house because they do not have a job. The Liberal government, where I am from, has attacked our energy sector and our agriculture sector to the point where the people who were working in wonderful careers in these sectors are now using food banks.

I want to repeat something from my speech, because I do not think the member across was listening: Canada has the most indebted households in the G7 and the worst housing inflation, and food prices have risen 37% faster in Canada than in the United States. I would just ask that the member opposite actually talk to his constituents and hear what they are saying.

• (1205)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time speaking in the House as the Bloc Québécois whip, and it is a great honour for me to take on this role. However, I am doing so under rather unusual circumstances, to put it politely.

These are such unusual circumstances that I may not have another opportunity like this, so I want to wish all the members, and especially the people of Berthier—Maskinongé, whom I have the honour of representing, a wonderful holiday season.

We have rarely seen such a profound loss of confidence in a government. Not only did the finance minister resign on the very day she was to present the economic statement, but we have regularly felt we were going through some unprecedented and sometimes surreal events during this parliamentary session. That is the situation we are in right now.

As members know, the Bloc Québécois withdrew confidence in the government some time ago. This is nothing new. I would like my colleague to tell us what she thinks is going to happen next. What are we going to do this afternoon?

[*English*]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on his new role and the new responsibility that he gets to bear.

It is quite interesting, actually. We know that the NDP has voted confidence in the Liberal government, not sometimes but literally all the time. We do know that right before the Elmwood—Transcona by-election, the leader of the NDP ripped up the supply and confidence agreement. We know that it was a big drama production and a show.

In her letter that was released today, the former finance minister said, referring to Canadians, “They know when we are working for them, and they equally know when we are focused on ourselves. Inevitably, our time in government will come to an end.” What is so shocking about that is that the New Democrat not get it. They keep having confidence in the Prime Minister, when the former deputy prime minister does not even have confidence in him. I do not get it.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I love our hon. colleague. Her intervention, as always, was fantastic and to the point. She speaks from the heart and she speaks for the constituents in her riding.

The hon. parliamentary secretary stood up and said, “Oh, everything’s great”, but seven million Canadians are without a doctor; two million Canadians are going to food banks every month, and 47,000 Canadians have died from the opioid crisis in this country.

Privilege

That is the Liberal government’s record. It is scandal after scandal and corruption after corruption.

It was not like that nine years ago, before the Liberal government took place, and it will not be like that when Canadians elect a strong Conservative government. I just want to give our hon. colleague another opportunity to talk about what she hears on the doorsteps in her riding of Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the kind words.

It is just so sad, especially coming up to Christmas. I was at the grocery store on the weekend, and I saw people who had to take things off the conveyor belt to put them back. What is baffling to me and what I do not understand is that what we are debating today is the Liberal government’s failure to produce documents that they were ordered by this place to produce, and the lengths it would go to to cover up. Whatever is in the documents must be very damning if the government is willing to go to this extent to keep covering up the corruption and the mismanagement of taxpayer dollars, which is ultimately hurting Canadians.

As I said in my remarks, it is hurting the most vulnerable of the most vulnerable, the people who are on the brink of losing their house and those who are not feeding themselves. I referred to scurvy; there are scurvy diagnoses happening in Saskatchewan, in Canada. That is unacceptable.

• (1210)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would observe that we live in the greatest country. However, we have the worst Prime Minister and the worst government in Canadian history.

The Prime Minister long ago lost the moral authority to govern, but today, if there was any doubt, we have seen that the government has lost its ability to carry on the very functions of government, because in four hours, the government has to present the fall economic statement. The problem is that there is no finance minister. The finance minister resigned in what is a truly unprecedented set of circumstances demonstrating that the Prime Minister has lost all control.

The member spoke about the fact that, notwithstanding that the leader of the NDP ripped up his coalition agreement with the costly and corrupt government, the leader of the NDP has propped up the government on confidence vote after confidence vote after confidence vote, three times. The member said she does not understand why.

I would put it to the member that the reason the leader of the NDP is propping up the Prime Minister is so he can pad his pockets with a \$2.3-million pension. Pension over Canadians is the priority of the leader of the NDP. Would the member agree?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely do agree that the leader of the NDP cares about himself, his own self-interest, padding his pension and making sure he checks that box, and he does not care whom he is hurting along the way. It does not matter whether it is his own caucus members, many of whom will not return to this place because they are not putting the interests of Canadians first, or whether it is Canadians.

Privilege

The NDP leader literally has voted to increase the carbon tax time and time again. He pretends he does not like the Liberals and their supply and confidence agreement, and he literally rips it up but tapes it back together. It is just so sad and so disheartening that some people can be so selfish and only care about themselves, when our fellow Canadians are hurting.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was going to talk about a lot of things, but the news this morning, or the tweet from the finance minister, has really changed things.

We are here today debating the privilege motion, which is the failure to produce documents pertaining to SDTC and the corruption that ensued from that. We know that the government is withholding documents from the House of Commons. We have seen this happen before with the Liberal government. We have had elections over it in the past, and here we are again today, debating a production of documents privilege motion.

What is the debate about? It is about an organization called SDTC, which is responsible for hundreds of millions of dollars in grant funding to companies to pursue so-called green technologies, and this organization has been tasked with divvying out this money. It turns out, as we have heard from the Auditor General, that nearly \$400 million this organization has given out was done under a cloud of conflict of interest, where people who were sitting on the board were giving their own companies money from this organization. That may come as no surprise to Canadians, as Canadians have come to expect that from this government, and Conservatives have been holding the government to account on this for a number of months now.

However, what is new today is that the finance minister has resigned her seat. She has written a letter to the Prime Minister, and I would like to read that letter here this morning just so we are all clear on what was going on there. The letter reads:

Dear Prime Minister,

It has been the honour of my life to serve in government, working for Canada and Canadians. We have accomplished a lot together.

On Friday, you told me you no longer want me to serve as your Finance Minister and offered me another position in the Cabinet.

Upon reflection, I have concluded that the only honest and viable path is for me to resign from the Cabinet.

To be effective, a Minister must speak on behalf of the Prime Minister and with his full confidence. In making your decision, you made clear that I no longer credibly enjoy that confidence and possess the authority that comes with it.

For the past number of weeks, you and I have found ourselves at odds about the best path forward for Canada.

Our country today faces a grave challenge. The incoming administration in the United States is pursuing a policy of aggressive economic nationalism, including a threat of 25 per cent tariffs.

We need to take that threat extremely seriously. That means keeping our fiscal powder dry today, so we have the reserves we may need for a coming tariff war. That means eschewing costly political gimmicks, which we can ill afford and which make Canadians doubt that we recognize the gravity of the moment.

That means pushing back against 'America First' economic nationalism with a determined effort to fight for capital and investment and the jobs they bring. That means working in good faith and humility with the Premiers of the provinces and territories of our great and diverse country, and building a true Team Canada response.

I know Canadians would recognize and respect such an approach. They know when we are working for them, and they equally know when we are focused on our-

selves. Inevitably, our time in government will come to an end. But how we deal with the threat our country currently faces will define us for a generation, and perhaps longer. Canada will win if we are strong, smart, and united.

It is this conviction which has driven my strenuous efforts this fall to manage our spending in ways that will give us the flexibility we will need to meet the serious challenges presented by the United States.

I will always be grateful for the chance to have served in government and I will always be proud of our government's work for Canada and Canadians.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues as a Liberal Member of Parliament, and I am committed to running again for my seat in Toronto in the next federal election.

With gratitude,

The [former finance minister]

That is the letter that was written to the Prime Minister this morning. It was shocking news for all of us, and it speaks to what Conservatives have been calling for, for a very long time, which is that there is no confidence in the government.

● (1215)

We have been saying this for quite a while. The Bloc has recently joined us in this as well. Now the former finance minister is suggesting that Canadians have no confidence in the government. What is increasingly concerning or confusing to me is the fact that the NDP continues to prop up the failed government, continues to provide confidence in the Liberal government, despite the fact that we are now seeing that even top-level members of the cabinet no longer have that.

We saw the resignation of the housing minister earlier today in a press conference where he said he is no longer seeking re-election. He has resigned from cabinet as well. We see that the troubles of our country are piling up. The government is in chaos and unable to address the issues. Conservatives have put forward a common-sense plan to axe the tax, to get rid of the carbon tax, to free up our economy and ensure that Canadians can afford food. When we tax the farmer who grows the food, we tax the trucker who drives the truck to deliver the food and we tax the grocery store that sells us the food, Canadians cannot afford food.

We have seen this over and over again, and we have been relaying this message to the government, pointing out that more Canadians are visiting food banks than ever before. We have been calling for a common-sense plan to remove the carbon tax, to make us competitive with our neighbouring countries, like the United States, which is our biggest trading partner in many ways but also our competition in an increasing number of ways. To have our economy saddled with the carbon tax while the Americans are not puts us at a significant disadvantage.

I think that the former finance minister recognized that. She recognized that, so she chose to resign today. We noticed last week already that there seemed to be some daylight between the Prime Minister and the former finance minister around a fiscal guardrail. We heard repeatedly from the former finance minister that she was concerned about the finances of our country and that she wanted to keep the deficit to \$40 billion.

Privilege

From my perspective, a balanced budget is the thing we ought to be pursuing, not a deficit of \$40 billion. However, it appears, in the fall economic statement the former finance minister was expected to deliver today, even that target would not have been met. We see that, increasingly, Canadians are lacking confidence in the government. The former finance minister is lacking confidence in the government, and Canadians are feeling the weight of the carbon tax, which is hampering our economy and making life unaffordable.

If that were not enough, the government intends to triple the carbon tax. As if life is not difficult enough in Canada, if we cannot afford to heat, house and eat in Canada because of the carbon tax at its current level, imagine what it is going to be when it triples over the next number of years. It is not an April Fool's Day joke, but every April 1, we get an increase in the carbon tax. This happens over and over again until Canadians cannot afford to live.

It is interesting as well that the housing minister resigned today. Common-sense Conservatives have put forward a plan to build the homes across Canada by removing the GST on new home builds. This would save on average about \$50,000 per new home build and would stimulate new home builds across the country. We are building fewer homes than we did in the 1970s, yet our population growth is dramatically higher than it was.

I would also point out that the housing minister formerly was the immigration minister. In some ways, he was responsible in his former role for the problems in his current role, which he was unable to fix and now is resigning from that position altogether. I wish the former housing minister well in his new endeavours. I hope he is more successful in those endeavours than he was as the minister of immigration and then housing, as he seemed to have been a total failure in both of those.

• (1220)

It is interesting we get two ministers of the cabinet resigning on the same day, with one very clearly outlining that they have lost confidence in the Prime Minister. It is also interesting to note that, in the resignation letter of the former finance minister, she talks about "keeping our fiscal powder dry". Conservatives have been arguing for a long time for that: to ensure that we balance the budget and keep the fundamentals of our fiscal home in order. This is something that the Prime Minister, from the get-go, has been loath to achieve.

I remember back in 2015, when I was first running to be a member of Parliament, that the Prime Minister said he was going to run small deficits. I also remember former prime minister Stephen Harper, at the time, pointing out that they were going to run these very small, very tiny deficits. Those deficits have ballooned dramatically. Never, ever, I think, in the entire tenure of the Prime Minister, has the deficit been \$10 billion. It has always been dramatically more than that.

We have seen the initial four years of \$10-billion deficits grow into multi-billion dollar deficits, \$60-billion and \$70-billion deficits, for nearly a decade. After nine years of the Prime Minister, the national debt has doubled. The Prime Minister has taken on more debt than all other prime ministers combined. To say that we need to keep our fiscal powder dry is almost somewhat humorous. I am glad that the former finance minister is pointing this out today,

but the Prime Minister has failed to do that for nearly nine years and came in on a promise to run deficit budgets.

I do agree with the former finance minister when she says that we are facing "grave" challenges with the prospect of a 25% tariff. Particularly where I come from in northern Alberta, softwood lumber is a major part of the economy. I always say to everybody that I come from the promised land. We do forestry, oil field and farming where I come from. We have been suffering under double-digit percentage tariffs on our softwood lumber for as long as the Prime Minister has been the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has totally failed to secure a softwood lumber deal with the United States. He has put our industry at a significant disadvantage. He has failed to not only defend our industry against American tariffs, but also failed to defend our industry here at home when provincial governments worked very hard to shut down the forestry industry. Then he has failed in terms of forest management when the federal government is involved in it. In Jasper National Park, the federal government is entirely responsible for forest management, and we saw large swathes of the national park burn because of poor forest management practices over the last 10 years.

We know what it is like to live under these tariffs in one particular industry, and we are concerned about the possibility of the entire Canadian economy suffering under a 25% tariff. We need a government that is focused on Canada first. We need a government that is focused on ensuring we have a united front here in Canada. From the Liberal government, we see chaos. We see finance ministers resigning, a deputy prime minister resigning her post, because the Prime Minister no longer has confidence in them and they no longer have confidence in the Prime Minister.

• (1225)

Conservatives have been calling for a carbon tax election, and I think that there is no better time than right now to call that election, to ensure that we can have a government that has the confidence of Canadians, that can negotiate with the United States and that can ensure that we do not face the 25% tariff that the Americans are threatening. Then we can fix some of these other problems and disputes that we have with the United States around software lumber. We can then restore the dream of North American free trade, which I have lived under my entire life and which, I think, was good for North America in general.

We need a government that can combat the buy America policies of several of the American states, so that we can ensure that we have a fortress North America rather than a conflict between Canada and the United States.

Privilege

I note that the former finance minister did not mention, in her resignation letter, the fiscal anchor that she had put in place for herself. I would note that this was, I think, the third fiscal anchor. A declining debt-to-GDP ratio was the first one, but when that no longer held, she then moved to this \$40-billion deficit. I note that she does not mention it explicitly in her resignation letter, but we did note last week that there seemed to be a number of rumblings coming not only out of the Liberal caucus, but also out of the ministry, around a dispute between the Prime Minister and the former finance minister over these fiscal guardrails that the former finance minister had put in place and whether the Prime Minister was willing to abide by them.

What seems obvious from the letter that we have from the former finance minister is that there was a significant disagreement and that the Prime Minister chose to fire the former finance minister rather than abide by the fiscal guardrails. The letter notes that, "On Friday, you", referring to the Prime Minister, "told me", that is, the former finance minister, "you no longer want me to serve as your Finance Minister and offered me another position in cabinet."

That is effective dismissal. The finance minister is generally noted to be the most high-ranking minister in the cabinet. It is generally the most prestigious position. A transfer out of that position to any other position would be seen as a demotion, which is an effective dismissal. I would say that the Prime Minister fired the former finance minister.

This has happened before to cabinet ministers who have stood up for Canada and who have stood up for what they believed to be right. We need to look no further than Jody Wilson-Raybould, who was in a very similar position. She felt that the defence of SNC-Lavalin should be done by the company itself in court and not by political interference by the justice minister, and she got into a dispute with the Prime Minister about this.

We saw a significant level of pressure brought to bear upon her to skirt around justice. We saw what happened to her as well. She was fired as the justice minister. She was also asked if she would be willing to take a lateral move. Therefore, we see that this is an MO of the Prime Minister, that he wants to get his way. No cabinet minister may push for what is good for Canada or for what is good for their ministry. It is insisted that they abide by the whims and wishes of the Prime Minister.

Today, we see another casualty of the whims and wishes of the Prime Minister, with the resignation of the former finance minister, which only goes to cover up, again, and distract from, again, the major scandals that have been plaguing the Liberal government over the last number of years. To bring it back to the privilege debate that we have been debating today, this just adds to a long line of scandals that have been happening with the government: SNC-Lavalin, the WE Charity scandal, SDTC and never mind the environment minister's severe conflict of interest with Cycle Capital.

• (1230)

All of those things would be more than enough to take down any government, yet here we are; it is still standing.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr.

Speaker, I realize that the leader of the Conservative Party was a member of the inner circle for Stephen Harper when he was a minister and a parliamentary secretary. When the Conservatives talk about corruption, I could talk about the anti-terrorism corruption of \$3.1 billion; the Phoenix scandal of \$2.2 billion; the G8 spending scandal; the ETS scandal; the F-35 scandal; the Senate scandal; the election scandals and the cuts to the Auditor General for foreign interference, which is a long one. Those are not to mention another booklet of 70 other types of scandals the leader of the Conservative Party was involved in with the government of Stephen Harper.

My question is more related to an image that the Conservatives are trying to portray to Canadians, that Canada is broken, which is not the case. Canada is the best country in the world to call home. When we compare Canada to the rest of the world, we will find that our interest rates are down, that our inflation is down and that there have been twice as many jobs created under the Liberal government as there were under the Harper government when the leader of the Conservative Party sat at the cabinet table. We have the most significant number of trade agreements ever signed in the history of our nation. We have a school food program. We have pharmacare. There have been a lot of proactive things.

Does the member opposite seriously believe that Canada is broken?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, Canada is the greatest country in the world, and the Government of Canada is indeed broken. Everything is in shambles. We see that cabinet ministers are resigning, left, right and centre. The rumours are that two more cabinet ministers are going to resign. I wonder who those will be.

Perhaps it will be the environment minister. I think it would be appropriate for him to resign, given his severe conflicts of interest that have come to light through Cycle Capital. He owns a significant number of shares in Cycle Capital. SDTC, the organization that we are discussing today, gave Cycle Capital companies over \$200 million in a significant conflict of interest for the environment minister.

My question, in return, to the member opposite is this: Does he know who the next two ministers to resign will be?

• (1235)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for over a month now, the Conservatives have brought government to a standstill to talk about contempt of Parliament, specifically the fact that the government refuses to hand over the documents requested by Parliament. They have used this time to give all kinds of examples of Liberal corruption. However, we know that corruption and this kind of phenomenon of contempt of Parliament exist because the system allows them to exist.

Privilege

Why not seize on this opportunity, then, to do something constructive? Why do the Conservatives not tell us about the measures they are going to put in place? How are they going to change the system to rein in corruption and make sure that this kind of situation never happens again?

[*English*]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are looking forward to a carbon tax election, where we would be able to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime. I am looking forward to having another confidence vote in which we would be supported by the Bloc, and I am looking forward to the NDP members actually voting with us in non-confidence in the Liberal government. We have seen that the former finance minister has resigned today, stating no confidence in the government. I look forward to the Bloc and the NDP supporting that as well.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of Christmas, I hope the hon. member will join me in wishing the Liberal Party well tomorrow night at its Christmas party, which is being held somewhere close to the Hill. I wish the Liberals all the best for tomorrow night's Christmas party.

We have a government that is literally collapsing in front of us right now. The only confidence that is being shown in the government is by the NDP. I recall when the NDP-Liberal costly, comfy coalition was conceived in 2022. I spoke, at the time, about the fact that the NDP was heading to an abyss of irrelevance and that it was actually playing right into the Prime Minister's hands. Given the fact that the New Democrats have supported the current Liberal government more than 25 times in votes of confidence as it relates to scrapping and axing the carbon tax, the fact that NDP members have continued to show their confidence in the government, even after the leader of the NDP ripped up the coalition agreement with much fanfare, and the fact that the NDP leader is here in order to secure his pension, is it not time that the NDP members join not just with Canadians but also with a majority of Canadians and show no confidence in the current Liberal government?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it will come as any surprise to my colleague that I agree with him when he says that we should have another confidence vote in the government and that the NDP should vote with us on that.

I want to recognize the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil in his role as the former House leader in this place. He orchestrated and delivered many confidence votes in that time, and I want to thank him for his role in that position. I look forward to having the opportunity for another confidence vote very soon.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his words. It is quite interesting. I want to bring a date to the minds of those who are in the chamber: February 12, 2019. Does anybody know what happened that day? Jody Wilson-Raybould resigned from cabinet on that date. It is almost like déjà vu. Even the former finance minister does not have confidence in the Prime Minister.

During the debate this morning, we heard through commentary that the NDP members have confidence in the Prime Minister, and they have voted over and over to increase taxes and to confirm their confidence. We have heard that the leader of the NDP wants to pro-

tect his pension. He wants to get his pension before he shows non-confidence in the government.

Does the member agree with that statement?

• (1240)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, we have seen over and over again, while Conservatives are fighting for Canadians and are trying to make life more affordable in Canada, while we are discussing the housing crisis, while we are trying to bring crime down across this country, while we are concerned about the free drugs that are being handed out in the streets and while Conservatives are focused on the issues that Canadians face, the NDP members continue to support the government for personal gain.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts on the motion we are debating today, the issue of privilege being brought to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. That is the actual motion. That is what the Conservatives have moved; it is their motion. The Conservatives have now been debating their own motion, by putting up hundreds of speakers on it, all in the name of preventing anything from being debated inside the chamber.

Does the member believe the Conservatives' behaviour is reflective of parliamentarians who want to work together to get things done for their constituents?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, no, I do not agree with the member.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister launched his leadership to great fanfare as a self-professed feminist. Since the time that he proudly announced his gender parity cabinet, and all of the other things he clings to for whatever reason, for photo ops or whatever the vanity project happens to be, we have seen a trail of women's careers and reputations damaged by this individual.

It started with Jody Wilson-Raybould, Jane Philpott and Celina Caesar-Chavannes, and now we see what has happened with the former finance minister. What is actually shocking to me is that all of this damage to these women's reputations and careers seems to be fine with the leader of the NDP, because he is putting the interest of getting his pension ahead of the careers and reputations of women who have had leadership roles in Canada.

Why does my colleague suppose that is?

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, I am not exactly sure why that is, but I do know that it must be harrowing for the members of the NDP who have to continually prop up the Liberal government. I am thinking particularly of the member for Edmonton Strathcona, who has repeatedly voted with the government and voted for the increases to the carbon tax.

We see over and over again that Canadians are struggling under the carbon tax and that Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. They cannot afford to heat their homes or to put food on the table. We see this over and over again. I cannot imagine what it feels like to have to vote to support the Liberal government.

Privilege

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the ruling of the Speaker with regard to the production of documents ordered by the House on the scandal involving Sustainable Development Technology Canada, also known as the Liberal green slush fund.

For those watching at home, here are the facts. The Auditor General found that the Prime Minister turned Sustainable Development Technology Canada into a slush fund for Liberal insiders, with \$58 million given to 10 ineligible projects that could not demonstrate an environmental benefit or progress in any green technology, \$58 million given to projects without any effort to ensure the terms of the contribution agreements were even met, and \$334 million funnelled to 186 cases where board members held a conflict of interest. The very people trusted with safeguarding taxpayer dollars were funnelling money into projects they were connected to. The NDP-Liberal government shovelled the working man's pay into the pockets of elitists who provide no value to the country, in the amount of \$400 million.

Canadians who are barely scraping by are watching the Prime Minister waste 400 million of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars. It is a lot of money and it is hard to think about how big the amount actually is. Here is what that \$400 million means for Canadians. The \$400 million could cover the costs for about 89,000 kids to play hockey. Let us think about that. With rising costs, families are barely able to put food on the table, let alone pay for a season of hockey to keep their kids active. The \$400 million could cover a month's worth of groceries for over 300,000 families of four. Right now, one in five kids are facing poverty and two million Canadians are going to food banks. The \$400 million could feed hundreds of thousands of them.

For seniors watching their pensions go up in smoke because of the Prime Minister's carbon tax and inflationary spending, \$400 million could cover a year's worth of housing for around 10,000 of them. The \$400 million could have gone toward our health care system, where one in four Canadians are set to lose primary care within a couple of years. The \$400 million could hire 4,700 more nurses or 1,700 doctors to ease stress on the system. What was done with the \$400 million?

The SDTC scandal is just one example of the moral and financial corruption of NDP-Liberals. A few hours from now, we were supposed to hear the fall economic statement from the now former finance minister, but she will not be delivering it because she is gone. She, like millions of Canadians, has no confidence in the Prime Minister. In her resignation today, she said the government needs to keep its "fiscal powder dry" and avoid "costly political gimmicks". Even she admitted the government has abandoned our people, saying Canadians know when government is focused on itself. Finally, she conceded the inevitable truth that the NDP-Liberal government will come to an end.

However, let us not forget that this is from the same disgracefully awful former finance minister who blew up the deficit, raised taxes on hard-working Canadians and could not even stay within her own fiscal guardrails. Her legacy is inflationary spending, higher taxes and broken promises. The NDP-Liberal government is a national embarrassment, a dumpster fire, with nine years of inflationary spending, a ruthless carbon tax, broken immigration, housing dou-

bled, crime, chaos, drugs and disorder, and now a fall economic statement without a finance minister to deliver it.

The Prime Minister has lost the confidence of his own cabinet. The sellout NDP and its leader appear to have more confidence in the Liberals than the Liberals have in themselves. It is clear the Prime Minister has a problem with strong women: Jody Wilson-Raybould, Jane Philpott and now another one is out the door. Every Liberal and NDP member in this House knew all of these so-called programs were delivering nothing and they watched every single one fail. They sat idly by as Canadians continued to struggle to put food on the table and pay their bills.

● (1245)

How many across the way agree with the former finance minister? How many are willing to let this chaotic clown show of a government continue? From evidence-based policy to macroeconomic government gimmicks, it is time for the Liberal caucus to put the government out of its misery. It is time for Liberals to force a vote of confidence in the Prime Minister's leadership. Will the NDP-Liberals have the guts to stand up and have a free vote, or will the NDP leader get up on his feet and deliver today's fall economic statement?

To quote Jody Wilson-Raybould, "When the general is losing his most loyal soldiers on the eve of a...war, the country desperately needs a new general". I agree. For the sake of our country, Canadians need a carbon tax election today. This is not a serious government, and the matter we discussed today, the green slush fund scandal, one of the many scandals of the current government, has led us here to this very moment.

A question I am always asked by my neighbours back home is, how do we get out of this mess? How do we fix all that has been broken and get back to the country we all know and love? How can Canada go from middling power to the major power it could be? For starters, we can scrap these payouts to the Prime Minister's corporate cronies for so-called sustainable development projects. We can axe the carbon tax eating away at our paycheques, our industries and our trade, and shift our focus to the power of our resources sector. It is time for us to put Canada first above all else: our workers, our paycheques and our people. Our resources represent trillions that would fuel, feed and secure the world; bring home paycheques for our people; build energy projects, reducing emissions; build economic reconciliation with first nations; and rebuild our armed forces.

For many, Canada's role in the world is often centred on what we can do with our intellectual and cultural talents. We see ourselves as a country best suited to act as a teacher, a mediator or a good example. We cling to a Canadian diplomacy from an international order of a different age, but this excessive focus on Canada's social capital can distract from the fact that we actually are distinguished on one important front: energy.

Canada is a world leader in its supply and mastery of virtually every energy resource and technology known to man. With this enviable access to the assets that fuel 21st century life increasingly reflecting real political power, Canada has the ability and the opportunity to present itself as a true leader. The sheer size of Canadian energy interests ensures virtually no corner of this planet is beyond our influence or our contribution, and should we choose to seize it, we have a unique opportunity to supply our allies with the energy they need, while also lessening the energy influence of the world's bad actors.

As economies require more and more energy, and rely more and more on supply routes from undesirable sources, the stakes and the upsides for every Canadian are high. China's energy imports have mirrored larger trends in its decisively illiberal foreign policy. Close relationships with Iran, Russia and Venezuela have kept China awash in petroleum, while Beijing plays defence for the atrocities of Putin and Maduro regimes in international forums.

In the Middle East, continued bad actions by the state of Qatar, including housing Hamas terrorists, have resulted in appropriate calls for the country's diplomatic and economic isolation. This provides ample opportunity for any nation willing to offer itself as an alternative to Qatari oil and gas, which is currently exported everywhere, from Morocco to Europe and Japan. Canada already has nuclear co-operation agreements with Jordan and the UAE. These agreements should be animated with long-term Canadian supply.

It is perhaps in Europe, however, where the geopolitics of energy are most fraught and most open to Canadian supply. Vladimir Putin spent years choreographing Germany's dependencies on Russian oil. Having exploited that to shake down Europe, he intervened in Syria and Libya to subvert pipelines that would supply Europe and amplified misinformation against our own Canadian energy, ensuring a steady stream of revenue for Russia's war machine of nearly \$1 billion a day, with \$250 million a day from Germany alone, to fund his war machine.

Privilege

When Germany finally realized the costs of this, Chancellor Scholz and, subsequently, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy came knocking on our door for Canadian energy and both times we turned them away. The leadership Canada can demonstrate in offsetting these negative trends for energy, sustainable energy and energy technologies is clear. We should fearlessly pursue our economic interests by making Canadian energy resources and technologies accessible to those who want them, offside allied dependence on worse alternatives.

● (1250)

At precisely the moment the world and our people need more Canada, the NDP-Liberals want to shut down our resources. With growing uncertainty about whether this country has the capacity to get its energy to overseas markets, Canada has to do better. It is insufficient to merely repudiate the anti-energy agenda. A comprehensive Canadian energy action plan is needed to advance the essential resources that support the Canadian social safety net and can deliver Canadian leadership to a world that demands it.

We must liberate Alberta's oil sands from their landlocked status to dramatically increase Canadian oil exports and, at the same time, Canadian power on the international stage. We must open liquefied natural gas export terminals on Canada's east coast, allowing it to serve as a gateway point for Canadian natural gas to Europe, and we must limit the damage of foreign interests who have worked to disrupt Canadian energy production.

For too long, woke, leftist policies have demanded that emerging economies extend the poverty of their people and delay economic development rather than accelerate sustainable growth toward lessening environmental damage. Addressing energy poverty boldly, where the young can light their homes to do homework at night, industrial development builds smarter cities faster that pollute less and traditional energy catalyzes transformative growth, should feature centrally in our national policy.

This is not the first time Canada's national interests have encountered obstacles; Canada itself was forged by overcoming divisions with a big vision, uniting a country with ribbons of steel and advancing a shared development. For more than 150 years, our country has endured wars, depressions and hard times. Our experience as one of the oldest democracies on earth affords us the opportunity to apply the lessons of an imperfect past toward shaping a promising future.

Privilege

In an uncertain world, Canada's essential rise as a power hinges on our ability to reconnect with the determination and resolve that have already overcome so much and to dispense with the corruption we have seen in the House today and over the last years. Now is the age of leaders with the courage of their convictions, with the competence to see us succeed and who will end the corruption awash among the NDP-Liberals. Now is the time for a prime minister with the brains and backbone to stand up for this country and who will rebuild our security, our military and our economy.

Let us have the election Canadians need. Let us restore the promise and put Canada first.

● (1255)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, putting Canada first is something this government has been doing since day one. We have been building Canada's middle class and those aspiring to be a part of it, and dealing with the many different economic challenges before us. Highlighting when the member talked about putting Canada first, the Prime Minister and government have signed off on more trade agreements than any other prime minister or government before us. I believe foreign investment coming to Canada was number three in the world on a per capita basis and number one in the G7 countries. Comparing Canada's interest and inflation rates with any other G7 country, we are doing exceptionally well.

It still is important that the government continue to look at affordability, as we have, being sympathetic to the needs of Canadians, which is why we come up with solutions such as the tax holiday for Canadians on the GST on a number of selected items. This is something the Conservatives actually campaigned on, yet the member and the Conservative caucus voted against the tax cut.

Can the member explain to his constituents why, on the one hand, Conservatives talked about a tax cut, but on the other hand, when it came time to vote, they voted against the tax cut?

Mr. Shivaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, as the parliamentary secretary well knows, the so-called promised tax cut of the NDP-Liberal government is falling apart at the seams. It is one of the major issues that the former finance minister resigned her post over. She understood that the gimmicks and the performance politics of the Prime Minister and his government were in no way a responsible decision to make. She cited in her letter exactly why this tax cut comes at an irresponsible time, when we expect to see tariffs imposed on Canadians and on the Canadian economy, and how creating fiscal restrictions and being irresponsible with the budget to the tune of billions would cost the government and the country its position to negotiate with the United States and others.

Nobody believes the parliamentary secretary and the NDP-Liberals when it comes to their performance over the last nine years. The evidence is obvious in the lives of every Canadian who is hurt and broken by what has happened in the irresponsible administration of the government.

In decision after decision, the government has placed partisanship ahead of the country and placed the Prime Minister's personal interests over the people of Canada. Never have we seen the current government make a decision for the interests of the country ahead

of its own partisan ambitions. Today, especially, we see the price of that manifest in its finance minister's resignation.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are really in a unique position today. As parliamentarians, we have a front row seat to what many Canadians are seeing today as a government that is spiralling out of control, that is literally collapsing before us at a very important time in our nation's history. The NDP has an opportunity here to make the right decision for once, and not support the government, not show any confidence in the government.

Later today, the fall economic statement is going to be presented, we think. We are not so sure anymore, but if it is, I am sure there are mechanisms in which the leadership side of the government, the House leader or others, could put it to a vote quickly. We could have a vote tonight or tomorrow. As we know, there are 70% of Canadians or more who do not have confidence in the government. However, I think it would show that this House has no confidence in the government, save the NDP.

Would the hon. member agree with me that we could, if we wanted to, put the fall economic statement to a vote immediately, to show whether this House has confidence in the government? I suspect that not to be the case, which would then force an election where we can return to some normalcy, some decency and some morality in this country led by a common-sense Conservative government.

● (1300)

Mr. Shivaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil is a source of great wisdom. We need an election today. If any of these NDP-Liberal colleagues go back to their ridings and actually listen to their people, they will hear exactly what we are hearing from not only our friends and neighbours in our ridings, but in their own ridings across the country. Every single member of Parliament here is hearing how badly Canadians want a carbon tax election today and this fall economic statement does provide that opportunity.

I reflect on what the hon. member just said about our NDP colleagues. They must be tormented over there in that caucus. On one side, they have a leader who is so determined to focus on their own pension that they are forfeiting the entire party and its principles for the sake of power, power that not even the former finance minister, the former deputy prime minister of Canada, not the fake deputy prime minister who the NDP leader is, but the deputy prime minister of Canada resigned her cabinet post over. However, the fake deputy prime minister, the NDP leader, is determined to hold onto power. They talk about democracy and freedom in the NDP and Liberal ranks. Here is an opportunity for them to accomplish that. Here is an opportunity for them to have a free vote on the fall economic update and call a carbon tax election that Canadians want today.

Privilege

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what we are seeing today is unprecedented, if I can use that term.

I hear members on the other side of the House asking questions about the infamous GST measure, a measure that was ill-conceived and one of the reasons why the minister decided she had enough and resigned her position. I find the whole thing rather odd.

I would like the Conservatives to reassure Canadians. I heard them say twice during their speeches that Canadians want a carbon tax election. However, I do not think that the Conservatives are reading the room correctly.

I think that Canadians want an election that will establish a much more consistent and sustainable agenda, rather than one suggesting that the carbon tax is the answer to everything. Do the Conservatives think that getting rid of the carbon tax will fix everything?

[English]

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate our hon. colleague for her thoughtfulness. I agree 1,000% with her. It is a bungled sales tax. It is a bungled tax on everything. It is a bungled program. The whole government's program for nine long years has been an absolute mess, so I agree with my hon. colleague on the assumption of her question.

With respect to a carbon tax election, the carbon tax is literally a tax on everything: on gas, on home heating, and on what it takes to grow the food, ship the food and sell the food. It is a tax that immorally punishes the lowest income Canadians disproportionately. The carbon tax is a tax that has had a deleterious effect on our economy and our national life. It has made us less competitive. The carbon tax is the source of much inflationary pressure on our goods and services in the marketplaces across the country today. It is a tax that is breaking people every single winter, especially with the one coming up ahead, with the promise of it quadrupling to 61¢ a litre.

When I hear, as the hon. member mentioned, our friends and neighbours around the country complaining about the costs of everything, the staggering debt that they have to pull themselves through just to be able to get through the next quarter, when I hear the anxiety and the desperation in the voices of our neighbours about how expensive everything is, it is the carbon tax that would lower that price and alleviate pressure on the lowest-income Canadians and unleash our country's economic potential.

• (1305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, there was a great deal of misinformation in what the member just indicated.

Let me put it to him in a different way. I have put this challenge out before. On this issue, on the price of pollution, the carbon rebate versus the carbon tax, I would love, and I would welcome, any Conservative caucus member to come to Winnipeg North, or even have something at a local university here in Ottawa, where we could have a debate on that issue.

Is the member that confident in the Conservative notes he has been provided to be able to take me up on the challenge? Will he have a public debate, in the forum of post-secondary facility, that would allow for him to express his thoughts on the price on pollu-

tion, the carbon tax versus the carbon rebate? Does he have the courage to take me up on that challenge?

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Mr. Speaker, as the parliamentary secretary may know, I spent nine long years leading a non-partisan think tank practice in the public debate, before arriving in this chamber.

I have never had a problem debating the facts of things that hurt our country's economic potential, here in the chamber or anywhere in the country.

I appreciate his challenge, but there is an opportunity for the parliamentary secretary. He has the chance to be a minister of the Liberal Party of Canada. He has a chance to be a minister for this Prime Minister. Here is an opportunity for him to perform as best as he can in this chamber and win the good graces of the Prime Minister in his dying days of the government and speak on behalf of the government as a member of the Cabinet.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are nine days away from Christmas, and the debate about the \$400-million green slush fund scandal continues on in this place, despite the crisis in confidence we are witnessing in this Liberal caucus today and in this failed Prime Minister. Yet, this NDP-Liberal government continues to ignore your order, Mr. Speaker, and this self-imposed deadline and the mess that they have created. Why is it that they are not giving up? This kind of steadfast resistance clearly tells us they are hiding something.

It is the official opposition's job to hold this corrupt Liberal-NDP government to account, and that is exactly what we are doing. Common-sense Conservatives are determined to get to the bottom of this massive scandal one way or another, and we will continue to insist on getting those ordered and unredacted documents from this government so that they can be presented to the RCMP.

At a time when Canadians are struggling to put food on their tables, when the dream of home ownership in Canada is just that, a dream for many young Canadians, and when our country is plagued by so many other serious challenges brought upon us by the failed policies of this incompetent and reckless NDP government, including potentially devastating 25% U.S. tariffs on all Canadian products beginning next month, here we are yet again this afternoon, debating this government's failure to live up to its responsibilities and your order, Mr. Speaker, to produce important documents pertaining to the Sustainable Development Technology Canada green slush fund scandal.

For those watching at home, this issue goes back 189 days, to June 10, when the House adopted the following motion proposed by common-sense Conservatives on this important matter. The motion reads:

That the House order the government, Sustainable Development Technology Canada (SDTC) and the Auditor General of Canada each to deposit with the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel, within 30 days of the adoption of this order, the following documents, created or dated since January 1, 2017, which are in its or her possession, custody or control:

Privilege

The motion then details what documents were to be supplied, and then directed that:

(h) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall promptly thereafter notify the Speaker whether each entity produced documents as ordered, and the Speaker, in turn, shall forthwith inform the House of the notice of the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel but, if the House stands adjourned, the Speaker shall lay the notice upon the table pursuant to Standing Order 32(1); and

(i) the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel shall provide forthwith any documents received by him, pursuant to this order, to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Yet, the government refused to comply, forcing you, as the Speaker, to then rule, in September, that our privileges had been breached. So, from that date on, we have been debating our amendments on the next steps required to get all these unredacted documents so that we can get back to addressing the issues impacting Canadians in all of our ridings.

As we approach the Christmas season, here is a generous gift from the common-sense Conservatives for all the other parties in the House. Our latest subamendment put forward by my colleague and seatmate, the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, will discharge the 30-day reporting period of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs if the Speaker tables a notice from the Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel confirming that all government institutions have fully complied with the order adopted on June 10 by depositing all of their responsive records in an unredacted form. Therefore, if the government simply hands over all the ordered SDTC documents, unredacted, we can finally move on from this scandal and begin addressing the many serious issues plaguing our country.

It dismays me and leaves me in utter disbelief that the House of Commons remains seized by this issue, and has been for an entire fall session. Despite ample opportunity, the Liberal government has still not done what is right and handed over the ordered unredacted SDTC documents to the RCMP.

For those watching at home, SDTC was established by the Government of Canada in 2001. As a federally funded foundation, it was responsible for the approval and disbursement of over \$100 million annually in taxpayer funds to help Canadian companies develop and deploy sustainable technologies.

• (1310)

For many years, SDTC operated responsibly and earned a generally good reputation for its work. However, that all changed in 2019, when former Liberal industry minister Navdeep Bains appointed Annette Verschuren as chair of SDTC. The issue at hand was a matter of conflict of interest. Verschuren was an entrepreneur who was already receiving SDTC funding through one of her own companies, and now she has been appointed by the NDP-Liberal government to hold responsibilities for overseeing those very SDTC funds, the same funds her company was receiving.

That fact alone should have resulted in alarm bells and red flashing lights to alert everyone in the government about this obvious conflict of interest. In fact, it was no secret. The then minister, the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office all knew. They were warned of the risks associated with appointing a conflicted chair, yet those warnings fell on deaf ears and were taken

with indifference; Verschuren was appointed by the Liberal minister anyway.

We can tell a government has lost its moral compass when it makes poor decisions, such as this one, without concern for doing the right thing and without fear of consequence. Only two years later, in January 2021, former minister Bains announced that he had decided to step away from politics and not run again in the upcoming federal election. That same year, SDTC entered into a five-year, \$1-billion agreement with the Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, or ISED.

If we fast-forward to this fall, it is clear the Liberals are trying desperately to run away and wash their hands of this mess, which they laid the foundation for through their own actions. This has especially been the case since the Auditor General released a scathing report about SDTC in June. The AG found massive issues, which resulted in the current Minister of Industry, the hon. member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, abolishing SDTC and immediately transferring its funds over to National Research Council Canada instead. These are truly astonishing developments in just three years for something the Liberal government does not want to talk about anymore.

What did the Auditor General find that was so bad and caused all this carnage? In June, the AG found that SDTC demonstrated “Significant lapses in governance and stewardship of public funds”. In fact, nearly 20% of the SDTC projects examined by the AG were ineligible based on the government's own rules for funding, with a total price tag of \$59 million. There were also 90 instances in which SDTC ignored conflict of interest provisions, awarding \$76 million to various projects. Indeed, the AG found 63 cases in which SDTC agency directors voted in favour of payments to companies in which they had declared interest.

Further, there were serious matters of governance, including the fact that the board did not even have the minimum number of members required by law. The report concluded, “Not managing conflicts of interest—whether real, perceived, or potential—increases the risk that an individual's duty to act in the best interests of the foundation is affected, particularly when making decisions to award funding.” It also blamed the government's Minister of Industry, whose ministry did not sufficiently monitor the contribution agreements with SDTC.

Privilege

Members can believe it or not, but it gets far worse. In June, the Auditor General found that directors had “awarded funding to projects that were ineligible” and that “conflicts of interest existed”. The Auditor General found that over \$330 million in taxpayer money was paid out in over 180 cases in which there was a potential conflict of interest, with Liberal-appointed directors funnelling money to companies they owned. Time after time, the Liberal government and its Prime Minister have shown total contempt for Canada's ethics laws. In fact, the Prime Minister himself has been the subject of three ethics investigations; twice, he was found guilty of breaking ethics laws. The Liberal government allows the culture of law-breaking to persist, and six Liberals have been found guilty of breaking ethics laws.

• (1315)

Liberals have gone through these ethical scandals before. That is why they are withholding these documents, breaching parliamentary privilege and trying desperately to sweep this mess under the rug and move on to the next thing. Common-sense Conservatives are not going to let them get away with it. We are holding the corrupt NDP-Liberal government to account. It will be held responsible for its carelessness, recklessness and, indeed, corruption.

That is why, on June 10, the House of Commons adopted our motion, which has led to this ongoing debate in the House. Let us not forget that the common-sense Conservative motion passed in this place with the support of the New Democrats, the Green Party and the Bloc Québécois. Only the Liberals opposed it. To be clear, nothing in that motion ordered the RCMP to conduct an investigation. The House simply asked that documents be turned over to the RCMP.

Again, it has been 189 days since this motion passed. This is a horrible look for the Liberal government. Further, nothing in that House order contemplated redactions to documents being made by the government. That is because the House of Commons enjoys the absolute and unfettered power to order the production of documents, which is not limited by statute. These powers are rooted in the Constitution Act of 1867 and in the Parliament of Canada Act.

In response to the Liberal government's failure to produce the documents, the Conservative House leader rightly raised a question of privilege, arguing that the House privileges had been breached due to the failure to comply with the House order. In September, the Speaker agreed; now, nearly three months later, we continue our important debate on this matter. The Speaker ruled that the government has violated a House order to turn over evidence regarding the latest Liberal \$400-million green slush fund scandal to the RCMP. The Liberal government's refusal to respect the Speaker's ruling has paralyzed Parliament, pushing aside all other work to address issues such as the cruel and crippling carbon tax, the cost of living crisis that Canadians face and the increasing crime, disorder and chaos on our streets and in our communities and cities. On top of all of this hardship, the incoming president of Canada's biggest trading partner is now threatening our country with 25% tariffs on all Canadian products exported to the U.S.

If the government fails to improve Canada's border security and to stop the flow of illegal immigrants and illegal drugs, such as fen-

tanyl, from crossing into Canada's borders, what will the president-elect do?

Since the Prime Minister took office in 2015, 47,000 Canadians have died from drug overdoses. That is more Canadians than we lost in the Second World War. It represents a 200% annual increase in drug overdose deaths after the Prime Minister's radical liberalization of drugs. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, it should not take U.S. tariff threats for our federal government to take action on this hugely important issue; however, as we have seen, issues only become important to the Liberals when their political fortunes are at stake. Canadian workers, Canadian families and Canadian businesses should not have to suffer the brunt of the pain and hardship caused by the NDP-Liberal government. They deserve so much better.

One of the drivers of this hardship is the cruel NDP-Liberal carbon tax. In fact, the carbon tax will cost the average Ontario family \$903 this year. This is completely unacceptable to the constituents in my communities of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie, who work hard for their money, save carefully for their future and dream of a better tomorrow. Instead of doing anything about climate change, the NDP-Liberal carbon tax is impoverishing Canadians.

Recently, the PBO confirmed that Canadians will suffer a net cost, paying more in the carbon tax than they will get back in rebates. Unfortunately, the NDP-Liberal government does not care. Instead of giving Canadians the tax relief they deserve, they hiked the carbon tax by 23% last spring as part of their plan to quadruple the carbon tax by 2030. That is not all. They plan to hike the carbon tax again this April.

• (1320)

It turns out that the NDP-Liberal carbon tax is not an environmental plan at all. It is simply another tax grab, put in place so the government can continue its reckless spending frenzy, which we will hear more about. We were hoping to hear about it today, when we would have had the fall economic statement, but we simply do not know where that stands.

Privilege

The SDTC scandal is also happening at a time when costs are up on essentials, such as food. In fact, families will be spending \$700 more this year on food than they did in 2023. When we tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who ships the food and the store that stocks, stores and sells the food, we end up taxing the families who buy the food. As Sylvain Charlebois, director of Dalhousie University's Agri-Food Analytics Lab, has said, the costly NDP-Liberal carbon tax "likely adds a significant cost burden to the Canadian food industry."

Because of the NDP-Liberal government's inflationary spending and punishing carbon tax, food bank usage has increased every year it has been in office. This was confirmed recently by Feed Ontario, which revealed that a record one million people visited a food bank in Ontario in 2024. This is a dramatic increase of 25% from the previous year. In fact, Feed Ontario's CEO told media that day, "I never thought I would see this day." Food Banks Canada reported earlier this year that it had seen a 50% increase in visits across Canada since 2021, with food banks handling a record two million visits in a single month.

In my community alone, Project Share, for example, saw a 20% increase in people served this year compared with the previous year; 4,740 people accessed its services for the first time and 120 families, on average, accessed its essential support services per day. Let us think of the 13,995 people who were served last year at Project Share, which equates to one in seven residents of Niagara Falls having accessed its essential support services. We should be debating these issues, and we could do so if the government would simply abide by the Speaker's ruling and provide the documents the House has requested.

Why are the Liberals hesitant to do what is right? Is it that they do not want to speak to the situation facing young Canadians and first-time homebuyers, which is so bad that the Canadian dream of home ownership is dying? Two-thirds of young people believe they will never be able to afford a home. There are almost 1,800 homeless camps in Ontario alone. Crime is also getting worse under the watch of the Liberal-NDP government. The issues I noted and so many more like them, such as the skyrocketing crime rate, are all pressing issues. Parliamentarians should be debating them instead of the SDTC crisis and scandal, but the House of Commons has been seized because the government refuses to comply with the House order to hand over these documents to the RCMP.

It is time for us to get to the bottom of this and, more importantly, for the government to respond to the House order to provide the unredacted documents to the law clerk and the RCMP. It is time for the Liberal government to end its cover-up and provide the ordered documents to the police so that Parliament can get back to work and Canadians can have the accountability they rightfully deserve.

• (1325)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the motion we are debating is a Conservative motion that says we take the issue outside the House of Commons and have the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs deal with the matter. The member knows it. It is a Conservative motion that the Conservatives have been filibustering for week upon week to pre-

vent us talking about the issues Canadians would like us to be talking about.

The member is saying we should just do what the Conservatives want us to do, which is to hand the documents over to the RCMP. The RCMP has said not to do that, the Auditor General of Canada has said no and other legal experts are saying no. However, the Conservatives believe that we should listen to them as opposed to those institutions.

Why does the Conservative Party, at the direction of its leader, continue to play this self-serving multi-million dollar game at great expense to Canadians? When is the game going to end?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, we go back to June 10 on the issue, when the original motion was put forward. We are still waiting for documents to be produced. Why is that? The situation could end tomorrow. We could be speaking about issues, such as, for example, border control. We could purchase a lot of border control with \$400 million.

We are building a new infrastructure, a \$400-million waste treatment facility in Niagara Falls that is needed for the burgeoning growth anticipated there. The figure would cover those costs. We are building a brand new hospital in Niagara that will cost at least \$400 million.

Instead of talking about such issues, we are talking about why the government is so concerned with not presenting documents that could get to the bottom of the issue. What is it trying to hide? Why is it trying to protect the individuals in question? The government knew that the person it appointed to the board was in a position of conflict of interest, yet it still appointed her. What does that say about its credibility, and what does that talk about in terms of its judgment with regard to accountability and transparency?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this has been a rather peculiar Monday, a day full of surprises, twists and emotions.

I would like to ask my colleague a quick question. Does he realize that this systematic filibuster goes against the Conservatives' own motion to refer this matter to a parliamentary committee?

Privilege

[English]

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do is just get the documents. I cannot understand why we are continuing the debate. It has been 189 days now. What is the government trying to hide? The documents would go to the law clerk and then they would be presented to the RCMP. We are not telling the RCMP what to do with them; we are asking that they be presented to it. What is the government trying to hide?

There are issues we should be debating. One in seven residents in my community goes to a food bank. That is insane and it needs to be addressed. We have to get the economy going again and get people working; the government is failing to talk about that. Today in fact there is a crisis of confidence in the Liberal government, and it is Liberals who have a crisis of confidence in themselves. We need to be debating those types of issues and get the economy going again, yet the Liberals refuse to allow us to do it.

● (1330)

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to quickly wish the great constituents of Souris—Moose Mountain a very merry Christmas and a happy Hanukkah as we go forward, and I wish the same to you as well, Mr. Speaker.

My hon. colleague from Niagara Falls gave an excellent speech, and I appreciate that. He did hit the nail on the head on the issue of the reality of \$400 million. When we reflect on what has transpired today and what the former finance minister said were “costly political gimmicks”, I am wondering whether the member might comment on whether he sees any correlation between the costly political gimmicks and what has happened with the \$400 million that has all of a sudden disappeared?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. The former finance minister said exactly that. I would like to take this opportunity to read from her resignation letter. She says, “Our country today faces a grave challenge.” She goes on to say, “That means eschewing costly political gimmicks, which we can ill afford and which make Canadians doubt that we recognize the gravity of the moment.”

Here we are, talking about \$400 million that the government refuses to provide accountability for. There is another sentence in the former finance minister's resignation letter that says, “But how we deal with the threat our country currently faces will define us for a generation, and perhaps longer. Canada will win if we are strong, smart, and united.” That is something we have to be. She continues, “Inevitably, our time in government will come to an end.” This is a great one line and I agree with it; surely it needs to come to an end as soon as possible.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know that the hon. member is a big Buffalo Bills fan, and yesterday there was a big win against Detroit, so I say, “Go Bills.”

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, where did that huff and puff come from? Oh, it was obviously from a New England fan.

I know that the hon. member represents a border community, and the border has become an issue since President-elect Trump's election. There are issues surrounding drugs and immigration. It is an

important part of the member's riding because of the safety and security of the border, but tourism is also a big part.

I wonder whether the hon. member can comment on the fact that the government is literally collapsing before our eyes and on how important it is that we call on the NDP to forget about the NDP leader's pension and to call no confidence in the government so we can have a government that can deal with the many crises facing our nation and show some strong leadership in a Canada first approach.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, go Bills.

My colleague is absolutely right. In my community, for example, there are four international border crossings. Two of the four bridges in my community alone are two of the four busiest commercial bridge crossings into the United States for commerce and for tourism, for example. In our community, there was \$2.4 billion in tourism receipts alone in 2019, prior to COVID.

The majority of our visitor base is domestic, but the primary international visitor base is American, which accounts for over 50% of our spend. Therefore what we need to be doing is taking actions to ensure that we continue to facilitate American visitation into our country, rather than taking steps that would damage in any way American visitation to our country.

The relationship in our border communities is also so close, including the success of our auto sector, for example. In our community there is a General Motors engine plant facility, but there is also one in Buffalo. The 25% tariff discussions going on currently worry me because of the hundreds of workers at the General Motors facility in St. Catharines. If the tariffs are put in place, it may be economically impossible to keep the facility open. The company could simply move the jobs to Buffalo instead, and it would be sad to see that happen.

● (1335)

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask my colleague the same question I just asked the last speaker. The Prime Minister touts himself as a feminist, yet time and again throughout his leadership, the axe has fallen on women he had appointed to his cabinet, including Jody Wilson-Raybould, Jane Philpott, special adviser Celina Caesar-Chavannes, and now the former finance minister.

How many more women will end up under the axe of the Prime Minister before the leader of the NDP chooses to actually stand up and do what he needs to do: have no confidence in the Prime Minister and save our country from the disaster that is unfolding?

For the Liberals across the way, I hope somebody has found where the fire alarm is and they are going to pull it, because they have about 25 minutes before question period.

Privilege

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable. The Prime Minister has real difficulty when it comes to people who want to speak truth to power. When that truth is spoken, they are then subjected to having to resign from cabinet. The finance minister said it best herself in her resignation letter, when she said, "Inevitably, our time in government will come to an end." Better words could not have been spoken.

It is time for the government to resign. It is time for an election. If the NDP stood for workers in this country, it would side with us and we would have an election called so we could replace the tired Liberal government.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the hell is going on? The country is without a finance minister and I am without a minister to be a critic of. The Prime Minister has not only lost control of his colleagues but has also lost control of his colleagues and has lost the confidence of Canadians. The only person he has not lost confidence from is the leader of the NDP, who is just waiting for his \$2.2-million pension, and then maybe he as well might lose confidence in the Prime Minister.

Do members know who else has lost confidence in the weak, fake feminist Prime Minister? It is the two million Canadians visiting a food bank in a single month; the one in four Canadians skipping meals; and the parents, the moms, who are putting water in their kids' milk to extend how much they can give to their kids. They have all lost confidence. They lost confidence nine years ago.

After the weak Prime Minister doubled housing costs, doubled crime and doubled the debt, he basically doubled all the pain and suffering in this country. Then he blamed Canadians for it, and then he lectured them. Then on top of that, to pour salt in the wounds, he is slamming Canadians with another carbon tax scam hike, one that he wants to quadruple if by some chance he becomes prime minister again.

Now the former finance minister has joined a long list of women who were in the Prime Minister's caucus and cabinet who have exposed how big of a fake feminist he is. She joins women like Jane Philpott, Jody Wilson-Raybould and Celina Caesar-Chavannes. It is a slap in the face to women, not just parliamentarians but all women.

Let me quote what the former finance minister said in her letter today that exposed the fake feminist Prime Minister: "On Friday, you told me you no longer want me to serve as your Finance Minister and offered me another position in the Cabinet." What a slap in the face that was. He was done using her.

On Friday he let her know, "Hey, I'm going to make you break through this fiscal guardrail that you promised Canadians, which was \$40 billion. I'm going to make you crash through that guardrail and take Canada's finances off the cliff, but why don't you go and deliver that bad news, and then I'll switch you into a different post?" What kind of fake so-called feminist does that?

What kind of a leader and what kind of a boss does that? It is pathetic to the highest degree what the fake feminist Prime Minister has done. He proves it once again, and he just recently gave a big speech last week about being a proud feminist. Some feminist he is. He is a fake.

Let me go on to read what else the former finance minister said: "you made clear that I no longer credibly enjoy that confidence and possess the authority that comes with it." I would argue that she never had it in the first place, because the fake feminist Prime Minister and carbon tax Carney are in the background.

Carbon tax Carney made his Canadian comeback just to fire the furious finance minister. That was his role. They used her, and they wanted to blame her for the finances of the country going over the cliff, only to disregard her afterward. This is all being done by the backroom boys of the fake feminist Prime Minister and carbon tax Carney.

The former finance minister goes on to say, "you and I have found ourselves at odds about the best path forward for Canada." She also says, "keeping our fiscal powder dry today, so we have the reserves we may need for a coming tariff war. That means eschewing costly political gimmicks, which we can ill afford and which make Canadians doubt that we recognize the gravity of the moment."

I could not agree more. These are political gimmicks. The Liberals just introduced a two-month temporary GST tax trick, which was a vote-buying scheme that businesses all across hated, that was going to be costly to them and that is not really going to bring in much more revenue. The Liberals brought it in at the busiest time of the year, just so the Liberal-NDP government could buy votes from Canadians.

● (1340)

However, Canadians are experiencing much more pain than that. While Liberals want to take pennies off peanuts or nickels off Nutty Bars, common-sense Conservatives want to axe the tax on everything, for everyone, for good. Enough of these cheap political gimmicks.

This carbon tax scam is more than a gimmick; it is pain. It is no environmental gain with all financial pain for Canadians, to the point where we see seniors who need to choose whether they heat their homes or buy a little more at the grocery store. They are getting through by putting blankets on. This is the reality of nine years of the corrupt, inept and weak Liberal-NDP government.

Instead of standing with Canadians and standing up for Canadian values, the Prime Minister chose to start a war with the Americans. This is the same former finance minister, obviously with the guidance of the weak Prime Minister, who said, "Why don't you go ahead with your digital services tax? Why don't we join other countries doing it?" Can members believe we are in the same pod as countries like Pakistan, which has introduced this? We are not with our partners on this at all. Liberals knew it would be something that would impact Canadian businesses and could possibly get our tariffs raised by the U.S., but they still moved forward with it. They pissed everyone off. They pissed off the Americans.

This is how incompetent the Liberal-NDP government is. It has no game plan. Once again, these cheap political gimmicks have Canadians footing the bill. At the end of the day, Canadians are having to suffer for these really incompetent political policies that have impacted them.

The former finance minister goes on to say, “our time in government will come to an end.” Yes, it will. We should put the tired, corrupt government out of its misery and call a carbon tax election now. We should give people control back, give Canadians back control of their lives, which is something they have lost. When Canadians see crime on the rise, hate crimes on the rise, and that the cost of everything is out of control, it is because they have a government that has worked against them. They have a leader in the NDP who has propped up the corrupt Liberal government for nine years, and now he is doing it just out of spite, just to get his \$2.2-million pension.

Canadians will remember this. Canadians will remember this at the next election. It is time for the government's time to come to an end. We have to give that power back to the people, where it belongs. There is only one leader in the entire House of Commons who will bring the power back to the people. That is the Conservative leader, the member for Carleton.

The former finance minister says something else I agree with, which is, “Canada will win if we are strong, smart, and united.” We need a leader who is strong, smart and will unite, one with a backbone and brains. Again, there is only one leader in the House of Commons with that, and that is the member for Carleton.

Once we have a common-sense Conservative government, we are going to axe the tax for good. We are going to get rid of the carbon tax to bring the cost of gas, groceries and home heating down. We are going to unleash the power of our natural resources, the world-renowned natural resources sector we have in Canada that the Liberal-NDP government has tried to kill with its oil and gas cap and all these other ridiculous policies like the carbon tax scam. We are going to axe the tax for good to bring home our natural resources and give them to the world in order to bring down emissions across the world.

We are going to build the homes. There will be no more photo op funds and no more giving municipalities and mayors millions and billions of dollars just to create more bureaucracy. We are going to build the homes, not more bureaucracy. We are going to bring home a GST tax cut for homes that are a million dollars and under, which will generate up to 30,000 new homes and save up to \$50,000 on those homes, which is going to lower the cost of mortgages.

• (1345)

While I am on the topic of mortgages, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, housing costs have doubled. Whether one is renting or a mortgage holder, the costs have doubled. Why have they doubled? The Liberal-NDP government has fed into the bureaucracies at the municipal level, which have only increased their permitting fees. On top of that, it is the population control that they admit themselves is “out of control”. The Liberals did this; their incompetence did this. The Bank of Canada also confirmed that it is their out-of-control population growth that made costs to renters double.

Privilege

In order to not give Canadians 40-year highs in inflation like the Liberal-NDP government did, we are going to balance the budget, something the Liberal-NDP government has no idea of how to do. This is the same Prime Minister who said that budgets balanced themselves and that he does not think about monetary policy. Then he said to let the bankers worry about the economy. He loves the bankers. Those are his Bay Street buddies, the same ones that Canadians have to send money to, with more in debt-interest charges than what goes to provinces for health care.

After the incompetent Prime Minister doubled the national debt, that is exactly what happened. Interest rates went up. Inflation went up. Of course, for the Prime Minister and his rich buddies, their assets got inflated, while everyday Canadians had to pay for that incompetence.

We are going to balance the budget and bring in a dollar-for-dollar law. We are going to make sure that any dollar spent in any department has to be matched with a dollar of savings. Canadians and businesses have had to do that under this government. The government should do the same and respect the money.

There is no doubt that we are going to cut the Liberal waste. The waste that went to Liberal insiders, such as the friends of the Liberals who got so much money for arrive scam and for the consultants, the McKinsey consultants. Now we just found out from the Auditor General about the CEBA loans that went to fraudulent corporations and companies. This is just another rerun of the last nine years of this government. First it was CERB, and now it is CEBA. This is what incompetence looks like. Who has to pay for it? Canadians always end up having to pay for this incompetence.

It is time for a common-sense Conservative government that will balance the budget, get rid of that Liberal waste and, of course, stop the crime. Canadians do not leave their houses now and sometimes live in their houses in absolute fear, because criminals have never had it so good. Under the Liberal-NDP government that brought in Bill C-5 and C-75, criminals have it way too easy. They commit crimes repeatedly and without any fear. They know they are going to get bail. They commit crimes over and over again.

However, just to virtue signal and to show that it is the most woke government, the Liberals created a bail system that is just too easy for criminals to get. That is why there is no more fear left within criminals. There is no fear in Canada. The only fear is from everyday Canadians who are just working to make it, to get by, to put food on their families' tables.

Privilege

However, now carjackings are up, violent crime is up and gun crime is up. Every day there are new videos coming out, and it is a result of this incompetent, woke government that lets criminals have zero consequences for what they do. We are going to stop the crime and bring in common-sense Conservative policies once again that will keep repeat offenders in jail and not grant them bail like this woke government has done over the last nine years.

• (1350)

My parents came here because Canada used to have this reputation that one could work hard here and either get by or get ahead. Canada used to be a country where one paycheque could run the household. One paycheque used to be able to get people a house, whether they wanted a mortgage or to rent. One paycheque used to be able to afford groceries for the week. One paycheque used to put people's kids through school. One paycheque used to be able to put people's kids in other activities.

However, after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, the Canadian dream that my parents came for and that Canadians had, whether they were born here or immigrated here, is broken. It is broken. Our reputation has been broken because this weak, woke, fake feminist Prime Minister broke Canada.

It is time for a common-sense Conservative government, led by our common-sense Conservative leader, the member for Carleton, to not only unite Canadians but to rebuild that Canadian dream and finally have a country where we can proudly stand and say we are from Canada, one where we see our flag and the rest of the world sees our flag and know we are represented by a competent leader who has the brains and the backbone to stand up for Canadians and do what is best for Canada first.

This is the same Prime Minister who, wherever he goes, is an embarrassment, not just nationally but all over the world. Literally, he is known as a clown now. He has turned the country into a circus. It is time for real leadership.

It is time to bring a serious government back that will put the people first, that will reduce those food bank lineups, that will reduce housing costs, that will reduce the cost of gas, groceries and home heating, and reduce the crime in this country, because that is how it used to be. Before the Prime Minister it was like that. When was the last time members heard of people lining up at food banks in record numbers or of people being afraid in their own homes or outside? We never used to even have to lock our doors in Canada.

In this next carbon tax election, the choice cannot be more clear: People can vote for a Liberal-NDP government that will punish their work, that will tax everything and that will double their housing costs on the Liberal-NDP government's path to quadrupling the carbon tax scam, or Canadians can make a choice to get back control of their lives and get back control of the country that they once knew and still love, under a common-sense Conservative government that will bring back the common sense that used to be common in the country, which we lost after nine years of the incompetent, woke Liberal-NDP government. Let us work together to bring home the Canada we all knew.

I turn to the leader of the NDP to make a request that he put the country and Canadians over his pension. Enough is enough. Cana-

dians have had enough. Canadians cannot suffer anymore from the Liberal-NDP government. It is time. It is time for a carbon tax election. This country is in chaos. The Prime Minister and his entire caucus is in chaos. It is time to give the control back to the people. It is time to give this country a common-sense Conservative government under the leadership of the member for Carleton, the leader of the common-sense Conservatives.

Let us bring home the Canada we all once knew and still love. Let us bring it home.

• (1355)

The Deputy Speaker: We will have about three minutes of questions and comments. I wanted to also remind colleagues about the usage of certain words. I know we started off using “H-E double hockey sticks”, which is an unparliamentary term.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike Conservatives across the way, I am proud to be a Canadian. Quite frankly, I disagree. Canada is not broken. The Conservatives inside the chamber and outside the chamber go around saying how Canada is broken when in fact it is the best country in the world to call home. I can tell members opposite that Canada is not broken.

We have doubled the number of jobs that have been created since Stephen Harper and the leader of the Conservative Party sat around his cabinet table. We have inflation rates that are under control, comparable with other countries around the world, in particular those from the G7. When we think of trade, no other prime minister has signed more trade agreements than this one. We have the highest amount of per capita in foreign investment in the G7, third in the world. This is an economy that is doing relatively well in comparison to other countries around the world, whether it is the United States, Great Britain—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, the member has a broken government that broke Canada, and we are going to bring back the common sense that this country once knew and still loves. We may have a great country, but we have a horrible leader; one who is weak, woke and fake. We are going to restore the Canada we knew. The member talked about double. This is a government that doubled the crime, doubled the debt and doubled the cost of housing, yet virtue signals and says it is Canadians' fault this happened. Let us call a carbon tax election now and give Canadians a choice between a government that wants to control them or a common-sense Conservative leader who wants to give control back to the people.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are paralyzing the government to denounce its refusal to hand over certain documents and to denounce corruption.

I would like to know if my colleague could talk about any measures the Conservatives are planning on taking to fight corruption and improve government transparency.

[English]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, first of all, the only people tying up the House are members of the NDP-Liberal government. They have an order from the House to release the documents, but they refuse to do so. That is why we are in the position we are in. It does not have anything to do with the Conservatives. Once the government becomes clean and transparent and releases the documents, we can move forward.

What are the Conservatives going to do to bring back confidence and transparency? We used to have it before. We do not have to do much else. We can bring back the transparency and accountability the common-sense Conservative government had before nine years of the corrupt Liberal-NDP government. We are going to bring back accountability, a dollar-for-dollar law so that we respect the taxpayers' dollars and deal with Liberal insider corruption.

Let us bring common sense back to this country.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the holidays are a time for celebration but, more importantly, they are a time to make sure that we connect with each other. As we gather with our loved ones, we are reminded of the importance of community and the bonds that unite all of us. Whether we are sharing meals, exchanging gifts or simply enjoying each other's company, these moments remind us of the power of community and support.

This season is also a perfect opportunity to look out for one another, especially those who may feel lonely or in need, making sure that no one is left behind. I want to thank all of the groups and organizations in Humber River—Black Creek, not only during this season but throughout the year, who make sure that our community is well taken care of all the time.

To all of my constituents in Humber River—Black Creek and to my wonderful staff in Toronto and Ottawa, and to all Canadians, I wish a merry Christmas and a happy new year. To all of my colleagues in the House, no matter what party, respect each other and have a very merry Christmas.

Statements by Members

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the year draws to a close, I want to take a moment to wish all my friends, family and neighbours in Cariboo—Prince George, and colleagues in the House a very merry Christmas.

Christmas is a time for sharing joy and love, for appreciating the people who make our lives truly special and for rejoicing at the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a time for family and friends, both near and far, a time for reflection, and a reminder of hope and happiness that this season brings. I am incredibly grateful for the moments that we have shared, the memories that we have created and the strength shown through tough times. There is something magical about the Christmas season but, more than anything, it is the people around us who make Christmas so meaningful. Wherever we are, and whoever we are with, I hope this Christmas fills our hearts with warmth and peace. Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

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CHURCHILL FALLS

Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can tell us what every Newfoundland and Labrador family talked about at the dinner table last week, because on December 12, the future of our province changed and a new course was charted. The 1969 Churchill Falls deal was infamous, unfair and forever contentious. It has now been ripped up with the announcement of a new deal between Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Innu Nation. This historic deal will impact generations to come and we will finally get our fair share as we build clean, renewable power for the country.

To all who have worked at home and in Quebec to bring this new Churchill Falls contract forward, I am thankful. As Premier Furey said, a new generation will now think of Churchill Falls with pride, not anger or shame. I say, "Well done, Premier, well done".

* * *

[Translation]

ASSOCIATION POUR LES VICTIMES DE L'AMIANTE DU QUÉBEC

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the excellent work being done by the Association pour les victimes de l'amiante du Québec, or AVAQ, the Quebec association for asbestos victims. Some members of the association, which is headquartered in my riding of La Pointe-de-l'Île, are here today.

The AVAQ has mapped more than 3,700 public buildings containing asbestos, including many federal government offices. Since federal regulations do not prohibit the release of asbestos fibres during renovations, workers in these environments can use the mapping tool to take action and demand compliance with occupational health and safety requirements.

Statements by Members

I am proud to have supported this initiative, and I encourage public service managers to locate their asbestos-containing facilities and take steps to ensure that renovations to those structures do not cause work-related illness.

I would like to thank the volunteers and the entire AVAQ team who have been working since 2017 to promote solidarity and mutual support among asbestos victims.

* * *

● (1405)

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do not worry, my voice carries very well in this chamber.

[*English*]

The holiday season is here and I have been getting into the Christmas spirit. I have been doing my Christmas shopping at some of the fantastic craft markets right across Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of joining the community of Fall River for its annual Christmas tree lighting. My grandkids and I enjoyed a pancake breakfast with Santa Claus at Beaver Bank Kinsac Community Centre during his visit.

We thank the volunteers of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook and across Canada for their incredible generosity and stewardship. Their kindness truly embodies the spirit of the season.

[*Translation*]

Happy holidays, everyone.

* * *

[*English*]**SILENT WITNESSES MEMORIAL**

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay homage to the anniversary of an event that unfolded on December 12, 1985, in the town of Gander, which rippled across nations. Arrow Air flight 1285 carrying 248 American servicemen crashed that day shortly after takeoff. They were returning home for Christmas to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, after a peacekeeping tour in the Sinai. All aboard, including eight crew members, perished. It remains one of the deadliest aviation disasters in Canadian history, a sombre moment etched in the collective memory of Canada and the United States.

On December 12, as in years before, the people of Gander gathered at the Silent Witnesses Memorial on the site of the 1985 tragedy to remember not just the lives that were lost but the ideals that these servicemen upheld: service, sacrifice and the hope of peace. By honouring their memory, we continue to ensure their legacy endures.

May they rest in peace.

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the holiday season approaches, I would like to take a moment to

reflect on the spirit of unity and kindness that defines our great nation.

In Markham—Unionville, we celebrate the rich diversity of our community, where people of all backgrounds come together to share and participate in the joy of the season. This is a time for family, for giving and for valuing the connections that bind us all. The holidays remind us of the importance of compassion and inclusivity. Let us carry this spirit to the new year and embrace the strength in our differences.

On behalf of the people of Markham—Unionville, I wish everyone in the House, their families and all Canadians a joyous and peaceful holiday season. To my family, my wife Monica and my children Andrew, Melissa and Ashley, I wish a merry Christmas and I hope Santa is good to all of them.

I wish a merry Christmas all.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a very special relationship with the Philippines. They have shared 75 years of diplomacy, and that is worthy of recognizing. Earlier this month, there was a large trade mission to the Philippines. It was like businesses speed-dating with other businesses, exploring people-to-people ties and how to make a difference not only for Canada but also the Philippines. These are the initiatives that make a difference.

At the trade mission, we found out that Air Canada is going to have four direct return flights a week from Vancouver to Manila come April. Again, this is good news for those who look for ways to expand our relationship with the Philippines. Most importantly, we have begun exploratory discussions on a trade agreement. Two thumbs-up for the relationship between Canada and the Philippines.

* * *

YALDA

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this week we mark Yalda, an old Aramaic word marking Show Chilla Hanari. It marks the winter solstice, an ancient practice celebrated for thousands of years across Iran and surrounding states. It is also called pomegranate night by Kurds from Rojhelat.

Yalda falls on the longest night of the year and symbolizes the renewal of light over darkness, a time for reflection and hope. Yet in Iran, the light of Yalda represented is dimmed by the Islamic regime that continues to suppress free speech and women's rights. Recently, Parastoo Ahmadi, a courageous singer, was arrested for performing solo and without the forced hijab at a caravanserai in Kavir National Park defying those oppressive Islamic laws. Her courage echoes that of others like Armita Geravand and Jina Amini murdered by the regime or Niloofar Hamed and Elaheh Mohammadi, who continue to fight for justice.

To all those celebrating Yalda in Canada, *Show Chilla Hanari Piroz. Jin, jiyān, azadi. Zan, zendegi, azadi.*

* * *

• (1410)

FIRST NATIONS DRINKING WATER

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are closer than ever before on ending water advisories on reserve. We have lifted 147 water advisories since 2015. The next step on our reconciliation journey is passing the first nations clean water act, but the Conservatives are blocking the bill from moving forward to the Senate. It is shameful to stand against first nations clean water standards like this, and it is shameful that Conservatives have openly refused to support first nations communities.

Getting this bill passed would ensure first nations are afforded the human right to clean water. The AFN is calling on us, and first nations are relying on us, to move this bill forward. Lives are at stake. Water is life. As members, we must move this bill forward as quickly as possible. I am calling on all Conservative members to do the right thing, support first nations clean water. It is not too late.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have been losing control for years. It has just been behind closed doors. Now, they have lost control for all to see.

The deputy prime minister and minister of finance resigned today in a shocking move, saying that she no longer had the confidence of the Prime Minister. She left on the day she was planning on tabling a Titanic-sized deficit. I wish I could say this was a shock, but it is par for the course for a government that is in perpetual chaos. The irony is that the NDP and its sellout leader now have more confidence in the Prime Minister than his own inner circle does.

The real tragedy of it all is that it is Canadians who are hurting. Nine years of their wreaking havoc has been absolute devastation to our people. Canadians need an election now, so we can end the chaos, the corruption and the economic destruction brought about by the Liberal-NDP government, and let Canadians elect common-sense Conservatives to fix what that costly coalition has broken.

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LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Jody Wilson-Raybould wrote that she is mad at herself

Statements by Members

now for having once thought the Prime Minister is “an honest and good person, when, in truth, he would so casually lie to the public”. This is a direct quote from former Liberal cabinet minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, who learned that the Prime Minister is a performative and fake feminist. She resigned.

It was just a week ago that the Prime Minister stood on stage to tell women what a great feminist he is. Today, we learned that the Prime Minister told the first ever female finance minister to do as he says or lose her role. She resigned. Even the former finance minister does not have confidence in the Prime Minister. Celina Caesar-Chavannes, former parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, felt reduced to a prop for the Prime Minister's image rather than valued for her voice. She resigned.

How many women will the Prime Minister throw under the bus before the leader of the NDP pulls his pathetic support for the weak Prime Minister? Canadians are done. Let us call an election and get rid of this fake feminist, narcissistic Prime Minister, who is destroying this country and Canadians' lives.

* * *

JOHN EMBURY

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 25, we learned of the passing of John Embury. I worked with John when Ralph Goodale was the minister of finance. He was a charter member of the loyal order of “Goodaleians”, a fierce band of loyalists to Ralph Goodale, Saskatchewan and all things Liberal. A great communicator, John would navigate us through challenging times with grace, wit, good humour and a fierce intelligence, all mandatory characteristics of the charter members of the “Goodaleians”. As director of communications, he was a calm, professional and super knowledgeable on a whole range of files. John left us too early.

He leaves behind his wife, Marjo; his grandson, the Dude; his two stepdaughters, Cora and Chloé; his mother, Margo; his brother, Mike; and his sister, Eden.

He was loved and cherished by his family and friends across the country, and he will not be forgotten.

Statements by Members

● (1415)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's settlement sector is the foundation for social cohesion, nation building and newcomer integration. Over 800 agencies are funded by IRCC to deliver a range of services, such as language classes with child care support, employment and career training, trauma-informed programs, family centres, and so much more. Last year, over 700,000 unique newcomers, primarily made racialized women across Canada outside of Quebec, were served by the sector.

Despite the sector's success, the Liberals are charting a course to massively cut these services. Many organizations have been told that their five-year contracts are not being renewed. Others face a cut of up to 70%. On top of that, a further deficit reduction plan is being levelled at the sector, and terms such as "refocus" are being used to cover up pending cuts to IRCC staffing. This would decimate service delivery and negatively impact the economy. The fall-out would be felt for years to come. The NDP is calling on the Liberals to stop blaming newcomers for their failures and to immediately reverse these cuts.

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[Translation]

MEMBER FOR SALABERRY—SUROÏT

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I want to acknowledge the work of an extraordinary woman in politics. Like a compass in a storm, she has always pointed us in the right direction. Her poise, competence and attentiveness to our needs have always been a source of comfort. She has been the perfect whip, having mastered the art of knowing when to be firm and when to be gentle.

She is stepping aside from her duties to take care of her father, but, fortunately, she is staying with us. In every aspect of life, she is and always will be strong, generous and irreproachable. It will be a monumental challenge to fill her shoes. I am not claiming I can replace her, but I will do my best to carry on the incredible legacy she leaves us: a flawless, united caucus made up of competent, qualified people who apply themselves, value each other and work together for the common good.

We thank the member for Salaberry—Suroît for making the Bloc Québécois caucus the best caucus of all, and we want her to know that we love her.

* * *

[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for weeks the Prime Minister has been repeating over and over again that a team Canada approach is about knowing the time to do the right thing, but he sure does not understand that point. Multiple cabinet ministers have resigned, including the finance minister on the day she was supposed to deliver the disastrous Liberal budget update. In her resignation letter, she said the government needed to issue "costly political gimmicks" and that the Lib-

erals are focused on themselves and not working for Canadians, yet the Prime Minister refuses to call an election.

The weak and self-interested NDP and Liberal backbench are complicit in his decimation of our country, propping him up while he pulls Canadians from one disaster to another. How many more deaths in the streets will it take for them to admit that it is over? How many violent demonstrations, business closures, lost jobs, lost homes, encampments of refugees in Canada's suburbs and tariff wars with allies will it take?

One man's ego is not worth this cost. No single person matters more than our country. Team Canada wants the Prime Minister to take his own advice and do the right thing and call an election now. Let us bring it home.

* * *

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all use a little chuckle today, so with that, I am proud to deliver this year's Liberal Christmas roast.

'Twas the week before Christmas,
Conservative MPs were muzzled.

Our investments in housing,
Have old P.P. puzzled.

Their party won't talk about foreign interference,
For Christmas, will their leader get his security clearance?

Dental care, child care, what more could there be?
School food and pharmacare—

Some hon. members: Thanks to the NDP.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Speaker,

They tore up our deal. They started to gloat,
But guess what happened on the next confidence vote.

Supply management and seniors, the Bloc has lots to say—
I don't really understand, Mr. Speaker, *je ne parle pas français*.

To calm caucus rebels, we cut the GST,
A small Christmas gift from the Liberals and me.

Groceries are high. There's trouble with the mail,
But we still have a chance to win Cloverdale.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's not a contest, so I don't mean to brag,
But it's only our leader whose name is on a flag.

One final thought though, Canada ain't broke.
Though I will admit we may be a bit woke.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, merry Christmas and happy holidays, too.
May we all get a Christmas card from a Randy or two.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS**

• (1420)

*[Translation]***FINANCE**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has lost control, yet he clings to power. We knew that he had lost control of the borders, immigration, spending, inflation and housing costs, but now he has lost control of his cabinet. The former deputy prime minister and minister of finance resigned just a few hours before presenting Canada's economic update with an enormous deficit.

When will there be an election?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government looks forward to presenting the economic update this afternoon. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the member for University—Rosedale for everything that she has done and for everything that she will continue to do for this country. She has a long list of accomplishments that are part of this government's history. We are very proud of everything we have done as a government.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has lost control, yet he clings to power. He has lost control of immigration; lost control of the borders; lost control of spending, deficits, inflation and housing costs. In fact, his apparently former finance minister was trying to get spending under control by capping the deficit at an already crazy \$40 billion, but he took carbon tax Carney's advice and pushed her beyond that guardrail and was trying to throw her off the cliff. She has now resigned, minutes before presenting her fall economic update. This cannot go on.

When will we have a carbon tax election?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government looks forward to presenting the fall economic statement later this afternoon. I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude for all that the member for University—Rosedale has accomplished for this country and will continue to do for this country. She has played an integral role in the government, first of all, by standing up for Canada in defending NAFTA, by bringing forward universal child care and by the incredible work she has done in defending Ukraine. We are very grateful for all that she has contributed to the government and to Canada.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the finance minister.

“Who are you”?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when Canadians are struggling, we are happy to bring forward measures that are going to assist them, things like the GST tax cut that took place, starting this past Saturday and going until February 15. While the Conservative leader and the members of his caucus stay focused on us, we are going to stay focused on helping Canadians.

• (1425)

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a serious question. Who is the finance minister?

After the former finance minister resigned this morning, the Minister of Industry automatically became the minister of finance. I congratulate him for that. However, he immediately resigned. According to the established hierarchy, the position then reverted to the two Randys. They do not want the job either. Now, we have no minister of finance minutes before the economic update is to be presented.

Where is the minister of finance?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, our government looks forward to presenting the economic update later this afternoon. This economic update contains measures that are important to Canadians. While the Conservative Leader of the Opposition stays focused on us, our government is going to stay focused on the well-being of Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just to underline the chaos we are faced with here, the former finance minister resigned the day she was to present the fall budget, which was going to contain a massive deficit overrun. The job then went automatically to the industry minister, who immediately resigned, like, on the spot. It then went down the line to the next person in order, the famous two Randys, and they are not available to do the job either. We are now less than two hours away from the fall economic update.

Why will the Prime Minister not have the courage to come in here, to present it himself, and to put it to a confidence vote tonight?

The Speaker: I would like to remind all members, as I did during Statements by Members today, to be careful not to refer to other sitting members by their names, but to use their titles or their riding names.

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

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition continues to play politics in this place, we look forward to presenting the fall economic statement later this afternoon that will have a series of important measures for Canadians, things that are going to help them with the affordability challenges and that are going to put Canada, Canadian jobs and the Canadian economy first.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I would like to ask the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton to please not take the floor when he is not recognized by the Speaker.

The hon. member for La Prairie.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we already knew that between 20 and 40 Liberal members no longer had confidence in the Prime Minister. We also knew that eight ministers were leaving the Liberal ship.

Today, the finance minister chose to step down rather than present the economic update. She stated in black and white that she disagrees with the Prime Minister on the best path forward for Canada. She, too, is saying that she no longer has confidence in the Prime Minister.

We are watching the Liberal government crumble before our eyes, and it really is not a pretty sight.

Will the Prime Minister call an election?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, as the government, we are looking forward to presenting the economic update later this afternoon. It contains important measures for Canadians, particularly when it comes to affordability.

We are focused exclusively on Canadians. We are working to protect the Canadian economy and Canadian jobs.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the deputy prime minister has resigned over election goodies. She said that Canadians “know when we are working for them, and they equally know when we are focused on ourselves.”

People see through their little game. Quebeckers do not want election goodies, and neither do businesses. Even the former finance minister is saying no. The only ones in favour of election goodies are the NDP leader and the Prime Minister.

Will these two finally try to stop sabotaging the economy by handing out election goodies in order to buy votes?

• (1430)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, removing the GST on essentials for Canadians is important to many Canadians. In fact, I have heard many people in my riding say that this is important to them. Restaurants and other small and medium-sized businesses have said it is important.

We are proud for putting it forward.

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*[English]***LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians literally cannot afford the groceries they need. They cannot afford to find a home to call their own. Now, Trump, the buddy of the MAGA Conservatives love, is threatening hundreds of thousands of jobs in Canada, and the Prime Minister is more focused on himself and on infighting. The Prime Minister cannot remain in that position.

Will he resign?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the time for slogans. This is not the time for partisanship. This is not a time to make jokes. This is about rallying for Canadians. This is a time when Canadians need to know that the House and all the members are standing behind them, that we are going to invest in Canadians, in this country, in our workers and in our industry, and that we are going to make sure that Canada is best prepared to deal with our U.S. friends. This is a time when we show that we are all Canadians.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that was not an answer, so I will ask again in French.

[Translation]

People are having a hard time buying groceries. They cannot find affordable housing. On top of that, we have the threat of Trump's tariffs jeopardizing hundreds of thousands of Canadian jobs. He should be focusing on the issues that are hitting people hard, but the Prime Minister is more focused on his party's infighting. Clearly, the Prime Minister cannot go on like this. Will he resign today, yes or no?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is not the time for jokes or partisanship, and it is certainly not the time for Conservative slogans. Now is the time for us to come together as parliamentarians and work to protect Canada, to invest in Canada, to protect our workers and to invest in our industry.

I am appealing to the civic duty of all members of the House. I ask them to work to ensure that Canada is well prepared to deal with the incoming U.S. administration. Today, we are all Canadians. Let us work together.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP leader is absolutely right: This cannot continue; the Prime Minister cannot go on like this. Housing costs have doubled. Food bank use has doubled. The debt has doubled. Gun crime has doubled, and now we face troubling tariff threats from a President-elect who can see weakness coming from a mile away. The Prime Minister must leave this job, but there is only one person who can remove him, and that is the leader of the NDP.

Will he put the country ahead of his pension and vote for a carbon tax election now?

• (1435)

The Speaker: Although the preamble to that question dealt with the administration of government, the question itself did not. The chair has made it clear that we are not doing that.

The hon. member for Thornhill.

Oral Questions

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has lost control. The Prime Minister's own deputy quit just hours before her economic statement, all of a sudden saying Canadians “know when we are focused on ourselves” and describing a new-found disdain for “costly political gimmicks”. Those are her quotes. This is after her own political rival, Mark Carney, wrote the fall economic statement full of things she did not want to present. The old boys' club is not in charge but Canadians are. It is time for credible leadership in the seriousness of this moment, not the fake feminism of the phony Prime Minister.

It is time for Canadians to decide, so will anyone or everyone over there finally agree?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we are looking forward, today, to presenting the fall economic statement. It is going to have a series of important measures for Canadians. At a time like this, it is important that all of us band together, united as Canadians, to make sure that we are doing everything we can to protect the Canadian economy, to protect Canadian jobs and to stand up for Canada.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they cannot even stand by each other. Hours before delivering the fiscal update, the former finance minister resigned. She lost confidence in the Prime Minister. Last night, the failed housing minister and the worst former immigration minister in the history of this country also resigned.

There were a couple of Randys, and now they are up to nine ministers who need to be replaced. The Prime Minister has lost control of the government. The party of backroom boys is over. The back bench should look up from their laptops, and the NDP leader should not be the only one in the House with confidence in the Prime Minister.

Present the statement, and call a vote today.

The Speaker: Again, I am just going to, for the last time—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I am going to remind members once again not to refer to members by their first names.

The hon. Minister for Housing, Infrastructure and Communities.

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure who she is talking about, but I am still here for now.

There are two kinds of people who run for office in politics: there are people who want to do something, and there are people who want to be somebody. On our side of the House, we want to do things. We want to build the houses to make sure families can afford to keep roofs over their heads. We want to make sure that families can afford to keep food on their tables to feed their kids. We want to make sure people can find jobs to go to that give them a sense of pride and that allows them to contribute to their communities.

On the Conservative side, their leader has been writing essays about why he should be prime minister since he was a teenager.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, the Prime Minister told Canada's first female finance minister that she was fired, but to keep sweet and present their wildly overspent budget on Monday so that he and an unelected man, Mark “carbon tax” Carney would not have to take the blame for their broken budget. He then, unbothered, released a video of him making cinnamon buns to get the womenfolk's vote.

How can any woman in that caucus defend that man instead of calling for an election now?

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did not realize that cinnamon buns were a gendered food, but what I would say is that her question says more about how that member and how Conservative members view women in this country than anything else.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, women are facing violence in the streets. They cannot afford groceries. They cannot afford to buy presents for their kids for the holidays. They cannot afford anything. Canadian women are far worse off under the fake feminist Prime Minister. He has now fired Canada's first female finance minister because she dared question him. That sounds pretty familiar. No strong woman exists in that caucus.

Why would any woman defend this man instead of calling for an election?

● (1440)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the member opposite. However, I think she is speaking from her own experience with the leader of the official opposition, when she said that she was not going to support him and then spent a year in the hinterlands.

What I will say is that when it comes to actually doing things that support women, we have done that on this side of the House. Whether it is affordable child care, which is making it possible for hundreds of thousands of women to join the workforce, free contraception or the Canada child benefit, which is helping families pay the bills, what do Conservative members of Parliament do every time? They vote against them. Actions speak louder than words.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has lost control. He has lost control of the economy. He has lost control of immigration. He has lost control of so many files. He has now lost control of the government. It is long past time for an election. The Prime Minister has sat too long here for any good that he has been doing.

In the name of God, will he go to Rideau Hall, call an election and end the chaos?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we well know, and as every member in this place knows, just because a Conservative member of Parliament wishes something does not mean that it actually happened. What happened over the past couple of weeks is that the government secured the confidence of the House. The government does enjoy the confidence of the House. That is why we will be presenting the fall economic statement later today, which we look forward to sharing with Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is an historic moment. The Deputy Prime Minister has resigned, saying that she is at odds with the Prime Minister about the best path forward for Canada.

The former deputy prime minister no longer has confidence in this Prime Minister to govern. Her lack of confidence comes in addition to the departure of eight other ministers. The Prime Minister cannot claim to have the public's confidence; he does not even have the confidence of his own ministers.

Will he be democratic enough to put his future in the hands of the public and call an election?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on our side of the House, I know that all of my colleagues want to work for Quebec and the entire country.

At a time like this, what Quebeckers expect from us is not inflammatory comments, but collaboration. This is a time when we need to work together to prepare Quebec and Quebec's industry to deal with the U.S. administration. We need to prepare Quebec and the rest of the country to succeed in the 21st-century economy.

I can say to all Quebeckers watching us that that is what we on this side of the House do here every morning. We wake up and ask ourselves how can we serve Canadians and how can we be there for the country.

We will continue to be there.

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FINANCE

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 2020, the Prime Minister fired Bill Morneau because he was not spending enough. He then appointed the Deputy Prime Minister to replace him. Now he has gone and fired her, too, also because she was not spending as much as the Prime Minister wanted her to.

Imagine how much his third finance minister will have to spend in order to keep their job. The Liberals have no choice. They are going to have to look for someone in the NDP who will be willing to spend more and, above all, who will always dutifully obey the Prime Minister.

Seriously, this is a disastrous economic update. Will the Prime Minister back down?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebeckers know how much the Bloc Québécois likes to stir up controversy, obviously.

However, today, the government will present an economic update, the fall update, which will confirm that we will always be there for Canadian industry, for workers and for the country as a whole.

At a time like this, Quebeckers expect everyone, and certainly members of the Bloc Québécois, to be there to defend them, to be there for families, to be there for seniors. That is exactly what we are going to do on this side of the House, and I hope to see the Bloc Québécois members rise to support the government.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government is preparing to table an economic update without a finance minister. No one, even among the Liberals, wants to take responsibility for it.

That is the ultimate proof that the government should not be racking up a record \$60-billion deficit just to hand out election goodies. It is racking up a deficit for measures that Quebeckers and businesses do not even want, measures that have been criticized by all economists, including those at the Department of Finance. It is not surprising that none of the Liberals want to take responsibility for that.

Will the Prime Minister do the right thing and backtrack?

• (1445)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, we will move forward. If members of the Bloc Québécois want to go backwards, then that is up to them, but on this side of the House, we are going to move forward. Why? The reason is that the Quebec families watching at home need a government that is there for them, for dental care, for children, for our seniors, for industry, for Quebec and for Canada.

On this side of the House, we will continue to fight every day for all Canadians because the country deserves for us to be there. We will always be there for all Canadians.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, the Prime Minister has lost control. He has lost control of immigration, he has lost control of the cost of housing, he has lost control of his caucus, and now he has lost control of public finances and has lost the confidence of his Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

This Prime Minister has done major damage to Canada. We know it, and most Canadians know it. Now his closest ally of the past nine years is saying enough is enough.

Can the Prime Minister take responsibility for once and call an election now?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, later today, the government will present its economic plan. It is a solid plan for Canadians that will help us ensure fairness, maintain jobs and continue to look out for the best economic interests of all Canadians.

Oral Questions

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that the minister takes himself seriously when he speaks. We know that this makes no sense, and the Minister of Finance resigned this morning for that very reason. She knows that it makes no sense.

Furthermore, in her resignation letter, the Minister of Finance said that “how we deal with the threat our country currently faces will define us for a generation, and perhaps longer. Canada will win if we are strong, smart, and united.”

As we have seen, that side of the House is not smart. Will the Prime Minister call an election now?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is time to set partisanship aside and join forces, because Canada will indeed face a protectionist threat from the other side of the border. We are getting ready and we will have a solid plan. I hope we can count on this member and his party when the time comes for Canada to address this threat.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what happened is very serious and unprecedented in the history of Canada. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance resigned a few hours ahead of the economic update. A veritable cluster bomb has exploded all over the place. It is even being talked about in the United States and around the world, in a negative way for Canada.

That is the reality we are facing today. The former finance minister said that the deficit would not exceed the \$40-billion mark, but the Prime Minister gave her the boot to listen to his friend Mark Carney.

Can the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry tell us what the Mark Carney deficit will be in two hours?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent. As my colleague indicated, we are presenting an economic statement later today. This is an economic statement that will be there for families, an economic statement that will be there for workers, an economic statement that will be there for industry, but also it is also an important economic statement. We expect the Conservatives to support it because this economic statement will be there to prepare Canada to deal with the next U.S. administration.

Canadians expect better than slogans. Canadians expect action. Will the Conservatives have the courage to defend Canada and vote with the government to prepare the country for the future?

* * *

[English]

CANADA POST CORPORATION

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have heard that Liberals are a shiver looking for a spine to crawl up.

We are seeing this play out in real time as they have let postal workers and in fact all workers down. At this time, when Canada Post CEOs got bonus after bonus while denying fair wages to its

workers, the government continues to betray people and cave to corporate interests. As the former deputy prime minister said, Canadians know when their government is not working for them but working for itself.

New Democrats know where we stand. We stand up for workers every single day. When will the government do the same?

• (1450)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada went through a four-week postal strike where letter carriers, who we do thank for their service to Canadians and who I know we all have deep affinity for, were out for a very long time. Not only the government but the Canada Industrial Relations Board has judged there to be a fundamental impasse in the negotiations. We have found an imaginative way forward, a way to get a collective agreement for Canada Post and its hard-working letter carriers.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they are not listening. The former deputy prime minister said it best today: Canadians know whether the government is working for them or for itself.

The Liberals have made it clear where their focus lies. The Minister of Labour's out-of-touch response last week to postal workers is a slap in the face. They deserve safety at work and livable wages. People are tired of the Liberals and Conservatives siding with rich CEOs at their expense.

Now Canadians want to know, will the Minister of Labour be the next to resign?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as that member well knows, postal workers and Canada Post were struggling to find a path forward at the negotiating table. It had gone on for four weeks. Canadians were, quite rightly, whether they were indigenous or in remote communities, whether they were small business persons or whether they were people expecting medicines, pressing us to act. We found an imaginative way forward with an industrial inquiry commission.

We will ensure that Canada Post operates for the holidays, and we are glad that we did.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about something that is on everybody's mind, and that is the Canadian dental care plan. One out of four Canadians skipped a visit to the dentist because of the cost, but thanks to the Canadian dental care plan, more than one million Canadians now receive that care, and every day that number continues to grow. Applications for the Canadian dental care plan opened for adults with a valid disability tax credit earlier this year.

Oral Questions

Can the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities please tell us how persons with disabilities are being helped by this important plan?

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian dental care plan is already saving Canadians an average of more than \$730 per year. This will help almost 200,000 persons living with disabilities access dental care. We know this is making a huge difference in the lives of people on the ground. We also know dental care is health care, and we will continue to make sure Canadians are getting the support that they need.

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LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this weak Prime Minister has lost control. Carbon tax Carney wrote the fiscal update and filled it with poison pills, so he could blame the former finance minister, pushing her off the fiscal cliff, so he can take her job and eventually the Prime Minister's job.

The finance minister figured out the plan, and she resigned in protest. She said that she no longer has confidence in this weak Prime Minister and carbon tax Carney's plan. If the Prime Minister's own caucus and cabinet do not have confidence in him, even though the leader of the NDP does, why should Canadians?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in a moment where Canadians are looking for leadership, the Conservative asking the question can only come up with names to lob toward his political opponents—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, it is very important for us to hear the question and the answer.

The hon. minister, from the start.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, the very best that the Conservatives can offer to this conversation is name-calling and mudslinging, not solutions to the problems that Canadians are facing.

When I talk to people at home, they want their governments to be focusing on creating good jobs to make sure people can afford to put food on the table. They want to make sure that governments are advancing policies to invest in health care and housing. They want to make sure we are doing more to protect the environment. Every time we put policies on the table to accomplish these ends, the Conservatives throw their hands up in the air, vote against and just sling mud at their opponents. That is not what people in my community want. It is not what Canadians deserve.

We are going to advance solutions that introduce real and meaningful changes that will benefit people who live in this country.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

● (1455)

The Speaker: I am going to ask the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon to please hold off on making comments while other people have the floor.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the incompetent minister and the Prime Minister, Canadians are looking for leadership. Carbon tax Carney's Canadian comeback fuelled a fiscal feud for the former finance minister. Carney wrote the fiscal update, pushed insane inflationary spending and brought in the two-month tax trick; he did this while trying to blame the former finance minister for running Canada's finances off a cliff.

Will the Prime Minister stop passing the blame on to women in his caucus and call a carbon tax election now so that common-sense Conservatives can give the power back to Canadians?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was wrong before when I said all they had was name-calling. Apparently, they have alliteration as well, but that is not going to put food on the table for people who need it in my community or in his. It is not going to put a roof over the head of people who are vulnerable in this country.

If the member wants to make this argument about whether women will be supported, I wonder if he has ever approached the leader of the Conservative Party about using hashtags to specifically attract the attention of men who hate women to support him online. I wonder if he has asked questions about why he has cancelled the investigation as to who was behind it; perhaps he has not, because he knows it was the Conservative leader himself.

* * *

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, everything is out of control: Home prices have doubled, and food banks are seeing two million users in a single month. Meanwhile, the real fiscal adviser to the Prime Minister wrote the financial update for this afternoon. He included a temporary two-month tax trick and is set to smash through the massive \$40-billion deficit promise that was made by the former finance minister. When the Liberals tried to blame the economic vandalism on her, she quit, saying that she does not have confidence in the Prime Minister.

The Liberals cannot tell us how much they have spent; they cannot tell us who is in charge. How can anyone have confidence in the Prime Minister?

Oral Questions

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives seem to know the cost of everything but the value of nothing. They do not see value in investing in child care, which has not only reduced costs for families but also led to the largest increase in women's participation in the labour force in the history of this country. They do not seem to believe there is value in investing in social housing, in public housing and in affordable housing so that everyone in this country can have a roof over their head. They do not believe in the value of the Canada child benefit, which is ensuring that middle-class families in this country can put food on the table.

Before the member continues to sling mud and arrows on this side of the House, he should perhaps look inward and ask why he is not even allowed to advocate on behalf of his community. It is because his leader has said that is just not in order.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yes, we talk about having confidence. However, that just came from a minister who said today that he is not going to continue to serve in the cabinet of that Prime Minister. This is just like the former finance minister who said she does not have confidence, the seven other ministers over there or the one in five Liberal MPs who said they do not have confidence in the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister. He broke housing and immigration; he broke our finances in this country. The Liberals talk about costs, but they have absolutely no idea how much they have spent. No government has ever spent so much to achieve as little as the current government has.

We know why the NDP leader has confidence in the Prime Minister. It is for his pension. However, why should Canadians?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is right about one thing. I did announce this morning that I am not going to be seeking re-election. However, if he thinks it is a matter of confidence, I can tell him I have confidence that I am going to be the best father to my kids that I could possibly be for the rest of my life. That is what is most important to me.

While I have the floor, I should say thanks for the opportunity to engage in the tête-à-tête over the years. This may be one of the last opportunities I have, and I want to use it to make this point: Canadians want governments to invest to increase the quality of life they get to enjoy. We do not seem to be able to agree on that basic tenet. On this side of the House, we will put measures in place to support families, not advocate cuts that will—

• (1500)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will quote the former deputy prime minister: “[Canadians] know when we are working for them, and they equally know when we are focused on ourselves.” She is right. Seventy-one per cent of Quebecers think that the GST tax break and the Prime Minister's cheques are vote-buying measures. Democracy as a whole loses when so many citizens believe that a prime minister is trying to buy them off.

Does the Prime Minister finally realize that there is a limit to putting Liberal priorities ahead of the common good?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Bloc Québécois.

If the Bloc Québécois were truly there for Quebecers, it would vote in favour of Quebecers. For months now, the Bloc Québécois has been contributing to the Conservative tactic of blocking Parliament and not advancing bills that would move Quebec forward.

Instead of stirring up controversy today, can the Bloc Québécois rise above it and be there for Quebecers by allowing this Parliament to function? Quebecers expect better from the Bloc Québécois. On this side of the House, we will always be there to defend Quebecers.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the former deputy prime minister's resignation confirms that the Prime Minister went too far in pursuing Liberal interests at all costs. It confirms that he no longer has the confidence of his closest colleagues. It confirms that the Prime Minister no longer has the moral authority to present an economic update without a minister to take responsibility for it. It confirms that the Prime Minister no longer has the moral authority to continue governing without a new mandate from the people. I would remind the House that the former deputy prime minister has confirmed all of this.

Will the Prime Minister call an election?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is customary in the House for the Bloc members to dismiss the government's economic plans out of hand, before even reading them. That is why they voted against the Canada child benefit. That is why they refused to support the dental plan for Canadians, which benefits many Quebecers. They voted against the guaranteed income supplement. They consistently vote against many measures that will help Quebecers. It should therefore come as no surprise today that the Bloc Québécois is once again rejecting out of hand measures that will help Canadians.

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[*English*]

FINANCE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, carbon tax Carney is the Prime Minister's official economic adviser, and his plan was always to push out the finance minister and take her place. Let us look at his advice so far. He forced her to bring in the GST tax trick. Carney also forced through insane inflationary spending, smashing through that \$40-billion guardrail. Carney's economic plan is so bad the finance minister resigned in protest rather than humiliate herself into reading his homework. Now nobody knows who the finance minister is.

Enough is enough. Why will the Prime Minister not do the only honourable thing left and let Canadians decide for themselves in a carbon tax election?

Oral Questions

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, another day, another attack against Canadians from the Conservative Party of Canada. Any time someone steps up who disagrees with Conservatives' vision for Canada, what do they do? They use personal attacks. Canadians deserve better than the slogans and personal attacks we get from Conservative members of Parliament.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the attacks on the government's economic record are coming from inside the Liberals' own cabinet, and it looks more and more as though carbon tax Carney's plan to push out the Prime Minister is working as well. For carbon tax Carney, it has always been profits over people. We can look at his record: Since he became the top economic adviser to the PM, he has moved his own company's headquarters to New York City, and he has been caught unethically lobbying the U.K. government. His firm, Brookfield, is now looking for \$10 billion in taxpayers' money for a new investment fund, which would be managed by Brookfield, his own company.

Canadians deserve better than the government in shambles. Why not call a carbon tax election and let Canadians decide for themselves?

• (1505)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is the people's House; in it, we should be debating things that are pertinent to the administration of government. What we hear from the House leader from the Conservative Party of Canada is attacks on Canadians. The person the member is talking about is not a sitting member of Parliament and is not a cabinet minister; it is someone they are attacking simply because they do not share their vision of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, every single Canadian deserves better than what we hear from the opposition today.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has lost control hours before delivering a fiscal update. The finance minister resigned, joining one-fifth of the Liberal caucus and saying she does not have confidence in the Prime Minister either. There is only one person left keeping the Prime Minister in power, and that is the leader of the NDP.

The fall budget is scheduled to be tabled in 54 minutes, and we do not even know who the finance minister is. The Liberal's own cabinet order on succession states that if it is not her, it is the industry minister, but he says he does not want to. That means it is supposed to go to the disgraced member for Edmonton Centre. Will the other Randy be Canada's next finance minister, and how much is he investing in fraud—

The Speaker: Order. Again, I have asked members to please not do indirectly what they cannot do directly by referring to a member by their first name.

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

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, all we see from Conserva-

tive members of Parliament are personal attacks and mudslinging against Canadians.

What we all need to be doing right now is standing united for our country, making sure that we are protecting the Canadian economy and Canadian jobs, making things a bit easier for Canadians.

We look forward to presenting the fall economic statement later this afternoon.

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JUSTICE

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government takes the safety of children seriously. That is why we put forward a comprehensive plan to bring Canada into the 21st century and change our online world, making it safer for kids and better for all. The Conservatives are blocking the plan, and they are standing in the way of a better future for our kids online.

Parents want the online harms act. Experts want the online harms act. Can the Minister of Justice explain why Bill C-63 must be passed to keep our kids safe?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, I asked for unanimous consent to split the online harms act and advance the child protection measures as soon as possible. Every single party got on board except for the Conservatives. The Conservative Party said no to forcing the removal of child sexual abuse material from the Internet. They said no to Amanda Todd's mother, Carol. They said no to Rehtaeh Parsons' mother and all the other parents who are begging us to act.

While Conservative inaction keeps child sexual abuse material online, on this side of the House, the government will continue to fight for victims, parents and kids to keep them safe.

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[Translation]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has totally lost control. He has lost control of immigration, the borders and the public purse. We also know that he has lost the confidence of 20% of his caucus, or perhaps even up to 30% or 40% at this point. He has lost the confidence of his right-hand woman, the former deputy prime minister and minister of finance.

After losing the confidence of pretty much everyone in Ottawa, will the Prime Minister, who has lost everything, agree to give up and immediately call an election so that Canadians can regain control of the future of their country?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives.

Oral Questions

Today, the government is going to present an economic statement focused on investing in Canadians, investing in industry, and investing in our workers.

What we saw today during question period is appalling. Canadians watching at home expect more from an official opposition. Now is the time for us to work together, to stand up for our country, and to prepare for the incoming U.S. administration.

It is disappointing to see the opposition carry on with its political games at a time like this.

* * *

● (1510)

FINANCE

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe what I just heard from the finance minister. Oh, sorry, he turned the job down.

The Prime Minister is out of control. The resignation letter from his former right-hand woman and finance minister is scathing in its review of Mark Carney's economic statement. She said, “[We need to keep] our fiscal powder dry today, so we have the reserves we may need for a coming tariff war. That means eschewing costly political gimmicks...which make Canadians doubt that we recognize the gravity of the moment.” She said, “Canada will win if we are strong, smart, and united.” This is serious.

We need to let Canadians decide who can best unite the country. They can choose between a Prime Minister who has lost control and a strong Conservative leader who puts Canada first.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, shouting partisan slogans, like the member opposite is doing, is certainly not going to unite this country. The government has a serious plan to move forward in the face of American protectionist threats. As part of our economic statement to be presented later today, we will deliver prosperity for all Canadians.

Yes, we will be there to protect Canadians from any protectionist threat.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is spiralling badly and his obsession for power is dangerous. It is actually dangerous and it is killing people every day. In Peterborough and area, families are suffering the greatest rates of food insecurity ever recorded. Do members know what food insecurity means? It means starvation, hunger, children. It is enough. This is as serious as it gets.

The finance minister quit hours before she was supposed to do this, and she does not have confidence in the Prime Minister. No one does. This man is a disgrace and we need an election now.

The Speaker: I ask the member, please, to be very judicious in referring to any member in this place.

The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development has the floor.

* * *

JUSTICE

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we have made investments to ensure that Canadians, including those in Peterborough—Kawartha, have the support they need, whether that be through affordable child care or through an HST holiday. The people of Peterborough—Kawartha can rely on us and know that we on this side of the House will fight for them when their member of Parliament will do everything she can to oppose these supports.

Hon. Joyce Murray (Vancouver Quadra, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, children in Canada are just not safe online. Our government wants to join the many countries that have now adopted online safety regulations, yet the Conservatives are preventing our online harms act from moving forward. Shockingly, they are blocking our efforts to remove child sex abuse material from the Internet. How disgusting.

Can the justice minister please describe the importance of Bill C-63 to parents and children, and explain why Canadians so urgently need this law now?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the online harms bill is the product of four years of consultation. It is comprehensive legislation that would remove child sex abuse material from the Internet. By blocking that very act, the Conservatives have made a clear choice: that they will not prioritize the safety of our kids. They do not stand with parents. Amanda Todd's mother, Carol, said she has been waiting 12 years for this type of change. We need to pass this legislation to do right by Carol and every other parent of every other child who has suffered abuse online. The question for Canadians and for that party is this: Will will they stand with us and keep kids safe?

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the marriage-after-60 pension clause is dated, sexist and unfair. All parties agree it should be eliminated, but the Liberals have sat on their hands and let veterans and their spouses down. The Liberals' former deputy leader said it best: Canadians can tell when the government is focused on itself and not on real people. Failing to remove this clause proves it.

When will the Liberals stop labelling women as gold diggers and get rid of this archaic, sexist clause?

Routine Proceedings

• (1515)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to thank the members of the Canadian Armed Forces for their service.

When a person serves in the military, we all recognize their family serves with them. Our government is sensitive to the situation of widowed spouses who had married veterans after the age of 60, and our government is committed to improving and to supporting members of veterans' families as we move forward.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, in my last question in 2024, I think of the IPCC sixth assessment report—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Colleagues, really, I would like to hear the hon. member. She is at the far end of the room and it is difficult for me to hear. I would like her to please start again.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, in my last question in 2024, I think of the IPCC sixth assessment report: that if we do not globally reduce emissions dramatically, peak before and see dramatic reductions “at the latest before 2025”, we will shoot way past the Paris Agreement targets, shoot way past 2°C and face climate disaster. I think of the words in that film *The Age of Stupid*: What were we thinking, to avoid the opportunity to save ourselves when we had the chance?

Can the hon. minister give us any excuse? Perhaps this question period answers its own question.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the hon. colleague that everything we have done since we have been in power, in 2015, has meant a 43% decline in emissions in Canada. Greenhouse gas emissions are at their lowest level in 27 years. Our plan is working. We are helping the economy, creating jobs and fighting pollution.

 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 response to 46 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I truly have the honour today, as we get to the end of 2024, to present, in both official languages, the 23rd report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled “Canada's Supply Chains and Expanded International Trade: Challenges and Measures”, for 2024 and as we move into the future.

CANADA–PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA RELATIONSHIP

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 9th interim report of the Special Committee on the Canada–People's Republic of China Relationship, entitled “Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy: Two Years Later”.

Our diplomatic, economic and military presence is valued in the region and we are making investments in long-term relationships that will be very beneficial for Canada and that region in years to come. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 16th report of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security in relation to the motion adopted on October 23, 2023, regarding the growing problem of car thefts in Canada.

• (1520)

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record that the Conservatives of the public safety committee have included a dissenting report on the public safety and national security committee's auto theft report. We heard a lot of testimony from police that the government's soft-on-crime measures have increased auto thefts in this country. We need tougher bail measures. We need tougher Criminal Code sentencing penalties for those responsible for auto theft. Conservatives have brought forward repeated measures to do so, which were voted down by the Liberal government.

It is very clear, and we have reflected this in our dissenting report, that the only way we are going to get fewer auto thefts in this country is if a Conservative majority government comes into power and brings in those Criminal Code changes to toughen up our measures and ensure that the people responsible for stealing cars are put behind bars. That is what is going to happen if a Conservative government comes into power. We have reflected this in our dissenting report and I am very proud to contribute that to the public safety report on auto thefts.

[Translation]

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table two reports.

First, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 17th report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled “Supplementary Estimates (B) 2024-25: Votes 1b and 5b under Department of Veterans Affairs”.

[English]

On the second report, Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, entitled “The Persian Gulf War Was a War”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table this supplementary report with the House to ensure the voices of veterans are heard. Over the course of this study at the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs, we heard from many different veterans, particularly from veterans who served in the war in Afghanistan who continue to be ignored and disrespected by the Liberal government. The committee agreed to study the designation of wartime service, which extends beyond just veterans who fought in the Persian Gulf War. In fact, even veterans who fought in the Persian Gulf raised this point several times, yet the report tabled by the committee completely neglected to mention even a single veteran who fought in Afghanistan.

Veterans put their lives on the line in combat and graciously agreed to travel to Ottawa to share their experiences with the committee. We owe it to them to include the wisdom they shared with us.

Common-sense Conservatives want to make it clear that we are listening to veterans, and we will not let the Liberal government and its NDP allies continue to ignore their concerns.

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UKRAINIAN HERITAGE MONTH ACT

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.) moved that Bill S-276, An Act respecting Ukrainian Heritage Month, be read the first time.

He said: I rise today to introduce in the House Bill S-276, an act respecting Ukrainian heritage month. This bill has passed the Senate, and if passed here in the House, the bill would declare September of every year Ukrainian heritage month. I would like to thank the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore for co-sponsoring this bill and I hope members of all parties will support it.

The first Ukrainian immigrants to Canada came on September 7, 1891. Today, there are approximately 1.4 million Canadians of Ukrainian descent. They have made an important impact on our country that spans coast to coast to coast, whether it be our economic, social or political life. At the same time, Canada has welcomed and supported Ukrainian Canadians. Canada was the first country to recognize Ukraine's independence. Canada has recognized the Holodomor as a genocide and has been a global leader in supporting the Ukrainian people in their fight against Russia's brutal invasion. We have said that we will stand with the Ukrainian people until they win.

Ukrainian heritage month would offer a special opportunity for us to celebrate Ukrainian heritage, the role Canada has played in supporting Ukrainian Canadians and the contributions Ukrainian Canadians have made and continue to make to Canada.

Slava Kanadi. Slava Ukraini.

Routine Proceedings

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

• (1525)

PETITIONS

ELDERS HOME IN WIIKWEMKOONG

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I stand once again in the House to table a petition signed by residents of Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory and surrounding area calling on the Government of Canada to assist in the funding required to built a new elders facility in Wiikwemkoong.

The petitioners note that they have received funding from the Government of Ontario, CMHC and community members, but there is a funding shortfall of \$20 million. They draw to the Government of Canada's attention that it has funded health care facilities in the indigenous community of Moosonee, a long-term care home for Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte and a seniors long-term care facility in Rankin Inlet.

They add that the current facility in Wiikwemkoong has reached the end of its life expectancy, and it is vital for the community to ensure elders can stay in their community to not only share their knowledge and experience with younger generations and remain close to their families but also to not be subjected to another era of assimilation.

FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Mrs. Carol Hughes (Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapuskaing, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there are several of these petitions. I stand to table a petition signed by residents of northern Ontario who are calling on the House of Commons to recognize the impact that reducing the number of electoral districts in the region, following the report of the federal electoral boundaries commission, will have on their electoral representation. They ask that the federal government modify the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act to ensure the number of electoral districts in northern Ontario is maintained at 10.

The petitioners also ask that the House 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.”

Routine Proceedings

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to present a petition on behalf of constituents. I rise for the 56th time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The community of Swan River is struggling with the rising rate of crime in its area. Statistics Canada reports that, after nine years of the Liberal government, violent crime has risen by 50% and gang-related homicides have nearly doubled.

Within the last five years, the crime severity index in Swan River has increased by over 50%. According to the RCMP, four individuals in Swan River alone were responsible for 309 total offences, 53 of which were violent offences, over the course of 18 months. This is why the people of Swan River are demanding jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders.

The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies that directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on affordable housing. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have neglected investing in affordable housing for decades, and predatory landlords have been able to take advantage of the vulnerabilities. The average rent in my riding of Coquitlam for a two-bedroom apartment has reached \$2,900. Corporate landlords are increasingly using renovations and demovictions to demolish affordable housing.

Therefore, the undersigned ask for the government to impose a moratorium on renovations and other forms of displacing tenants, to invest in affordable housing, non-profit and co-op housing, and to stop providing billions of dollars in handouts to corporate landlords who are buying up existing affordable housing, evicting people and raising rents.

• (1530)

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I table a petition signed by individuals in Canada who are very much concerned about foreign interference. They make reference to murder, extortion and political interference and call for the leader of the Conservative Party to get the necessary security clearance so he can be more aware of the degree to which foreign interference is playing a very significant role here in Canada.

It is a petition that many have signed, and I would encourage members to look at the petition itself.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in which the petitioners are calling on the Liberals to permanently scrap their reckless planned expansion of MAID, where mental illness is the sole underlying disorder.

The petitioners note that vulnerable persons would be put at unique risk because it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine ir-

remediability, meaning persons who could get better could have their lives prematurely ended. Secondly, it is difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between a rational request for MAID and one motivated by suicidal ideation when the request is in the context of a sole underlying mental illness.

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table two petitions.

The first is with regard to 500 concerned citizens and workers from across Canada calling on the government to take immediate action to protect workers from the growing misuse of non-disclosure agreements, or NDAs, in the case of harassment, violence and discrimination. NDAs are increasingly used to force workers into silence, preventing them from seeking help or speaking out about mistreatment and misconduct in the workplace. This is increasingly true for workers in low-wage or precarious employment situations.

The petitioners call for legislation that would ban the misuse of NDAs by the federal government and federally funded agencies, unless specifically requested by a worker who has received legal advice on alternative ways to protect their privacy. This is a crucial step to protect workers, especially those in vulnerable situations, and to ensure they are not silenced or forced to live in fear.

I urge all members to support this petition.

NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is a good news story. It is supporting the banning of the Nuclear Waste Management Organization in South Bruce. Despite the fact that there was a good, positive decision as of November 28 and the final decision was made to choose an alternative location in northern Ontario for nuclear waste disposal, the petitioners still want the government to have a proper process in place.

The petitioners are concerned about the transportation, processing, burial and abandonment of close to 1,200 tonnes of nuclear waste that would remain radioactive for 100,000 years. They are calling for this to be reviewed and mandated through legislation and law because the process that was taken in South Bruce was dysfunctional for the community.

Again, the community has fought back and won this fight for themselves, their families and the future of our country by protecting the Great Lakes waterway, which has been asked for repeatedly over these number of years.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to table a petition on behalf of residents from Kelowna—Lake Country and surrounding region. To summarize, the residents state that due to bureaucratic impediments to passport issuance and unavailable consular services to many Ukrainians, Ukrainians under CUAET cannot apply for their open work permit extension, as many temporary resident statuses are linked to passport validity. As Ukrainians cannot return to Ukraine due to the war, without a passport and without a valid work permit they become undocumented residents without a legal authorization to work or study in Canada.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to resolve the situation with work permit extensions for Ukrainians in Canada whose passports have expired or are expiring in 2025 or 2026 and allow displaced Ukrainians who came to Canada under CUAET to continue working in Canada legally for another three years regardless of their Ukrainian passport validity.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand before Christmas and table three petitions in the House of Commons today.

The first is from Canadians who are concerned about the politicization of charitable status, which was promised by the Liberal Party in the 2021 election. Canadians are very concerned about that and have signed a petition accordingly.

• (1535)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting, because the next two petitions I table are on issues that are important to constituents but are actually on both sides of a particular issue when it comes to energy development and how to take meaningful action on the environment. As we know, this is the place where we can have those conversations. It is an honour to, on behalf of constituents, table both of these petitions, although from different perspectives, on issues related to the environment today.

Because I am on my feet and this may be my last chance, I simply wish the Speaker, all members of Parliament and all Canadians a very merry Christmas.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member and wish a merry Christmas to him as well.

PHARMACARE

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition is from Prince Edward Islanders who are concerned about pharmacare. They point out that health care is a human right and that age, income, pre-existing conditions, province or territory and immigration status should not determine their ability to pay. Petitioners call on Parliament to immediately pass legislation for a public, single-payer universal pharmacare program, as outlined by the advisory council on implementing national pharmacare in its 2019 report.

Routine Proceedings

PARENTAL ALIENATION

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is on the subject of parental alienation and the use of this pseudo-theory in divorce and child custody cases. This is something that is commonly invoked when domestic violence is reported on the part of a custodial parent. It is an unfounded and dangerous theory, and it sometimes causes courts to lose sight of the best interests of the child and make decisions focused on parental rights, and to trivialize domestic violence.

The United Nations has spoken out on this through a special rapporteur. The special rapporteur on violence against women and girls has urged governments to prohibit family courts from using parental alienation pseudo-theory. That is exactly what the petitioners are calling on the government of Canada to do, which is to amend the Divorce Act to prohibit parental alienation accusations in family disputes.

FIREARMS

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are wondering when the NDP will finally stop propping up the Liberal government, but I will get to my petition.

The petition comes from the residents of Skeena—Bulkley Valley, who state that the government has attempted to ban and seize the hunting rifles and shotguns of millions of Canadians, that the targeting of farmers and hunters does not fight crime and that the government has failed those who participate in the Canadian tradition of sport shooting. Therefore, petitioners call on the Government of Canada to stop any and all current and future bans on hunting and sport-shooting firearms.

I present this petition because the NDP member of Parliament for Skeena—Bulkley Valley will not.

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We know full well that, when presenting petitions, petitions are not to be political. On the language he is using, I ask him to withdraw the referencing of other members of the House. If it is not in his petition, he does not have the ability to reference that.

The Speaker: Indeed, the hon. member for Hamilton Centre is correct. The tradition in terms of when hon. members present petitions is that they are not supposed to offer an opinion for or against the petition but to just present it on behalf of constituents.

I would ask the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies to withdraw the comment.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, even though it is factual what I said, their MP will not present the petition—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I will ask the hon. member to please simply withdraw the comments. No further editorial comment is required.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Mr. Speaker, I will withdraw.

Routine Proceedings

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege to present two petitions here today.

The first petition comes from Canadians from across the country who are concerned about sexually explicit material online. The consumption of sexually explicit material by young people is associated with a wide range of serious harms, including the development of addiction, the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and the development of attitudes favourable to harassment and violence, including sexual harassment and sexual violence, particularly against women.

Parliament has recognized these harmful effects and the increasing accessibility of sexual explicit material online for young people, and sees that as an important part of public health and as a public safety concern.

The folks who have signed the petition are calling on the Government of Canada to recognize a 2017 study by the Standing Committee on Health, and they call on the House of Commons and the government to adopt Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

• (1540)

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting comes from Canadians from across the country who want to raise awareness about #TrudeauMustGo. It has been a top trending hashtag on Twitter—

The Speaker: Again, members cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly. I am going to ask the hon. member, even when quoting, that when referring to a member who sits in the House, he makes sure not to use their name.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock has the floor.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting comes from Canadians from across the country who want to recognize a particular hashtag that has been trending on Twitter saying that the Prime Minister must go. It has been a top-trending hashtag, and more than 500,000 people have retweeted it.

The petitioners have described their concerns around the Prime Minister, including his divisive comments and attitudes towards Canadians who have made different health decisions. They also note that the Prime Minister has passed laws, including Bill C-48 and Bill C-69, the no more pipelines bills, which cancelled many energy projects and drove away investment through their excessive regulations. Petitioners note that the Prime Minister has generated more debt than all previous Canadian governments combined.

Petitioners want the government to axe the tax, and they note that the carbon tax continues to drive up prices and punish Canadians who have to drive to work or to school or to get groceries. They also note the serious lack of ethics by the Prime Minister: the SNC-Lavalin scandal, the billionaire island scandal, the WE Charity scandal, the \$6,000-a-night hotel scandal and the multi-million dollar arrive scam app. As well, the petitioners are concerned with the Prime Minister's inaction on foreign interference.

Therefore, the folks who have signed the petition call on the Prime Minister to resign from office and to call a carbon tax election.

* * *

NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table a petition on behalf of Canadians who are outraged by the government's attack on natural health products. They call on the House to pass the excellent private member's bill from my colleague the member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

* * *

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. 3145, 3146, 3148, 3149, 3153 and 3159.

[Text]

Question No. 3145—**Mr. Chris d'Entremont:**

With regard to Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) 2016 ministerial review of the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion project: what did NRCan do with the submissions from the public and the meeting minutes?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the 2016 ministerial review of the Trans Mountain Pipeline expansion project was carried out by an independent review panel. The engagement activities completed by the panel, including holding public meetings, receiving email submissions and creating an online questionnaire, were summarized in a public-facing report posted on the NRCan website and used to inform the final report to Canada's Minister of Natural Resources.

The report summarizing the submissions from the public to the online questionnaire is available at: https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/sites/www.nrcan.gc.ca/files/energy/pdf/Questionnaire-Nielsen_reportTMX_en.pdf.

The final report from the ministerial panel for the Trans Mountain expansion project to the Minister of Natural Resources is available at: https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/sites/www.nrcan.gc.ca/files/files/pdf/16-011_TMX%20Full%20Report-en_nov2-11-30am.pdf.

Question No. 3146—**Ms. Niki Ashton:**

With regard to the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner (OSIC), broken down by fiscal year since 2015-16: (a) what is the total amount of funding allocated to the OSIC; (b) what is the total number of (i) full-time, (ii) full-time equivalent, (iii) part-time, (iv) temporary or contract, workers employed by the OSIC; (c) what is the total number of complaints or incidents reported to the OSIC which (i) were admissible to the OSIC, (ii) were inadmissible to the OSIC, (iii) warranted provisional measures; and (d) what is the total number of complaints or incidents reported to the OSIC that were deemed inadmissible due to the (i) respondent not being under the authority of a Program Signatory, (ii) respondent being involved at the provincial, territorial, club or other level of a Program Signatory?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), since 2018, Sport Canada has worked in consultation with experts and athletes to promote safe, welcoming and inclusive environments for all sport participants, bolstered by investments in budgets 2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023.

The Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner, OSIC, was launched by the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, SDRCC, in June 2022 as part of the abuse-free sport program. The OSIC manages complaints related to violations of the universal code of conduct to prevent and address maltreatment in sport, UCCMS, and undertakes sport environment assessments. The abuse-free sport program also offers education, prevention tools and resources.

Given that the abuse-free sport program, including the OSIC, was established in 2022, Sport Canada did not provide funding for the program prior to the 2021-22 fiscal year. However, since 2021-22, Sport Canada has provided the following funding to support the abuse-free sport program, including the OSIC: \$2,067,500 in 2021-22, including \$272,500 to establish the OSIC; \$4,000,000 in 2022-23, including \$1,862,200 to implement the OSIC; \$6,000,000 in 2023-24, including \$3,380,000 to maintain and enhance the OSIC; and \$4,000,000 in 2024-2025, including \$2,685,000 to maintain the OSIC.

With regard to part (b), given that the abuse-free sport program, including the OSIC, was established in 2022, the following information pertains to 2022 onward. In 2022-23, the OSIC had six full-time staff members and one part-time staff member. In 2023-24, the OSIC had seven full-time staff members, one part-time staff member and one temporary staff member. As of 2024-25, the OSIC has 10 full-time staff members, one part-time staff member and three temporary staff members.

These figures only include the OSIC's employees and contractors. The entire abuse-free sport program includes more employees who are not part of the OSIC, such as those employed to work on safe sport education, athlete/survivor outreach, research, legal aid, mental health support, accounting and communications, as well as safeguarding tribunal staff. The director of sanctions and its deputy director are not included in these figures as they do not report to the OSIC.

With regard to (c)(i), the following information was gathered through the SDRCC's regular reporting, which is publicly available. Between June 20, 2022, when the OSIC was launched, and March 31, 2023, a total of 96 complaints were received, 32 of which were admissible to the OSIC. In 2023-24, a total of 299 complaints were received, 134 of which were admissible to the OSIC. In the first period of 2024-25, a total of 187 complaints were received, 77 of which were admissible to the OSIC.

With regard to (c)(ii), in 2022-23, 64 of the 96 complaints received were deemed inadmissible to the OSIC. In 2023-24, 165 of the 299 complaints received were deemed inadmissible to the OSIC. In the first period of 2024-25, 110 of the 187 complaints received were deemed inadmissible to the OSIC.

With regard to (c)(iii), in 2022-23, provisional measures were imposed by the office of the director of sanctions, DSO, in eight cases. In 2023-24, provisional measures were imposed by the office of the DSO in 34 cases. In the first semester of 2024-25, provisional measures were imposed by the office of the DSO in 32 cases.

Further information can be found on the OSIC's website, annual reports from 2022-23 and 2023-34 and periodical reports from June 20–September 19, 2022, September 20–December 31, 2022, January 1–March 31, 2023, April 1–June 30, 2023, July 1–October 31, 2023, November 1–March 31, 2024, and April 1–September 30, 2024. For more information, please contact the OSIC.

With regard to (d)(i) and (ii), clear data on the total number of complaints deemed inadmissible due to the respondent not being under the authority of a program signatory or being involved at the provincial, territorial or club level is not available for fiscal year 2022-23. As of April 1, 2023, the Government of Canada required federally funded sport organizations to participate in the abuse-free sport program to be eligible for federal funding. During this transition, some cases initially deemed inadmissible were reactivated when relevant sport organizations joined the abuse-free sport program.

The following information was gathered through the SDRCC's regular reporting, which is publicly available. In 2023-24, complaints were deemed inadmissible for the following reasons: the organization listed is a program signatory of abuse-free sport, but the respondent is not a participant under the authority of a signatory, e.g., involved at the club level only – 63%; the matter is unrelated to the UCCMS – 26%; or the complaint/report contained inadequate information to proceed, e.g., no respondent identified, and no method of contacting the reporter to obtain necessary information was provided – 8.2%; the organization is not a signatory – 1.4%; other reasons – 1.4%.

The total number of inadmissible complaints is not available, as some complaints were deemed inadmissible for multiple reasons and are counted in more than one of the above categories.

Further information can be found in the OSIC's website, annual reports from 2022-23 and 2023-34 and periodical reports from June 20–September 19, 2022, September 20–December 31, 2022, January 1–March 31, 2023, April 1–June 30, 2023, July 1–October 31, 2023, November 1–March 31, 2024, and April 1–September 30, 2024. For more information, please contact the OSIC.

Question No. 3148—Mr. Sameer Zuberi:

With regard to Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) and the information note "Vertical farming and pest control products," dated or last modified on May 1, 2024: (a) what was the scientific rationale for issuing the note; (b) what about the methods of vertical farming made the PMRA consider it necessary to categorize and treat vertical farms differently than traditional greenhouses; (c) what are the details of all conversations or correspondence the PMRA has had with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on this matter, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of communication, (iii) summary of the contents, (iv) participants; and (d) how many applications have been received by the PMRA for the use of pest control products in vertical farms since the publication of this note, and of the applications, (i) what is the processing time, (ii) how many were approved, (iii) what products have been approved for use in vertical farms?

Routine Proceedings

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), as Canada's federal pesticide regulator, Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency, PMRA, published the information note, "Vertical farming and pest control products" on May 1, 2024, in order to ensure the health and safety of Canadians and the environment. Due to rising confusion within the user industry surrounding whether they could use pesticides labelled for greenhouses in vertical farming, and to help provincial partners address this, the PMRA felt the publication of this information note would aid in clearing up any potential confusion.

In Canada, pesticides are federally regulated under the Pest Control Products Act, PCPA, which is administered by Health Canada's PMRA. As stipulated under the PCPA, a pesticide may only be permitted to be used or sold in Canada after it has undergone a rigorous scientific assessment process that provides reasonable certainty that no harm to human health and the environment will occur, and that products have value, when used according to label directions. Under the Pest Control Products Regulations, pesticide label directions must include any use limitations, including the intended site for the use of a pesticide, e.g., greenhouses, and procedures to reduce risks associated with that use must be included on the product label.

There is currently not sufficient data for Health Canada to assess the hazards and risks associated with vertical farming, such as occupational and dietary exposure risks and how the pesticide breaks down in the work environment after application under vertical farming conditions. This lack of availability of the required scientific data is a result of this method of crop protection being relatively new. Therefore, in order to ensure the safety of those involved in current vertical farming practices in Canada, PMRA issued an information note to inform all parties of the requirement for this registered use on pesticide products.

With regard to part (b), it is important to note that each intended site for the use of a pesticide, i.e., use site category, USC, has mandatory and specific data requirements that must be submitted with an application to register a pesticide for sale or use in Canada. This information is listed on the PMRA webpage Use Site Category (DACO Tables).

Vertical farming differs from greenhouse growing in various aspects including air circulation, lighting and plant density. These differences can affect how much pesticide a worker is exposed to, how long the pesticide remains on the treated plants, how much may be transferred to skin and clothing, etc. The PMRA is in the process of investigating how these differences may affect potential risks of pesticide use in vertical farming, and what, if any, amendments to data requirements would be needed to register pesticides for this use.

With regard to part (c), there have been no dedicated exchanges or correspondence between Health Canada's PMRA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, USEPA, on this topic. However, the PMRA outlined its efforts to learn more about this new technology in October 2022 and November 2023, at the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, CUSMA, meetings of the North American Trilateral Technical Working Group on Pesticides. Regulatory officials from the USEPA were present at both meetings.

With regard to part (d), to date, Health Canada's PMRA has not received any applications for the specific use of pesticides in vertical farming.

Question No. 3149—Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:

With regard to media reports that the CRA discovered hackers had used H&R Block credentials to get unauthorized access into hundreds of Canadians' personal CRA accounts, change direct deposit information, submit false returns and pocket more than \$6 million in fraudulent refunds: (a) how many users' accounts were accessed; (b) how many accounts had their direct deposit information changed by hackers in this instance; (c) how many false returns were submitted; (d) how much money was paid out in fraudulent refunds; (e) how much of the fraudulent refund money has since been recovered; and (f) how much of the fraudulent refund money does the CRA (i) expect, (ii) not expect, to recover in the future?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the CRA can neither confirm nor deny the assertion contained in the preamble to the above-noted question regarding the named entity. The confidentiality provisions of the acts administered by the CRA prohibit the CRA from commenting on specific taxpayer information. This also includes information that may have been obtained from third parties, for example, tax preparers, as information collected through the electronic filing of returns, EFILE, is protected under the Income Tax Act.

With regard to parts (a) to (f), for reasons noted in the preamble to this response, the CRA is unable to speak to any specific cases. Generally speaking, when the CRA becomes aware of suspected identity theft cases, it undertakes an analysis and investigates the situation. Furthermore, until such an analysis or investigation is complete, the CRA would not comment as the information may be incomplete or could lead to inaccurate or misleading conclusions.

Question No. 3153—Mr. Marc Dalton:

With regard to the government's response to Order Paper Question Q-2825 and the data provided by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada titled "Police-reported incidents of arson occurring at religious institutions, region, 2010 to 2022": what are the details of the accounts, including the names and locations for each instance of arson referenced?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the data provided in Q-2825 regarding the geographical region represented the lowest level of geography permissible under the Statistics Act. Additionally, the data was shared specifically for locations identified as religious institutions. The Statistics Act strictly prohibits Statistics Canada from disclosing any information that could identify an individual, household, business, agricultural operation or location without explicit consent or in very specific and limited circumstances authorized by the act. As a result, Statistics Canada is legally bound to withhold the requested information to ensure compliance with these stringent confidentiality requirements.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 3159—Mr. Jake Stewart:**

With regard to government litigation related to the non-compliance of contractual obligations of contracts signed with the government, having a value in excess of \$1 million, commenced or ongoing since January 1, 2024: (a) how many contracts are the subject of litigation; and (b) what are the details of each contract, including the (i) date, (ii) description of the goods or services, including the volume, (iii) final amount, (iv) vendor, (v) country of the vendor, (vi) litigation court?

Mr. James Maloney (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Justice undertook a preliminary search in order to determine the number of litigation files and quantity of information that could fall within the scope of the question, as well as the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. It was concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual review of files, and that relevant information, if any, be extracted on a case-by-case basis, which is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

* * *

[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 the government's response to Question Nos. 3147, 3150 to 3152, 3154 to 3158 and 3160 could be made for orders for return, these returns would be tabled in an electronic format immediately.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 3147—Ms. Michelle Rempel Garner:

With regard to the National Advisory Council on Poverty, broken down by year for each of the last five years: (a) what were the expenditures of the council, in total and broken down by line item; (b) how much remuneration did members of the council receive, in total and broken down by member; (c) what are the details of all hospitality expenses incurred by members of the council, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) vendor, (iv) amount, (v) purpose of the event; (d) how much was incurred in travel expenses by the council; and (e) what are the details of each trip expense by council member, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) origin, (iii) destination, (iv) total cost, (v) breakdown of the costs, (vi) purpose of the trip?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3150—Mr. Glen Motz:

With regard to government expenditures related to the Prime Minister's trip to New York to attend the United Nations General Assembly in September 2024: (a) what are the expenditures incurred to date, in total and broken down by type of expense; (b) how many members were part of the Canadian delegation; (c) what are the names and titles of the delegation members; (d) what was the total expenditure on hotels in the New York City area during that visit; and (e) what are the details of the expenses at each hotel, including the (i) total amount spent, (ii) name of the hotel, (iii) number of rooms rented each night, (iv) rate paid and the number of rooms at each rate?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3151—Mr. Glen Motz:

With regard to legal costs incurred by the government in relation to litigation against the Information Commissioner since January 1, 2021: what is the total expenditure on outside legal counsel, broken down by legal costs paid out to date and by legal costs scheduled to be paid out, for (i) Attorney General of Canada v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1623-22), (ii) Export Development Canada v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file

T-1793-22 and Federal Court of Appeal file A-345-23), (iii) Minister of Public Services and Procurement v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-125-23), (iv) Clerk of the Privy Council v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1090-23), (v) Clerk of the Privy Council v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1091-23), (vi) Information Commissioner of Canada v. President and Chief Executive Officer of the Trans Mountain Corporation (Federal Court file T-1399-23), (vii) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1606-23), (viii) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1607-23), (ix) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1608-23), (x) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1653-23), (xi) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1680-23), (xii) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1728-23), (xiii) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1764-23), (xiv) Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T- 2022-23), (xv) Information Commissioner of Canada v. Minister of National Defence (Federal Court file T-2683-23), (xvi) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-272-24), (xvii) Minister of Transport v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-280-24), (xviii) Information Commissioner of Canada v. Minister of National Defence (Federal Court file T-333-24), (xix) Information Commissioner of Canada v. Minister of National Defence (Federal Court file T-334-24), (xx) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-342-24), (xxi) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-344-24), (xxii) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-371-24), (xxiii) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-397-24), (xxiv) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-970-24), (xxv) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1054-24), (xxvi) Minister of Canadian Heritage v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1060-24), (xxvii) Information Commissioner of Canada v. Minister of National Defence (Federal Court file T-1226-24), (xxviii) Minister of National Defence v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1433-24), (xxix) Minister of National Defence v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1434- 24), (xxx) Minister of Indigenous Services v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-1556-24), (xxxi) Information Commissioner of Canada v. Chairperson of the Immigration and Refugee Board (Federal Court file T-1822-24), (xxxii) Minister of National Defence v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-2013-24), (xxxiii) Minister of National Defence v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-2681-24), (xxxiv) Minister of National Defence v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-2709-24), (xxxv) Minister of National Defence v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-2720-24), (xxxvi) Minister of National Defence v. Information Commissioner of Canada (Federal Court file T-2779-24)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3152—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to Parks Canada's national fire management program: (a) as of July 22, 2024, what was the breakdown of firefighting equipment available through the program by (i) type of equipment (e.g., fire truck, water tender, helicopter, drone, portable pump, bulldozer, brush cutter, air tanker), (ii) quantity of each equipment type, (iii) storage location, including the quantity of each equipment type at each location; (b) as of July 22, 2024, what was the breakdown of firefighting personnel under the program by (i) qualification level (e.g., certified wildland firefighter, volunteer firefighter, support personnel), (ii) number of personnel at each location; (c) how much of the equipment and personnel specified in (a) and (b) were actively utilized in response to wildfires occurring in National Parks in 2024, broken down by (i) National Park location, (ii) type of equipment and number utilized, (iii) number of personnel deployed; and (d) for all equipment or personnel not utilized in wildfire responses occurring within National Parks in 2024, (i) what was the reason for non-utilization, (ii) what other roles or assignments were designated for this equipment and personnel during this period?

(Return tabled)

S. O. 52

Question No. 3154—Mr. Marc Dalton:

With regard to fires at each place of worship that were caused by arson between 2016-24: (a) for each instance, was the arsonist (i) apprehended, (ii) not apprehended; and (b) for each instance in (a)(i), what were the sentences received?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3155—Mr. Marc Dalton:

With regard to wildfires caused by arson, between 2016-24: (a) what charges and sentences were laid for arsonists; and (b) what are the details of each account of which wildfires were determined to be caused by arsonists, including whether or not the perpetrator was apprehended?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3156—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the Order in Council 2024-1112 authorizing Canada Post to transport prohibited firearms: (a) did the government consult (i) Canada Post, (ii) the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, prior to issuing the Order In Council, and, if so, on what date were they consulted and how were they consulted; (b) how is the government addressing the safety issues that Canada Post employees will face as a result of the Order; (c) what safety precautions have been put into place by Canada Post since the Order was issued; (d) why did the government take the position that it is safer for Canada Post employees to transport prohibited firearms rather than firearms owners who have taken the Canada Firearms Safety Course; (e) will the government require Canada Post employees, who will now be required to transport prohibited firearms, to take the Canada Firearms Safety Course in order to ensure safe transport, and, if not, why not; (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, how much will this training cost Canada Post; and (g) what mechanisms, if any, are in place so that Canada Post employees, who are uncomfortable with transporting firearms, or are not trained to transport firearms, are not forced to do so against their will?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3157—Mr. Ben Lobb:

With regard to government programs aimed at establishing digital credentials or a digital identification (ID): (a) how many employees or full-time equivalents are assigned to working on such a program; (b) how much money has been spent exploring or studying options in relation to such a program in the past five years, in total and broken down by type of expenditure; (c) what is the government's plan for how digital credentials or a digital ID would be used; (d) what options or uses have been studied to date; (e) of the options in (d), which ones have been rejected outright by the government; (f) does the government commit to not establishing any new digital credential or digital ID projects or programs without receiving explicit approval from Parliament prior to starting any such projects or programs, and, if not, why not; and (g) which employees or other individuals has the government authorized to be involved in any related projects or programs, and who is in charge of overseeing the work of the individuals involved?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3158—Mr. Jake Stewart:

With regard to complaints received by the CRA related to its assistance by telephone: (a) what is the number of complaints received since January 1, 2022, broken down by month; and (b) of the totals in (a), what is the breakdown by type of complaint, including (i) the line not working or being out of service, (ii) dropped calls, (iii) long hold times, (iv) others?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 3160—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF): (a) how much of the \$2 billion promised through the fund has been delivered to the recipients to date; and (b) what are the details of all projects funded through the DMAF to date, including, for each, the (i) location, (ii) amount of funding, (iii) project description, (iv) start date, (v) completion date, or expected completion date, (vi) funding breakdown, if the project is funded by sources in addition to the DMAF?

(Return tabled)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand at this time, please.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that I have received notice of a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I invite him to rise and make a brief intervention.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have been in this place now for over 20 years. I have never seen a situation like this before. Today is the day the government waited until to table the fall economic update where it would publish the true deficit numbers that Canadians will be on the hook for.

As the House knows, the former finance minister resigned this morning. Things are unclear; there are some media reports indicating that there may be a replacement now, but at the time of the writing of her letter, it was not even clear who the finance minister was.

All this is at a time when Canadians are facing an emergency situation. They are facing the fastest rate of inflation in over a generation with food inflation; food prices are rising 37% faster here in Canada than in the United States. They are facing a housing crisis that the Prime Minister caused by doubling housing costs with mortgage and rent payments. Two million Canadians are lining up at food banks. There is crime and chaos on our streets, and now the government is in shambles.

By waiting until the second-last day of the December sitting, the government was hoping to table the fall economic update and then run and hide for six weeks in the snow, depriving parliamentarians of holding the government to account, the very thing Parliament exists for: to oversee government spending.

Because of the situation, we find ourselves in an unprecedented case where some new person is going to table the fall economic update, we believe. It is still unclear, according to media reports. It is unclear how the economic update will be presented, and it is unclear whether or not any parliamentarians will be able to participate in any kind of questioning of whichever minister ends up delivering it or tabling it, if one actually does. Then the House will rise at the end of the day tomorrow for six weeks.

Because of this unprecedented and emergency situation, I believe that the best thing you, Mr. Speaker, can do to uphold the integrity of Parliament as an institution that exists to oversee, scrutinize and approve government taxation and spending is to grant an emergency debate. That is what my letter to you outlines.

Privilege

When we look at the situation facing Canada, including threats from abroad; 25% tariffs; staring down the barrel of a gun pointed at us by a U.S. President-elect with a strong and fresh new mandate, who can smell weakness from a mile away; and a cabinet in chaos, with one-fifth of the government caucus demanding that the Prime Minister resign, we believe that it is now time for you, Mr. Speaker, to grant the House at least the opportunity to question the government for a few hours this evening on what should be its fall economic presentation.

The former finance minister herself said that going past the \$40-billion guardrail would plunge the country into another round of nightmarish inflation and interest rate hikes. Media reports are speculating as to how high the deficit will go.

I know that there are precedents and guidelines you, Mr. Speaker, might look to as to whether you should approve an emergency debate. However, given the fact that there is really no other opportunity for parliamentarians to debate the issues, to scrutinize the economic update that is scheduled to happen this afternoon, I believe it is incumbent upon you now, Mr. Speaker to consider the rights of individual MPs and the House as a collective to be the representatives of Canadian taxpayers and to hold the government to account for its economic update later on today.

● (1545)

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle for his intervention, to which I listened very carefully. However, I am not satisfied that the request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[*English*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

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

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member's speech this morning. I would just like him to comment a little on the issue of a rare sighting today, a sighting as rare as the mythical dinosaurs or dodo birds. It was a Liberal with principle, apparently. I did not know that the former minister of finance had principle, but apparently she does, and she resigned over excessive spending by the government.

I am wondering whether the member could comment on the fact that the leader of the NDP seems to have less concern or principle. I believe that if the Prime Minister were to stand up and say that there is going to be an election, the leader of the NDP would probably say that now is not the time for an election.

Could the member comment on the apparent principle that the former minister of finance has, compared to the current NDP leader?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, often I would think it is a trap, but I thank the member for such a great and thoughtful question.

The member is absolutely right. It is sad to see that the NDP has lost all principles. Just for the greed of the leader of the NDP's \$2.2-million pension, New Democrats have sold out Canadians entirely. They have supported the same policies that doubled housing costs, and they have supported the carbon tax scam that has made the cost of everything go up. These are the same policies that drove more than two million Canadians to a food bank in a single month, and now one in four people is starting to skip meals.

The leader of the NDP has sold out Canadians. Also, I do not see many other leaders driving a Maserati, but the leader of the NDP is the guy who sold out and propped up the corrupt government.

● (1550)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We know that the opposition member will say anything and do anything to get attention, but the leader of the New Democratic Party does not drive a Maserati. Lying does not help further the member's argument. I ask for him to withdraw the comment.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

First of all, the hon. member raised a point of order, but he used the word "lying", and he knows that is not acceptable in the House. Could he withdraw the comment, please?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I know truth hurts, so I withdraw.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask members to make sure when they withdraw that they just say "I withdraw." I think that will prevent a lot of dissension in the House.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, I would argue that if the member for Timmins—James Bay gave attention to his own riding, he would not run away before the next election, hiding before his own constituents fire him.

I will get back to the point. Over his \$2.2-million pension, the leader of the NDP is willing to sell out Canadians to prop up the corrupt, weak, woke, fake feminist Prime Minister, who has driven more Canadians into poverty and who has continued to bring about policies that drive more and more people to a food bank.

It is time for a common-sense Conservative government that will bring back the Canada we once knew.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was passionate. He dedicates his life to his riding, his country and this place, to ensure that Canadians get the election they desperately need right now.

Points of Order

We talk about \$400 million of a green slush fund that was supposed to help with environmental projects, but not one was done; in fact, Liberal insiders got rich. My question to the member is as follows: What could \$400 million do if it were used properly in this economy to help the Canadians who are suffering so much? What difference could \$400 million, which the Liberals misused and gave to their friends, do?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, the \$400 million could do a lot, but first of all, let us just address the \$400 million that went to Liberal insiders. A slush fund was created under the guise of climate change just to reward Liberal insiders.

The money could have gone to our brave men and women who serve Canada and who are underserved by the Liberal-NDP government, which refuses to stand up for them and for our brave veterans, who are calling out the Prime Minister for saying that they are asking for too much. They deserve all the respect, and they deserve more than what the corrupt Liberal-NDP government has given them.

* * *

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, given the events from earlier today, I would like to inform the House that, notwithstanding the special order adopted on Wednesday, December 11, 2024, there will not be a statement by the Minister of Finance at 4 p.m. today.

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as you would know, that was an order of the House that the minister is trying to unilaterally withdraw. I seek guidance from you and from the table on whether a minister of the Crown can withdraw a unilateral order of the House to prevent the government from making a statement. I am looking for your advice on whether the government, due to its own disorder and chaos, can now unilaterally withdraw an order of the House of such magnitude.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member.

• (1555)

[Translation]

The member for Berthier—Maskinongé is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order.

The Bloc Québécois is asking for clarifications on the next steps in the process. We received the order that there would be an economic statement today at four o'clock. Our members are here to respond to it. The contents of the economic statement were disclosed in lock-up, so we are ready to address them. We are asking that the

opposition's right to ask questions, to seek clarifications, be respected. We need to know what is going to happen next.

The term “chaos” was used. I think that is a very appropriate word. Amidst all this chaos, what will happen next?

We need some order.

[English]

The Speaker: First of all, I would like to thank the hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

[Translation]

I would also like to thank the member for Berthier—Maskinongé for raising these very important points.

I would like to quote the motion that that House unanimously adopted last week on December 11. By unanimous consent, it was ordered:

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 purpose of this motion, which was adopted by the House of Commons, was to enable the former deputy prime minister and minister of finance to present her economic update. That order asked the Chair to interrupt the House at 4 p.m.

[English]

The hon. member for York—Simcoe.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just for the opposition, could you clarify who the deputy prime minister is and who the minister of finance is at this time?

The Speaker: I am afraid I cannot respond to the hon. member. That is not a question that would be posed to the Speaker, but it is a question that would be posed to the government.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé has a point of order.

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I want this on the record in Hansard. This is absolutely unacceptable. It shows a profound lack of respect for all Quebeckers and Canadians, for all the elected members of the House of Commons. It makes no sense. This is total chaos. It is proof that this government is now completely dysfunctional and that we need an election sooner rather than later.

We needed a demonstration—

• (1600)

[English]

The Speaker: Before I recognize hon. members who are rising on a point of order, I will say the following.

Points of Order

[Translation]

It being 4 p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, December 11, 2024, I am required to interrupt the proceedings to permit the Minister of Finance to make a statement.

[English]

That being said, given the information provided by the government House leader to the House, indicating that the government does not intend to proceed with the statement at this time, the remaining provisions of this motion cannot take effect, which is the period reserved for questions and comments, and the replies from the various parties that are dependent on the statement being made.

[Translation]

In the absence of a statement, the House will resume the business that would normally be before it at this time.

[English]

I will go to a point of order raised by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, followed by the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this has been a chaotic day, but the reality is that this is an order of the House that cannot be countermanded by the government. Our expectation is that the finance minister will be in the House to present the fall economic statement. That is what New Democrats are prepared for. That is what we want to comment on and want to criticize. That is why we are here. This cannot be countermanded by the government itself. Parliament must be respected, and, Mr. Speaker, you must uphold the motion that was adopted unanimously by the House.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this is not to make the same point as my hon. colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby, but given that there was a moment when the Speaker had to stop at four o'clock and seek the presentation, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that we are in a really difficult quandary here, as opposition party members. We were given access, on a confidential, embargoed lock-up basis, to read the document, and now we will not hear it being presented.

I am in a quandary, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. table officers have many volumes in front of them, but unless they have a volume by Lewis Carroll, I do not know if they can answer my question. Am I allowed to talk about the document that is not happening?

The Speaker: I am going to listen to the points of order from various members before I come back to members.

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

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to go over the facts of this case.

Last week, a few days ago, the government House leader negotiated in good faith, with all the opposition parties, a process by which the fall economic update could be tabled in the House. We all agreed on that. That was not something that was going to happen automatically. It took the participation of all parliamentary par-

ties to allow that to happen. We agreed in good faith. We expected it to happen.

Everything that has happened today has been entirely of the government's own making. Parliamentarians should not be deprived of the information as to what the fiscal situation is here in Canada. Canadians are facing an unprecedented crisis on housing, inflation, debt and deficits. The Liberal government has a statutory obligation to table these documents by the end of the year. This is the second last sitting day, and you have just denied a request for an emergency debate on this very same issue.

There is no other opportunity for parliamentarians to find out just how bad the books are. I go back to the point as to the fact that the government itself initiated this agreement. The government committed to opposition parties that it would happen today.

I ask you this, Mr. Speaker. The fact that it is in chaos is not the problem of parliamentarians. It is a problem for Canadians, but it is not a problem caused by Canadians, and they have a right to know exactly what is happening with their tax dollars. For the government to come in at literally the last minute and pull the carpet out from under an economic update is unbelievable. It is not the actions of a serious G7, NATO partner country.

At the very least, Mr. Speaker, I ask that you find the government in contempt of the House order that was passed by all members of this place.

● (1605)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

I see that the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill is also rising on a point of order.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are businesses trying to think about making decisions based on what was supposed to be in the statement today. We have senior economists who have been waiting for this information. Literally, the entire nation's business has been waiting for this. All of us in this place have the right to see these finances. This is why we are here. It is almost to the point of a violation of our privilege to not be able to see this, frankly.

We are being asked to vote on things, without a finance minister, on the day that a budget was to be tabled. This is not what a serious government does. We need to have this information today. It is borderline privilege. Again, as the opposition House leader said, presumably, this is a contempt of Parliament, of the utmost magnitude.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill for her intervention.

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

*Points of Order**[Translation]*

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, the motion adopted on December 11 states that “the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings”. It does not say that the Speaker may interrupt the proceedings. We believe that you have an obligation to interrupt the orders of the day. The Liberals have nothing to say, even though the in camera status has been lifted. There are journalists outside the House right now disclosing the content of the economic update, while we are being told, in all seriousness, that we do not deserve to know what is in the update and that we will not have an opportunity to respond to it or to ask any questions on behalf of our constituents. Some pretty unparliamentary language comes to mind, quite frankly, and I will not resort to using it, but this makes no sense whatsoever. This government has no idea what it is doing.

This is a serious breach of parliamentary privilege. Members of the House deserve to have access to that content. If the government does not have the courage to stand up and present it, then it should table the document. I have colleagues who were at the in camera meeting who could respond to the content of the statement. We demand the right to respond and to uphold the rights of our constituents.

[English]

The Speaker: There are at least three more points of order, which I would like to hear.

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will try to add to what has already been said. Obviously, not only certain parliamentarians have had access already, when most of us do not, but also journalists have had access to it already. That will leak. There is a precedent. In the mid-to-late 1980s, then-finance minister Michael Wilson's printed budget leaked. There is a printed budget that is available to be tabled now, a fall economic statement. They can table those documents now.

When it was leaked, the then minister of finance had to go to the press gallery, because the House was not sitting in the evening, and he actually had to deliver the full budget so that parliamentarians could get access. This is a similar situation in that we now have select people, some of whom are not parliamentarians, who have access to those documents. I personally believe that it is a breach of my privilege that a journalist has access to those documents and that I do not, when the government can simply table the budget, the fall economic statement documents, in the House now, without giving the speech.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets. Indeed, he and I are of the same vintage, and I do remember that. I think it was 1989.

I will recognize the hon. member for Bow River.

● (1610)

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is my point of privilege, which has been infringed upon by what has been done. I feel that it is a very grave injustice for people to have had this information and for them to come in minutes before it was to be announced, after having the document and having been able to use it and read it. My privilege has already been broken.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for Bow River.

I see that the hon. leader of the government in the House of Commons is rising on her feet.

[Translation]

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the 2024 fall economic statement.

[English]

Mr. John Nater: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, now that the fall economic statement has been tabled, I believe we would now proceed to questions to the minister.

Therefore, I would like to ask the government to stand in this place and tell us exactly how big the budget deficit was last year. How much did the government blow past the \$40 billion? Is it a big deficit, or is it a super-duper deficit?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

I see a number of members rising on points of order. We will go first to the member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there might be unanimous consent of the House to now have all parties, including the Green Party, offered the opportunity for 20 minutes for a speech and 10 minutes for a question and comment period afterward.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I just want to remind you that the order that the House adopted was very specific. It states:

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...

A minister of the Crown just came in and made a statement. Her statement was that she was tabling the fall economic update. That is the statement. At the very least, there should now be a 10-minute period of questions and comments. The government House leader chose to have a very short statement. There is nothing we can do about that. She came in, tabled it and then ran out before there could be any accountability or scrutiny.

I believe the most logical thing for the Chair to do would be to accept that as the statement that it was, which I would say is a perfect statement on the state of the Liberal government right now, and, at the very least, allow opposition parties and opposition members to ask questions of the government as to what was in the fall economic update.

Points of Order

• (1615)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on that same point of order, the government House leader stood on a point of order and tabled documents. It is as simple as that.

The Speaker: I thank the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader. Indeed, that was where the Chair was going to go.

I do see that there are a number of members who are rising on points of order. I have not heard from the hon. House leader for the NDP, who is also rising on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a fundamental tenet of parliamentary democracy, transparency and accountability. We have just had the tabling of the document. Therefore, if you seek it, anyone respecting democracy should support the following motion. I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, immediately following the adoption of this motion, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings to permit one member from each recognized opposition party and a member of the Green Party to make a statement of up to 20 minutes, followed by a period of up to 10 minutes for questions and comments related to the fall economic statement.

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

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, there is \$61.9 billion of extra spending in the fall economic statement. I came prepared, and I was at my seat at the time indicated. You went through, in great detail, exactly the process we would follow for the fall economic statement, and the government has reneged. It has done a drop-off, drive-by of a tabling, where the leader of the government spun around and walked right out. That is contemptuous of the adopted motion that we would all be here today to undertake a democratic scrutiny of the government.

The government cannot pick and choose its role. It is subservient to the House. I would ask you to find it in contempt because, obviously, the government is not prepared to allow any other process. This is something that makes not only me and the whole House look bad, it looks terribly on you. I would ask that you would defend our rights as parliamentarians and force, the government through a mechanism, perhaps a contempt motion, and find it in contempt in its duties to the House.

The Speaker: The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the regular proceedings were interrupted for an order. It is a mandatory order. There are different kinds. The language could have said “may.” That is permissive language, and if the order had said “may”, you would have had discretion as to how to proceed. The proceedings were interrupted in the face of a specific order. The order says, “the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings to per-

mit the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to make a statement followed by a period of up to 10 minutes”.

If the government chose not to use its time to make a statement, that is its problem. You are bound by a mandatory order to now give us the opportunity that is set out in the motion. It is not permissive, and it not optional. It is mandatory, and we, as opposition members, expect you to follow and enforce your mandatory order.

The Speaker: The Chair has been placed in a situation where he very much has to follow what is listed here. I thank the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon for quoting the motion. I will say that, yes, it says “the Speaker shall interrupt”, which the Speaker did. More fully, the motion states:

...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 difficulty the Chair finds itself in is that the motion is a permissive motion. The minister chose not to make a statement, by which the rest of the order does not follow.

I will be listening to a number of hon. members about this, and there are a number of members who are on their feet for points of order.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the motion compelled you to interrupt the proceedings, which you did.

The government representative chose not to speak. However, her decision not to speak must not violate the right and parliamentary privilege of members of the opposition parties to make statements, followed by a question period. I do not believe that unanimous consent is needed to proceed in this way. I believe that you, as the Speaker of the House, have the power to decide. It is up to you to decide the length of the speeches, whether 10 minutes or 20 minutes, but there must be speeches. I would remind members that, outside the House, journalists are commenting on the contents of the economic update, while we, parliamentarians, have no such privilege. That is totally unacceptable. Ask anyone and they could answer that question in 30 seconds or less.

I invite you to seriously consider that you have the right to force this debate. If you need to, I suggest that you suspend the House for a few minutes to consult the clerks and the House staff to determine precisely how to move forward. I believe that you have a duty to preserve a semblance of democracy in a country that, need I remind you, is part of the G7. I have extremely bright colleagues who are perfectly able to intervene on the economic update.

If people in the government are unable to do so, that is on them. However, you have a duty and the power to give us the floor.

Points of Order

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order.

I just spent the past few hours in camera analyzing the budget documents and preparing to speak in the House because there was an agreement allowing me to present my party's position.

I analyzed the document with colleagues and with my entire team. We prepared our position to present in the House.

At the very least, each party should be allowed to present its position. If the government is too disorganized to do so, that is too bad, but we are prepared and we want to discuss this.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, and it is not often that I get a chance to do this, but I feel it is important to rise to concur with the opposition MPs who have stood in the House to call on you to bring the government to order and present to the country what its vision of the future is so that we can have an adequate debate. I find it rather gormless that they came into the House, dropped the document and then left without an opportunity for us to debate here today.

I am prepared to listen to the member for Vancouver Kingsway present the NDP's vision for the future of this country, and I know that the other opposition parties also have their vision. That is what a Westminster system is designed for. There has been disorder in the House, but certainly nothing more chaotic than what we have witnessed over the last hour here.

I call on the Speaker, in concordance with members of the Bloc, the Conservative Party and, indeed, the Green Party, to bring the government to order to allow us to have a full debate on the fall economic statement.

The Speaker: I understand the hon. member's frustration in this situation, but the Chair is bound by the decision that was passed by the House. After much debate and consultation, I have to follow the order that was made by the House. I interrupted the proceedings, and the minister chose not to make a statement. Therefore, the rest of the motion does not apply.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

With all due respect, we disagree with the decision that you are making and with your interpretation of the motion.

This is all a bit surreal. I do not have the right to say who is here and who is not, but I can say in a roundabout way that there are not a lot of government caucus members here right now. That is an unbelievable affront. You cannot just ignore that.

This is a great opportunity to gain the confidence of many members and to show that you are serious about managing the House, even if it means calling a vote. I think that we will have a majority and that we can have a debate. That would be the bare minimum.

Right now, this is being debated outside the House in the media. What an absurd situation this is.

The Speaker: Unfortunately, it goes beyond my power as Speaker to circumvent an order that was adopted by the House of Commons. I consulted the clerks at the table to see what the options are, but there are no options available to us on this issue.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I certainly hope that we will be able to respond to this very important document at this time. We have a responsibility to be transparent with all Canadians. It is important that we discuss this document that was tabled in the House.

[*English*]

As such, I am going to try again. I move that notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, immediately following the adoption of this motion, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings to permit one member from each recognized opposition party and a member of the Green Party to make a statement of up to 20 minutes, followed by a period of up to 10 minutes for questions and comments related to the fall economic statement.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Surely the hon. member for Winnipeg North would at least give the country the courtesy to rise in his place right now and to tell the rest of the country why he continues to shut down this debate.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I would like you to consider this as a matter of contempt of Parliament. The finance minister resigned this morning at 8 a.m. The economic statement was to be delivered at 4 p.m. this afternoon. The Prime Minister had ample opportunity to appoint another finance minister and deputy prime minister and have them sworn in to issue the fall economic statement. That to me, and I hope you agree, is a point of contempt. The government knew this motion was in place and that it was agreed to by all parties. It failed this Parliament and therefore failed Canadians, and I believe it is in contempt.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

As the NDP finance critic, I have attended the lock-up, I have read the fall economic statement and I have gone to considerable lengths, along with my colleagues, to prepare the New Democrats' response to this. What I find patently unfair is that the government has chosen to release that document to the public at four o'clock. That document, a very thick book of policies, is now circulating, but there is no opportunity for any other opposition person to have a comment on that, whether Conservative, Bloc, New Democrat or Green, and that is patently unfair. In fact, I would say that it is undemocratic.

You cannot allow the government to present its case and then not allow opposition to present its case in return. That may be how autocracies work, but that is not how democracies work. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you allow a specific member from each party to have up to 20 minutes so that we can have our comment on this document, as the Liberals have.

I find it, frankly, a little infuriating that the government has allowed its voice to be heard in this document, but stands in this House and says “no” to allowing any other party to have its say. That is not democratic.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

● (1630)

[*Translation*]

PRIVILEGE

REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

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

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I am shocked to be rising in the House of Commons to announce this government's deficit. Usually, the Liberals would be the ones to announce the deficit in their economic update. However, they came to the House of Commons to table an economic update without even wanting to give a speech about it. They do not even have a finance minister who is brave enough to talk about it. He is hiding at Rideau Hall rather than doing his job.

There were three finance ministers today. The former minister of finance and deputy prime minister stepped down. Right after that, the Minister of Industry automatically became the finance minister under cabinet's system of delegation. He immediately announced that he, too, was resigning because he did not want to take responsibility for the country's finances given what he had just learned about them. The Minister of Public Safety, who was responsible for securing our broken borders in light of the U.S. president-elect's tariff threats, has now become the Minister of Finance.

However, he is nowhere to be found. His whereabouts are a great mystery. What is no longer a mystery, however, is the staggering size of the deficit. We were promised that the federal deficit would not surpass the \$40-billion guardrail. The reality is that the deficit has reached \$62 billion. That is 55% higher than promised eight months ago. It is out of control.

I will give the former finance minister credit for seeing, a few months ago, just how dangerous this government's deficit was. It was threatening to increase inflation, slowing interest rate cuts, jeopardizing our social programs and slowing our economic growth. That is why she said there would be a red line to prevent the deficit from going beyond \$40 billion. It was a guardrail. Guardrails prevent buses from falling off cliffs.

Then the Prime Minister took the wheel. He pulled to the left. He hit the guardrail. The bus is now falling off the cliff and is at the bottom of the ravine in a big pile of debt that threatens the future of

Privilege

Canadians. That is why, today, we are announcing that we are going to vote against this plan. We are calling on the NDP do its job, for once, and vote in favour of a non-confidence motion on this out-of-control, corrupt and costly government. We need an election. That is what we need.

Here is an astonishing fact. My grandfather came to Canada from Ireland. Why? Because Ireland was poor. Today, Ireland is twice as rich as Canada. It has a GDP per capita of \$100,000. Ours is \$50,000. Although they have no oil or natural resources and lack the huge advantage of living next to the United States, which has the largest economy in the world, the Irish are now twice as rich as we are because they made good decisions. I was told that there are only two kinds of people in the world: Irish people and people who want to be Irish. From an economic perspective, that is true.

● (1635)

Ireland reduced taxes, cut the red tape to speed up big projects, and opened its economy to give entrepreneurs economic freedom and to reduce the size of government. The Government of Ireland costs 23% of the country's economy. Here, it costs more than 40%. When the Irish government was cut in half, the wealth of its citizens doubled.

We know what to do. We need to break down all the barriers that governments have put in place. We need to cut back on bureaucracy, consultants and corporate nonsense, which is a big waste of money. We need to reduce deficits and taxes, eliminate red tape, and allow freedom of competition and open-mindedness. This will let us generate bigger paycheques that people will bring home to invest in their communities. That will let us lower inflation and taxes and have a dollar that keeps its value.

That is what we are going to do to fight the threat that future President Trump and his tariffs pose. We are going to bring investment back to Canada to build things and to become the freest economy in the world and the richest people in the world. That should be our goal.

Enough with the chaos, division, poverty, homelessness and misery caused by the NDP-Liberal socialist government. Now we need to get back to the principle of common sense, the basic principle. We are going to bring home the promise that anyone, no matter where they come from, can work hard and fulfill their dreams, that people can earn a big paycheque or pension so they can pay for affordable food and housing in a safe community. That is what common sense means. That is what we are going to do to put Canada first.

*Privilege**[English]*

I rise today, flabbergasted by the news that has just been made public. The government has finally revealed its true deficit number. Let us remember, the finance minister, this outgoing and now former finance minister told the world that she was putting in place guardrails to limit the damage that her deficits could do. Her deficit plan was \$40 billion, a mind-bogglingly large number, that was already contributing to rekindling inflation, again.

This \$40 billion was too big. It was out of control, as it was. However, at least to her credit, she said, "No more than that." She decided she would have a guardrail. We know a guardrail is meant to stop vehicles from flying off cliffs. She was trying throughout the year to avoid going off the cliff.

There were two people on the bus who had other ideas, the Prime Minister and carbon tax Carney. The two of them went to the front of the bus, they grabbed the wheel, they pulled it sharply to the left, smashing into that guardrail, and she tried to resist. They pulled even further to the left, and they stepped on the gas. The bus flew off the cliff, and now Canadians are at the bottom of the ravine in a big pile of debt.

However, instead of taking responsibility, the Prime Minister told her that she should take all the blame. That when the ambulances, the police cruisers and the fire department arrived, she should take the blame for running the bus off the cliff, and that carbon tax Carney and the Prime Minister could innocently sit back. The Prime Minister could then put carbon tax Carney in charge of driving the next bus. The good old boys in the back room would protect themselves and make the then-finance minister take all the blame.

● (1640)

It reminds us of the way they treated the former Attorney General, a brilliant and brave first nations woman who refused to kowtow to corruption. It reminds us of the way the Liberals treated Jane Philpott and so many other brave women who have dared question the self-described feminist Prime Minister. Indeed, some feminist he is, throwing the bus off the cliff and throwing women under the bus. That is his real record.

His real record on finance is yet another \$62-billion deficit. For context, outside the current government, no government in the history of Canada has ever run a \$62-billion deficit. Not even in the nineties, when *The Wall Street Journal* said we were a third world basket case, and not even during the massive global economic crisis did the deficit come anywhere close to that, yet here we are.

With the global economy growing, with the American economy booming in stable times, this deficit is 100% at the feet of the irresponsible Prime Minister and his personal economic adviser, carbon tax Carney. Now Carney says he does not even want the job of finance minister. He does not even want to try to drive the crashed-out bus after he helped run it off the cliff. The Liberals could not find anyone all day. In fact, no one will appear today to defend this incredible disaster of a budget.

We can look at the consequences in human terms: We have 1,400 homeless camps in Ontario and 35 homeless encampments in Halifax alone. Two million people are lined up at food banks. Scurvy is

making a comeback. The government admits that one in four children is going to school hungry every single day. Unemployment is rising and, according to the budget, expected to exceed 7% by the end of next calendar year. The gap between per capita GDP in Canada and the U.S. is now 30,000 Canadian dollars, although it was equal 10 years ago. This is the worst gap since at least the Second World War, and some say it is the worst gap in a century.

Canadian workers are only getting 55¢ of investment for every dollar an American worker gets. A half a trillion Canadian investment dollars, which works out to almost a quarter of our economy, has left, net. It has gone to the United States to build pipelines, factories, warehouses and business centres; Canadian investment dollars are paying American wages while our workers go starving for investment and for salaries to pay their bills.

When I travel across this country, I consistently meet two types of people. There are those who are a little better off. I will be very blunt about this. They tell me that if I do not win, they will leave the country. They are very numerous. I do not worry about them as much. Do members know whom I worry about? I worry about the ones who cannot leave. Using very blunt language, they are the ones who tell me, "I don't know what the hell I'm going to do. I have no idea how I'm going to pay my way."

I met a waitress at a restaurant not long ago. She came up to me, grabbed me by the hand and said that I have to win. I thanked her and said that I appreciated her support. She said, no, it was not a compliment. Then she told me her story. She was working one full-time job and two part-time jobs just to pay her bills. This is a single woman in her late fifties, and she was tired of working all the time. She had cut everything out of her budget, every creature comfort and everything she enjoyed about her life, so that she could drop one of those part-time jobs. One morning, she woke up, walked outside and her car was gone. She called her insurance, and they said they were not going to cover the replacement value. She had to take that job back because she simply cannot live her life without a car.

Colleagues can bet their bottom dollar that the guy who stole the car was probably out on bail. This was not his first job. This woman's taxes and heating bill have gone up. Her wages have not gone up. She is scared to go out in the streets, in places where they did not even lock the door not long ago. These are the people we are fighting for.

● (1645)

These silly games over here are very entertaining, as is the soap opera that everyone is seized with today. That is all fine, but there are real people whose lives are on the line. We have a duty to work for them.

Quite frankly, this woman does not see me or any of us as any kind of saviour. They see us all as a last hope. In fact, she does not want to be saved; she just wants her life back. She was taking care of herself just fine before her tax, her heat and her grocery bill went through the roof and her car went missing. She was doing everything right.

I met a guy at the Labatt brewery a few days ago, and members can watch the video of me talking with him. He walked up to me and said he works three jobs, but his family cannot make it. They are renting. They have no hope. They have given up on ever owning a home. They can barely make it. He said to me that he feels ashamed when he talks to his kids because they ask why he is never around and why they can never have a house. He feels like a failure.

He did not fail. He has been failed. He has been robbed of the promise of Canada. It was a very simple promise: If we worked hard, we got a good life. It was not fancy or extravagant, but we got a house with a yard, where we could have kids playing safely. We could have a nice dog that we could afford to feed, along with the kids. Our kids could play safely in the streets. That was the promise.

Politicians break promises all the time, but do we know what was bad about this promise? This promise did not belong to the Prime Minister. It was not his promise to break. It belonged to all of us. Our purpose is to bring home that promise for that young man, that young father, and that older female worker, so that they can take back control of their lives once again and live in a safe country where their hard work earns them a good wage, where the rent and food are affordable and where, when they go to bed at night, they know that they will be safe throughout their sleep and that they will have their car in their driveway in the morning. Our purpose is to have a country where people are proud to fly the flag again, where they know that the government is a servant and not a master and where they understand that the Commons, this place, works for the common people every day, not for the ego of one man desperate to cling to his job.

We must remember that we are servants in this place. We have a job to do on behalf of the people who sent us here. Our personal dramas are not important. The dramas that should seize all of our concern and imagination are the daily dramas of the working women and men who build this country. We are in it for them. We are going to give them control of their lives back in the freest country on earth, Canada. Let us bring it home.

[*Translation*]

The Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bow River, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton, Democratic Institutions.

• (1650)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no one who tries to portray a false impression that Canada is broken more than the leader of the Conservative Party

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does, both inside and outside the House. The reality is that Canada is the best country in the world to call home. We can do a world-wide tour where we will see that, whether it is interest rates or inflation rates, Canada is virtually second to no other G7 country. When we think of such things as foreign investment, we were third in the entire world in 2023.

To the leader of the Conservative Party, I say that Canada is not, in fact, broken. I would remind him that he sat around a cabinet table with Stephen Harper, to whom Canadians sent a very resounding message back in 2015. A third party took over as the government of the day because his government back then was such a disaster.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, absolutely everything is broken today, and 70-plus per cent of Canadians agree with me on that. The borders are broken. There are half a million people here illegally, according to the government's own documents. The immigration system is broken. We now have refugee camps, something we only used to see in third world countries. They are being set up across our country in formerly tranquil and peaceful suburbs. The drugs and disorder have broken our communities. We have lost more people to drug overdoses in the last nine years than died fighting for Canada in the Second World War.

Absolutely everything is broken after nine years of the pathetic Prime Minister, who is hiding under his desk right now.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with a lot of what my hon. colleague said in terms of his description of how difficult it is for many Canadians. I do not know that I would say everything is broken, but I can say that a lot of people are broke. A lot of families are struggling. Fifty per cent of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque, and one out of four parents is skipping meals to feed their children.

The NDP proposed giving those people an immediate cut by permanently removing the GST from life's essentials, such as home heating, all grocery items, cellular and Internet bills, and diapers. However, he voted against that. If he thinks everything is broken and truly believes that people are struggling right now, why did he vote against the NDP motion that would have given people an immediate 5% break on life's essentials?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, I find it incredible that, even when there is no Liberal minister willing to defend the temporary two-month GST tax trick, the NDP is there to defend it for them.

An hon. member: You voted against a permanent cut. That's dishonest.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: We have a tax trick that will cost more to administer than it will save anybody, that many vendors are not even implementing and that will be gone before it starts. The NDP member has—

Privilege

The Speaker: I would ask the hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway, who had the opportunity to ask a question, to please wait until he is recognized by the Speaker again.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, the member wants me to tell the truth about the permanent tax change. There is a permanent tax change he has supported, which is to jack up the carbon tax on absolutely everything. He has voted to quadruple that tax to an eye-watering 61¢ a litre that would literally grind our economy to a halt. It would take food off grocery shelves, take parts out of factories and shut down the farm vehicles that bring us our food. It would be a nuclear winter if the tax increase that he has voted to legislate into place ever happens. That is why we need a carbon tax election: so that I can axe the tax.

• (1655)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is rare that the Green Party gets to put a question to the leader of the official opposition, so I will take this opportunity.

I will start by saying there was nothing in his statement with which I could disagree, because it vaulted us into a frenzy of patriotism. I love this country. There is no place in the world I would rather live than in Canada, but the hon. leader of the official opposition also maybe gave us a chance to get to know him a bit better. What would he do instead?

He mentioned he had met a waitress. He has known me for a long time. I was a waitress for more than a decade and could not afford to go to university, but only in Canada was it possible for me to go to law school as a mature student. Since I did not join a political party until I was over 50, what jobs has he held in real life outside politics that make him think he could be prime minister?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: I would be happy to talk about jobs, Mr. Speaker. My first job here was to help pass the Federal Accountability Act to crack down on the corruption that we have seen on the Liberal side. I then helped cut the GST so that Canadians could save when they made every single consumer purchase; it was cut from 7% to 6% to 5%. I worked with former prime minister Harper to help balance the budget and rebuild the military so that we would have necessary equipment to help destroy al Qaeda after the attacks of 9/11. I helped deliver the lowest inflation of any government in 40 years, leaving behind a balanced budget and the best balance sheet of any government in the G7.

In fact, it turns out that the job experience I have is best aligned with the job that I promise to do. Now let us bring it home.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the words of the leader of the official opposition bring great hope to Canadians at a time when they need it most. The Liberal Prime Minister committed to a massive \$40-billion deficit as the guardrail. Now, of course, that is an irresponsible number, \$40 billion, but that is what the promise was, and they smashed through it. Who are the “they”? It is the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister and carbon tax Carney, his real economic adviser. They tried to pin this massive failure on their former finance minister. She declared she did not have confidence in the Prime Minister and that she would not support him.

I know he will have some very insightful wisdom for Canadians, so my question to the leader of the official opposition is this: What can Canadians look forward to that a common-sense Conservative government would do to restore fiscal sanity and clean up this \$62-billion mess the Prime Minister has created?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, it is such a tough question; I almost did not want to stand up and answer it for a second there. It is a big mess. It is an incredible mess the Prime Minister will leave behind when he takes a run, and I understand that might happen any minute, as carbon tax Carney is lining up. We almost wonder if carbon tax Carney planned it all this way. He is the top economic adviser. He pushed all of these extra spending measures on the former finance minister and then she objected to the crazy \$62-billion deficit. She is out now. The Prime Minister might soon be out. Who will walk up? Well, carbon tax Carney will, taking the wheel of the bus after he helped crash it.

He not the only one. There is also the getaway car. Who has been driving the getaway car? It is the NDP leader. Today, he said the Prime Minister should resign. However, just days ago he voted to keep the Prime Minister exactly where he is. It is time for the NDP leader to state clearly that not only has he lost confidence in the Prime Minister, but he is prepared to vote non-confidence or take any other legal steps necessary to express non-confidence in the Prime Minister in order to trigger a carbon tax election as soon as possible.

• (1700)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, the member for Vancouver Kingsway be permitted to speak a second time to this subamendment.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the member for Joliette.

First, this is an unusual situation. Personally, I have 10 years of experience and I have never seen anything like this in Parliament. It is total chaos.

I will come back to the economic update, the story of a horror or a horror story. We have been asking for an economic update for a long time. It is tradition. The government has to face the public and provide an update on its economic record. We have been talking about this document since November. We were insistent. We kept asking when they were going to present it. They did not know. They were not sure.

Finally, someone on that team had the bright idea to do this the day before the end of the session. Taken aback, the others said, "Why not? We have not reached the height of absurdity yet, so let's go". That is how it was decided to wait until the last minute to present the economic update.

Now things have gotten really crazy. The finance minister and deputy prime minister has resigned. She felt the economic statement was ludicrous and decided not to table it. She got upset and left. She continues to speak out against the Prime Minister, which is very noble, I must admit. Who knows whether there will be an economic update; there is no finance minister.

Then, we eventually found out that there is a new Minister of Finance, someone who has all sorts of roles and who, it seems, always manages to settle matters, one way or another. He is like a firefighter—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I hate to interrupt the hon. member, but some members in the House are having discussions. No one interrupted their leader when he was speaking. I would ask people to leave quietly if they wish to talk and give the hon. member for La Prairie the respect he deserves.

The hon. member for La Prairie.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the government chose the patron saint of hopeless causes, or perhaps I should say the patron saint of desperate causes, as the new Minister of Finance. Today, the government was supposed to table the economic update and present it to the House. One does not need a PhD to know that the government has to make a speech when it tables such a document and that the opposition must have the right to reply. However, the government has muzzled MPs. I watched all of this play out. The Liberals are as confused as a chameleon in a bag of Skittles. They are completely lost. We are all wondering whether we are going to have a right of reply. We found a way to reply, and we are very happy about that.

We were on pins and needles as we waited for the economic update. We thought that it might contain something extraordinary, but there was nothing there except one very important thing. The only essential information is this. In April, the former finance minister promised, hand on heart, that the deficit would not exceed \$40 billion. I am certain she was sincere. However, since then, all we have seen is problem after problem.

In October, the Parliamentary Budget Officer forecast a deficit of \$46.8 billion. That was worrying. Then the election goodies started, with the Prime Minister handing them out left and right. People had to calm him down a bit, but the Prime Minister was not done yet. He is a bit over the top when it comes to spending. We now find ourselves staring down a \$48.3-billion deficit, and that is not the end of it either. There are three and a half months to go be-

Privilege

fore the end of the fiscal year. It is worrying. That is what the economic update offered. My colleague will talk about that in more detail.

In reading this document, it is clear that there is nothing exceptional about it, except for one thing: the Minister of Finance resigned. The person who was supposed to table this document stepped down. She chose not to table it because she has principles. Perhaps the Prime Minister can learn something from his former finance minister. She had promised not to exceed \$40 billion, but she did not agree with the Prime Minister.

At one point, the Prime Minister had Mr. Morneau resign because he was not spending enough. Some people are saying that the Prime Minister provoked the finance minister's resignation because he did not think she was spending enough. That is disturbing. It is always easy to spend other people's money, and the Prime Minister knows a thing or two about that.

Today, the Deputy Prime Minister resigned. This is like if Spock, from *Star Trek*, threw himself out a porthole to escape the *Enterprise* after losing all trust in Captain Kirk. It is unheard of. People are saying that the Deputy Prime Minister resigned, but keep in mind that she was the second-in-command of the government. She took a few swipes at the Prime Minister on her way out the door, too. Obviously, I mean figurative swipes.

We had a government that was not working well. Everything it touched turned to mud. It had the opposite of the Midas touch. As soon as something that was working well landed on the Prime Minister's desk, it turned to mud, with lots of smoke pouring out from everywhere.

There were 20 Liberal mutineers who were popular this summer. Then that number climbed to 40. It was not clear what was going on. Finally, the mutineers calmed down. Now there are eight ministers who are not running in the next election, but it does not end there. There are eight ministers that we know of who are saying they are not interested in running in the next election. They did not exactly put it that way. They came up with excuses. They see the polls and they have to turn the poll upside down to see if they are in first place. At some point, they looked at the polls and realized that things were not going their way. They started talking amongst themselves. It seems like the Prime Minister is the only one who thinks he still has a chance, but he has never been good with numbers. That might explain some things.

The Liberal Deputy Prime Minister has decided to jump ship. I feel for those folks. I saw their faces during question period. They are going through a tough time. I look at the Prime Minister and wonder whether the guy still has the confidence of his members. I think not. Does he have the confidence of his ministers? Except for a few of them, I think it is safe to say the answer is no. Does he have the confidence of the people? I think it is safe to say the answer there is also no.

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The Bloc Québécois has a proposal for the Prime Minister. He remains convinced that he is the right person for the job. The proof is that he was the first head of state to visit Donald Trump at Mar-a-Lago. He was barely out the door when Trump started insulting him. He called him the governor of the 51st state. If he was trying to show leadership on the international stage, it is fair to say that he missed the mark, so there is that, too.

• (1705)

Every time he does something, it does not work. He reminds me of the donkey that always has a dark cloud over its head in the adventures of Winnie the Pooh. If he were the only one getting wet, it would not matter so much, but he is dragging the public down with him. It is not funny.

The Bloc Québécois has been telling the government that we have a responsibility in the House. The House has been paralyzed for the past three months because the government is refusing to hand over documents. We have been talking to the government and asking it why it does not free up Parliament. The government says that it is because it does not want to hand over the documents, even though it has been ordered by the House to do so. The government does not want to hand over the documents, and Parliament is paralyzed. However, that does not bother the government because it no longer has any vision or ideas.

The only idea that the government had was the GST holiday. I think the government can let that go, calm down, take a shower and have a cup of tea. That is the only decision that the government has made, and it has been condemned by economists, Quebeckers and business owners. Everyone was against that idea. The government spent \$1.6 billion on a ridiculous GST holiday.

I could tell all kinds of stories about that. It is completely ridiculous, and nobody can figure out how it works. For example, the GST exemption applies to soft dolls. A woman had a soft doll with a rigid head, so the question was what to do about that and whether the doll was exempt. It took 12 people to talk about it and figure it out. What is that all about? That is what things have come to. This is a government that does not deserve Canadians' confidence and that does not have Canadians' confidence. The Prime Minister believes otherwise.

The Bloc Québécois talks to people. We listen to them, we hear them. What we are hearing is that Quebeckers want this government out of office. The government no longer represents them. Did they ever really feel it represented them? They likely did, since the Liberals were elected. However, their expiry date has passed. What we would like is for this Prime Minister to act like a statesman, like de Gaulle. He should stand up in the House and roll up his sleeves. If he is convinced he is right, he should call an election. It is the only option he has left.

The Bloc Québécois will be there. We are going to criss-cross Quebec, we are going to talk to Liberal members and we are going to take part in debates. We are going to make Quebeckers understand that the only credible option to defend Quebec's interests in the House, the only party that looks them in the eye and only in the eye, the only party that speaks for them without compromise, the only party that knows their values and their needs, is the Bloc Québécois. We will be back in the House with a lot more MPs.

• (1710)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on something I understood the Bloc was actually fairly supportive of, and that was the idea of the tax holiday break for people in all regions of the country. It was an election platform issue for the Conservative Party. It had made a commitment, but instead of two months, it was only going to be for one month. Even the leader of the Conservative Party talked very positively about that in his tweet. Then the Conservatives changed their minds. I am wondering if the deputy leader from the Bloc can provide his thoughts in regard to that specific issue.

Does he believe it benefits the people of Quebec and, in fact, the people of Canada to give them this tax break during the holiday season?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, I must commend the Liberal member for his courage. He rises quite often to speak. I think he holds the record for the number of speeches given, and I sincerely commend him for that.

Eliminating the GST on certain products cannot be done willy-nilly like that. It does not sit well with people. In Quebec, almost everyone feels that way. People do not like that, and businesses are tearing their hair out over this two-month measure. Taxes are going to be taken off some products, but we are still not entirely sure which products the measure covers. Two months later, the government is going to reapply the tax. I think it cost the public treasury \$1.6 billion. They say that people will benefit from this measure, but we need to know who is going to benefit. Who is going to benefit the most from these one-time exemptions? It will not be the people in greatest need, the people who need more help from the government. They are not the ones who stand to benefit. In economics, this is called a regressive measure. It is not a good measure.

At some point, the government has to take the public money contributed by taxpaying Quebeckers and Canadians. Before that money even reaches their pockets the government takes it away. We need a more serious approach. The Liberals are managing things haphazardly and they could have done better. We have a few suggestions for them. All they have to do is listen.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always nice to hear from my Bloc Québécois colleague, with whom I had the pleasure, honour and dignity of sitting in the National Assembly years ago. I hope we can continue serving together in the future.

The member did a great job giving an overview of what happened today, which is completely ridiculous and embarrassing for all Canadians and Quebeckers. I am of course referring to when this government's second-in-command decided to leave, literally slamming the door on her way out. Today, we had government members who arrived late with a piece of paper, tabled it and then refused to have the necessary debate. My colleague gave a very good description of the problems with the GST, among other things. As far as I can remember, this is the first time that a government has made a so-called tax cut and gotten pumelled for it. I have never seen that in any democracy.

Why has the Bloc Québécois maintained its confidence over the past few years and voted in favour of the government's inflationary deficits more than 190 times? Just last week, when it had nothing—

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We are running out of time, and I have to allow the hon. member for La Prairie to respond.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, listening to the beginning of my colleague's intervention, even I was convinced that he was ready to come knock on doors in my riding so that I could win. I like my colleague a lot, and I could picture what a fun time we would have together.

I have a very simple challenge for the member. Every time the Bloc Québécois voted, it voted in the interest of Quebec and only in the interest of Quebec.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, they are mad because they know that I am right. They should listen to me and let me speak.

I challenge him to pick any Bloc Québécois vote from any time, look at the bill we were voting on, and think about Quebec's interests. He will see that the Bloc Québécois always voted in the interest of Quebec and only in the interest of Quebec. We are always on the right track. I will never be ashamed of my decisions. Take any bill that I have voted on. I can say that I will not be embarrassed about how I voted on it. I can talk to my constituents without blushing. I can look anyone in the eye and tell them that they can be sure the Bloc Québécois is there for them.

We make no compromises. We have a clear conscience, and we are proud of what we are accomplishing here.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague to look at the situation that the Canadian government is currently in from someone else's perspective, for example, someone from another country.

What are his thoughts on that?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, it is rather disheartening. Take, for example, the Prime Minister's visit to see Donald Trump.

What did other world leaders think when the Prime Minister had no comeback to being called the governor of the 51st state?

Do members really believe that this is the kind of international representation that Quebeckers and Canadians deserve?

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The answer is simple: We deserve better.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, today in the House, the government tabled the 2024 fall economic statement. Whose economic statement is it, exactly? Did the former finance minister, who announced her resignation this morning, draft it? I am not sure, because she chose to resign rather than endorse it. Is it the economic statement of the new finance minister, who was probably just sworn in moments ago and was the Minister of Public Safety? Has he even read it?

It was the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons who came to table the document in the House, without making a speech or delivering the speech that was probably already prepared. Does the government House leader endorse this economic statement, given that she decided to table it but did bother getting up to defend it? In a few minutes, will the now Minister of Finance, who was the Minister of Public Safety, come in and defend this document? Does he know how many pages it has? Does he know what is on the cover? Has he held it in his hands? We do not know.

This statement is obviously very disappointing, even if we do not know who wrote it. Perhaps it was the Prime Minister, but we do not know. One thing is certain, this statement does not tell us much. This government has run out of steam and has little direction. It is a bit like a rudderless ship with a torn sail, and its only hope is to rely on a lucky star to get it where it needs to go. That is what it feels like, reading this document. We do not know whose responsibility it is at the moment, because no one is defending it.

There are two interesting numbers in this document. There is the deficit for the current year, but, most importantly, the fall statement—which is more like a sad Christmas statement, the Christmas of a grinch government, we might say—includes the amount of last year's deficit. We finally have the figure for last year's deficit. We can read that amount in this document. To reassure the economic class in English Canada and the economic interests of Canada, the former finance minister said she would put in a fiscal anchor. She said it was true that they kept exceeding the deficit since 2015, that they kept spending too much, that they would set an anchor at \$40 billion and that we had her word.

Last year's deficit is \$61.9 billion. We found that out just before leaving for the holidays in a document tabled at the last minute and defended by who knows who. Why? Because the government still has not tabled the public accounts. They are usually tabled in September, but I think we are not going to get them before the end of this year. It will surely be in the first sitting days of next year. If not, there is still tomorrow. We are talking about a \$61.9-billion deficit for last year. The former finance minister, however, hand on her heart, said it would be \$40 billion, that it was time to stop spending money left and right, and that we had her word.

Privilege

Now, she has stepped down and we are seeing that last year's deficit was \$61.9 billion. What will it be this year? The year is not over yet. As the House leader of the Bloc Québécois was saying a few moments ago, there are still three and half months left in the year and the government has already exceeded the \$40-billion mark, despite a solemn promise to the contrary. The deficit is now just over \$48 billion. I am anxious to see what it will be at the end of March. When will we find out? Will it be next Christmas or after the election? That is how lax the current government is. That is what we have been seeing. This is truly ridiculous. It makes no sense. This economic statement is going to go down in history for all the wrong reasons. The former finance minister chose to step down rather than endorse this economic statement, which discredits everything the government has done.

The government made a commitment. Apart from the appalling figures, that is about all we saw. We were told that a border plan would be presented. That did not happen in this document. It is not a plan, it is a number. It says \$1.3 billion for the borders over the next six years. Why \$1.3 billion? Because, converted into U.S. dollars, that is \$1 billion. President-elect Trump will be happy; \$1 billion is good. We tried to grill officials a bit by asking what the money will be used for. Will it be for drones, guards, helicopters?

• (1720)

There is no plan. Officials said that they would put a number on it and that, eventually, there would be a plan. The former finance minister wrote that, but she resigned so she would not have to endorse it, and the new Minister of Finance has no idea what is in the document. It is really embarrassing. Why did the minister resign? It is because she had promised not to exceed \$40 billion, but her government keeps resorting to vote-buying measures, like the \$1.64 billion for the GST break. That is in there.

The government is going further into debt to give people gifts in hopes of boosting its standing in the polls, but it is not working. Meanwhile, all the business owners are having to adjust to this, for just two months. It makes no sense. People think it is not significant enough to make them change their spending choices. When we look at the items that are zero-rated, there are some good ones, such as diapers and children's clothing, but the focus seems to be on restaurants, alcohol and junk food. Is that responsible? The Prime Minister announced that he wanted to send \$250 cheques to everyone earning up to \$150,000 net income, which amounts to \$270,000 gross income per year, but not to people who really need it. He thought this would give him a boost in the polls. In the end, he is all alone. I do not think there is a single line in that statement about the infamous cheques. The measure has simply been forgotten and will never be mentioned again.

Another thing missing from the economic statement is capital gains. Members will recall that the government said in its last budget that it would be implementing this measure to try to balance the books. That was supposed to happen in June 2024. There was a notice of ways and means, but ultimately it was no good. No bill ever followed. Then we were told about another notice of ways and means, but ultimately, it also failed and was never introduced. I was really looking forward to going in camera to read this document and find out the details.

When are we going to get to see the details? There is not a single line about that either. We know that it amounts to \$7 billion this year. If this measure is not implemented, it means another \$7 billion will be added to the deficit. That is not to mention all the businesses and individuals who made decisions based on this measure. Frankly, none of it makes any sense. This government is a ship drifting off course with no rudder and no sail. I think that, out of respect, as the former finance minister said in her letter to the Prime Minister, we must work for the public first, ahead of party and personal interests. In the interests of the common good, an election must be called, because right now we see nothing but an endless parade of debacles, ineptitude and infighting.

There are a few measures in the economic statement, but nothing really new or meaningful. It is mostly about extending programs. The bulk of the spending it sets out is for 2028, 2029 and 2030, at the end of the next term in office or after that. The minister must have thought that the Liberals would win a majority government because it seems the Liberals were already planning what they will do in the final years of that majority term. As the House leader of the Bloc Québécois was saying earlier, St. Jude is the patron saint of hopeless causes. I think that, at this point, the government should go light some candles to ask for help from St. Jude, although even St. Jude no longer has confidence in this government.

In the meantime, the needs are there. What is more, some needs, such as supply management, would not cost the government anything. The supply management bill is still stuck in the Senate. Are we ever going to see it pass? Is the government doing its job? No, it is not. The religious exemption for hate speech would not cost a penny. It is urgently needed, considering what we are seeing in the streets, considering what is happening, yet the government is not doing anything to eliminate it. The help we wanted for seniors aged 65 to 74 would have cost half as much as the election goodies that the government is proposing, and it would have been a game-changer. We can say the same thing about social housing, where there are still significant needs. None of that was addressed. We expected a plan for protecting the border, but there was nothing. Then there are all the challenges with Canada-U.S. relations and EI reform. The government completely neglected all of those concerns.

• (1725)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have known, for years now, the Conservative Party's approach to the minority government. The Conservatives have been wanting and calling for an election for well over two years now. What we have seen is that the Bloc has kind of coalesced and is working with the Conservatives more and more; it too would like to see an election. It is fine if the Bloc members want to adopt that attitude, but with respect to saying there is nothing in the fall economic statement in terms of important issues, exempting the Canada disability benefit from taxes is a very positive measure that is in the statement.

If the member and, in particular, Conservatives want to focus on the debt, let them take a look at the public debt charges since 1981 and compare them to the GDP, which is so critically important. Could the member provide his thoughts on comparing the debt to Canada's GDP?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, the government is handing out election goodies by eliminating the GST for two months. This measure will benefit the wealthy when they go out to eat or buy alcohol. When the government presented this measure, we saw that it was a pre-election move that would benefit the wealthy and that it was not the right approach to take. That is the new measure set out in the economic statement.

This morning, we learned that the former finance minister called this a political gimmick, so she agrees with us. We are not forming a coalition against the government with all of the other parties. Even the former finance minister is speaking out about these pre-election gimmicks that are designed to buy votes, which is unacceptable.

As for the deficit, the former minister admitted that her government has spent record amounts since 2015. To reassure the markets, she set an anchor that was exceeded by over 50% for the year coming to an end. However, we are only finding out about that at the end of the year because the government did not table the public accounts. The current year is not over yet and they have already blown through their fiscal anchor for this year. That is unacceptable and inexcusable. Let us fix this with an election.

• (1730)

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, and I am very pleased that he has come to exactly the same conclusion as the Conservative Party. We need an election as soon as possible. We have been calling for an election for almost a year now.

Can my colleague assure us, hand on heart, that as of today, he will always support the Conservative Party in every confidence vote that will take place in the House so that Canada can finally be free from the political chaos that we are currently experiencing?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his kind words, but I must correct the record.

Privilege

The mandate that my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I have was not given to us by the Conservative Party or by Conservative voters. We were all elected in our ridings to come here and be the voice of Quebec. Every time we stand up, we are thinking about the people in our ridings and in Quebec, whom we hold in our hearts. Every time we speak, every time we vote, every time we make a decision, every time we make a choice, it is always in the best interests of the people we love and represent: the people of Quebec. With every vote, every decision and every piece of legislation, we will always act with that in mind.

As our leader often says, if it is good for Quebec, we vote for it. If it is bad for Quebec, we vote against it. When we can, we improve bills in the interest of Quebec. We often do. That work is done behind the scenes, but it pays off.

Given what is happening, with the Liberal ship adrift, we feel that it is in Quebec's best interest to settle this issue in an election.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his excellent speech and, most of all, for the excellent answer he just gave to our Conservative colleague.

Is the government doing something different in the 2024 fall economic statement when it comes to the oil and gas industry? Has it suddenly decided, in this economic statement, to give less money to the oil industry by way of subsidies and tax credits?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, nothing has changed.

The former minister came up with an \$83-billion plan that essentially targeted the oil and gas industry. The striptease continues, and the statement comes up short on new details. For example, the government is now explaining how it plans to support hydrogen production from methane. It says that this is good for the environment. In truth, it is really about supporting oil sands, oil and natural gas. The government's striptease on this topic continues under false pretenses, with a fake green veneer, when urgent action is called for. We have already passed the 1.5°C target and the other targets that were set, and now we are seeing what changes that has brought on.

The government needs to do a lot more, but by all indications, it is doing nothing.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, on the occasion of the 2024 fall economic statement, it is clear that Canada is at a crossroads. Many Canadians are struggling and uncertain about their and their families' futures. We are facing multiple, overlapping crises that require immediate and decisive action from the federal government, yet we are watching a Liberal government in complete disarray, out of ideas, flailing with gimmickry and unable to implement a coherent, effective plan to address these challenges.

Privilege

We are also seeing a Conservative opposition that has reduced these complex issues to nursery rhymes, able to only muster bumper-sticker slogans to the most challenging problems facing Canadians. They are proposing outdated policies that not only will not work but caused many of the structural problems we are seeing today in the first place. They will cut the services Canadians need, reward their corporate backers and create untold damage to working and middle-class Canadians.

Let us review the major crises facing Canadians as a result of successive Conservative and Liberal governments. The cost of living crisis continues to escalate, with millions of people struggling to make ends meet. The cost of essentials such as rent and food have increased by over 20% and 21% over the last three years. Fully half of all Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque, and one in four parents have cut back on their own food consumption to ensure their children have enough to eat. The rising costs of staples such as home heating, telecommunications and transportation are straining household budgets, making it virtually impossible for families to save for the future or handle unexpected expenses.

Eighty per cent of Canadians now believe that owning a home in Canada is only for the rich. Among those who do not own a home, over 70% have given up on ever owning one. In major cities across Canada, tenants are regularly paying over 50% of their income on shelter, which is a crippling and unsustainable burden.

Income inequality in Canada has hit the highest level ever recorded. The top 20% of Canadians hold more than two-thirds of the country's wealth, averaging \$3.4 million per household. By comparison, the bottom 40% of Canadians own only 2.8% of our country's wealth. At the same time, the top 5% of income earners paid a lower overall tax rate in 2022 than the bottom 95%, with the top 1% paying an even lower rate. Welcome to Conservative and Liberal tax policy.

After decades of federal underfunding, Canada's health care system is under serious strain with long wait times, inadequate access to essential services and high levels of burnout among health care workers. Millions of Canadians do not have a family doctor, which is critical to accessing our health care system. I remember campaigning with Jack Layton in 2008 when he pointed out that five million Canadians had no family doctor. We then saw, for the next seven years, a Conservative government under Stephen Harper, and here we are, nine years after that, under the current Prime Minister, and there are more Canadians today who do not have a family doctor after those decades of Conservative and Liberal government in this country.

Thousands of Canadians continue to be harmed by the toxic drug crisis without timely access to publicly funded treatment facilities and other life-saving services. Canada is facing a serious mental health care shortage, with wait times for mental health services especially long for children and youth.

The urgency of climate action cannot be overstated. By 2025, the previous 10 years of climate change will have reduced Canada's GDP by an estimated \$25 billion. Without concerted action, by 2030 GDP will be an estimated \$35 billion lower than it would have been otherwise, and by 2055 it will be an estimated \$100 billion lower. When the Conservatives come talking about the price of

the carbon tax, we should ask them what the cost of inaction in dealing with the climate crisis is. It is multiple billions more than the action to deal with it.

● (1735)

Moreover, when governments are forced to cover the costs of climate change by rebuilding damaged infrastructure, paying for increased health care costs and fixing damages from weather-related disasters, including compensating farmers for lost agricultural products, capital is diverted from activities that would drive additional growth.

Youth unemployment in Canada hit 14.5% in August. That is the highest level since 2012, outside the COVID-19 pandemic. Some one million Canadians under 29 are without jobs or training today, as we speak. That is an issue of intergenerational inequity that Deloitte estimates will cost our economy \$18.5 billion over the next decade, never mind the cost in broken dreams and shattered lives.

Enhancing productivity is vital for economic growth and competitiveness. However, spending on machinery and equipment by businesses, and on research, development, innovation and training, has been falling as a share of Canada's GDP for decades. Actually, it has been since 2000, and this is despite the large corporate tax cuts introduced at the turn of the century and promoted by both Conservative and Liberal governments. With rapid job creation and population growth, business capital investment has not kept up.

Despite its commitments, the federal government is failing to achieve reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Indigenous housing, water and infrastructure are in perilous conditions. The lack of progress on nation-to-nation governance and the stripping of wealth from indigenous territories have resulted in poverty rates and incarceration levels among indigenous people that are nothing short of shameful. The government has failed to fully implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls for action and the calls for justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

New Democrats believe that these crises and other priorities demand urgent and comprehensive action to ensure a prosperous, fair and sustainable future for all Canadians. However, this fall's economic statement has demonstrated once again that the Liberals are out of touch and unable to respond to the realities that Canadians are experiencing. What they have offered today is totally unresponsive to the crises facing our country. They are simply too weak, too self-interested, too full of infighting and too beholden to corporate interests to fight for people.

Privilege

On the other hand, the Conservatives offer no solutions, only a discredited agenda of cuts to the services people rely on, and tax breaks for their friends and the ultrawealthy. They are happy to re-inforce disingenuous and insulting characterizations of our country from foreign leaders like Donald Trump, while ignoring the real needs and challenges faced by Canadians. The Conservative approach undermines our values and fails to provide the support and investment required to build a fairer, more prosperous society.

When he was senator, Joe Biden famously said, “Don’t tell me what you value. Show me your budget, and I’ll tell you what you value.” Liberal and Conservative values are very clear to Canadians who have been paying attention to the federal government for the last 25 years. They continually, consistently prioritize the interests of the wealthy and corporate sector over the interests of working and middle-class Canadians. New Democrats say that is wrong, and there is a better way.

For our part, New Democrats are proposing a robust set of policies designed to tackle these challenges head-on. Let us review some of the key NDP proposals that ought to have been included in the fall economic statement.

With millions of Canadians struggling to make ends meet, the NDP pledged to permanently remove the GST from daily essentials and monthly bills, such as all grocery store items; Internet, home phone and cellphone bills; home heating; and diapers and children’s clothing. We believe that Canadians deserve a tax cut that will bring immediate and permanent relief.

• (1740)

The GST is a structurally regressive tax that puts a burden on many Canadian households, particularly those who do not receive any rebate. By making it permanent, the NDP knows that Canadians can count on a predictable reduction in costs of 5% on the bills they face every month and cannot avoid, with a measure that businesses can easily administer.

Unfortunately, last week, both the Conservatives and the Liberals voted no to the NDP’s motion to permanently scrap the GST on daily essentials and monthly bills. Axe the tax indeed. It seems the only tax the Conservatives want to axe is when it is given to the corporate sector, but when there is a tax cut proposed by the NDP for working and middle-class Canadians, they vote no. That is a shame. This is a prime illustration of what Senator Biden, now President Biden, meant and of where Liberal and Conservative priorities really lie and where their values really are.

New Democrats believe that a youth climate corps would help address both the climate emergency and Canada’s youth employment crisis by providing young people with the skills and job experience they need. The NDP’s youth climate corps would provide participants with a decent wage and practical training while they engage in work across three critical areas: first, emergency response in the face of extreme weather events such as wildfires, flooding and heat domes; second, strengthening community and environmental resilience to climate change by enhancing natural ecosystems, improving local infrastructure and strengthening community supports in anticipation of climate disruptions; and third, building infrastructure that drives down greenhouse gas emissions. This measure will be of particular assistance in Canada’s rural and

remote areas, places that especially need our support and development.

New Democrats believe that the federal government should accelerate and expand the Canada public transit fund to enhance public transportation infrastructure across the country. We also have proposed the establishment of a Crown corporation to enhance and make sure that people in rural and remote areas have regular inter-city bus service between their communities and major urban centres, because they deserve public transportation as well. By investing in public transit, we can reduce traffic congestion, lower greenhouse gas emissions and provide Canadians with reliable and affordable transportation options.

After decades of neglect, the federal government must support the construction of non-market housing of all types, including community, non-profit and co-operative housing, at the scale and speed needed to meaningfully address the housing crisis. I am shocked to not see profound investment in this area in the fall economic statement.

New Democrats believe we should begin by doubling the percentage of Canada’s non-market housing stock to meet the OECD average, which, shockingly, we fall significantly below. By increasing the availability of affordable housing, we can alleviate the burden on low- and middle-income families, reduce homelessness and ensure that all Canadians have access to safe and stable housing. By substantially increasing the amount of non-market housing stock, we can also reduce demand in the market supply, which will reduce market prices and make home ownership available to more Canadians.

The federal government must also take immediate steps to end the financialization of housing, such as by ending the tax exemption for real estate investment trusts. This measure will help curb speculative investments in the housing market, ensuring that homes are treated as places to live, rather than commodities to make money from.

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It is trite to say that a healthy population is essential for economic success. The federal government must take strong action to protect our public health care system by enhancing patient care, reversing privatization and addressing the health human resources crisis. Federal funding transfers must be tied to the public delivery of health care services, and the Canada Health Act must be robustly enforced in the face of attacks from Conservative premiers who want to gut public services and privatize delivery, both of which will make health care more expensive and less available to all.

The federal government should also fulfill its commitment to establish a dedicated mental health transfer and provide targeted funding to expand desperately needed mental health services across the country. Mental health is as vital as is physical health. It is also essential to expand access to public addictions treatment and other life-saving services, addressing the urgent needs of those affected by the toxic drug crisis and other substance-use disorders.

• (1745)

On the revenue side, New Democrats believe fair taxation is essential to providing revenue for the services Canadians depend on and to ensuring a sustainable fiscal framework. We note that the former finance minister blew through two of her three so-called financial guardrails, both last year and this year, and likely next year as well. This is because Liberals refuse to address fair taxation in this country.

A key component of this is an excess profits tax on large corporations that have abused their monopoly positions in the marketplace and taken advantage of Canadians. Since 2021, increased corporate profit margins have significantly contributed to high levels of inflation and growing income inequality across the country. Despite the normalization of supply chains and easing of shortages today, Canadian corporations have maintained stratospheric profit levels and sky-high prices on everything from food to energy and rent.

To add insult to injury, inflated profits have not translated into increased investment in the Canadian economy. Instead, they have largely been used for share repurchases and dividends, without contributing to wage growth or productive investment. Despite large corporate tax cuts and other corporate-friendly policies, Canadian businesses have demonstrably failed to invest in the machinery, equipment, innovation and training that are so needed to set the basis for increased Canadian productivity. New Democrats believe it is time we tied all corporate incentivization programs to clear commitments to invest in the Canadian economy.

Advancing indigenous reconciliation is both a moral and economic imperative. According to a recent report from the Assembly of First Nations and Indigenous Services Canada, it will cost \$349 billion to close the indigenous infrastructure gap by 2030. However, the report also found that closing that infrastructure gap could generate \$635 billion in economic output over the next seven years.

Increased funding for education, health care, housing, infrastructure and clean water in indigenous communities, supporting indigenous land rights and self-governance and implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls'

calls for justice will help us unlock the potential that exists in Canada's indigenous communities.

Recent developments in the United States make it clear that Canada needs a comprehensive green industrial policy and a resilient trade strategy to secure our long-term economic prosperity and sustainability. This shift will not only help Canada meet its climate goals but also create high-quality jobs and stimulate economic growth. A renewed trade policy would protect Canadian industries from the volatility of international shock and external pressures, making Canada more self-reliant.

As the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted, Canada currently lacks the capacity to produce essential items during a time of crisis, such as masks, ventilators and vaccines, underscoring the need for greater self-sufficiency to critical sectors. The recent comments from the president-elect south of the border provided us with a historic opportunity to diversify our trade markets, including in Europe and Asia-Pacific, taking better advantage of CETA and trade agreements that include Asian tigers like Japan and South Korea.

They also should compel us to embark on a serious made-in-Canada policy, using government procurement measures and incentives geared to national self-sufficiency in key areas. If the United States can have a buy America program, so should Canada have a buy Canadian program.

The crises we face are daunting, but they are not insurmountable. With bold, progressive and forward-thinking policies, we can build a stronger, fairer economy that benefits all Canadians. New Democrats believe in a Canada where everyone can thrive, where science and compassion are at the heart of our policies and where we invest in our future to build an equitable, sustainable society.

We are ready to lead with a vision that puts people first.

• (1750)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to questions and comments, I want to recognize it is the birthday of one of our colleagues: the hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek. I will not say her age, but for the length of time she has been here and her age, I think it is quite an honour and a privilege to have her as an MP here in the House.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech. I believe we are debating the privilege motion on the Liberal green slush fund. I did not hear the Liberal green slush fund or SDTC mentioned in his speech. I heard a lot of other things that seemed more like a budget speech.

I would ask the hon. member why his party continues to vote for the government when the former deputy prime minister will not even support the Prime Minister. In this case, the Auditor General found that almost \$400 million was funnelled to companies of Liberal insiders, yet the member did not speak to that issue at all or say whether he will support the motion the House passed, which is paramount, that all documents be unredacted and released, otherwise the government is in total disregard of the role of Parliament and the 600-year history of our power to request documents.

• (1755)

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, the member raised the question of what we are voting for. I can give a little sample of what I and my New Democratic colleagues have voted for. We voted to bring dental care to nine million Canadians. We voted to bring diabetes medications and devices and contraceptives to 10 million Canadians. We voted to bring a school nutrition program to schools in this country. We voted to permanently remove the GST from life essentials, monthly expenses that Canadians have to pay and cannot avoid. We voted to have 10 paid sick days for every Canadian working in this country.

The question I have for my hon. colleague is, why did the Conservatives vote against those things?

An hon. member: Why did you vote for the corruption?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member had an opportunity to ask a question. If he has another one, he needs to stand at the proper time.

The hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells has the floor.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, some of us reach an age where we express our age in Celsius. It works for us.

I appreciate the latitude the member took with his comments. We have heard an awful lot from the opposition about the carbon tax and the horrible burden it is placing on the cost of everything, and yet every reasonable economist in the land says that it is simply not the case.

Perhaps the member could explain where the NDP is on that specific issue.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, if we are speaking of latitude, in my 16 years in this place, I have never seen such latitude given to a government in presenting a fall economic statement, which was basically to table it outside, run for the hills and not be in the House to present the document. That is showing latitude to a government.

In terms of the carbon tax, New Democrats have for many decades been very concerned about the climate crisis. We were warning about this decades ago. We have always called for an ef-

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fective price on pollution and supported effective policies, whether that is a carbon tax, a cap-and-trade system, regulation of industries or, frankly, incentivizing the production of renewable energy in this country. Our record, in terms of dealing seriously and responsibly with the climate crisis, is second to none.

My disappointment is that after nine years of the government, I have not seen meaningful progress in reducing Canada's carbon emissions. The question the member has to answer is, why is that? Why has his government failed so terribly in meeting our international commitments, whether it is Kyoto or Paris? We have a whole generation of Canadians—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Shefford.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am a bit disturbed by everything I am hearing in the House today.

The NDP had an opportunity to help people who really needed it by continuing to support us on Bill C-319 to increase pensions. Instead, the New Democrats have continued to support this spendthrift government with measures that do not really help people. Our leader even said that, at some point, someone would get tired of this marriage. Clearly, the former finance minister started to find this marriage with the NDP a little too onerous, because of its demands. As a result, we are stuck and we cannot help people. For example, we could continue to talk about the bill to help seniors. It was a much cheaper measure. My colleague from Joliette talked about it in his speech. The New Democrats like to brag about the dental care program when, just last Friday, people came to my office to complain about it.

Why did the NDP continue to support a government that is now completely dysfunctional, only to suddenly call for the Prime Minister's resignation?

It makes no sense.

[*English*]

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I will join issue with her on one thing, which is that we also believe the Prime Minister should resign. Our leader called for that very thing today. The New Democratic Party has 25 MPs in the House. My hon. colleague is a member of the Bloc Québécois and it has, I think, 33 seats. It has more seats than we do.

Privilege

What have the New Democrats accomplished in this Parliament since 2021? Again, as of today, three million Canadians have signed up for and are receiving dental care in this country because of the efforts of the NDP. Agreements with British Columbia, Manitoba and, I understand, almost every other province are well under way to ensure people can walk into a pharmacy and walk out with contraception and diabetes medications that they need. That is what the NDP did. We worked to obtain a billion dollars to help kids across this country get access to a nutritious school meal every day. That makes a difference.

After we withdrew from our confidence and supply agreement, the Bloc Québécois attempted to make a deal with the government, which failed. The Bloc Québécois has achieved nothing in this Parliament for anybody. I would stack the New Democrats' record of accomplishment and achievement in the House, in this Parliament, against anybody's. We have helped millions of Canadians in a practical and pragmatic way, including millions of people in Quebec.

● (1800)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Vancouver Kingsway for the amount of his speech that he dedicated to addressing the housing crisis. It is clear that he and the NDP are serious when it comes to addressing the housing crisis. He talked about the need to double social housing across the country. He likely knows that one of the reasons the government has been unable to do so is that the CMHC has a definition of housing that is not actually being used in the various programs it operates. In fact, in today's fall economic statement, there are accelerated funds for a program of which only 3% delivers anything that helps those who are in core housing need.

I would appreciate understanding from him the extent to which he is similarly concerned with CMHC not using the right definition of housing and how addressing that could help address the need to get more affordable housing built.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, the housing crisis that we experienced in 2024 did not develop yesterday. It did not develop in the last five years. This has developed over decades of successive Conservative and Liberal governments, beginning in the early 1990s when the Liberals and Conservatives cut CMHC's investments in social housing in this country. That was the start of the long slide. That is why Canada today is so far below the OECD's averages of the percentage of our housing that is social housing. We can blame CMHC, but to me, the buck stops with the government. The policies of the government are the ones that should be driving the CMHC.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is a Crown corporation that should be fully driven toward producing a house for every single Canadian in this country who needs one. We all represent ridings in this country and we deal with thousands of issues, but some are foundational. In my view, housing is a foundational issue. It anchors people in community. It is what makes their ability to work and access schools and connect with community possible. When people do not have access to a secure, affordable, decent house, their rights as a citizen are seriously abridged. Only New Democrats are capable of making sure the CMHC—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to add one more question here.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway for really sharing with the House all of the fantastic work the NDP has done for Canadians, all of those programs for Canadians.

I wonder if the member would not mind letting Canadians know what the Conservatives have not delivered in the House in three years.

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for all of her work. She has been a crusading force in the House fighting for people with disabilities, including getting a meaningful Canada disability benefit. She continues to fight for that. In a word, I guess, the shorter list is to explain what the Conservative opposition has obtained for Canadians in the House, in this Parliament. The answer to that would be nothing.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise at this moment and to debate in the ongoing motion of privilege. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Being a stickler for the rules, I am aware as I begin this that today seems to be a day when all the rules are going right out the window. I noticed that the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets noted that the member for Vancouver Kingsway did not speak to the motion that is before us. That is consistent with the 20 minutes that the leader of the official opposition took to give his speech, which also made no reference to Sustainable Development Technology Canada nor the motion of privilege nor the return of documents.

Through a series of, I have to say, ill-considered, not necessarily ill-intentioned but certainly disrespectful decisions that were occasioned by the unanticipated and I am sure shocking events of the day in terms of how they affected the Liberal caucus, the planned tabling of the fall economic statement, the planned opportunity to hear the former minister of finance and deputy prime minister explain what was in that document, explain to us how the guardrails of deficits above \$40 billion had been breached, explain to us what was in there and what was not in there, and then to allow each party in this place, including the Green Party, to have a right of response, to take questions and so on, all went out the window.

I am a stickler for the rules, so before turning the floor over to my hon. colleague, I am going to say that nothing I am about to say is relevant to the matter that is before the House for Orders of the Day. I apologize, but this is my one opportunity to say some things that I think need saying.

Privilege

I want to say on the floor of this place, as we normally would in a circumstance where someone who has served on the front benches of this place as a cabinet minister since 2015, who has now left that cabinet suddenly and unexpectedly, that I do not agree with much of what that member for University—Rosedale put forward over the years, but I respect her enormously and it is a really lousy thing. I do not know what word to use. It is graceless, it is crass and it is unbecoming to our tradition as parliamentarians that someone as fine as the member for University—Rosedale would leave the cabinet, leave being deputy prime minister and leave being minister of finance.

The member had previously been minister of international trade and played a really large role in getting this country through our first encounter with a Trump presidency. She played a rather large role in negotiating and renegotiating NAFTA, now CUSMA, so that Canada ended up whole and in fact better because we got rid of the energy clause and what were then chapter 11 investor-state provisions of what was NAFTA and is now CUSMA.

In terms of good or bad luck for a government to have an expert, the member for University—Rosedale was, as far as I know, the first Canadian banned from Russia by Vladimir Putin because, before entering politics, she had a job. She was a journalist and was based in Moscow and she did not write flattering puff pieces about Mr. Putin. She told the truth and, as a result, she risked her life and certainly did not earn any bonus points. Mr. Putin decided to name her specifically as someone not welcome in Russia. I have had that honour since that time. Since Russia invaded Ukraine and since Greens have stood up with the rest of this Parliament in defending Ukraine and in urging that we do everything we can to stop the brutality of the Russian invasion, I eventually got listed as one of those not welcome in Russia, but I am a johnny-come-lately to the honour. The member for University—Rosedale has it hands down regarding the bravery of living in Moscow and doing that work as a journalist.

The member for University—Rosedale played a large role in navigating us through COVID. Much of Canada emerged from the COVID pandemic a different country, fractured, so I would love a group of psychiatrists, psychologists and experts to figure it out. We are more divided than we used to be and yet we got through COVID with half the death rate of our neighbours south of the border and we got through it using benefits that actually, for the first time in the history of this country, reduced childhood poverty.

• (1805)

There is much to be said about the hon. member for University—Rosedale, and I just wanted to, publicly in this place, thank the hon. member. I have argued with her many times about climate policy, but she is a fine public servant, sitting as the member of Parliament for University—Rosedale, and today was not a good day for any kind of gracious acknowledgement of a role that somebody played across the aisle.

[*Translation*]

I want to thank the member for University—Rosedale very much for the incredible work she did during very difficult times and during several crises. I am thinking about Russia and its war against Ukraine, and there was also the COVID-19 pandemic.

• (1810)

[*English*]

Today was not a good day for us in this place, because I think it was a contempt that, without any “by your leave”, the fall economic statement was dropped. I have a lot of respect for the government House leader. She was not prepared to deliver a speech nor to take questions, but I think it was, again, classless and disrespectful that we were not allowed to give a round of speeches on what we thought of the document, having been briefly exposed to it in the shortest lock-up in history over any budgetary document.

Usually we are given the better part of a day for time to ask questions. We got the document at about 1:30 or 1:45 this afternoon. I had to run back here for question period. I am not looking for sympathy about how quickly we had to work and how hard we had to read, because there was so little there, but that does not matter.

The exemption on props, Madam Speaker, is if we are speaking to the document itself, so this document itself—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is not to point to a document that she is holding. She can reference it, but she cannot be pointing at it.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has the floor.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, we learn something new every day. I understood that there is an exemption to the rule on props if we are actually speaking to a document and holding it in our hand for reference. I thought that was acceptable, but perhaps we had better check the rules.

The document has very little in it, despite its bulk, and there is almost nothing new. There is a pittance on housing and less than a pittance on climate. There is recognition for the first time, which is good, that there should be some transparency rules around climate finance. There is a suggestion that the government is going to work with the insurance industry, there is an idea, to try to get flood insurance for Canadians in flood plains and to keep them out of “harm's way”.

That is not going to be a solution to the galloping climate crisis and the number of Canadians whose life and limb are at risk from the variety of climate crises that are upon us, whether they are extreme flooding events; atmospheric rivers; heat domes such as the one that killed 619 British Columbians in four days in the summer of 2021; extreme events like hurricane Fiona or the derechos that devastated parts of Ottawa, storms that we did not even know had names; or increased tornadoes, floods, droughts or extreme weather events of all kinds.

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However, very little is said for Canadians to make us feel safer in our homes or to make us think that the government understands what the crisis really looks like when we live through it. We live through more all the time. Wildfire events are extremely bad for our health. It is extremely hard to have to breathe the smoke from fires that come at all times of the year.

While the fall economic statement in its substance was extremely disappointing, the way in which it was dropped on us, with the lack of accountability for fiscal promises made and broken, is a low ebb for the Government of Canada. I wish the best to the new minister of finance. I hope someone will take responsibility.

Accountability is sorely lacking in all corners of our institutions, across Canada and into provinces. We need to take responsibility for our actions, be accountable, say when we have made a mistake and be honest with Canadians about how we plan to do better and what we plan to do.

It is not enough to have rhyming slogans. We need policies and programs, and we need to be serious about the work at hand, because Canadians are serious, honest, hard-working people, and they need to know that their members of Parliament are working for them, not just to prop up one colour-coded team against another.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, since 10 o'clock this morning, I have been hearing a great deal of discussion about the fall economic statement, and as the member herself admits, even with the question of privilege that is before us, virtually all speeches, whether they were pre-2 o'clock or post-tabling of the document, have been on the fall economic statement. That is not necessarily my question, however.

One of the slogans the Conservatives have is that they are going to fix the budget. "Fixing the budget", for many Canadians, including myself, would mean a Conservative government would in fact look at cutting things that we put into place, such as the national disability program, the national child care program, the national pharmacare program, the national dental care program and the national school food program.

Whenever the Conservatives use the slogan, "fix the budget", does the member have any concerns in regard to what is actually meant when they say that?

• (1815)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, we actually do not know what is meant by that, because to me, fixing the budget is to get a balanced budget. We know it will take some time, but the Greens have been advocating that if we want to balance our spending with our revenues, we should go for where the money is, which is the billionaire class, big banks, big oil and big grocery chains. They have been reaping excess profits over the last number of years.

It is true that, when I asked this in question period last week, the former minister of finance said that the Liberal government introduced an excess profit tax on banks and insurance companies, but it is a very small one. It did not apply to oil and gas or to grocery chains, and it did not apply to a wealth tax, because we have seen a massive increase in the number of billionaires in this country. They are very nice people, I am sure. However, I would like to see them

taxed not enough that it would be cruel, but enough that it would reduce them to mere millionaires.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing I hear a lot about in my riding, from constituents and from people who are following this, is security clearance. I know the leader of the Green Party got her security clearance, and duly so. The leader of the NDP got his security clearance. The leader of the Bloc got his security clearance, and of course the Prime Minister has his security clearance. There is one leader who does not have a security clearance. That is the Leader of the Opposition. A lot of my constituents are simply asking, "Why not just get it?" Put out that fire and move on. However, he continues to avoid getting it.

My question to the leader of the Green Party is this: Why?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I have one small factoid correction. It is true that the Prime Minister of this country has his security clearance, but he got it by right when he became Prime Minister. He never actually had to go through the process that I, or the leader of the New Democratic Party or the leader of the Bloc Québécois, had to go through.

[*Translation*]

That is a good question, and a very important one. Why did the leader of the official opposition refuse to initiate the process?

[*English*]

The only reason that I can think of is that the Conservative leader is worried he would not get it, because we do not get it by right. I urge the leader of the official opposition to remove the doubt for Canadians that there is something about his history, potentially with foreign interference or something else, which means he worries that he would not get top secret security clearance if he were to ask for it.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, in the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands' speech, she talked about what we could do if we were to really tax the wealthiest. I know she believes one of the things we could do would be to lift folks with disabilities out of poverty. I used to say that the government was going to do this vote-buying scheme, and maybe it is just the Prime Minister who is planning on doing it. That vote-buying scheme left out folks with disabilities, just as this fall economic statement did.

Can the member comment on how important it is to lift folks with disabilities out of poverty and how this statement could have been a place to do it?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, we are a rich country. Thanks to my hon. friend for Kitchener Centre for reminding us that we have an obligation as a country to have essential fairness. People with disabilities have a disproportionate rate of poverty, but why do we have people living in tent cities? Why are we allowing people to live in conditions that are inhumane in a country that could afford a guaranteed livable income for all?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to correct my record on the previous point I brought forward about the document. I checked on that, and Speaker Milliken ruled on this in the past. If it is a document that has just been tabled in the House, it can be referenced; members can have it in hand while referencing it.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

• (1820)

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I want to recognize, as my friend from Saanich—Gulf Islands did on the point of relevance, that I will be focusing my speech on the fall economic statement. This is as opposed to what we really should be doing if we were to follow the orders of the day exactly, which is focusing on the amendment. I recognize that it has been about three months of talking about this particular motion. In fact, I have shared a few times about how we have had a number of speakers on this. The number of Conservative speakers alone is 223 or so. I have spoken quite a bit to this motion already. To make it clear, Green supported the precedent to the motion back in June. That continues to be the case.

My second apology is that things have been so last minute and disjointed today. I would usually even send notes for such a speech to translators. My apologies to them; I have not actually done that tonight either. However, it is important to take every opportunity I can to speak out for the concerns and the priorities of folks in my community. This is an important moment to do so because, of course, as many in this place and across the country are, I am troubled by the events of today. More so, I am troubled by the statement we were provided just this afternoon: the fall economic statement.

The reality is that folks in my community are in a time of crisis. Forty per cent of those living in poverty are folks with disabilities. This should not be the case in a country as wealthy as ours. I have spoken quite a bit about the number of people in my community who have been living unsheltered in recent years, at a time when rents have doubled. The number of people living unsheltered tripled from 2018 to 2021, from just over 300 to over a thousand. In the most recent point-and-count study, it nearly tripled again, to over 2,300.

Meanwhile, we continue to be the only country in the G7 with emissions that have risen since 1990. We are in a closing window of opportunity to act on the climate crisis. It is because of the significant crises that folks in my community and across the country are facing that Greens proposed a number of constructive solutions, which could have been in the fall economic statement. I will go over a few of those now with the time I have.

First, we could start with fixing the Canada disability benefit and following through on the promise the government made to lift hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities out of poverty. This was another moment missed for the government to follow through on doing so. This is also a moment at which it could have addressed the housing crisis we are in. Greens have been calling for the government to get towards a plan to double social housing across the country. If it did so, we would go from the bottom to just the middle of the pack in the G7.

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One way we have proposed to do this is in a new motion I have put forward to require the CMHC to have two income-based definitions of affordable housing. This would ensure that, when it talks about such funds as the affordable housing fund, the money is actually going to build affordable housing. This housing would support people who are in core housing need. The proposal relies on research by housing experts, such as Dr. Carolyn Whitzman and others across the country. We have been calling on it to address the loopholes for large corporate landlords that are buying up housing in my community, raising rents and profiteering off the homes.

With those funds, we could turn and address a gap in HST that was exempted for for-profit developers of rental housing to ensure that non-profit builders of affordable home ownership, such as Habitat for Humanity, are HST exempt. We can pay for it, as I mentioned, by taxing real estate investment trusts as we do other corporations, for example. These are the kinds of housing solutions we would put forward to be in the fall economic statement.

We have also been calling for the government to get serious about funds to support harm reduction and other programs to support people who are using drugs, who are dying from poisoned drugs. I have not looked at numbers today in my community, but when I last checked, at least 72 people had died in Waterloo region from poisoned drugs. There is a federal funding mechanism called the substance use and addictions program. Greens had been calling for that program to be better funded so that communities such as Waterloo region would get their fair share of funding.

• (1825)

To date, we have received zero dollars in Waterloo region from this critical program to support organizations such as Sanguen and Community Healthcaring to provide supports that keep people alive because, while treatment is important, a person who is dead cannot get treatment. We need to provide a suite of supports that includes mental health, housing, treatment and harm reduction, along with safe supply. That is part of what Greens had been calling for.

Greens had also been talking about revenue tools to fund solutions. One of those revenue tools is a windfall profit tax. While there is a lot of talk in this place about the carbon tax going up two cents a litre in 2022 and in the years since 2022, the profits of the oil and gas industry went from some 26¢ a litre to around 44¢ or so, which is an increase of 18¢ a litre, all of which went to their profits. It ended up being around \$66 billion or so for the top five oil and gas companies operating in Canada.

Adjournment Proceedings

It is clear those companies are gouging Canadians while their emissions go up. They are responsible for the largest share of emissions while we are in a climate crisis. The government put in place a windfall profit tax and called it the Canada recovery dividend. It was applied on banks and life insurance companies in the midst of the pandemic.

As Greens, we have been saying, now do oil and gas. I put forward a motion to propose doing so. The PBO has costed it. With a windfall profit tax on profits above a billion, even just a 15% tax on profits above a billion, the government could generate \$4.2 billion a year.

Those are the funds that could be used to invest in public transit, for example. Rather than seeing local councils, such as that of the Region of Waterloo, talking about cutting public transit routes or increasing fares, the federal government could be showing up with the dollars to help them make sure that high school students, for example, could get lower or no fares. We could also see the federal government step up for the permanent public transit fund to be put in place sooner than 2026, after the next election, to provide not only infrastructure, but also maintenance, for example, money for mechanics.

This is what we had called for. That windfall profit tax could be used for that, along with retrofit funding to help Canadians who want to look at installing retrofits in their homes. It would reduce their emissions and save them money. That program expired in February of this year. We had put forward for them to renew that program in a significant way, to look at \$50,000 for Canadians who want to look at retrofitting their homes.

We had been calling for the government to invest in closing the infrastructure gap. At Six Nations of the Grand River, for example, it continues to be the case that 70% of those living on reserve do not have access to clean drinking water, and their infrastructure gap is around \$1.6 billion. This was an opportunity to close that infrastructure gap.

We have also been calling for more equity in federal arts funding because, in communities like mine and many others across the country, while the Canada Council for the Arts has lost about \$140 million in funding since the pandemic, communities like mine have continued to be historically underfunded. We get about three dollars per person, whereas places like Montreal, Vancouver and Winnipeg average around \$18 dollars or so a person. The Greens had been calling for this fall economic statement to provide a new mechanism to ensure funding is more equitable across the country and for those funds to be restored to previous levels.

What do we get instead, after all these calls had been made? Well, when it comes to home retrofits, rather than actually delivering funds, the government talks about interest-free loans. Apparently, all the money was gone, the tens of billions they are sending to carbon capture. It is so much that I cannot even keep track. Environmental Defence has been doing their best to do so. They know it is about \$18 billion or so in fossil fuel subsidies. It is certainly not always the case that they get loans, but when it comes to Canadians who want to retrofit their homes, I guess loans are going to have to continue to do.

On housing, the government is talking about accelerating more funds into the apartment construction loan program. This is a program for which only 3% of the funds are actually going to those in core housing need. Again, if the government does not actually address the underlying definitions of these funds, accelerating more dollars to them is not going to help address the housing crisis in a substantial way.

When it comes to the Canada disability benefit, rather than actually addressing the core issue, the government is talking about ensuring that it is tax-free. For many, the assumption was that would always be the case.

● (1830)

What we need is to see the government recognize that, for so many across the country, like folks in my community, the promise of what Canada could be is being lost. The Liberals need to step up to restore hope so that we can get back to that sense of what is possible for young Canadians and others across the country.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[*English*]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak again on a very important topic: carbon tax and the policies that affect agriculture.

The carbon tax is a huge one. The capital gains tax was supposedly for some kind of elite businesses, but it really does affect businesses such as family farms. The capital gains tax is another one that is a very significant challenge. It goes along with the GST tax break, which the Liberals found is not getting them any bump because it is not one that works either.

However, there is some information on the carbon tax. The average 5,000-acre farm in Canada is paying about \$150,000 every single year in carbon taxes. For an irrigation company, that multiplies at least to another \$100,000. I know that my colleague will suggest other forms of energy, but natural gas and propane, and natural gas in particular, create power, and this is what is used in our part of the world.

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For greenhouses, and I have significant ones in my riding for tomatoes, green peppers, lettuce and strawberries, they are facing huge costs, at \$22 million a year in carbon taxes. By 2030, it will be \$82 million to \$100 million, which is a huge cost on greenhouse produce in our country. We have 44% of fresh fruit and vegetable growers already telling us that they are selling at a loss, and their statements show it. We have 77% who cannot cover their production costs, and we have 77% of produce growers in Canada close to going under.

Alberta farmers paid \$17 million in carbon tax last year just on natural gas and propane to dry their grain and to heat and cool their barns. Bill C-234 would have eliminated the carbon tax on natural gas and propane, saving farmers that billion a year, but the senators gutted that bill.

However, we have ways that we can work on this. Some people do not get that we have institutions. This is from the president of the University of Alberta. He said:

...we understand energy, and we understand innovation. After more than a century of energy breakthroughs, we have learned the key to success: when you bring together the right people, you push the boundaries of innovation.

...This Alberta-based project brings together academia, industry, and government to advance the solutions that will reduce carbon dioxide emissions and diversify the economy.

We have ways that we can work with the energy sector and work with emissions. We have great academic institutions, like the University of Alberta, who can bring people together to work on this.

However, there are some other costs that are really interesting. At the ag committee recently, CN Rail representatives were there and they were asked about the carbon tax. For Saskatchewan, CN said that the carbon tax bill was \$36 million just for transporting produce out of Saskatchewan, and then we can multiply that by Alberta and Manitoba. They were asked whether CN pays the carbon tax, and they said, of course not; we just download it to the farmers. This is the problem, which is that the carbon tax will be downloaded.

These are not rebate operations. There is no rebate for these large farm operations. They are the ones who do a great job of producing great food, food security produced in Canada, but they are being taxed severely. This is the challenge with the carbon tax, and it needs to be stopped.

• (1835)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is nice to be here in adjournment debate with my colleague from Bow River. Unfortunately, once again tonight, my colleague over there is spreading misinformation about carbon pricing to discredit the system, and that is misleading Canadians. Just recently, the Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan estimated that a large, 5,000-acre farm spends around \$10,000 a year on carbon pricing, but the member just said it is \$150,000. APAS goes on to suggest that these costs can be mitigated with changes to some of the fuels used. As APAS knows, the vast majority, about 90% of on-farm fuels, are exempt from carbon pricing.

I come from a family of apple farmers. Obviously, there is no grain drying involved in apple farming, but I am a member of Parliament for a semi-rural riding. There are poultry farms, two mushroom farms, very large egg operations, beef farms and cattle, equine facilities and a huge horse community. Actually, just 25 years ago, Milton had more horses than humans.

The raw data the member shared is in stark contrast to what the Agriculture Producers Association of Saskatchewan said. In fact, the number that he used was more than 15 times greater than these farmers stated the costs were. Those farmers also very clearly said that every farmer's goal, no matter their political stripe or commodity, is to leave the land we all have in a better condition for the next generation. They also added that they are not anti-carbon tax by any means.

We have a collective responsibility and obligation to ensure that food is affordable in Canada, and every time Conservatives stand up in the House and blame carbon pricing for elevated food costs, they are straight-up lying to Canadians. The evidence is very clear. Time after time, we see the facts come out that if we were to eliminate carbon pricing entirely in Canada, we would see less money in the pockets of lower- and middle-income Canadians, and we might see a grocery cart valued at \$100 come down in cost by 50 cents. It is not the cause of the affordability crisis that Canadians are experiencing. In fact, the number one cause that scientists, economists and farmers have collectively identified as the cause for elevated food prices is climate change itself.

The impacts of climate change and extreme weather through floods, wildfires, drought and all of the challenges we are facing as we continue to burn more and more fossil fuels and emit more greenhouse gases into our atmosphere are causing extreme weather. The hottest year on record is 2024. The record it broke was from 2023. The record 2023 broke was from 2022.

Wheat yields in Canada went down last year and the number one cause was climate change, not carbon pricing. The member makes it very clear that he is proud of our energy sector; he wears his "I love Canadian oil and gas" tie in the House on a frequent basis. We ought to be proud of our energy sector and support it and the workers within it. It has enhanced the wealth of our country, and that is a very important thing.

At the same time, we need to make sure that our oil and gas sector and our energy workers are innovating and providing solutions to lower their emissions so that we are not contributing to climate change.

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I would ask once again that the member opposite cut with the misinformation. The number one cause of food inflation in the world is climate change, not carbon pricing. Carbon pricing is one of the best solutions for it.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, at this time, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those people in my riding who have supported me over the years. I really appreciate it. It is the Christmas season, and I would like to wish all of those families, as they celebrate together and gather in communities, a very merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, I would also like to wish my colleague and friend from Bow River a merry Christmas. He used to be a teacher and taught one of my former colleagues, my friend Sherraine, and she always asks me how the member is doing. I tell her we have lively debates into the wee hours sometimes, but I do genuinely appreciate the opportunity.

I also appreciate the opportunity to say merry Christmas to my friend and to everybody in Calgary and around the Bow River area, of course. I would also like to wish everybody in Canada a merry Christmas at this time. I know that times can be tough, but we have solutions in Canada, and the member from Bow River and I can agree to disagree, but we are still friends. As we gather around tables and have meals and celebrate together, let us put our differences aside, enjoy one another's company and realize that we are better together than we are apart.

• (1840)

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, for 54 days the then minister of public safety and current Minister of National Defence slow-walked a CSIS warrant. The subject of the warrant was none other than a former Ontario Liberal cabinet minister and top organizer and fundraiser for the Prime Minister in the GTA. This same former Liberal cabinet minister has also been someone long suspected of being involved in Beijing's interference activities on Canadian soil.

At the public inquiry, national security officials testified that warrants of this kind are typically signed off by the minister in four to 10 days. Consistent with that, during the same time as this warrant, the minister signed off on two other warrants within four to eight days, but when it came to a warrant involving a former Liberal cabinet minister, top organizer and fundraiser for the Prime Minister, it took 54 long days.

We know, based on the evidence at the inquiry, that this was no accident. It is not as though the warrant application fell through the cracks on the minister's desk, which in and of itself would raise serious questions about the minister's competence. What happened was much more serious. There was a concerted effort within the government to slow-walk the warrant for a Liberal kingpin.

Here are the facts. The minister's chief of staff was given notice by CSIS that it intended to bring forward the warrant application in respect to the former Ontario Liberal minister. Two weeks after the warrant sat on the minister's desk, CSIS followed up with the minister's chief of staff. The warrant continued to languish on the minister's desk for 30 more days. Indeed, not until the director of CSIS

personally intervened did the minister finally sign off on the warrant.

The question is why. What took so long? When I raised this question in the House during question period, I received a non-answer from the minister. The minister and his chief of staff testified at the public inquiry, where they provided no credible explanation for the delay. Canadians deserve answers about why it took 54 days, during which national security may have been compromised, so I put it to the government: What is the explanation?

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak about the important issue of combatting foreign interference in our democratic institutions. It is a little ironic for my colleague to talk about political interests in matters of national security when his leader still will not get his security clearance to learn more about foreign interference taking place in his party.

Since coming to office, our government has taken a range of measures to address the threats of foreign interference, such as amending the Canada Elections Act in 2018; creating both the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency and the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians; standing up a range of initiatives to strengthen our electoral system against cyber and other threats through the plan to protect Canada's democracy in advance of the 2019 election; and building upon and further strengthening that plan in the advance of the 2021 election.

Bill C-65 would ensure key protections against foreign interference are not limited to the election period; ban intentionally false and misleading statements about election activities or the voting process to disrupt an election or its results; prohibit contributions through money orders, prepaid gift cards or cryptoassets, the source of which can be difficult to trace; and introduce new third party contribution rules to increase transparency and mitigate the so-called dark or foreign funds from entering the system. If passed, these amendments would continue the cycle of continuous improvements to Canada's electoral process. Members will have a chance to study the amendments proposed in Bill C-65 and we look forward to the discussions that will follow.

• (1845)

Mr. Michael Cooper: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary acts as if the Liberals are bystanders and yet we are talking about a specific warrant that sat on the minister's desk for 54 days, despite repeated attempts by CSIS to have the minister sign off on the warrant.

I simply asked for an explanation. Why did it happen? Is it not because it was about protecting a Liberal kingpin? It was about protecting someone the Prime Minister saw as benefiting him, as a Liberal organizer and fundraiser for the Prime Minister. Is it not the case that, once again, the current government put the partisan interests of the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister ahead of national security?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, the government is committed to protecting and strengthening Canada's democracy. We look forward to the ongoing work of the Public Inquiry into Foreign Interference in Federal Electoral Processes and Democratic In-

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stitutions, including the commissioner's final report in December. The government will review the report in due course. In the meantime, the government continues to take steps to counter foreign interference. This includes proposed amendments to the Canada Elections Act, recently introduced through Bill C-65. I look forward to the ongoing engagement with members of the House as we consider potential changes to further protect and strengthen our Canadian democracy.

I want to wish my colleagues and everybody in the House happy holidays. We will see them in the new year.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 6:48 p.m.)

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