



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

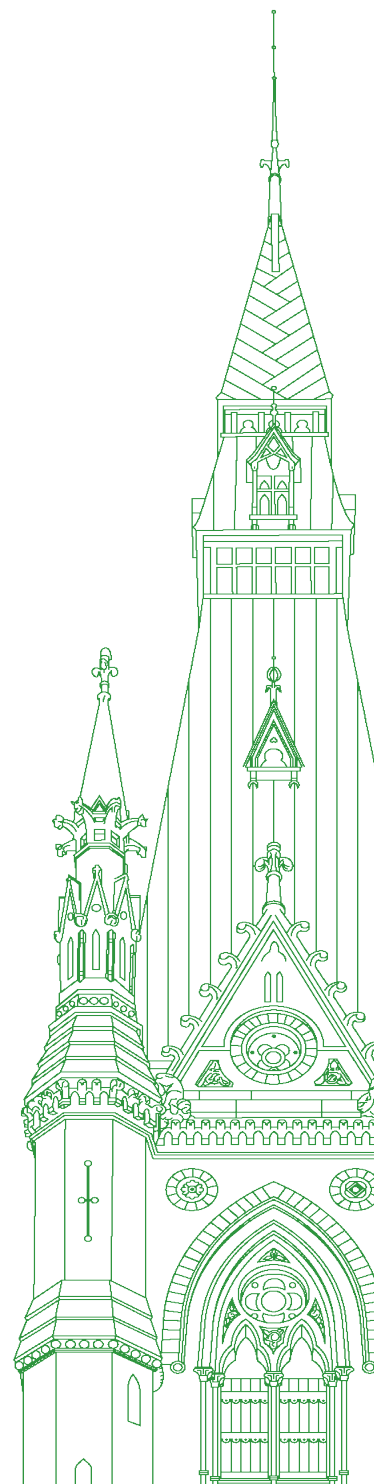
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

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Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[Translation]

PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 40(1) of the Privacy Act and subsection 25(1) of the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, the Privacy Commissioner's report for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023.

[English]

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

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PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 38(3.3) of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, a case report of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

[Translation]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN HOSTAGE TAKERS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-353, an act to provide for the imposition of restrictive measures against foreign hostage takers and those who practice arbitrary detention in state-to-state relations and to make related amendments to the Proceeds of Crime (money laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

She said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to have this first in the House, and I hope it is among my many. It is an honour to present my first private member's bill, the foreign hostage takers accountability act.

It is high time to protect Canadians who are used in hostile foreign states as pawns in diplomacy. Foreign states' imprisoning our citizens on spurious charges to extract concessions is fundamentally unjust, and it puts Canada's national interest in deep peril.

Our country has a strong tradition of upholding its commitment to protecting its citizens, including those living and travelling overseas, standing up for fundamental human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law. As it becomes more and more dangerous, the realities in modern terrorist networks are becoming more complex, requiring continued vigilance and real action.

To ensure that Canada responds effectively to hostage-taking and hostage diplomacy, I am proud to introduce this bill. It would strengthen Canada's ability to deter, minimize and resolve instances of hostage-taking by increasing governmental power to levy sanctions, by establishing a family liaison office and by providing incentives for foreign co-operation.

The hostage takers accountability act would build on Canada's reputation as a dedicated defender of human dignity, and if passed, it would be a vital tool in our nation's arsenal to continue to protect the lives and rights of Canadians wherever, whenever and however they are at risk under wrongful and unlawful detention.

I am happy to bring this bill to the floor of the House of Commons, and I want to thank the member for Calgary Heritage for seconding it.

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

Routine Proceedings

● (1005)

*[Translation]***CANADIAN RADIO-TELEVISION AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION ACT**

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-354, An Act to amend the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act (Quebec's cultural distinctiveness and French-speaking communities).

He said: Mr. Speaker, we in the Bloc Québécois like to stress that a nation must not leave its own culture in the hands of its neighbour. That is exactly why I am tabling this bill today.

This bill provides that the CRTC must consult the Government of Quebec before regulating any aspect that relates to the cultural distinctiveness of Quebec. It responds to a formal request made by the Government of Quebec during the debates around Bill C-11 for a mandatory and official mechanism for consulting the Government of Quebec.

This bill is also in line with the House's recognition of Quebec as a nation. It is a constructive response to the disturbing decision made by the federal government last year to end the long-standing practice of alternating between francophone and anglophone chairs of the CRTC.

The bill also provides that provincial governments must be consulted before regulations are made that concern French-speaking markets. That will no doubt be well received by every francophile in Canada and every advocate for cultural diversity in a broader sense.

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

* * *

*[English]***PROHIBITION OF THE EXPORT OF HORSES BY AIR
FOR SLAUGHTER ACT**

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-355, An Act to prohibit the export by air of horses for slaughter and to make related amendments to certain Acts.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to rise today to table my first private member's bill, the prohibition of the export of horses by air for slaughter act.

Currently in Canada, large-breed horses are bred to be fattened up and sent by plane to other countries, where they are slaughtered and used raw as delicacies for human consumption. This private member's bill seeks to ban this practice.

Over the past several months, I have consulted with industry members, stakeholders, advocates and fellow members of Parliament. These consultations helped shape the legislation of this bill, which has garnered support from members on both sides of the House. Many Canadians have expressed concerns about the export of live horses for slaughter. Other countries have banned this practice, and I believe it is time for Canada to do the same. I look forward to working with my colleagues from all parties to pass this legislation.

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

* * *

CRIMINAL CODE

Hon. Anita Anand (for the Minister of Justice) moved that Bill S-12, An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and the International Transfer of Offenders Act, be read the first time.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That a take-note debate on credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, and that, notwithstanding any standing order, special order, or usual practice of the House: a) members rising to speak during the debate may indicate to the Chair that they will be dividing their time with another member; b) the time provided for the debate be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each; and c) no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

● (1010)

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS**CLIMATE CHANGE**

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition that deals with the pressing issue of the climate crisis. Specifically, the petitioners zero in on the government's commitment to ban the export of thermal coal.

Coal, and particularly thermal coal, is the dirtiest of all fossil fuels. As Canada has, unfortunately, a sorry record of increasing greenhouse gases since we pledged to cut them, the petitioners call on the government to take the necessary measures to regulate the export of thermal coal under the existing legislation, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Amendments that went through the House in Bill S-5 are not considered in the petitioners' motion here, which I will read. Petitioners wish that the government act expeditiously to put thermal coal on the priority substances list and then, as quickly as possible thereafter, to add it to the toxic substances list under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, to allow the Minister of Environment to take the steps to regulate it and for the Minister of Health to also take steps under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act to stop the practice which has been continuing from the Port of Vancouver. As ports along the west coast of the United States ban the export of thermal coal, U.S. thermal coal is moving out of our Port of Vancouver.

The steps that the petitioners wish us to take would expedite the government's living up to a pledge the government made in 2021.

The Speaker: With the backlog having built up over the summer and quite a few people wanting to present petitions, I am going to ask everyone to be as concise as possible with their comments. It is about tabling a petition, not speaking to it.

We will continue with the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the summer, I heard from a large number of constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon who are concerned about the trafficking of individuals, namely of foreign students.

Foreign students come to Canada to start a new life, get an education and play a part in Canadian society, yet over the last number of years, we have seen an increasing number of foreign students, namely women, who have been exploited in Canada.

Petitioners in my riding call upon the Government of Canada to strengthen the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act to make sure that our law enforcement agencies have the tools they need to go after traffickers in order to keep international students, and all Canadians who are possibly subject to human trafficking, safe.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my thoughts and prayers go out to the soul of Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, his family and his loved ones.

I rise today to present a petition brought forward by the leadership and sangat of Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, Surrey-Delta, following the tragic killing of Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The petition calls upon the government to address concerns related to India's alleged involvement in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil, while ensuring the safety of all Canadians.

VAPING PRODUCTS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition brought forward by two university students, Bianca Mammarella and Mika'il Visanji, working with the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian Cancer Society regarding the usage of e-cigarettes, commonly known as vapes; the targeting of these products toward youth; and the nega-

tive short- and long-term consequences of the usage of these products.

The petition seeks to ensure that the proposed regulations would ban all vape flavours apart from tobacco and mint/menthol. However, this progress has been stalled. Additionally, these regulations exclude mint/menthol, which are two of the most popular flavours among youth. By introducing these regulations, we would aim to curb the harmful addiction that occurs with e-cigarettes.

● (1015)

REMOTE-CONTROLLED MODEL AIRPLANES

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of hobbyists in my community who fly remote-controlled model airplanes, which are separate and distinct from drones. They note that there are over 13,000 members of the Model Aeronautics Association of Canada and that prior to 2023, remote-controlled model airplanes were exempt from regulations that apply to drones.

However, this year, new regulations were brought into effect that brought those two groups together, which results in significant additional burdensome paperwork for the remote-controlled model airplane hobbyists. They call on the Minister of Transport to separate these regulations once again so remote-controlled model airplane hobbyists are not subject to the same regulations as those who fly drones.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first petition comes from the Falun Gong community. It specifically asks that a resolution be passed to establish measures to stop the Chinese Communist regime's crime of systematically murdering Falun Gong practitioners for their organs. Petitioners ask that there be an amendment to Canadian legislation to combat forced organ harvesting and that there be a public call for the end of the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the second petition I have comes from residents in my community of Kingston and the Islands. It draws attention, once again, to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which has warned us repeatedly that rising temperatures over the next two decades will bring widespread devastation and extreme weather.

Petitioners are calling on the government to move forward quickly and immediately with bold emissions caps for the oil and gas sector that are comprehensive in scope and realistic in achieving the necessary targets that Canada has set to reduce emissions by 2030.

Routine Proceedings

EXPRESSION OF POLITICAL OPINION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be back in the House. I hope the feeling is mutual for the members opposite.

The first petition I want to share is in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-257. This bill recognizes the growing problem of political discrimination, that is, people facing discrimination on the basis of their political views. While federal human rights legislation protects people from various kinds of discrimination, it does not include a situation in which, for instance, someone could be fired from their job, denied access to a bank account or denied equal access to government funding simply because of political opinions they hold and have expressed. My bill would change that by adding protections against political discrimination to the Canadian Human Rights Act.

The petitioners like the bill. They want the House to support the bill and defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am presenting is on a private member's bill, Bill C-281, the international human rights act, from a colleague of mine. The petitioners highlight that Canada should be committed to upholding the protection of international human rights. Therefore, they call upon the House to pass Bill C-281 to add protections against human rights violations and to promote a stronger role for Parliament in responding to those violations.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am presenting is with respect to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. It notes various violations of the fundamental human rights of Falun Gong practitioners; these violations include, but are not limited to, forced organ harvesting.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada and the House to take stronger action to respond to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and to continue to be vocal about this issue.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS INITIATIVE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am presenting deals with the Canada summer jobs program.

Sadly, Ukrainian youth who have come to Canada as part of the authorization for emergency travel are not able to participate in the Government of Canada-funded summer jobs program. The petitioners believe, and rightly so, that this is an unfair exclusion and that youth coming here as refugees should not be prevented from accessing this very large number of summer jobs, which happen to be funded by the Canadian government. They are looking to support themselves and their families. The petitioners note that youth from Ukraine are facing unique barriers and should not be barred from summer jobs in this arbitrary way. They call on the Government of Canada to allow Ukrainian youth under the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel to apply for jobs funded

through the Canada summer jobs program. Sadly, it is too late for this summer, but there will be other summers in the future.

• (1020)

CANADIAN PASSPORT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition I am presenting opposes the changes the government has made to the Canadian passport. The petitioners note that the passport Canadians have used for a long time contains images significant to Canadian heritage, including the fathers of Confederation, the Vimy Ridge memorial and Terry Fox; the government plans to erase these images from it. Petitioners call upon the government to reverse its plan to erase these symbols of national heritage and identity from the Canadian passport.

BURMA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the next petition that I am presenting contains a number of different asks related to the ongoing violence that we are seeing in Burma.

The petitioners note the horrific campaign of violence against civilians that is happening in Burma and the need for communications infrastructure that would allow early warning and would allow civilians to protect themselves. They also note the role of state-owned Myanmar oil and gas enterprises in providing funding to the military and Canadian obligations for the responsibility to protect.

The petitioners call on the government to take more action on this; to call on the military junta to immediately cease executions, atrocities and human rights abuses against civilians; and to increase humanitarian aid to Burma. In particular, aid should not be delivered centrally; rather, it should be delivered by working cross-border from neighbouring countries to provide support directly to minority-controlled areas.

The petitioners call on the government to provide technological and logistical support for communications to establish early warning systems and air defences to warn and protect civilians from aerial attacks; to call on insurance companies to stop providing insurance cover for deliveries of aviation fuel to Burma; to impose sanctions against Myanmar oil and gas enterprises, including blocking direct and indirect oil and gas purchases that support the Burmese regime; to swiftly implement the objectives set out in the aforementioned strategy, upholding our obligations under responsibility to protect; to refuse to engage or recognize the junta's state administrative council in any regional or international fora and to recognize the National Unity Government instead; to promote open dialogue among pro-democracy and diaspora groups with a view to helping the Burmese people to establish an inclusive democracy with full representation and recognition of the rights of all ethnic minorities, including Rohingya; and to provide assistance to Burma's politicians and citizens, supporting the development of a federal democratic system and power-sharing that would provide a solution for the country of multi-ethnic people who have been living together for a very long time.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, next, I am presenting a petition regarding our international development policy.

The petitioners note the success of the Muskoka Initiative, which was launched by the previous Conservative government. It involved historic investments in the well-being of women and girls around the world, emphasized value for money and ensured investments in priorities identified by local women.

The petitioners note that the Liberal approach to international development for women and girls has recently been criticized in an Auditor General report because it fails to measure results. They say that the government has shown a lack of respect for cultural values and autonomy of women in developing countries by supporting organizations that, in some cases, violate local laws at the expense of international development priorities, such as clean water, access to basic nutrition and economic development.

The petitioners call on the Government of Canada to align international development spending with the approach taken in the Muskoka Initiative, focusing international development dollars on meeting the basic needs of vulnerable women around the world.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition that I am presenting today refers to comments made by Louis Roy from the Quebec College of Physicians recommending the expansion of euthanasia to “babies from birth to one year of age who come into the world with severe deformities and very serious syndromes”.

The petitioners believe that this proposal for the legalized killing of infants in Canada is deeply disturbing and wrong. They call on the Government of Canada to block any attempt to legalize the killing of children.

* * *

● (1025)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA-NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.) moved that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementa-

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tion Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to have the opportunity to commence debate on Bill C-49 to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act.

I am here today to deliver on the Government of Canada's commitment to working in close collaboration with the governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and of Nova Scotia to establish firm foundations for a thriving offshore renewable energy sector in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador. This legislation is an important part of our country's future as we work to fight climate change by reducing carbon emissions and seizing the economic opportunities that can come from a transition to a low-carbon future.

Around the world, businesses large and small, and governments, are in a race to reduce carbon emissions and to seize the extraordinary economic opportunities associated with a low-carbon transition and, of course, to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Global financial markets are playing a key role in this investment shift through their investment decisions. Successful businesses interpret and adapt to changes in the environment in which they operate. It is what their shareholders expect; it is what their employees depend upon.

The science of climate change is clear. The major cause of increasingly severe and frequent weather events and wildfires is, of course, climate change. Similarly, the science is clear about what must be done to avert the worst impacts of climate change. As a global community, we need to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, and we need to make meaningful progress by 2030. We cannot get to net zero by 2050 if we begin our journey in 2040.

[Translation]

In 2019, Canada was one of the first countries to commit to achieving net zero by 2050, and we subsequently committed to meeting ambitious interim targets along the way.

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That was just four years ago. Today, 80 countries are committed to achieving net zero. Progress has been made both here in Canada and around the world, but we all need to do more. Commitments are meaningless unless they are backed up by plans and actions. That is why Canada has developed one of the most detailed and, I would even say, one of the most comprehensive climate plans in the world.

Increasingly, governments are not the only ones taking action. Global financial markets are playing a crucial role in the transition to a low-carbon future through their investment decisions. The smart money, looking for long-term gains, is moving away from assets that will underperform in a low-carbon world.

[English]

Governments are certainly no different. To effectively serve their citizens, they must also respond to changing circumstances and then take decisive actions. The economic future of Canadians depends on our making the right choices to ensure that Canada will thrive in a low-carbon world. The good news is that Canada is very well positioned to take advantage of these opportunities. It is up to us as a country to make the smartest possible choices. Canada can choose to be a leader in this global economic shift or to let it pass us by. Going slowly and just hoping for the best is a choice, and a much riskier one; in fact, I believe it is a terrible gamble.

There are really two paths we can take. The first path accepts that climate change is a scientific reality that we can and must address. It understands that the world at large is moving in that direction, creating a shift in investment and innovation. The first path calls for a thoughtful plan for the future that acknowledges where the world is and must be headed and that seeks to take full advantage of the economic opportunities that are available through the transition to a low-carbon economy.

The second path starts with shrugging off the damage that climate change has already caused: the dramatic floods in our towns and cities, dried-up rivers, melting glaciers and the wildfires in our forests that folks here and across the country know very well. It pretends that climate concern is a fad that will fade and that we do not really need to do anything to keep our economy healthy for the long term. The second path presents, as I said, a terrible gamble that is effectively betting against the environmental imperatives that are all around us. It is one that would thus lead to both environmental and economic devastation.

This federal government has chosen the first path. There are five key things that we must prioritize if we are to seize the historic opportunities and go down this path. First is identifying and seizing key economic opportunities in every region of the country, which are made available via the global shift to a net-zero economy. These opportunities are in areas from critical minerals to batteries and EV manufacturing, from hydrogen to biofuels, and from small modular reactors to renewable sources of energy and a wide range of clean technologies. Second is a thoughtful approach to Canada's oil and gas sector and its resources, for which there will continue to be demand, albeit less demand, in a net-zero world. Third is building out a clean, reliable and affordable electricity grid. Fourth is advancing economic reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Finally, we must

make more efficient and effective our regulatory and permitting processes.

• (1030)

Bill C-49 is about creating a clean electricity grid, seizing the economic opportunities of a low-carbon future and about the opportunities this entails for economic reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

As part of our broader plan, we need to build more clean power, certainly a lot more. While we are focused on deploying clean energy to reduce electricity-sector emissions, we must also expand the total amount of power on the grid. As we electrify much of the transportation and building sectors with electric vehicles, heat pumps and other technologies, we will need new clean power to meet this rising demand.

An abundant supply of clean energy is also at the core of accessing critical economic opportunities, like we have seen with Air Products in Alberta, Volkswagen in Ontario or Ford's new battery cathode facility in Bécancour. This all demands a decarbonized grid, but also a much larger grid. In fact, we will need to double, or increase by more, the size of our existing grid by 2050. Offshore wind offers opportunity for Atlantic Canada to not only feed the need for significant additional renewable energy for the electricity grid, but also would provide a major export opportunity associated with the production of zero-carbon hydrogen.

Bill C-49 is a critical piece of legislation to enable our offshore power potential to be realized, not only to meet federal climate targets, but also to achieve provincial power and economic plans. Last fall, Nova Scotia set an offshore wind target with a goal of providing seabed land leases of up to five gigawatts of offshore wind energy by 2030, with the intention of using most of that power to support the production of hydrogen that will be used in Canada or exported. That is enough energy to power 3,750,000 homes.

Newfoundland and Labrador has high ambitions as well. During my last visit to St. John's for the Energy NL Conference, there was extensive interest from the private sector, workers and local levels of government in the opportunities presented by offshore renewables, including hydrogen production.

With regard to the hydrogen opportunity, it is an economic opportunity for Canada. It is also an opportunity to help our friends in Europe in their efforts to enhance energy security and to accelerate the move toward a low-carbon future. It is something that we discussed when Chancellor Scholz and Vice-Chancellor Habeck visited us last year, and it is something on which we continue to work actively with our friends in Germany.

Newfoundland's energy minister, Andrew Parsons, has said of Bill C-49 that he is "pleased that the federal government is moving forward legislative amendments to modernize the Accord Acts to enable new clean energy opportunities, grow the economy and protect the environment. This is consistent with [his] government's commitment to achieving net zero by 2050."

Nova Scotia's ministers Halman and Rushton said that we need "modern, forward-looking solutions to achieve [climate goals]." They stated that "Amending the federal Accord Act is an important step so that we can safely and responsibly pursue renewable energy projects like offshore wind."

Today, we are here to talk about a potential \$1-trillion global industry, offshore wind. Canada must move rapidly to seize our share in this global economic opportunity. We know that we are in a race for investment, and that is why, in partnership with Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador, we have been working on this legislation while concurrently preparing for its implementation.

● (1035)

[Translation]

The proposed amendments to the accord acts are key factors in unlocking this potential. As we all know, the development of major projects requires a stable, predictable and credible legislative and regulatory framework, as well as oversight provided by a predictable and credible regulatory authority. We have both.

We have the accord acts, and we have the offshore regulators that are the result of enduring federal and provincial partnerships that have existed for more than three decades. The two historic Atlantic accords were signed in the mid-1980s, first between Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador, then between Canada and Nova Scotia. These are historic accords that laid the foundations for the current system of joint management of the offshore accords. Under these historic accords, both provinces became equal partners with Canada in managing offshore energy, with revenues going to the provinces.

[English]

They also established two autonomous boards that were tasked with regulating offshore oil and gas projects. Through this bill we would expand their mandate to include the regulation of offshore renewable energy. The boards are already well accustomed to interpreting offshore energy legislation and enforcing standards that each project will be expected to meet.

It is time to look to the future and move forward with these important amendments. The accord acts are informed by years of engagement and collaboration with our joint management partners, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador.

There are several things these amendments would do. First, they would modernize parts of the land tenure process for existing offshore activities to better align with the international best practices and keep pace with emerging technologies. Second, they would leverage the boards wealth of expertise and modernize the accord acts so that the boards can take on the important responsibility of regulating Nova Scotia's and Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore renewable energy projects, very much including wind

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projects. This would allow the boards to implement and administer the proposed legislative frameworks around offshore renewables and ensure that best practices around land rights management are adopted specifically around land use planning, bidding processes, issuing licences for seabed use and providing authorizations for the development of offshore renewable projects.

The amendments would ensure that the accord acts align with the Impact Assessment Act, ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of regulators and the Impact Assessment Agency are further clarified for all parties and stakeholders. Also, with regard to the government's duty to consult with indigenous peoples, the amendments specify that the government would be able to rely on the offshore energy boards to consult with indigenous peoples and make accommodations to mitigate any adverse impacts to treaty rights and aboriginal rights.

This legislation is a critical part of Canada's ongoing work in the fight against climate change and it aligns with the actions taken by some of our peer countries. Several countries have taken the step of creating or broadening the authorities of existing offshore energy regulators. This is true for the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and Australia.

Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador are working to fight climate change and to seize the economic opportunities that can come from a transition to a low-carbon future. They are promoting the use of low-cost and low-carbon electric heat by the installation of heat pumps. They have joined with the Government of Canada on the Regional Energy and Resource Tables to ensure they are well placed to capitalize on economic opportunities, and they are initiating new, innovative, renewable energy projects. They are part of a push that is happening across the country to encourage renewable energy and clean fuels as well as create a thriving energy economy.

As I mentioned off the top, there is an alternative to our plan for the future. This is what I referred to earlier as the "second path", which is one of hoping for the best. In my mind, this path ignores the very clear evidence as to how climate change is undermining the health and safety of people and of the planet. Burying one's head in the sand will lead to environmental devastation and economic stagnation as the world, very much including global investors, simply looks elsewhere.

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Some in this country will try to tell us that one can fight climate change by simply relying on technology. I know that the Conservative leader is often fond of using the tag line “technology, not taxes”, by which he seems to imply that we can simply hope on technology to save us. However, I will tell members that is not a plan. That is a blind hope that comes from someone who has no background in technology, no background in energy and no background in climate issues.

I certainly am very well aware, given the time I spent in the technology industry, of the power of technology, but technology is not a climate plan nor is it a plan for the economy. A true plan requires thoughtful regulation, thoughtful investments and, yes, a price on carbon pollution.

This “hope for the best” approach will lead the Canadian economy down a path to obsolescence and the loss of tens of thousands of jobs in Canada's energy sector. Such an approach would create uncertainty and dissuade investment from coming to Canada, which is, of course, the opposite of what we need. Simple tag lines in place of serious policy do not serve Canadians well, which is why we are here today with serious policy that would create good jobs, fight climate change and unlock the full economic potential of the offshore.

Certainly, passing Bill C-49 would allow Canada to compete with our peer countries to seize our share of a massive global market opportunity. On the other hand, opposition to this bill would hold back our potential, prevent job creation in Atlantic Canada and send the wrong message to Nova Scotians and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

It is incumbent upon us to ensure that we act in the best interests of the economic and environmental well-being of Atlantic Canadians by supporting Bill C-49. I sincerely hope that no one in this House will decide to go down the wrong path instead of working together to pass this legislation to bring our offshore into being.

In conclusion, all of these changes make sense. Offshore wind energy can and will contribute to this government's goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050. It is a key part of decarbonizing the electricity sector and transitioning our economy towards electrical power, establishing our hydrogen sector and providing new, sustainable jobs in the offshore energy sector. I am confident that this bill is and will be a critical element and a key driver to achieving the future we all envision in this House, one that is sustainable, affordable and prosperous for all Canadians.

• (1040)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a great liking for my colleague, the minister, and I hold him in high esteem.

However, when I read Bill C-49, there was something that jumped out at me, and that is the name change. It incorporates the concept of clean energy. However, a careful reading shows that this bill applies mainly to offshore oil drilling. I hardly think offshore oil drilling qualifies as clean energy.

I know that the minister criticized our Conservative colleague in the context of the devastating wildfires we went through this summer. We must listen to science. Sometimes, however, I get the impression that my colleagues in the Liberal Party are spinning the science and doing some greenwashing.

I would like the minister to explain to us how exactly this bill applies to clean energy.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, Bill C-49 does indeed focus on renewable energy. It will allow us to launch a new offshore wind industry and foster a strong economy in Nova Scotia as well as in Newfoundland and Labrador.

That is at the heart of this bill.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, obviously, Conservatives support expanded development of offshore petroleum resources and the development of innovative, green and new technology development. Conservatives have, for years, highlighted concerns around permitting timelines and gatekeeping roadblocks of uncertain conditions.

Could the minister clarify how many of the details around the scope, mandate and requirements of the additional responsibilities of the new boards and regulators will be clarified before this bill passes the Senate? How much of that will be left to regulations such as what was done in Bill C-69, creating the disaster that Canada now finds itself in?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, there is actually a fair bit of detail in the bill. The hon. member will know the ways in which offshore accord acts work. They are actually jointly done and must be agreed upon.

There has to be mirror legislation introduced in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador. The bulk of it will be laid out in the bill. There will obviously be some in the legislation but that will be, of course, something that must be agreed upon between the provincial governments and the federal government.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that the clean energy tax credits of the Biden administration have created an explosive growth in clean energy opportunities, \$110 billion in new projects. On offshore wind, the vineyard project will create energy for 400,000 homes; off Rhode Island, 250,000 homes, so it is a huge opportunity.

At the same time, we see the Danielle Smith government shutting down and walking away on \$33 billion in opportunities. Atlantic Canada has a huge opportunity here, but the urgency here is getting the tax credits moved from promises to reality so that we do not lose opportunities stateside like poor Alberta is doing from Danielle Smith's actions.

I would like to ask the minister this. When does he see the clean energy tax credits coming into force so that we can take full advantage and compete with the United States?

• (1045)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, I am in agreement with the member that we certainly want to advance the final definition of the investment tax credits so that there is certainty with respect to investment. Right now we are waiting to see what that will be.

I would also say that it is really important that we have a regulatory structure that companies can rely upon. That is exactly what this bill is intending to do, to put in place that regulatory structure in collaboration with Newfoundland and Labrador and with Nova Scotia.

With respect to the investment tax credits, we are working on that very actively. As members would know, the Department of Finance leads on that, but we are working to have that done expeditiously. We all recognize the need to have that in place.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, Bill C-49 is welcome. The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board and the Canada-Newfoundland & Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board have long had embedded within the legislation aspects of the Atlantic accord that make it a duty of these offshore boards to increase offshore petroleum production. I do not see those sections being removed. It is certainly welcome to see a focus that allows the offshore petroleum boards to actually promote and regulate offshore wind energy production, which is truly green.

Meanwhile, we still see subsidies pouring into fossil fuels. We still see that the government is intent on completing a pipeline, the Trans Mountain pipeline, which we own, and it is a horror and a scandal to waste \$31 billion on a project intended to produce more greenhouse gases out of the oil sands. We still are putting money into the proven failure of carbon capture and storage, which is yet another disguised subsidy to fossil fuels.

Would the government be open to amending Bill C-49 when it gets to committee to ensure that it takes away the embedded preference of petroleum over renewables?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as the hon. member will appreciate, the role of the House and committees is to discuss and to look to find ways to improve upon bills. It would be irresponsible for any minister to say that he or she is not willing to engage a conversation about how bills can be improved. However, the focus of this bill is on enabling the offshore renewable sector, and that is something we are very intent on moving forward on as expeditiously as is possible.

I would correct a couple of the things that the hon. member said. A few months ago, the government brought forward a framework for the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies. We are the first G7 country to do that. We are two years ahead of all the other countries with respect to their commitment. We have been very focused on that, as well as the international financing of fossil fuel projects.

With respect to the member's comments on carbon capture and sequestration, she is wrong. Many carbon capture and sequestration projects are in process of being developed or are already operating.

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It is a technology that is not that novel. It is scaling the technology and making it economic that is most important. I would suggest that perhaps she do a bit more homework on that.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is nice to hear the minister endorse the idea of carbon capture and have that on the record.

I am wondering about liquefied natural gas. He did not mention it in his speech. Mr. Putin is largely funding his war on the back of selling natural gas in Europe. Canada is one of the largest producers of natural gas. Is his government now behind the idea of building liquefied natural gas terminals and supplying clean Canadian natural gas to the world?

• (1050)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: No, Madam Speaker, this bill is about enabling offshore wind. It has nothing to do with liquid natural gas, but there certainly are opportunities for liquid natural gas. LNG Canada phase one will be coming on stream in 2025 and the Woodfibre project probably not that long afterward. There are a number of other projects, including some that have been approved, like Cedar LNG.

However, for liquid natural gas to make sense in the context of moving forward, it has to be done in a manner that is consistent with Canada's climate obligations and it has to be in a situation where it actually displaces heavier fossil fuels that are used in other countries. We have been working with the sector on that and we will continue working within the sector, but it is simply not appropriate to ignore our climate obligations. Canada has to meet its own climate targets and therefore it has to be done with that frame.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this is a historic day, the modernization of the Atlantic accords between Nova Scotia and the federal government, and Newfoundland and Labrador and the federal government, as we try to decarbonize our grids in the face of the increasing demand on electrification for home energy and transportation.

I wonder if the minister could comment briefly on the connection between the offshore accord modernization and the ability to decarbonize the Atlantic Canadian grid.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Madam Speaker, as the member knows, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick still rely significantly on coal, and there is a need to move away from coal. The Government of Nova Scotia has its own requirement to be off coal by 2030. One of the ways in which we can enable that is through the development of more renewables, and offshore wind offers the opportunity for large scale renewables to feed the grid.

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Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to be back in the House of Commons on behalf of the people of Lakeland, and Canadians everywhere, who want life to be more affordable, and also want energy and food security, which is the most important economic and geopolitical question facing the free world.

Unfortunately, Bill C-49 is another step in a long line of Liberal laws and policies since 2015 that appears destined to drive investment out of Canada with more uncertainty, red tape and extended and costly timelines.

Hopefully, this time the Liberals will actually listen to cautions and analysis during debate and committee consideration to prevent the rather ridiculous current spectacle they are now caught in, claiming to want to reduce permitting and regulatory timelines even though they have been in government for eight years, and are actually talking about the extra red tape, confusion and potentially endless timelines they themselves imposed through Bill C-69, which Conservatives and then municipalities, indigenous leaders, private sector proponents, and all provinces and territories did warn about at the time. As always, the Liberals figured they knew best, and they sure did create a heck of a broken mess.

Ostensibly, the bill would amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board to become the regulators and add offshore renewables to their mandates, while creating a regulatory regime for offshore, wind and other renewable energy projects that currently exist for offshore petroleum operations.

It is a reasonable and necessary initiative, and Conservatives are glad to see the inclusion of the provincial governments as required partners in final decisions on this joint jurisdiction. I might note that is a principle the Liberals often abandon when it comes to other provincial governments with which they disagree. However, it is both unfortunately and unsurprisingly clear that Bill C-49 would also subject offshore renewable energy to the same web of uncertain regulations, long and costly timelines and political decision-making that has driven hundreds of billions of dollars in private sector energy investment, hundreds of businesses and hundreds of thousands of energy jobs out of Canada and into other jurisdictions around the world.

Bill C-49 also includes provisions that could impose a full shut-down and ban on offshore oil and gas development at any time. That is a direct attack on one of Newfoundland's key industries, risks undermining the rights of indigenous communities and local communities to meaningful consultation, and ignores the work and aspirations of other locally impacted communities and residents.

The Liberals have already threatened offshore activity in Newfoundland and Labrador with a minister saying that the decision on Baie du Nord was the most difficult one they had ever made. Baie du Nord would have provided more than 13,000 jobs overall; \$97.6 billion in national GDP; \$82 billion in provincial GDP, more than 8,900 jobs, \$11 billion in taxes and \$12.8 billion in royalty revenues for Newfoundland and Labrador; \$7.2 billion in GDP and more than 2,200 jobs for Ontario; \$2.6 billion and more than 900 jobs for Quebec; \$3.1 billion in GDP and almost 700 jobs for Albertan. Like the usual pattern under the government, the private

sector proponent has put that project on hold for three years because of uncertainty.

As written, the bill has many gaps. The Liberals must clarify, sooner than later, a number of practical implications.

For example, will the offshore boards need more resources for technical expertise or personnel, or more funding to fulfill the additional responsibilities? If so, who will pay for it? What is a realistic expectation of when the regulators would be fully ready for the work outside of their current scope? What about the responsibility for health and safety regulations for renewable energy projects at sea, which are currently the job of the respective offshore boards on offshore rigs and under the department of labour on land? These obligations should be clearly defined jurisdictionally in the bill.

What about environmental considerations relating to offshore renewable projects? The boards, the truth is, currently have no experience in activities around wind, tidal and other sea-based energies that may disrupt ecosystems and seaweed growth; harm sea birds, whales, fish stock, lobster stock; or interfere with organisms that live on the sea bed, like anemones, corals, crabs, sea urchins and sponges. What provisions are needed for the regulators to adequately assess risks to key habitat and vulnerable species?

● (1055)

I cannot imagine, nor would I ever suggest, that the NDP-Liberals will add upstream emission requirements as a condition for such approvals, like it did, along with downstream emissions, in a double standard deliberately designed to kill the west to east pipeline that could have created energy self-security and self-sufficiency for Canada, by refining and exporting western resources on the Atlantic Canadian coast for export. European allies and Ukrainians definitely would appreciate that. However, it would certainly be a significant hurdle if they did, given what is really involved in the manufacturing of steel and concrete for offshore renewable projects, which create a lot of hazardous waste on the back end, for example. If the Liberals actually cared about the cumulative impacts, like they always say they do, they would clarify all of that in this bill also.

The Liberals must account for these considerations. At this point, after eight years, Canadians should be skeptical if the government says that it will work out the details later or in regulations after the fact. That has always been a disaster under those guys, no matter the issue.

On top of these unanswered questions, the reality is that the bill would triple the timeline for a final decision on alternative energy projects and would give political decision-makers the ability to extend that timeline potentially indefinitely.

If this all sounds familiar, a lack of details on crucial issues, uncertainty around roles, responsibilities or requirement, and timelines that actually have so many loopholes for interference that no concrete timelines really exist at all, that is because it is. This is what the Liberals did in Bill C-69, which the Conservatives warned would help prevent any major pipeline projects from being approved or even proposed in Canada since it passed in 2019. It has become a gatekeeping roadblock to private sector proponents in all areas of resource development and the pursuit of major projects in Canada.

The reality is that companies will not invest billions in building energy infrastructure in Canada's uncertain fiscal and regulatory framework, where excessive and duplicative red tape means there is no consistency or certainty in the assessment process, no clear rules or a path to completion, and no guaranteed return on investment, which can all be lost at the whim of a government minister's unilateral decision.

As much as the Liberals wish it were true, alternative energy projects are not in a separate magical category from oil and gas, where they are somehow immune from these basic economic and fiscal considerations, except for those publicly funded through subsidies or paid for by utility ratepayers, definitely a significant proportion of renewable and alternative energy to date, especially outside of Alberta, where it is done by the private sector primarily. The fiscal and regulatory framework is a crucial and definitive aspect of what private sector proponents politely call the "lack of a business case" every time a major project is halted or abandoned after years and millions of dollars of working toward it, usually moving their focus and tragically their money, jobs, innovation, initiative, creativity and expertise to other countries. The Liberals have already created these same adverse conditions for wind, solar and tidal as well.

Let us take the Pempa'q tidal energy project in the Bay of Fundy. It would have provided clean, green energy to Nova Scotia's electrical grid and could have generated up to 2,500 megawatts, while bringing in \$100 million in investment and significantly reducing emissions. However, after repeated delays, a tide of Liberal red tape and "Five years of insurmountable regulatory challenges" the proponent withdrew, and it folded.

Sustainable Marine was not the only victim of multiple layers of red tape that involved departments. Other renewable projects, like a pulp mill that would have created biodegradable plastics from their waste stream, left Canada because the Liberals told the proponents that the approval phase under their gatekeepers would take 20 years.

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The bottom line is that energy companies, like any company, need certainty to invest, whether in the oil sands, natural gas, critical minerals, pipelines, hydrogen, petrochemicals, wind or solar farms or hydroelectricity. Proponents need concrete timelines, consistent, well-defined and predictable regulatory measures. They need to be confident that a government will respect jurisdictional responsibilities, be willing to enforce the rule of law and take action if necessary for projects after approval so proponents can know that if they follow the rules, meet the conditions and act in good faith, they will be successful.

Companies and the regulators also need to account for possible risks posed to local activities, most notably the impacts of offshore wind development and other technologies on the livelihoods of Atlantic fishers and lobstermen.

● (1100)

In this case, all impacted parties need to be involved in the consultation process from the get-go. Unfortunately, the Liberal's Bill C-49 creates the opposite for both alternative energy sources and offshore oil and gas. When it comes to crafting anti-energy legislation, the Liberals, with their NDP power broking coalition, just cannot seem to help themselves. Sections 28 and 137 of this bill give the government the power, as I mentioned before, to completely end any current offshore drilling for oil and gas, as well as any offshore alternative energy development. Obviously, that is an immediate threat to the sector because of the uncertainty, even for existing operations, and it risks any future projects in these provinces by designating prohibited development areas.

Notably, the bill states that any activity may be suspended in those areas. That obviously includes offshore petroleum drilling and exploration, but the language could also include offshore wind and other alternative energy development. One thing that is predictable is this pattern because it is similar to a previous Liberal bill, Bill C-55, which allowed a government minister to unilaterally designate any marine area in Canada as a prohibited development zone.

The Liberals must answer whether their increasing targets and the language in Bill C-49 would cancel and/or prohibit both traditional and renewable energy projects if located in those areas. What are the restrictions? How could developers make investment decisions if the areas where they operate may suddenly be declared prohibited?

The Liberals are so comfortable with their nearly decade-long pattern of piling on layers of anti-energy, anti-development and anti-private sector laws, policies and taxes on Canada's key sectors that they hinder both traditional sources of energy, which they recklessly want to phase out prematurely, and stand in the way of the renewable and new technologies they purport to want.

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This discussion cannot be removed from the context of Canada still operating, or rather more accurately not operating, under the rules and red tape the NDP-Liberal government imported into this bill.

Bill C-69 completely erased the concept of having any timelines for approving energy infrastructure, and instead allowed for limitless and indefinite extensions of regulatory timelines, as we warned. Unfortunately, this just creates a swath of potential maybes on project applications because of the potential for suspensions and delays, and the uncertainty about measures for applications and outcomes.

With Bill C-69, as many Canadians said at the time, the Liberals might as well have hung a sign in the window that said, "Canada is closed for business". What is clear, and should be stunningly and frankly, through this total travesty, clear to all Canadians by now, is that clear timelines and requirements, as well as predictable rules and responsibilities, provide certainty for private sector proponents, which benefits the whole country.

After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canada ranks 31st among peers in the burden of regulations, as of 2018, and is less than half as competitive as the OECD average in administrative burdens on energy project start-ups. Canada is second-last in the OECD for construction permits, only ahead of Slovakia, and 64th in the world for building permits.

The Liberals touted creating certainty and predictability for energy companies with clear rules and regulations to follow, but the actual bill created a massive new web of poorly defined criteria for companies and gave cabinet ministers the power to add any criteria to the list that they wanted at any time. There is no predictability or consistency. Bill C-49 is an extension of that pattern.

Another concerning part is the provisions that specify the regulators in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia as the parties responsible for indigenous consultation for offshore oil and gas and affordable energy projects. I must say that Conservatives believe in greater authority and autonomy for provinces to govern their own affairs. We want less Ottawa. Conservatives believe in smaller governments and a shift of power to individuals and local communities. The many indigenous communities where I am from, and those from across the country, who are reliant on and depend upon traditional and alternative energy development, all say the same thing.

● (1105)

However, I want to caution the NDP-Liberals that this section may invite court challenges if it is not clarified, which would create even more costly delays in an already drawn-out and unpredictable process. Through years of extensive legal challenges, precedent and judicial decisions on major energy infrastructure, courts have emphasized that it is the Crown's duty to consult indigenous people and that a failure on the part of the government to ensure a two-way dialogue, and that actual decision-makers are at the table during the consultation process, is what has overturned approval decisions.

That was the case with the Liberals' approval of the Trans Mountain expansion under their own process. Indigenous consultation was overturned and the minister had to spend months meeting with indigenous communities to redo it. Of course, they could have also

done that with the northern gateway pipeline before that, and they would have saved everyone time and money later on with TMX. Instead, the Prime Minister vetoed northern gateway, blocking exports from the west coast to countries in Asia that desperately need our energy and killing all of the equity and mutual benefit agreements for the 31 indigenous communities along the pipeline that supported it, but I digress.

As currently drafted, this bill explicitly delegates the regulators as responsible for indigenous consultation. It is silent on the Crown's particular duty to consult, and it also shifts the power of final decision-making to federal and provincial government ministers.

On top of the fact that indigenous leaders often consider a federal minister specifically as the appropriate decision-maker to engage with them, if current or future governments rely too much or exclusively on the regulators for all assessments not captured by the Impact Assessment Act's consultation process, as is suggested in this bill, this section risks court challenges to proposed and approved projects in the long run and jeopardizes future offshore renewable and petroleum projects.

The impact of the uncertainty created by the Liberal government cannot be overstated. It takes Canada out of the global competition for energy development, punishing the best in class, and cedes market shares to dictators and regimes with far lower environmental and human rights standards. It costs Canada billions of dollars in investment and hundreds of thousands of jobs, and it robs Canadians and Canada's free and democratic allies of many irreplaceable opportunities, of energy security and of hope for the future.

I believe the impact on provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia deserves special attention. Anyone who has worked in Alberta's oil patch has no doubt worked together with many Newfoundlanders and Nova Scotians. Certainly, that is where my own family came from.

My mother was from Newfoundland. My father was from Nova Scotia. My grandmother was the first female mayor of Dartmouth, and I am a first generation Albertan.

My own constituents have been hit hard by the hostile, divisive NDP-Liberal government. Other than the people of Saskatchewan, our neighbours who are often interchangeable citizens based on the free enterprise policies of our respective provincial governments at any given time, the people most concerned about the damage done to Alberta are consistently Atlantic Canadians.

I wish that more of our neighbours could hear directly from Atlantic Canadians, who are always effusive in their reverence for Alberta and our main industries. Atlantic Canadians share with Albertans a feeling of distance and neglect from Ottawa. They are concerned about the exact same consequences of NDP-Liberal policies, and the skyrocketing costs of living, as well as those of fuel and food prices. They are being forced to choose between heating and eating, and they are concerned about a reliance on energy sources, for which there are few affordable or immediate options. They are worried about how to make ends meet and are wanting to hope for the future.

Thousands of people from Atlantic Canada, every year, come to Alberta to support their families and communities through the array of diverse opportunities offered by Alberta's globally renowned energy and renewable energy sectors. Alberta has steady work and high-paying, quality jobs that contribute revenue to all three levels of government for the public services and programs that Canadians rely on.

That impact was unprecedented. In 2014, for example, nine out of every 10 full-time jobs created in Canada were created in Alberta, and every job in the oil sands creates two indirect and three induced jobs at home and in other regions and provinces.

While public enemy number one for the NDP-Liberal anti-energy and anti-private sector policies during the last eight years has been Alberta, the truth is that the costly coalition's approach hurts the whole country, especially Atlantic Canadians.

While Albertans and Atlantic Canadians are inextricably linked and have helped to build each other's provinces, there is always a human cost to having to move away for work. Generations of parents, grandparents and great-grandparents spent a hundred years working hard to build lives, businesses, farms and futures for their kids. Now their children and their grandchildren are being forced to seek out opportunities elsewhere.

Legacies left behind is the very real generational impact of anti-development and anti-resource policies. Conservatives, in conclusion, want to see the same opportunities. We want to see the same high-paying, quality jobs for people in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia as there are for those in Alberta and for every Canadian.

Conservatives want families to be able to stay together, parents to be able to see their kids, cousins to know each other and people to be able to build upon legacies secured by generations before them.

• (1110)

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the

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work she's done on natural resources over the years, and I am looking forward to working with her more closely in the coming years.

The member talked at great length about other bills and other issues not related to Bill C-49. This bill is looking at creating jobs and attracting investment. That has been the federal government's approach. Could the member explain why both provincial premiers, Premier Furey and Premier Houston, are supporting this bill? Could the member explain if the Conservative Party will be supporting this bill, supporting the premiers, supporting investment and supporting jobs with Bill C-49?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I sure did enjoy our time together on the natural resources committee in my first term.

I spent a lot of time talking about Bill C-49. Aspects of this Bill C-49 are imported from bills such as Bill C-69 and Bill C-55. I talked about them to give context for policymakers, elected representatives in this debate and all Canadians.

I suspect the provinces of Nova Scotia and of Newfoundland and Labrador are supportive of the intent of this bill because they also want to have effective, efficient regulatory frameworks for both petroleum and alternative energy offshore development. A crucial thing that we support in this bill is that this does include the requirements of provincial ministers to be consulted in the case of any of the decision-making around development areas, regulations and the framework for development offshore.

Obviously, those provincial governments should be partners. I suspect that is why they support it. Of course, that does stand in contrast to the provincial governments the Liberals attack on energy when they disagree with them.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, my question is quite simple.

The bill we are looking at appears to continue the Liberal trend. In other words, it claims to promote renewable energy, but, in reality, it makes no changes to the status quo and continues to encourage the development of the oil industry.

We think that the government needs to start gradually reducing the size of that industry. My question is going to focus on two aspects.

First, does the member think we need to start taking action to slow the effects of climate change?

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Second, during the study of this bill, is my colleague ready to start talking seriously about gradually, sensibly and intelligently reducing the size of the oil industry? Of course, the transition to renewable energy will include support for those who work in the oil industry.

• (1115)

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, this the key philosophical dividing point between Conservatives and every other party in the House of Commons, which Canadians should know. Conservatives recognize the reality that multipronged, private sector energy companies are involved in the development of innovation and technology across the entire expanse of the different kinds of oil and gas production, as well as all kinds of different sources of energy production. Certainly in Alberta's case, that stands as an example with the oldest and largest-scale commercialized solar and wind farm. That has been going on for decades, funded mainly by oil sands and pipeline companies.

Here is where Conservatives stand: Global demand for oil and gas will continue to rise for the foreseeable future. Conservatives believe that Canada should be the supplier of choice for our responsible oil and gas products and technologies, which would help lower global emissions and are produced under the highest standards in the world. It is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have to allow for other questions.

Continuing with questions and comments is the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague. I love being on committee with her, and we have lots of great discussions.

I am really fascinated by my colleague's concern about driving investment out of Canada. Exhibit one is Danielle Smith. There is no place on the planet that has more opportunity for clean energy than Alberta, but it has a premier who believes that the world is 5,000 years old and that dinosaurs existed at the same time as Fred Flintstone. She has shut down huge opportunities in clean energy.

Alberta has lost 91 projects, worth \$33 billion, at a time when the Biden administration is moving ahead with \$110 billion in opportunities. We have huge opportunity in Alberta being shut down and driven out of the country by the bizarre talk of Danielle Smith.

Is my hon. colleague's leader willing to tie himself to Danielle Smith's stagecoach to nowhere, or will the Conservatives be willing to compete for clean energy in Alberta?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I too enjoy working with my colleague on the natural resources committee and have gotten to know him over the past couple of years. I also enjoy his CDs, even though we give each other the gears on a very regular basis because of our divergent world views.

Quite frankly, I am confused as to why the member does not see the wisdom in having a world-renowned renewable energy development jurisdiction, starting on the front end to implement clear requirements, clear conditions and clear accountability to Albertans

through the entire process, as well as remediation and reclamation. This would help set attractive investment conditions for alternative energy development and build confidence among Albertans in the long term for the development of those projects. That is an important, responsible tactic that a provincial government must take. It should not be surprising since the province has always led in regulatory standards for all kinds of energy development.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague from Lakeland is probably the only one in the House who will not be surprised by what I am going to say, which is that Bill C-69 was not in the interests of environmental assessments in Canada. It was so poorly designed. It was all discretionary. There were no timelines.

The only thing that made environmentalists think it was a good bill was that Jason Kenney called it the anti-pipeline act. It could just as easily have been called the pro-pipeline act because it is discretionary and lacks the basics that have been in our environmental assessment law since the mid-1970s through to the early 1990s, when former prime minister Brian Mulroney brought forward a very good environmental assessment act.

My hon. colleague from Lakeland knows that we will disagree on the notion that we want to expand oil and gas demand across the world and that there is any such thing as responsible oil and gas. There are only fossil fuels, and burning them destroys our future.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I do recall finding interesting points of agreement on Bill C-69 around the arbitrary, unilateral and unclear impacts of that bill, but as she noted, we had wildly diverging world views and aspirations for the energy sector in Canada.

Since we are debating this federally, let me just emphasize what Conservatives believe. We believe in lower taxes and less red tape, and the elimination of duplicative and onerous regulations so businesses can thrive. Conservatives want Canada to be the supplier of choice for our responsible oil and gas development, for our own energy affordability and security and for our allies.

As prime minister, our Conservative leader would green light green technologies so brilliant engineers can advance more affordable electricity. We would reduce approval timelines for all energy projects, and remove unnecessary, duplicative red tape and punishing taxes so that entrepreneurs and companies can invest in Canada and so that major energy and infrastructure projects can actually get built in this country. This is unlike the NDP-Liberals, who gate-keep, roadblock and make traditional energy more expensive while delaying and driving out new energy opportunities.

• (1120)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I had to go back and reread what I heard because I am pretty sure I heard the member say that this Liberal government was interested in phasing out the oil and gas sector. Then she said the word “prematurely”. That would suggest to me that she agrees that the phase-out is inevitable or happening, and I just want clarification on that. Does she agree that this is inevitable, despite the fact that she might think it is premature?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, this is what has been wild about the Liberals over the past eight years: They have tried to speak out of all sides of their mouths. There are NDP and Green voters who fell for the Liberals' empty words on the environment in 2015, although I should not say they fell for it. In good faith, they trusted the Prime Minister and the government to keep their promises. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands did point out the very reasonable concerns that those voters should have with the government.

The Liberal government tries to say it supports pipelines on the one hand, but it brings in anti-energy legislation on the other. It will block renewable energies just the same as traditional energies. The Canadian energy sector should be able to thrive long into the future so we can provide energy affordability, security and self-sufficiency, as well as offer emissions-reducing technologies and products to displace higher-emitting sources around the world.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am especially pleased to rise in the House this morning because I am feeling confident. My party whip complimented me on my perfect hair before I rose to speak, so I am feeling really good about speaking to Bill C-49 this morning.

The Bloc Québécois will take a careful look at the principles of Bill C-49. It goes without saying that we will want to examine this bill more closely in committee. However, before I get into the nitty-gritty of the bill, I want to mention a few problems that I noticed with it.

The first has to do with provincial jurisdictions. Personally, I would not want the federal government to have control over the management of Canada's natural resources. We know that natural resource management is a provincial responsibility. However, when we look carefully at this bill, we see that, in response to a Supreme Court ruling, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia have agreed that offshore waters fall under federal jurisdiction. There is therefore no breach.

I think it is important to point that out, because the Bloc Québécois introduced a bill on environmental assessments that states that such assessments should fall under Quebec's jurisdiction and that what happens within Quebec's borders should be specifically assessed by Quebec. That is one thing.

I do not think there is any dispute about areas of jurisdiction in this bill. That is also important because my riding is home to the Saguenay waterway, and the federal government published a study that said that traffic on the Saguenay waterway should be restricted. I did not want to end up in a situation where I had to defend some-

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thing that would go against the legitimate right of Quebec and the provinces to have their jurisdictions respected.

Before moving on to Bill C-49 itself, I would like to go over the context. That is a bit like what the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources did earlier in his speech. He went over the context. This summer, we experienced the worst wildfires in the Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean and Abitibi regions. I have colleagues from Abitibi who were affected all summer by this awful situation. They had to support many people in their community.

Wildfires are a symptom of climate change. Droughts are getting longer and more intense and starting earlier. This makes forest conditions ripe for wildfires. To deny that would be heresy, in my view. I say this because I believe public decision-makers have a duty to act responsibly, particularly in the context of the climate crisis. That is the theme that the Bloc Québécois has adopted for this new parliamentary session.

What does acting responsibly in the context of the climate crisis mean? For one thing, it means listening to the science. If someone cannot listen to the science, then at the very least, they should not lie. Politicians should not lie to the population. The people of Alberta should not be led to believe that things can go on as before and that they can keep extracting oil from the oil sands forever. Albertans should not be lied to. Most importantly, Quebecers should not be lied to.

There is a lie that is being perpetuated. I hear it here every day. It is about the infamous carbon tax. Let me repeat, there is no carbon tax that applies to Quebec. Quebec has its own carbon pricing. The only carbon tax applies to the rest of Canada, and what my Conservative colleagues are referring to is actually a fuel standard. The Conservatives themselves once tried to implement a similar clean fuel standard.

Going back to the context, it should be obvious that we are facing a climate crisis. That climate crisis must be addressed by respecting science and, above all, by not lying. I can promise you, Madam Speaker, that I will not lie.

To give a slightly more detailed picture of the current context, let me remind members how reliant Canada is on fossil fuels. For me, the first thing that comes to mind is that over \$30 billion was spent on a pipeline. That is a lot. That is over \$30 billion for a piece of infrastructure that will serve the greedy oil and gas industry. I will come back to that later.

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Since 2015, I have often heard the Liberal government cite the fight against climate change as an excuse to spend billions of dollars of public money on the pipe dream of making oil sands development cleaner. The government hopes to extend the lifespan of the oil sands.

• (1125)

Now it is telling us that low-carbon oil is on the way. The government is sparing no effort to make it happen. I would simply remind my colleagues of the emissions reduction fund that was created during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was anything but what its name suggested. The commissioner of the environment and sustainable development told the Standing Committee on Natural Resources that the fund had not reduced emissions after all. I would also refer my colleagues to the emissions reduction fund's \$675-million onshore program, especially with respect to the case at hand.

According to conservative figures from 2022, the federal government provided no less than \$20 billion in support to the oil and gas sector, that is, the fossil fuel sector. Subsidies for bogus solutions are being perpetuated in the pursuit of the new fantasy of carbon capture and sequestration strategies. The most recent budget included tax credits for the production of blue hydrogen, which is hydrogen derived from natural gas with carbon sequestration. Several experts have indicated that it is unattainable in these volumes, and yet huge subsidies are still being paid out to the oil and gas sector.

Meanwhile, looking at 2022, since 2023 is not yet over, the figures show that the oil and gas sector posted record profits. In 2022, Exxon recorded record profits of \$56 billion, Shell made \$40 billion, TotalEnergies made \$36 billion, Chevron made \$36 billion, and BP made \$27 billion, for a total of \$220 billion. Why am I sharing those figures? It is because it seems clear to me, and I think it is clear to all my colleagues, that when it comes to energy, Canada is trapped in the oil industry's stranglehold and cannot escape the idea of it. No one seems capable of thinking outside the box.

Let us come back to Bill C-49. I am not saying that the Bloc Québécois is not going to support this bill, but there is still a lot of work to be done. If the government wants to convince us of the merits of Bill C-49, then it needs to demonstrate that the bill is truly for the benefit of the energy transition. Perhaps we will talk a bit later about the name of the bill we are trying to change. Slogans and changes to the names of organizations are not going to convince the public, who no longer trusts the government to fight climate change. The bill needs to set out a plan to gradually reduce offshore oil and gas production and set an end date to the issuing of permits for new drilling projects.

Generally speaking, if we go back to what is in Bill C-49, we see that it aims to modernize the administrative regime and management of the marine energy industry in eastern Canada. I understand that there are no contentious aspects from a jurisdictional management perspective, but I would say that even though the bill refers to future activities related to the renewable energy sector, namely offshore wind energy off Canada's coasts, which is what I was saying to the minister this morning, the fact remains that the primary ob-

jective is oil and gas development, which our party has consistently denounced.

It is a bill that talks about clean energy, but what is hidden under this clean energy is still oil and gas development projects. It is not all doom and gloom, however. There are some interesting elements in this bill. However, many issues remain unresolved, particularly with respect to meeting conservation requirements for marine biodiversity, which we can see when we look at the part of the bill that deals the renewable energy development in eastern Canada. The same goes with respect to tightening the rules governing oil and gas development activities, although they should simply no longer exist.

• (1130)

I see that the stated purpose of offshore wind power development is to produce hydrogen for export. Is that an attempt to soften the current narrative around hydrogen? The fact remains that the Government of Canada's strategy on hydrogen is to produce gas-based hydrogen. At the end of the day, the amount that would be produced from wind power is negligible compared to the targeted production amounts for blue hydrogen.

I know that the minister does not like talking about colours when it comes to hydrogen. However, blue hydrogen requires a carbon capture technology that is not quite ready and the government is investing a lot of money in that.

My party and I believe that, in the context of the energy transition, the offshore, non-renewable energy sector should decline quickly. The non-renewable energy sector's decline may well be an area that requires further clarification in the bill.

We therefore do not think that any new offshore oil and gas export or development project should be permitted, regardless of the specific conditions associated with it. As a friendly reminder to my friends in the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the NDP, the path that Quebec is currently taking could quite possibly start a trend in the maritime provinces and Canada. We all know that Quebec put a firm and definite stop to oil and gas exploration and development in its territory by passing an act ending exploration for petroleum and production of petroleum and brine. The act also seeks to eliminate public funding for these activities.

Within the limits of its jurisdiction and in light of the current climate crisis, a responsible government could therefore decide to end oil and gas development. It has been done before. A nation did it before, and that nation was Quebec. The federal government followed our example on child care. I would urge it to do the same thing today on this file—and 20 years down the road maybe it could follow Quebec's example again, but on secularism. I digress. Still, Quebec deserves special mention as the first North American state to ban oil and gas exploration in its territory.

As we mentioned multiple times, the government of Canada has failed in its duty to protect ecosystems. Not a week, not even a day, goes by without my colleagues questioning the Minister of Environment about that. The minister did indeed fail in his duty: He authorized dozens of new drilling projects in environmentally sensitive areas, including marine refuges. We spoke out about this before the summer break.

Everybody knows as well as I do that offshore drilling poses a threat to marine life. Despite its commitments to marine conservation, the Liberal government supported the development of the offshore oil industry and authorized drilling projects in the very marine refuge it had created.

I want to talk about a double standard that I have seen emerging. There was a threat to the entire forestry sector in Quebec over the caribou issue. On numerous occasions, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change said that he was considering issuing a decree to ensure that caribou were better protected. At the same time, in those same weeks, he was prepared to approve offshore drilling.

That seems to me to be a double standard for two natural resource sectors. When it comes to the oil and gas sector, wildlife protection is not even on the government's radar. However, when it came to Quebec's forestry industry, the minister was ready to pounce, prepared to say he would issue a decree. In the end, the only thing that made him back down, strange as it may seem, was the forest fires. The double standards are pretty clear.

On this point, in the specific case of offshore development, the Minister of Environment absolved himself of responsibility by arguing on multiple occasions that the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board was an independent body.

• (1135)

That is what was convenient for him, since it allowed him to justify his inaction, even though the board exists under an agreement between the federal government and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the federal government is responsible for conducting environmental impact assessments and protecting natural environments.

For years now, the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board has been promoting the development and exploitation of marine oil and gas. Every year, the board issues a call for tenders and auctions off new exploratory drilling permits. Every year, our party speaks out against this process because its objective runs contrary to the objectives of protecting biodiversity and fighting climate change.

The boards and the Department of Natural Resources are responsible for both regulating the industry and fostering its development, which is totally incongruous. I am sure everyone would agree that these are two contradictory goals. As indicated on the department's website, their role is to facilitate the exploration and development of oil and gas resources. I hope that this problem will be corrected in this bill and that it will not prevent the development of renewable energy.

Now I would like to draw the attention of the House to the following. I have pointed out an inconsistency to my colleague the

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minister regarding the greenwashing in this bill. On reading this bill I wondered why they would add the expression “clean energy”. I asked the minister earlier which development this was referring to here. Of course there is going to be wind power projects, but the development at hand here is primarily oil and gas development. Why add the expression “clean energy”? The federal government uses that expression everywhere. Oil is not and never will be a clean energy. It is a purely Canadian fantasy.

My party—and I hope the same goes for the NDP and for all the other parties—is not fooled by the name changes in the two acts in question. To me, removing the word “petroleum” is greenwashing. They remove the word “petroleum” at the very moment that Ottawa and Newfoundland have a plan to double production beyond 2030 to 235 million barrels a year, which would require 100 new drilling projects by 2030.

As we often say, the Liberals do not walk the talk. That much is obvious. If their goal is to have more clean energy projects, all I can say is that what the government is doing behind the scenes could not be further from that. By now, we are used to all this greenwashing language. The Prime Minister and his friend the Minister of Natural Resources have truly mastered that craft.

What I like about the Conservatives is that we know what to expect from them. They are proud, enthusiastic even, to act as lobbyists for the oil and gas sector.

In the Liberal ranks, however, under the guise of reducing the impact of the oil and gas sector's greenhouse gas emissions, they use other strategies: they want to produce net-zero oil using a bunch of new, extremely expensive technologies. Nevertheless, the goal remains the same: to support the oil and gas sector.

I will end on a positive note. This bill is not all bad. It contains elements to regulate the development of renewable energy, but those too will need to be looked at carefully in committee.

We also believe that environmental impact assessments should be the responsibility of independent public organizations whose mission does not include any other responsibilities or objectives. In that regard, we believe that the federal and provincial governments could be guided by Quebec's environmental legislation.

Finally, if the government wants the Bloc Québécois to support Bill C-49, then it must show that this bill serves the energy transition.

• (1140)

On that point, I want to emphasize that it is futile for the government to argue that all the companies are doing is exploratory drilling because everyone knows that the purpose of such drilling is development. No company spends tens of millions of dollars to carry out exploratory drilling when they have no intention of developing the resources—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member's time is up. He can continue his speech during questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources and to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech today and for his work on the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. I would also like to thank him for all the work he is doing on renewable energy. I would even go so far as to say that he is a clean energy champion in his riding and in Quebec.

At the start of his speech, he talked about provincial jurisdictions. We have worked and negotiated hard with Premier Houston of Nova Scotia and also with Premier Furey of Newfoundland and Labrador, who support Bill C-49.

We heard earlier that the Conservatives will not support the premiers. Further to the intervention by my Bloc Québécois colleague, I would like to know if his party will support Bill C-49 because the premiers of both provinces support it.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, as I said at the beginning of my speech, respect for jurisdictions may not actually be an issue here. Given that the provincial premiers were willing parties to those discussions, I do not see this as an issue.

While I do want everyone to bear in mind that natural resource development is under provincial jurisdiction, that is not an obstacle in this case.

I would not say that the Bloc Québécois will never support this bill, but the reason we have trouble supporting it is that I get the sense that, once again, some people are trying to promote oil and gas development. They label it "clean energy". In this particular case, the end goal is to promote the oil sector.

The thing is, the goal should actually be to cut back on development. That is the problem with Bill C-49.

• (1145)

[English]

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am a little confused, and maybe my hon. colleague can help me understand. It takes 80 gallons of oil to lubricate one windmill, and he spoke about the wind turbine. There are 2,212 turbines in Quebec, which require 176,960 gallons of oil. This report came in August 14 of this year from Radio Canada.

The thing that I am trying to understand is that if we are worried about the environment and we want to be environmentally friendly, what happens to those windmills? Their lifespan is 20 years, and they are not recyclable. Could he explain that to me?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, in discussions about the oil and gas sector and the fact that we have to reduce our fossil fuel consumption, I always get a laugh out of Conservative members

who talk about clean energy sources that rely on petroleum products.

I just want to point out that oil sands oil is the dirtiest oil in the world. When we invest energy and money in those resources, which are used by Albertans and all Canadians, we cannot invest those resources in renewable energy.

We have to stop clinging to the illusion of clean oil and liberate ourselves from oil and gas. That is what every country wants to do. We have to stop talking about things that are not backed up by science and making up facts such as, say, there is a carbon tax in Quebec. That is not true; it is a lie.

Politicians who say things like that discredit themselves.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is no secret to anyone that we are in a very serious climate emergency, and I am sure people across Canada sent thoughts and prayers to Atlantic Canadians as they experienced some of the worst environmental crises and damage as a result of the climate crisis. While all of this has gone on, although we see a bill today, the Liberals have sat on their hands while the country burns and we see record floods, and the Conservatives have not been willing to move toward a real and aggressive plan for renewable energies.

I am wondering if my colleague agrees with me that the Liberal government needs to act more quickly if we are going to tackle this climate crisis head-on.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague.

I would point out to my colleague that, in fact, the NDP has the ability to force the government to act quickly given the agreement it has with the Liberal government. I very much welcome the possibility of the NDP using the same proposal as the Bloc Québécois. In order to support this bill, we need to see a plan to gradually reduce fossil fuel production. It would be great to see an amendment along those lines. The NDP could support it and use its agreement with the government to push this idea of reducing our dependence on oil and, more importantly, reducing the horrific pressure we are all experiencing as a result of increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

I completely agree with my colleague. I invite her to take action and move in that direction.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will start with a brief comment on breaking news. I know that many people are horrified and have been contacting me about the aggression we are seeing by Azerbaijan against Nagorno-Karabakh. It appears it is launching an aggressive war of choice, calling it a “military operation” and taking a page out of Russia's playbook in the process. I hope Canada takes a firm stand for peace by opposing this aggression.

I want to follow up on a comment my colleague made about how allegedly we are trapped by oil. I, of course, reject that framing. I want to point out that his province, Quebec, receives transfer payments that are funded by energy production. I wonder if he wants to tell us how he feels about that and address whether Quebec should maybe reject transfer payments that owe their origin to the production of oil and gas.

• (1150)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I love that question; it comes up a lot.

I would simply point out to my colleague that more than \$30 billion, some of it from Quebec, has been poured into infrastructure that Quebecers will never use. In 2022, if I am not mistaken, the oil and gas industry received \$20 billion from the federal government for a sector of activity that will never serve Quebec. The balance of trade between Quebec and Alberta equals a loss of approximately \$2 billion to \$3 billion. Just send it back to us; that would make us very happy. Once we finish with the electrification of transportation, we would be quite happy to get that money back.

Equalization gets blamed for a lot of things. Once we are sovereign, we will be even better off.

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech on Bill C-49.

Staying on the topic of forest fires, I would like to point out that the northern area of my riding, Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, lost 3.6 million hectares to the fires. Until now, the impact of climate change has been constant. The forest fires caused us tremendous economic, social and workforce losses. For an idea of the scope of the fires and the losses they caused us, members should keep in mind that my riding is three times the size of France.

Can my colleague tell us whether this bill will reduce the impact of greenhouse gases on the environment or reduce greenhouse gases from oil and gas?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous amount of work done by my colleague this summer to support her constituents in the wake of the forest fires.

I will reiterate what I said at the beginning of my speech. A number of stakeholders have said this summer that what we are experiencing is a symptom of climate change. It is happening right now. A number of stakeholders have told us that the effects of climate change will begin in the summer of 2023.

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I cannot fathom how anyone can keep saying that they want more oil, and that anything that works against the oil and gas sector should be considered an obstacle. That is what the Conservatives do every day when they talk about the carbon tax. They are trying to tie the challenges facing the poorest people when it comes to paying for housing, clothing and food with what the Conservatives see as a disadvantage for the oil and gas sector.

The greedy oil and gas companies made \$220 billion last year. The Conservative Party is defending them on the pretext that this will help ordinary people who are having a hard time putting a roof over their heads and food on the table. I have never heard such deep-seated populist rhetoric in my life. Anyone who looks back on this in a decade or so will likely blush.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am certainly proud to rise on behalf of the people of Timmins—James Bay to speak to Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act. It would make sure that we can finally embed the issue of getting renewables in wind energy development off of the east coast of Canada.

I want to begin by saying that I extend my deepest concern in solidarity with the people of Atlantic Canada, who have just come through the devastation of hurricane Lee. I was supposed to be in Lunenburg this past weekend. It was the second year in a row that I had attempted to be at the Lunenburg writers festival, both years with planes booked and hotels all set. Last year it was the devastation of hurricane Fiona that shut down the writers festival, with a cost of \$800 million in damages for the people of the region. I was invited to come again this year, and then we had hurricane Lee.

What we are seeing is the climate crisis up close. It used to be that hurricanes were spread out over many, many years. Now we are starting to see them regularly, and they are moving further north as we are seeing an increasingly destabilized climate.

This past summer, 200,000 Canadians were displaced by climate catastrophe. Some communities were almost lost, from Kelowna to Yellowknife to Halifax to my region of Kashechewan and Fort Albany in the James Bay subarctic. Fires in the subarctic of James Bay are almost unheard of. As we were scrambling to try to get Hercules aircraft up to get people out of the fire zones, people had to put their families in canoes to stay ahead of the fire. All through this time, of course, the leader of the Conservative Party was running his tour to make pollution free across Canada. In fact, he had to cancel a number of his events because people were being chased out by the toxic fumes of a climate catastrophe.

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How do the fires in James Bay, what we just saw in the Arctic and the almost toxic levels of air quality we have seen for the last number of weeks in Edmonton tie into the crisis being faced in Atlantic Canada? The scientists who are monitoring the collapse of the Greenland ice shelves have noticed a very disturbing trend. Soot from fires that is landing on the ice shelves draws heat because it is dark, and ice normally is reflective of the sun. However, the more soot that falls on the Greenland ice shelves, the quicker the disintegration of those ice shelves has become. That is causing increasingly destabilized waters in the Atlantic.

When 14 million hectares of Canadian forest burn in a single summer, we can see that we are at an environmental tipping point. It needs to be said clearly and simply that the cause of this collapse is the burning of fossil fuels. The oil industry bears responsibility. It knows that and it has known that for decades.

In the early 1980s, Exxon produced some of the best scientific evidence showing that a climate catastrophe would unfold if the diminution of the use of fossil fuels was not implemented immediately. In fact, in 1982, we had a memo from Exxon Mobil warning that if steps were not taken, the damage would not be reversible. Unfortunately, this is what our country and our planet are living through now. Exxon and the other oil players decided to suppress evidence and in fact spent millions on a disinformation campaign falsifying what was very straightforward science saying that the more carbon that is put into the atmosphere, the more heat will be trapped, and the more heat that is trapped, the more the temperature changes and the more the planet destabilizes.

It is therefore really important that we address this crisis straight on. We have to address it with a sense of urgency. There is an urgent need for the government to start moving quickly on addressing this. There is a need to urgently hold the big oil companies to account.

We know that this past summer, Rich Kruger, the CEO of Sunco, said the only urgency facing his company was to make as much money as possible. This is at a time when it is making record profits, yet he sees the urgency of burning more of our planet quicker in order to pay shareholders, most of whom live offshore.

• (1155)

However, there is an impact to that that is not just about this year, next year or 10 years from now. Scientist David Archer states, "The climatic impacts of releasing fossil fuel CO₂ to the atmosphere will last longer than Stonehenge...longer than nuclear waste, far longer than the age of human civilization so far." That is the cavalier attitude of those who are promoting the expansion of big oil to not just the world we have today, but the world that our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren will have to live with. It makes no economic sense whatsoever.

I will refer to last week's really interesting report by the International Energy Agency, hardly a left-wing think tank, that warned we are at "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era". It says that since the war in Ukraine, there has been a massive push in Europe to increase clean energy so that they get off Russian oil and gas. The Biden administration's IRA has launched a huge clean energy transformation, something that is not being picked up in Canada. In fact, Danielle Smith has just spiked investments by \$33

billion and has shut down numerous projects out of the ideology she has that clean energy is somehow a threat to oil and gas in Alberta, even though thousands of jobs would be created. In fact, Calgary Economic Development says Alberta alone stands to gain 170,000 jobs from clean energy development. Unfortunately, we have a premier who believes the world is flat. It is not flat; it is burning.

To the International Energy Agency's comment that "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era" is here, Fatih Birol of the International Energy Agency says, "We are witnessing the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era and we have to prepare ourselves for the next era." I am hoping that this legislation to update the accords with Atlantic Canada to increase offshore oil will be part of that process. Birol says, "Oil and gas companies may not only be misjudging public opinion...they may well be misjudging the market if they expect further growth of oil and gas demand across this decade. New large-scale fossil fuel projects carry not only major climate risks but major financial risks."

Canada as a petrostate needs to get very serious very quickly about the diversification of energy, not just to deal with the fact that our northern boreal forest is on fire and our communities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts are facing more and more climate urgency, but to deal with the fact that our economy needs to shift so that we do not lose the competitive advantage. It is a competitive advantage that is being taken very much by our colleagues and neighbours in the United States.

Why is it urgent to move on Bill C-49? Until now, the Liberal government has talked a good game on the climate crisis, but it has not really delivered. It made numerous promises in the fall economic statement and in the budget about clean energy tax credits, but those clean energy tax credits have to come into force very quickly. Again, as we have seen in the United States, there are huge opportunities and huge investments are being made.

As McCarthy Tétrault notes:

Bill C-49 would modernize the Atlantic Accord Acts by notably establishing a framework for the development and regulation of offshore renewable energy projects in both provinces and their offshore areas. Bill C-49 also expands regulation of current petroleum projects and clarifies jurisdictional rules regarding domestic and internal sea boundaries.

As this also includes petroleum, we have to get a really clear sense as New Democrats of how much the government is going to hold petroleum exploration to account. As the International Energy Agency says, we cannot allow more development of the energy that is burning our planet. The Liberals will have to be clear with us on this.

We really need to catch up with the United States. My colleagues in the Conservative Party seem to think that clean energy projects are some kind of ridiculous, outrageous attack on the 20th century, where they are very comfortable living. We have seen the Conservatives' attack on the investments in the battery plants being put in the auto sector, while huge amounts of investment are happening in the United States. We see their attacks on wind energy, relentless attacks, as though it is some kind of threat, particularly the members coming from Alberta, where we have 170,000 abandoned wells spewing toxic stuff all over farmlands.

● (1200)

Look at what is happening in the United States off the Atlantic coast right now. One wind farm off Rhode Island is going to create energy for 250,000 homes. There are 27 major projects on track to be completed by 2025 in the United States on the east coast. The Vineyard Wind project will create power for 400,000 homes. Canada is no where near this.

The Maritimes, with its huge energy costs, has an opportunity to step up right now, create thousands of jobs and dramatically lower the energy costs people face. This is why we need to move quickly on this.

The other huge opportunity we have is hydrogen, and getting a strong hydrogen economy off the ground is essential.

This past November, I was in Berlin. We had excellent meetings with various ministers. I met with Chancellor Olaf Scholz. The question the Germans asked of us was whether we could deliver them a hydrogen economy. That is what they were interested in from Canada.

My Conservative colleagues have always gone on about how Canada should be selling its LNG to Germany and Europe. They said to us very clearly that they were not interested in Canadian LNG, because by the time we could actually build a pipeline, they would be off that energy. They wanted a hydrogen economy. However, hydrogen is something the Conservatives do not believe in because it does not burn the planet. They think it is some kind of threat.

The Germans are a major industrial economy. They want to know if Canada will partner. When I met with Chancellor Scholz, I told him about the huge potential for hydrogen in Alberta. Now that we have Danielle Smith and her stagecoach to nowhere sitting out on the dead prairie grass, the Germans will not be going to Alberta if she does not get her act together. However, they will go to Atlantic Canada, and Atlantic Canada has a huge opportunity right now.

In Alberta, we saw \$33 billion in clean energy projects spiked out of ideology. Again, this is because the Conservatives believe the world is flat.

Let us compare this to the Calgary economic development study that predicted 170,000 jobs in Alberta alone from a clean energy economy. I meet with Alberta energy workers all the time. Those workers want a clean energy economy. They know what is happening in big oil.

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Big oil has fired 50,000 people in the oil patch in the last 10 years. Suncor got rid of 1,500 jobs this year alone. Rich Kruger is bragging he is going after work; they are moving toward automation. There is nothing in this for workers, but where the opportunities are going to be is in clean energy. We need to move beyond ideology. We need to address the economic issues and opportunities, because this investment is going stateside in a big way.

I talk with people in energy and mining sector all the time. They are saying that they we need to get a tax credit program up quickly, that the Americans are moving forward on that. How fast are the Americans moving? Since Biden moved forward on a clean energy vision, there has been \$240 billion in new clean energy manufacturing investment in the United States. The private sector in the United States has over \$110 billion in the clean energy manufacturing investments, \$70 billion in electric vehicle supply chain and more than \$10 billion in solar manufacturing.

Let us just talk about the electric vehicle supply chain for a moment. The Conservatives have been regularly attacking EV investments to keep our auto sector competitive. If we do not play in this field, it goes stateside, and the states are very willing to get this. It will have a huge impact in regions like mine, which is based on mining. They are looking at the opportunities of the base metal and clean energy critical minerals supply chain in which Canada could be a leader. We can do this, but we need to move quickly. We need to get the regulations in place to make these things happen. These are huge projects.

In Scotland, where North Sea oil is continuing to diminish, the huge offshore wind projects in Aberdeen have been transformative. We have not seen that in Canada. Therefore, we need to move on that.

● (1205)

As for what we see in the United States on the Inflation Reduction Act, it is expected that there will be 1.5 million additional jobs over the next decade based on clean-energy jobs. That is a huge transformation. However, here is the other element that is really fascinating. When the Biden plan came into place, there were a lot of skeptics. It was hard to tell whether this would work or not, but he brought a whole-of-government approach, something that the Liberal government has not done. At every level, the U.S. is focused on making this happen. They are saying now that with the Biden investments, the clean-energy takeoff that has happened, they are going to see 50% to 52% below current emissions by 2030.

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The environment commissioner says that the Liberal government's promises to get to 40% below is still very much pie in the sky, very unrealistic, because the Liberals have missed every single climate target they have made. This is a problem with the Prime Minister going to COP26, standing on the world stage and making big, bold pronouncements, but not actually having done the work.

For example, when he announced the emissions cap, the Liberals did not talk to anybody here about what that emissions cap would look like. They went to COP26, made an announcement of an emissions cap and then did not follow through. The Liberals are going to have to follow through on the emissions cap now, because what we are seeing from the walk-away of the big oil companies in the Pathways Alliance is the lack of investment in clean tech, the fact that Suncor has walked away and divested itself through its clean energy projects and that it wants to vastly increase oil and gas production. The emissions cap has to happen and the government needs to get serious about this.

There is another interesting element for why we need to ensure that we get these regulations and tax credits and update our act so we can actually compete with the United States. In the United States, American families are projected to save between \$27 billion to \$38 billion on their electricity bills from 2022 to 2030 relative to a scenario if they did not have that act. The other thing we have learned about clean energy is that it is much cheaper to produce than gas or oil right now. That is why we are seeing this movement, where the International Energy Agency says that we have reached the economic tipping point. Is Canada going to continue to live in the 20th century or is it going to embrace the realities and the crises of the 21st century, not only the realities of a burning planet and destabilized weather systems that we have to address but also the opportunities to dramatically decarbonize?

The other element we need to really focus on is who is going to pay the cost for the huge damages that are being done to our planet right now, the billions in damages to communities and provinces from these unprecedented wildfires. We were so lucky and thankful that we did not lose communities this summer. We have seen a lot of damage, but we realize that we do not have the capacity anymore to deal with the kinds of fires we are seeing that easily could have taken out Kelowna, Yellowknife and communities in my region. We have to start addressing fires in a new and different way.

Growing up in northern Ontario, firefighting in the summer was a summer job before going to college or coming home from college. We need to talk at the national level. My colleague from the Kootenays has put forward a vision of the need to have a national program, but also who will fund this.

We see that Suncor made \$70 billion in profits in two years. Those profits should be put into a fund for the damages that are caused by Suncor's actions. Who takes the risk when fossil fuels are burned? Ordinary Canadians and citizens around the world. If the shareholders are to make a profit, the people who really have a stake in this crisis should be able to get some recompense.

The New Democrats will be supporting this bill. We have a number of questions we want clarified at committee, and we will be more than willing to work to make this happen. We need to move

quickly and decisively in the face climate crisis, but also for the opportunities we see.

● (1210)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, given that the anti-energy, anti-private sector, anti-resource development costly coalition of the left continues to mis-characterize the position of the Conservatives, let me just say this again. We support innovation and the development of new energy sources, which obviously help diversify Canada's energy mix and create new opportunities and reduce emissions globally.

Here is a crucial point, and it is relevant to the member's comments. The Conservatives want to attract private sector investment that will spur the development and the affordable and feasible adoption of alternative energy and the fuels of the future, instead of putting taxpayers on the hook or losing innovation and investment in the valley of death between invention and commercialization in Canada. It makes no difference and it is not in good faith to tell Canadians a bunch of things that are not possible.

The Conservatives recognize this reality. Oil and gas remains the top private sector investor in the Canadian economy, Canada's top export. It also counts for 75% of private sector investment in clean tech. That is why the Conservatives take an approach of the development and advancement of all kinds of energy, because all of this innovation technology fits together.

Given all of the concerns that the member has raised, since he seems more interested in holding Danielle Smith accountable instead of the Prime Minister, could he just explain how he rationalizes being the power broking prop-up to the federal Liberal government despite all his complaints and crises about which he is apparently outraged?

● (1215)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the issue about private sector investment was very clearly stated. How are we going to have private sector investment in the clean tech economy when we have someone like Danielle Smith, who is part and parcel of the Conservative movement that is over there, shutting down clean energy and telling them to go to the United States?

How can the Conservatives believe that they can talk about private sector development when they are shunting billions of dollars of investment to the United States because of the ideology that if it does not burn the planet, it is not good for us?

That is a false view and we have to challenge it. Private sector investment will only come if we have the regulations and the support in place for a clean energy economy.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed some of the exchanges that I have heard from Conservatives in the last half hour.

The previous MP to speak specifically talked about the Conservatives being willing and open and saw the need for change and transition, and for growing out all sectors of the energy opportunities in Canada. However, moments before that, the member for King—Vaughan stood up and complained that it took 80 gallons of oil to lubricate a single windmill.

The red herrings that those members seem to throw up in the air, as if that is going to suddenly justify stopping all investment in renewable energy, seem to be countless.

Could the member for Timmins—James Bay comment on the hypocrisy we seem to hear from Conservatives from time to time.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the issue is that there are huge opportunities. It is like my colleagues over there are defiantly against the cellphone because they believe the typewriter is going to come back. The difference is that the typewriter is not killing the planet; big oil is. They can pound on their typewriters all they want and scream at the moon. The reality is that when we meet with energy workers in Alberta, which I do all the time, they say that they get it, that they want investment, that wind power needs metals like aluminum. It actually creates jobs in the value chain.

The Conservatives are out to ridicule and undermine the creation of one of Canada's main industries, which is auto. They do not want a proper EV battery operation to get off the ground. They want us stuck in the 20th century. They want us to think the world is flat. They want us to think that vaccines do not work. Meanwhile, the planet is burning.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, moving toward renewable energies is a path forward that we must consider. However, we must also think about workers' rights. Sometimes the devil is in the details.

Subsection 25(4.2) on page 16 stipulates that any person employed by the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board is not subject to the Canada Labour Code.

Does my colleague agree with that? Is this something we should amend, or at least clarify? Why should these workers not be protected by the Canada Labour Code?

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. We need to make sure that, whenever we go forward on anything with respect to clean energy, the rights of workers are protected and they are fully covered. We will certainly be looking at that.

We spoke with the Liberals again and again about how the clean energy tax credits have to be tied to apprenticeships and standard wage rates, so we are not creating McJobs but actually creating well-paying union jobs. That is Biden's commitment in the United

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States and needs to be the commitment here, and we will continue to push. I am certainly willing to work with the Bloc on this to make sure that it is clarified in the legislation.

• (1220)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, this summer we saw the ravages of the impacts of climate change. They were quite devastating, not just in Canada but all over the world. This means that we need to start acting now; I think this is why the NDP supports Bill C-49.

It is not that we are propping up the Liberal government on this bill; rather, we have our own sets of priorities, such as combatting the climate crisis. Could the member comment on this and clearly describe why we support Bill C-49?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we are at an unprecedented moment in our history as a people. The decisions we make now will affect one, two, seven or 10 generations ahead. We cannot be cavalier about this and engage in petty politics. We need to ask what we can do to make a difference. We have to do that. We have to take seriously the fact that the planet is on fire and that fire is being caused by the burning of fossil fuels. The most vulnerable regions on the planet are the ones taking the biggest hit, whether it be in the South Pacific or even in the region my colleague represents. Those communities did not cause this problem, but they are living with the consequences and looking to us to make a difference.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to take this member seriously. In one breath he says that we should not engage in petty politics; in another, he says that people who disagree with him are flat-earthers.

Listening to this member speak, it is also clear that he is more interested in holding Danielle Smith accountable than in holding the Prime Minister of Canada accountable in this chamber. That is because New Democrats have negotiated a deal with the Liberals whereby they vote for every single significant proposal the Liberals put forward but still want to be able to criticize them for electoral reasons. However, they are here every time, voting with and supporting the agenda of the government.

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I can say that these policies are not popular in the member's home riding, which is why our leader has been so warmly received in his riding. Maybe the member is preparing for a political future where he will run for the legislature in Alberta. I would certainly welcome him to come to my constituency and do that. However, he is also very clearly misstating the Conservative position. Our position is that the red tape the Liberals are constantly piling on industry is as much a problem for green energy as it is for traditional sources of energy. Moreover, the Liberals are not helping any aspect of our economy with such measures as Bill C-69, which make it harder for any industry to create projects and jobs. The real problem is gatekeeping across the board, including the way it negatively impacts the green energy sector.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, this is a bill about cutting red tape. However, the Conservatives are going to lose their minds over that because it is about creating clean energy opportunities, which they have spoken out against continually. They may not want to admit it, but those are the facts. Therefore, when I say “flat earth”, as Bob Marley would say, if the cap fits, let them wear it.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Kings—Hants this morning.

At two in the morning on July 22 of this year, Tera Sisco heard an emergency alert on the first responder scanner at her workplace. A flash flood was barreling through Brooklyn, Nova Scotia, where Chris Sisco and Chris and Tera's six-year-old son were sleeping. Worried, she called Chris, who woke to find the apartment filling with water. He told Tera they were going to get in their Ford F-550 and evacuate.

Chris and their son, along with neighbours Nick and Courtney Harnish and their two children, got into the massive truck. However, even at four tonnes, it was no match for the flood's current; soon the truck was drifting away, filling with water and sinking. The next update Tera received came over the scanner once again: word that there was a child in the water.

On July 21 and 22, thunderstorms dumped 250 millimetres, or 10 inches, of rain on Nova Scotia. It was the heaviest rainfall in 50 years, amounting to three months' worth of typical rainfall in just 24 hours. Tragically, four Nova Scotians died in those floods, including the two children in that Ford F-550: Colton Sisco and Natalie Harnish, both six years old.

Nick Holland, 52, and Terri-Lynn Keddy, 14, also perished. I know that all members in this House join me in mourning this terrible loss and extending our condolences to their families and loved ones, whose grief must be simply unimaginable.

In an interview with the Canadian Press not long after burying her six-year-old son, Tera Sisco recounted to reporter Michael Tutton the story I just shared. I would like to read a quote from Tera in that piece. She said, “Governments aren't moving quickly enough to prepare for climate change, and Canadians are now seeing avoidable climate disaster deaths”. She continued, “These climate events are historic, and my little boy is part of that history now.” I hope her words are heard loud and clear here in this chamber.

This year, Atlantic Canada has seen the devastating impact of unrelenting climate disasters. A year ago this week, hurricane Fiona, the strongest storm in Canadian history, swept through Atlantic Canada. In just one small community alone, Port aux Basques, 20 homes were destroyed, displacing 200 people. A Nova Scotian, a Prince Edward Islander and a Newfoundlander died in that hurricane.

This past summer, wildfires raged through the Halifax area, destroying 150 homes and causing 16,000 Haligonians to evacuate. Many were without a home to return to after the fires. I am sharing these stories to illustrate the human impacts of climate change. The climate crisis is here. It is ravaging communities in each of our ridings, and it is getting worse by the month and by the year.

Canadians are looking to us to act and to protect them from the most devastating impacts of extreme weather events caused by climate change. We have an immediate responsibility to adapt our infrastructure to this new reality, especially in coastal communities such as those in Atlantic Canada, and to mitigate the worst, most unbearable impacts of climate change caused by fossil fuels and greenhouse gas emissions.

Of course, there is no mystery as to why these disasters are happening. We have known for decades that climate change is caused by releasing greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and that the only way to mitigate climate change is to stop releasing greenhouse gases by transitioning to cleaner, renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, tidal, green hydrogen and others.

In Nova Scotia, we are particularly vulnerable to unmitigated climate change. We have 7,400 kilometres of coastline, and we are surrounded almost entirely by water. We have the Atlantic Ocean to the east, the Gulf of Maine to the south, the Bay of Fundy to the west, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the north.

In fact, we are connected to the rest of Canada only by a 21-kilometre-wide land bridge known as the Chignecto Isthmus, which is mostly a marshland that is barely above sea level. It is extraordinarily vulnerable to sea level rise, storm surge and hurricane damage and becomes more vulnerable every year.

While our identity and our livelihoods have been sustained for generations by our proximity to the sea, the sea has increasingly become a threat because of extreme weather events and sea level rise caused by climate change. However, here is the thing: Our proximity to the ocean also grants us a fighting chance to protect ourselves and future generations from the very worst effects of climate change, and that is the immense potential of offshore renewable energy.

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• (1225)

This is the context in which the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources introduced Bill C-49 in the House today. Bill C-49 proposes to amend the mandates of the historic Atlantic accords in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador to accelerate offshore wind development off of Atlantic Canada's east coast. Since the Atlantic accords were signed in the mid-1980s, they have become vitally important for the economic prosperity of our two provinces. Moreover, they have provided a framework between Canada and Nova Scotia and between Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador that has allowed each province to receive a significant share of revenues generated from offshore oil production.

However, times are changing. As we make our necessary transition from oil to a low-carbon future, and in order to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, Canada and the world are looking for new forms of renewable energy. Therefore, for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador to continue to benefit from the Atlantic accords in this new context, the Atlantic accords, too, must change and evolve. This change is good and necessary. It has been a long time coming, and it brings with it an incredible opportunity for our region and for our people.

Bill C-49 would expand the mandates of offshore boards that, today, regulate offshore oil and gas projects to now include the regulation of offshore renewable energy, for example, wind. We do this because, for major offshore projects to proceed, the government must provide a stable, predictable and credible legislative framework and regulatory regime. This is exactly what we are doing in Bill C-49. In introducing these amendments, we are unlocking the enormous potential of offshore renewable energy development for generations to come. As has been expressed by Canada's industry association, Marine Renewables, in its support for this bill, we are building an industry that reflects Canada's values and builds a sustainable blue economy.

Last year, my province of Nova Scotia established an offshore wind target. Seabed leases will produce up to five gigawatts of offshore energy by 2030. This was an incredibly exciting move that garnered a great deal of excitement from the renewable-energy industry around the world. Bill C-49, as we have heard, is supported by our provincial partners in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is the obvious next step in ensuring that we meet that opportunity.

Let us be specific about what that opportunity is. It is a trillion dollars. That is the potential economic opportunity of offshore wind globally. We should make no mistake: Atlantic Canada is in that global race. Europe is already knocking at our door for clean energy options. The changes in Bill C-49 would allow us to create further products, such as green hydrogen. We can then ship them to our European allies, such as Germany. The German chancellor came to Newfoundland last summer to show his country's interest in Atlantic Canada's clean energy potential. Chancellor Scholz is not alone. When I recently met with Ukraine's ambassador to Canada, Yulia Kovaliv, the first thing she wanted to talk about was how soon we can start exporting green hydrogen from Nova Scotia to Europe to get off of Putin's gas.

Let us not forget the immense private sector interest in cleaner forms of energy development. Officials at the Port of Halifax are in advanced talks about decarbonizing their port. I have been involved in many conversations with offshore shipping organizations to figure out how to decarbonize the marine transportation sector as well.

This kind of job creation is exactly what we mean when we talk about the sustainable jobs of tomorrow. These renewable energy projects are creating well-paying jobs for generations of Canadians to come. I mentioned earlier that our proximity to the ocean has shaped who we are as Atlantic Canadians and provided a livelihood to communities along our coastline. Bill C-49, by unlocking the promise of offshore wind energy, would provide a limitless new opportunity for Atlantic Canadian workers to earn a livelihood and to grow our regional economy, all while providing us with a fighting chance against the threat of unmitigated climate change.

If this bill does not pass, offshore renewable energy projects in Atlantic Canada will be stalled for years to come. Therefore, to the official opposition's energy critic, who signalled earlier in this debate that she is not supportive of this bill, I will say this: She and Premier Smith can own the stalled emissions reductions, the ecological devastation, the human impact and the unrealized job creation that comes with cancelling renewable energy projects in Alberta. However, she may want to chat with Nova Scotia's Progressive Conservative premier, Tim Houston, who is in full support of Bill C-49 and wants it passed as quickly as possible.

This government is unswerving in the fight against climate change, and we stand with the offshore renewables industry in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador. For our workers, our communities and our future, I urge all members to support this historic bill.

• (1230)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing I would like to get clarification on. The member talked at great length about the importance of renewable energy, wind and presumably tidal as well, and I agree with him, but the problem is that there was recently a tidal project in Nova Scotia that was basically roadblocked and gatekept by federal bureaucrats. Sustainable Marine Energy had to pull out of its project because of these roadblocks.

How can Canadians take the member's government seriously when a simple project like that is blocked by the federal government?

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Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, everyone was disappointed by that project's cancellation, but it is emblematic of the fact that we are living in a changing world. Governments of all orders, municipal, provincial and federal, are being called upon to regulate, for economic, for human health and for environmental reasons, brand new technologies that have never had to be regulated before. We are learning quickly with this. Bill C-49 is exactly what this is about. We are modifying an existing framework for oil to make it function even better for offshore renewables, and I look forward to working with the member on making this bill a reality.

• (1235)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked about offshore wind power. I saw a project like that in Denmark that seemed interesting.

I just want to make sure that none of these wind development projects will be built in an at-risk or protected marine area and no protected marine area will see its boundaries moved to the benefit of entrepreneurs or investors.

Can my colleague give me assurances on that?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her good question.

[English]

Bill C-49 is about making sure that offshore energy projects can proceed in a way that causes no harm ecologically, culturally or any other way. The important thing is that we are able to approve these projects quickly in a way that is respectful of all points of view and all perspectives. By working with industry we have landed on the current contents of the bill; by working with stakeholders we have landed on the current contents of the bill, and we believe it is the path forward.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as indicated by many in this House, we are faced with a climate crisis. In my community in British Columbia we are seeing forest fires. We are seeing catastrophe happening right before our eyes. We know that this has impacted the Atlantic provinces as well, so we are not spared, and this is the reality we are faced with.

One of the questions I keep on wondering about is in terms of the action from the government. For the workers who are in the energy sector, the assurance that needs to be given to them is a pathway to an alternative energy and to different infrastructure building. Will the government support a jobs guarantee for the workers in the energy sector and in other energy infrastructure development in Canada?

That way, we could transition people smoothly into the sector and ensure that the good-paying union jobs are secured for them and their families.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, I share the member's interest in making sure that our highly talented and skilled workforce of today can transition and be just as productive in the low-carbon economy of tomorrow. The process of re-skilling and upskilling these already extremely talented people from across the country is one that the government is focused on. The offshore renewables sector

alone, never mind all the other renewable energy frontiers we are working on, will require an unimaginable number of workers. There will be jobs for all who are interested in all manner of turbines. I will not go into all the details, but there are a great many jobs that will be available, and we will work together in this House to make sure that those jobs are transitioned.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here today with my colleagues to speak on Bill C-49, which is a piece of legislation to amend the Atlantic accords, which are between the governments of Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia. This is a crucial piece of legislation that matters in the global race toward net zero.

I want to say to my colleagues that we are in a perfect position as a country. Canada is in the driver's seat to make sure we can be part of that global solution, but this legislation is a requirement to do just that.

[Translation]

The agreement that was signed for the first time by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1985 and the one signed by the Government of Nova Scotia in 2005 demonstrate the importance of the work that has been done to promote regional fairness in Atlantic Canada. This guarantees fairness in the allocation of oil and gas resources within the federation for the benefit of our provinces.

The oil and gas industry still plays an important role in Newfoundland and Labrador today, and by amending the agreements, we are paving the way for a better way of governing, managing and, ultimately, profiting from offshore wind energy.

Offshore wind energy benefits Canada in many ways. This is a critical opportunity in our fight against climate change. The science is clear in this regard. Canada must work on reducing its greenhouse gas emissions. Projects on the Atlantic coast can help to do that by harnessing the wind for the benefit of all.

• (1240)

[English]

That power can not only help Canada decarbonize its current electricity grid but ensure that we have excess power supply, not only for our own province of Nova Scotia but indeed for all of Canada in the days ahead. I will have more to say on that in a moment, but beyond the domestic focus, this is a tremendous opportunity, and an enormous opportunity for exports of green hydrogen transported as ammonia to fuel industrial uses around the world.

My hon. colleague from Halifax talks about the German chancellor who was in Newfoundland and Labrador last summer. Whether it is Europe, whether it is countries like Germany, but all around the world green hydrogen is the pathway for our industrial future. We have that opportunity right here in Canada, and this legislation would help to enable Canada's offshore sector to play a crucial role in doing just that.

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I want to talk about some of the projects so that people can actually conceptualize what we are talking about. In our home province, there is EverWind, led by CEO Trent Vichie, and it has indigenous partners. As an Atlantic caucus, we had the opportunity to talk to Chief Terry Paul of Membertou, a partner on this project, which is driving tremendous benefit. First, of course, is onshore production of wind, which will play into a green hydrogen strategy. However, part 3 of that plan is to go offshore and leverage the tremendous opportunities we have in Nova Scotia to help fuel the world.

I want to talk about foreign direct investment. As I am part of the Canada-United Kingdom Inter-Parliamentary Association, I was sitting in on a meeting when Minister Rutley was there, and I was talking about the fact that other jurisdictions around the world have already moved in this direction. If we look at the United Kingdom and Europe, they have tremendous expertise, and their ability to invest alongside Canadian firms and Canadian expertise is significant. This represents a significant opportunity for foreign direct investment across the country and particularly in our Atlantic region, which is extremely important.

Last, I want to tell a story about jobs and opportunities. Not too long ago I came out of high school, in 2009, at Hants East Rural High. I am proud to say that I am an alumni there. However, at that time, graduates of my ilk were going to western Canada, which was where the opportunities were. I want to articulate that there are still great opportunities in western Canada, but I am proud to say that now there are more opportunities in our home provinces of Atlantic Canada where young people can make a future. I give credit for that, in part, to this government and the investment and focus it has had on Atlantic Canada.

Now, people graduating from high school in Nova Scotia can look west, they can look east and they can stay where they are at. There are opportunities at home to build a future. This legislation builds on that, and we need to be able to move quickly.

The other thing we need to understand is that this legislation is straightforward. I heard the Conservative critic, earlier in the debate, talking about the variety of questions that she has. When I look at this legislation, it is straightforward. It is amending the accords to create the former Nova Scotia offshore petroleum board to actually regulate, to be the regulator of these projects, to extend that.

Mr. Speaker, you know very well because you were involved in provincial government during that time. I want to credit you for your work at the provincial level.

This legislation is straightforward. A regulatory model would follow. We have the expertise involved in the board. However, time is of the essence. This is a global race. The longer this sits in the House of Commons, the more we are wasting time to be able to fight climate change but, more importantly, to create great jobs in this country.

What I am disappointed in is when I look across the way, some of the Conservatives members are already signalling that they are going to be against this. They are signalling that they are against Atlantic Canada, because this is a tremendous opportunity. They should ask the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and

ask the Government of Nova Scotia. The member for Halifax very clearly said the progressive Conservative, and I highlight “progressive”, in Halifax wants this legislation. Where are the members? Where are the eight members of the Conservative Atlantic caucus? Will they stand up and make sure that their party votes as quickly as possible to advance this legislation?

This matters for Canada. It matters for Atlantic Canada. I want to see the member for Cumberland—Colchester, I want to see the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake, and I want to see the member for South Shore—St. Margarets stand up and be with the Liberal government because that is what Atlantic Canada needs. In fact, every member of this House needs to drive this forward.

For those who stand here in this House and talk about climate change as being the existential threat to our country and to our world, I agree with them. However, let them not stand here and say that they are against this straightforward piece of legislation that we need to be able to advance our green energy future. It is hypocrisy, if I hear this from the Bloc, and fortunately we have the NDP on board. Who would have thought, for all the criticisms that the opposition will sling at the NDP for being anti-development, that it is the Conservatives who stand here against the ability, the green energy future and the technology that we have in Atlantic Canada.

I look forward to taking questions from my Conservative colleagues, because they are going to have to explain to my constituents, to Nova Scotians, and to Newfoundland and Labradorians why it is they are against their prosperity, because they sure as heck stand in the House and pretend to stand for their interests at other times. However, on the piece of legislation that could create the economic prosperity that matters to our world and to our region, they heckle me from the side and say that somehow they will not support us.

I actually want this House to move this legislation quickly. Let us get it to committee. Let us put a motion up this afternoon to get it to committee to study. I will ask my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader, who knows more about procedure. I think we should put this to the House and see if we could get unanimous consent to move this through the House so we could get to committee.

This matters. They want to talk about global energy. This is what it represents. Canada is in the driver seat, but only if we have the House on board to be able to move. Every day that this languishes in the House is yet another day that we are not moving forward on the global fight on climate change and we are not fighting for Atlantic Canadians.

That is what matters. Members can scream all they want from the other side. I am asking the Conservative Party of Canada to stand with the Liberal government for Atlantic Canada, very simply.

Government Orders

The last thing I want to say in my 45 seconds that I have is this. The Atlantic Loop is extremely important as part of this. We are going to create the conditions so that the offshore can succeed, but it is not just an export opportunity for hydrogen. It is an opportunity to provide Quebec and central Canada the power that they need. The Premier of Quebec has talked about the need for more generation. We have it on the offshore. Let us partner together and drive an opportunity to make a difference in this country. Let us make sure that we are focused on the ITCs. The government needs to clarify them, I will say that. We also need to drive forward.

The question remains today, and I will finish on this, will the Conservatives join us in supporting Atlantic Canada and our clean energy future, or will they not?

• (1245)

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating that the member for Kings—Hants talks about moving quickly after eight years of the NDP-Liberal coalition's sitting on its hands. It is really strange that, after his door knocking and his fear of losing his seat, now he has to lambast everybody he can in trying to become a champion of Nova Scotia. He is talking out of both sides of his mouth. He talked about the gun registry he said he would oppose, and when the vote came, what did he do? He abstained. Wow, what a great supporter this guy is.

The other thing that is very clear is that when we begin to understand the tidal project in the great riding of Cumberland—Colchester, we start to understand there is a business there called Sustainable Marine Energy. I really wonder whether the member for Kings—Hants went and talked to the leadership of Sustainable Marine, because what Sustainable Marine said was that it is the first project out there putting electricity back into the grid. It had no fish kills, no hits and no threatening markers at all, and what did the Liberal-NDP government do? Absolutely nothing. It gave no direction and allowed a project that is clean and green to actually be demolished. It is sad.

• (1250)

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, he had almost as much time as I had in my remarks to give a speech, so I hope you will give me some time to respond. First of all, there is no gun registry, and I am happy to work with the Minister of Public Safety to make sure there is an exemption for sport shooters.

Number two, on Sustainable Marine, I agree with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that we have a problem. I have been out and vocal—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I cannot even hear the answer being given right now. This side of the House certainly did afford the other side the opportunity to ask their question. I am really hoping the same can be done for my colleague, who is trying to answer the question.

The Deputy Speaker: I will take this opportunity to remind everyone to keep a bit of decorum as we have these debates. Although I enjoy the energy of what is happening today, we should try to

keep it down so we can hear the responses to the questions we are asking.

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

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I covered the public safety question. I will now cover the question around Sustainable Marine. I agree. In fact, there actually needs to be a fundamental change in the way DFO operates and approves these projects. The member opposite, my neighbour, would know I was against DFO and the way in which the situation was handled on the Avon River and continue to be against that if the government moves in a different direction, so he does not need to lecture me about being an advocate.

The last piece I will say is that he mistakes himself, because we have an opportunity here to make a difference for our province of Nova Scotia. He can talk all he wants about eight years. The legislation is now before us. The industry is ready to move, and his party suggests its members are against it. Will they move with us to make sure there are opportunities in Atlantic Canada? It is a straightforward piece of legislation, and it is actually incredible the Conservatives are giving me an opportunity to highlight the hypocrisy. They talk about technology and not taxes, but they will not support the legislation that drives the technology.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am a little taken aback. I would have thought that this past summer, with fires all over Quebec, Alberta and the rest of the world, would make my Liberal friends a little less smug about the fight against climate change, but no.

This morning, they are pounding their fists and exhorting everyone to vote in favour of the Liberals' climate change plan.

I just want to tell my colleague that, in 2022, the Liberal government gave the oil industry \$51.5 billion. That industry turned a \$220-billion profit in 2022. Considering that we need to build 3.5 million housing units in this country, that is utterly obscene.

How about a little humility, please.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, my answer is simple.

The Bloc Québécois should join us in our effort to create the legislation we need to move green energy and the Atlantic offshore wind industry forward. The Bloc Québécois has always talked about the importance of climate change. Now it has an opportunity to join the fight.

My question is simple: Will the Bloc Québécois join us in our effort to move the Canadian wind industry forward, yes or no?

[English]

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to be back in the House of Commons. The last couple of months were tough. I had a few sinus surgeries, missed a bit of time and had some uncomfortable moments, but I am really happy. Truly, when one does not have good health, it really gives one an understanding of how precious it truly is.

Today I am really excited to speak to this bill for a number of reasons.

Before I get into the meat and potatoes of it all, there are a few comments I heard. I am really encouraged by the fact that the Liberal member from Nova Scotia acknowledges that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is a complete failure on just about every front.

In Miramichi—Grand Lake, it failed the Atlantic salmon: the fish, the species and the community itself, all of the people who benefit from it, on a vast, almost unprecedented, scale. It actually does not even deserve the right to govern it anymore. As a federal MP, I am left believing that, with regard to the Atlantic salmon, though it is a federal jurisdiction, the DFO has lost the right to govern it. It actually does not care. The people where I live know this and it is heart-wrenching for all of us. My dad was an outfitter. I grew up a salmon fisherman and a guide, so I have seen a very serious decline in that species.

I will comment on the Liberal member's question of Progressive Conservative support in the Conservative Party of Canada. That was one of my favourite things he said. I am going to quote what the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney's son tweeted the other day, after the Quebec City convention. This is what the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney said to his son about our leader's speech at the convention: "Mark, I attended my first convention in 1956 for Mr. Diefenbaker. I was 17 years old. I've seen a lot of convention speeches since then. [The leader of the Conservative Party's] speech was probably the best convention speech I have ever witnessed. [The leader of the Conservative Party's] command of such a large amount of information in both official languages for an hour and a half was extremely impressive. The only other speech that may have challenged his own was that of his wife Ana's." That was the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney.

Just as an honourable mention, the Hon. Peter MacKay was speaking at the convention and was quite proud to do so. I think that the Liberals can take their worst fears and realize that they are true. Maybe they should plan harder, go door to door and start working harder. I can understand that.

I am now going to get into Bill C-49. In my speech today, I am going to cover three things. Number one is the positive impact of the Atlantic accords in both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. Number two is the potential upside of Bill C-49's proposed changes to energy regulation for the Atlantic offshore. Number three will be the reasons why I cannot support Bill C-49 as currently presented.

Let us start with the 1985 Canada-Newfoundland Atlantic accord. The original Atlantic accord was an agreement between the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and Ottawa concerning the management of the oil and gas reserves off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. It determined how two governments shared revenues and how that income affected the equalization payments received by the province. It also established the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Offshore Petroleum Board. The Atlantic accord was a watershed in the province's economic development. It ended years of negotiations and allowed Hibernia and sub-

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sequent offshore oil fields, including Hebron, Terra Nova and White Rose, to enter into production.

Mobil Oil carried out the first seismic surveys on the Grand Banks in the 1960s, and then exploratory drilling continued during the 1970s. Chevron Standard Limited discovered the first commercial oilfield, Hibernia, in 1979, one year after I was born, but development could not proceed until the provincial and federal governments resolved the ownership and management disputes, which continued from 1967 through 1985.

The Atlantic accord was widely hailed as a success and a turning point for the provincial economy. At the signing in 1985, premier Brian Peckford predicted that it would allow "this province to catch up socially and economically to the rest of Canada", while Right Hon. Brian Mulroney famously stated, "I am not afraid to inflict prosperity on Newfoundland and Labrador."

• (1255)

We can see very early on in my speech and the history lesson that Conservatives clearly had a vast, productive and successful outlook for Atlantic Canada. I just went back over a number of decades. This is history, and that is why it is important.

Twenty-six years ago, Hibernia, Newfoundland and Labrador's landmark oil production platform, became the first to produce oil in the province. Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore oil and gas have contributed more than \$25 billion in royalties and directly employed over 6,000 people, as well as thousands more in supporting industries. That is \$25 billion in royalties and over 6,000 people employed. The Hibernia project came to life thanks to former prime minister the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney's support at a time when Newfoundland and Labrador was facing economic and cultural challenges of the cod moratorium. Hibernia created thousands of jobs and new government revenue at a time when it was truly needed.

Hibernia was celebrated as a new dawn for Newfoundland and Labrador's economy in 1997 and has continually exceeded expectations over the past quarter century. Production was expected to last 18 to 20 years and produce 520 million barrels of oil. In fact, Hibernia has produced more than 1.2 billion barrels of oil and has paid almost \$20 billion under fiscal agreements to the provincial and federal governments since 1997. Today, about 95% of those working on the Hibernia project are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The skills, technical ingenuity and work ethic of the team have been the backbone of Hibernia's success for 26 years and will continue into the future. That future is exciting, with the potential for Hibernia to continue production for another 20 years.

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In Nova Scotia, one of Premier John Hamm's most notable achievements was negotiating with the federal government to implement the Atlantic accord, a multi-decade regional development program that had been approved in principle during the late 1980s to prevent provincial government offshore oil and gas royalties from being included in calculations for the federal equalization program. This resulted in an \$830-million payment from the federal government to the Nova Scotia government in 2005, which Premier Hamm applied against the principal on the province's long-term debt, thereby reducing debt servicing payments by more than \$50 million annually. That is clearly another great Conservative decision made over the course of time.

During Premier Hamm's reign, the Sable Offshore Energy Project was Canada's first natural gas project. The Sable project provided a new source of clean energy to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and a new supply to the northeastern United States through the Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline. Saying the word "pipeline" in the chamber gives me pleasure, but not what really what it should have given me. New Brunswickers wanted to bring a pipeline from Alberta to Saint John and Montreal. I remember that, at the time, the mayor of Montreal was against it and the Province of Quebec was a little worked up about it. Now, however, Quebecers are against the carbon tax, and some of the Quebec members of the House who are not in the Conservative Party are running for dear life because they supported the carbon tax and put that on the backs of Quebecers. They are going to pay for it.

Beginning production in 1999, Sable was a catalyst for \$3.7 billion in direct payments to Nova Scotia's government. Made up of royalties, Crown share and exploration payments, this is money that helped build better schools, hospitals and roads over 20 years. Since the mid 1980s, Canada, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador have jointly managed the development of offshore petroleum resources under the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act, also known as the Atlantic accord acts, which generated more than \$30 billion in government revenues off the east coast.

• (1300)

Here are a few points that are worth making about the concept behind Bill C-49. The idea of a single regulator for offshore energy projects makes sense, whether they are oil and gas or renewables, such as wind. Joint management between the federal government and Atlantic provinces is good and should be maintained, as that was the promise of the original accords, which we have just learned were successful.

Regarding offshore wind, siting is important so that other existing users are not damaged by the new activity, whether that be fishers or transportation routes. It is extremely important that the wind industry works with fishers to minimize direct impacts and ensure collaboration and compensation if there is to be a direct impact. The end of project remediation and bonding must be sufficient to remove the infrastructure when out of use.

The current process will take far too long to identify potential areas suitable for activity, and it is likely that Canada will miss the opportunity to benefit from offshore wind. Generally, floating wind

is less impactful than fixed and provides more flexibility for siting in deeper water, which tends to be away from land and inshore fishing activity. By the time the current process concludes, at the pace they are going, the opportunity will likely have passed Canada anyway. We saw that with the Energy East pipeline. That was the Liberal government's problem across the floor. It caused that. I saw it in my own province of New Brunswick. We were decades behind in natural gas production, and we lost the ability to move forward with moratoriums. It really set New Brunswickers back. That was a project that should have been a success.

For Nova Scotia, offshore wind is an area of promise because land spaces are limited and tidal is still speculative. Nova Scotia does not have hydro opportunities, yet the federal mandate to be off coal is real for 2030.

One big red flag for me is that Bill C-49 allows the federal government to rely on the regulators for indigenous consultation. This could result in court challenges and detrimental judicial decisions for both offshore petroleum and renewable projects if the federal government relies solely on the regulators and does not sufficiently execute the Crown's duty to consult because this bill also makes government ministers the ultimate decision-makers.

I know from my time as the minister of aboriginal affairs in New Brunswick that our first nations want to be partners in future energy projects and not to be just considered as stakeholders. They want to be partners. I know from all of my experience at that time that negotiation is always a better path than litigation. We have seen situations in the past where governments get really excited about projects. Governments get excited about potential economic projects and large energy projects. What happens is that they will bring in the chiefs of first nations at the ninth hour, when they have already upset them as they have missed the process. It is interesting that this legislation is coming from the Liberal government right now because it has clearly failed first nations on every single front.

I was reading something yesterday that struck me about all the work that the Liberals have done over the past 20 years to basically pretend to be best friends with first nations' people. We have situations in this country where people of indigenous descent in our country do not have water. They have water they cannot drink, and that is a basic necessity of our country. It is a basic necessity for almost every country in the world, and it should be paramount. The Liberals have failed to provide that. I cannot believe they would put a bill forward in the House that would literally disrupt the duty to consult. We have seen how successful those projects have been. Times have changed. We have to work with everyone involved. We clearly have to work with treaty people as a part of being in Canada.

The Liberals have put this forward. It is really rich of them to do that because there are a lot of indigenous people still waiting for clean water. They should get on that. They do not have a leg to stand on at this point. It is totally ridiculous that they would ever claim friendship with any indigenous person in this country. I can tell colleagues right now that that is a box they had better start to check off, or none of this will be successful.

There has been more red tape and delays. This bill would add delays in the approval process because it would triple the timeline from the current framework and would politicize the decision-making process, giving final authority to the federal and provincial ministers.

• (1305)

Canada's red tape regime already hinders traditional and alternative energy development. This bill would add broad, unilateral, discretionary cabinet powers for arbitrary decision-making. It would actually increase timelines and add uncertainty around requirements, which would drive investment away. We have seen this record play over and over in our country.

There was a project in New Brunswick called Maritime Iron. Everybody got all worked up and said it was not economical. Somebody in Venezuela thought it was economical. I remember other projects where it was said that they would not be economical and might emit carbon. Can members guess what? China had the same project with the same company. I have seen North African companies take our projects too.

It pains me to say that New Brunswick has lost so much because of bureaucracy, whether provincial or federal; weak leadership; the failure to consult with first nations; and an overall lack of understanding of the projects in front of us, which could have paved the way for New Brunswick.

We have Sisson mine, a natural gas extraction in New Brunswick. We have moratoriums on uranium. We have moratoriums on natural gas, even though the lamps in the entire city of Moncton were lit by natural gas in the late 1800s. There are areas in New Brunswick where we have had it forever. That is what we are built on.

The Liberals really need to get their act together on this because the Atlantic accord was a big-time positive in Atlantic Canada. We need them to stop driving investment away, and impeding growth and progress in Canada.

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This bill could end offshore petroleum drilling in the Atlantic provinces. Sections 28 and 137 would give cabinet the ability to end offshore drilling or renewable energy projects with the authorization of the provincial minister if the area may be identified as a marine protected area.

Any activity may be suspended in the marine protected area or in an area that may be identified in the opinion of cabinet as a marine protected area, which would create significant uncertainty. There would be no formal indigenous consultation required in the cancellation of new or currently operating projects.

The Liberals' Bill C-55 allowed the fisheries minister to select marine protected areas by order in council, which can prohibit development and activity. This bill would implement this measure, which the Conservative Party opposed because marine protected areas should really be called "prohibited development areas". That would be common sense, but what we are getting over here is nonsense, and that is why they have it that way.

In closing, let me reiterate that Conservatives support the development of offshore wind and renewables in Atlantic Canada, but this bill would impose uncertainty and extends timelines, which could hinder the development of the sector while creating opportunities for politically motivated, anti-energy decisions and delays of offshore petroleum development.

Bill C-49 should be amended to require the development of a framework for renewable energy projects that would require clear plans for the project's impact to fish, birds and the environment. It should also require consultation with impacted indigenous communities and private sector proponents before the establishment of a marine protected area and/or the cancellation of any operations in progress.

• (1310)

The Deputy Speaker: Before we go to questions and comments, I would like to commend the member for talking about such a great cabinet from way back in 2003-04, when a young Chris d'Entremont was a member of cabinet.

Continuing with questions and comments, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands has the floor.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed the history on previous Conservative governments. I think we would be hard pressed to find any member in the House who would not agree that Conservative governments of the past, the Progressive Conservatives, were actually the champions of the environment. I have even heard the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands say that from time to time.

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The member unfortunately cannot see the link between the Conservatives of the past and the Conservatives of today because they are quite different. He talked at length about Brian Mulroney. I have a Brian Mulroney story myself. Not that long ago in the House, I spoke at great length about the great work that Brian Mulroney and Progressive Conservatives did, and then contrasted them to the Conservatives of today.

Much to my surprise, a portrait of Brian Mulroney arrived at my constituency office the next day, which was personally signed. It said, "Mark, keep making those speeches", with two exclamation points, and it was signed by Brian Mulroney. I think it is very rich to try to suggest that the new, reformed party of today somehow has a link to the Brian Mulroney Conservatives of the past.

The premiers of both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador support this piece of legislation. The member said he supports it in principle. Why would he not at least help get it to committee so a decision could then be made to try to form the bill into what he wants to see, as he does support it in principle?

• (1315)

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, going to committee may be a potential down the road, but as elected officials in the House, we have to do our due diligence.

We have watched this government impede growth in several sectors. We have seen several bills it has put forward that have really limited progress in the energy sector. We have watched this across all aspects of the energy sector. What I would say here today is that Conservatives are doing their due diligence, and that is the best thing we can do in the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this summer, I had the honour of being showcased in a Conservative ad campaign. I am happy to know that I was on TV across Canada. My agent will send them the bill. Given that I am a member of the Union des artistes, a bill will definitely be coming.

The problem is that what was stated in the ad was completely false. It said that the Bloc Québécois was in favour of the carbon tax. Obviously, we are for putting a price on pollution. I think that we all agree with that on this side of the House. That being said, the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec.

Has anyone told the Conservatives? The Premier of Quebec told them. The leader of the Bloc Québécois told them. Every member of the Bloc Québécois has been telling them. It does not apply. There has been a carbon market in Quebec for 10 years, and the tax does not apply.

The Conservatives have been spreading lies across the country. How does that make them feel?

[English]

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, it would be the Liberal fuel regulations. There is the carbon tax. There are the clean fuel standards. There are lots of different bills. It is the Liberal's fuel regulation that is basically hurting Quebecers now. I heard it when I was in Quebec City. I had people telling me that they were against it.

The member may think it is interesting, but I think that the Bloc Party has been in cahoots with the Liberal Party enough that there is almost as though there are two coalitions in the House. If the Conservative Party has to take on every party in the House on behalf of Canadians, we will do it.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there was a project from Sustainable Marine Energy. It was the first North American tidal power project, and it was cancelled by the Liberals through stalling and lots of regulatory red tape. Is the member concerned that the bill before us would exacerbate that problem by institutionalizing red tape and bureaucracy, which would prevent projects from being built?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, we have grave concerns on this side of the House that the Liberal government either does not know anything about economics whatsoever or impedes growth and progress across all sectors through every decision it makes. It is probably both.

We have grave concerns because the project the member mentioned did not go forward. I told members about energy east pipeline as another project. There is a lot of evidence over the past seven or eight years that the federal Liberal government has clearly driven a spike into so many economic opportunities in this country. We now look like a laughingstock around the world because all of the projects we have said no to are happening in other jurisdictions, and they are emitting twice the carbon we are with no regulations.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqagtittiji*, this summer we saw the ravages of climate change. We are in a climate crisis, not just in Canada but all over the world. I wonder if the member agrees that Bill C-49 needs to pass because it would create more opportunities for the east coast to use renewable energy, and that we need to act now.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, in my speech I laid out the reasons why we think it should not pass at this point. It needs amendments. However, if this truly is an urgent matter for the federal Liberal government, then why did it take eight years? Why are we watching a recycled video of a housing announcement that happened six years ago? There is no urgency on that side of the floor, and Canadians know it.

People cannot afford their mortgages now. People cannot afford gas. They do not need an electric car where I live because there is nowhere to plug them in. They take 18 months to show up, and then there is nowhere to plug them in when we get them. I could go on and on, but no understanding of rural Canada exists over there, none at all. Therefore, no, the bill should not go forward right now. It needs amendments because the Liberals are impeding progress, and we cannot allow them to keep doing it.

• (1320)

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as someone from Nova Scotia, who represents indigenous communities, I have heard, loud and clear, not only from our provincial leaders but also indigenous leaders that this is an important thing for us to make that transition to clean energy. We have heard from Membertou Chief Terry Paul, who has talked to us about the importance of EverWind and hydrogen moving forward with all of the things that we need to make a better future for our future generations.

I am kind of astonished to hear that the member would stand up and say that there is not anything that looks at indigenous consultation, when economic reconciliation is indeed part of this legislation. Therefore, I am wondering if the member has read the legislation and, if so, can he tell us just one provision that he is against?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, like I said earlier, it is interesting because what I laid out is the fact that the bill does not mention the duty to consult and it does not mention the Crown's responsibility. It is silent on that part of the legislation. As a first nations individual, the member should know that. That should mean as much to him as to anybody else.

The duty to consult is on the Crown. You have bypassed it. You have not given water to the people who needed it and asked for it eight years ago. You have failed indigenous people on every front in this country. You have failed them. You completely failed them.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Members cannot speak directly to a member. They are speaking to the Chair. They cannot use the word “you” when they are speaking to another member.

We will move on to the next question. The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, for my colleague from Miramichi—Grand Lake, I had not heard over the course of the summer that he faced health challenges. I had a stroke in June and this is my first opportunity to speak of it in this place since we resumed. I want to thank, from the bottom of my heart, all the members from different parties who sent me notes of encouragement. As they can see, I am recovering well, but I am still not allowed to fly to Ottawa, and not allowed to fly anywhere, so I am glad I can participate virtually. For my friend from Miramichi—Grand Lake, it is good to see him back and I hope he has gotten through his health challenges.

I just do want to correct the record. The member spoke of marine protected areas as if they stopped development. From the point of view of the Green Party, we would love it if that were the case. The Minister of Natural Resources has said recently that even the interim protected areas offshore Newfoundland would be removed if the oil industry that is currently exploring there were to find oil. The government would just get rid of the protected area so that it could exploit oil there. Therefore, I will agree with members of the Conservative Party to this extent, that the Liberal ministers speak out of both sides of their mouth.

I support this bill. Let us hope we move wind energy and offshore wind energy and try to catch up with the rest of the world. We are a long way from being in the lead on this.

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Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments about my health and I am glad to hear that the member is feeling better too.

Clearly, Conservative Party opinion and Green Party opinion on some of these files greatly differ on a good day, and some of the member's more concrete questions would really have to come to the Liberal ministers who drafted this legislation and have them explain it.

For me, I think we have lost so much to other jurisdictions by trying to prove to everybody that we are saving the world here and I do not think our emissions are even high in Canada. We have really stalled productivity all over the place because of the Liberal government's decision-making and that is where our party has to do due diligence in the House, to make sure that we have opportunity for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am extremely pleased to rise today and speak on behalf of my fellow residents of Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

[English]

I have to say that in listening to the speech from the Conservatives, I am very surprised but not shocked. I will share what they did back in 2007 with the Atlantic accord in Nova Scotia. Bill C-49 is extremely important to make adjustments and modifications so that we could be moving forward very quickly on the potential of economic growth, as well as reducing our emissions.

I want to share a story that is extremely important. My colleague, who was here in the House with us, Bill Casey was elected in the Conservative Party in 1988. In 2007, believe it or not, he was thrown out of the Conservative Party of Canada under the Harper government. Why was he booted out, ejected from the party? I will tell the House what my colleague told me. I will share his story. I am sure he could do a better job, but I am going to share it.

He stood up and defended the Atlantic accord. The Conservative government, under Harper, in 2007, decided in its budget that it was going to tweak a very important part, all by itself. There was no consultation with the Province of Nova Scotia. It was going to tweak it so that some of the revenues coming in would be lost. It would make a change and Nova Scotia would lose some money because of the equalization payments.

Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Halifax West.

Mr. Casey was telling the Conservative Party to not make that tweak because Nova Scotia could lose up to \$1 billion of revenue, if that change was made in the budget. The then premier of Nova Scotia was Rodney MacDonald. The ministers were all trying to convince him that it was okay, that it would be fixed later. Absolutely not.

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Mr. Casey was a man of principle. Mr. Casey was in the Conservative Party. He was ejected in 2007. He came back, because the people had lots of trust in him, as an independent and won. Then he came back as a Liberal and won. He was a very good parliamentarian, and he stood for Nova Scotia. He stood for Canadians. I want to thank him for that.

I have to say, when I first got elected, I was impressed with how he got the work done. The first year, I watched him as he moved from desk to desk, talking to ministers about how they could help his region.

It is obvious today that the Conservatives are against an accord that they tried to take pieces out of, which would have affected Nova Scotia. It is very sad.

This has been jointly managed between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland for many years. This is an industry that is now ready to boom. There is actually \$1 trillion on the table of investments from now until 2040. In Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and across Canada, we need to take advantage of this. The time is right.

How are we going to do that? Nova Scotia would help us to lower our emissions and bring us to zero by 2050. Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador have the fastest winds in the world. Why is this so important for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland? It is exactly because it puts Canada in the great position of feeding not only Canada but the world in offshore renewal, which is crucial.

Nova Scotia announced last year that it had the intention to issue targets of five gigawatts on seabed licences by 2030. They want to get moving quickly, as well. This would help them to decarbonize the grid, which is the goal of the province.

Our government is very committed to moving forward on this project. If the Conservatives could come on board, it would be very helpful. They keep talking about Atlantic Canada, and here is the chance to help Atlantic Canadians. However, Conservatives are refusing to be part of the solution to help economic development in Atlantic Canada. That is what they are doing today.

Our government is committed to expanding the mandate and to include offshore wind as a key ingredient in the accord.

• (1325)

We will also ensure the highest standards of worker safety and environmental protection.

We have to move now. Can members believe that as I speak today there is not one commissioned wind project offshore in the country right across Canada? There is none. Of course, it is important that we move forward and fill in that gap, and we are going to do that with the amendments we are bringing forward. We are not the only ones. The U.K. and the United States are all expanding their mandates to pick up offshore wind, which is crucial to moving forward.

Last August, I was in Halifax to witness an announcement for the first-ever wind project in Canada called the Nova East Wind project. This is a joint venture between two companies, DP Energy and SBM Offshore, which are global leaders in the industry. They

are now putting the project together and will help us establish the first-ever offshore wind farm project in Canada, which will take place in Nova Scotia near Goldboro.

There are other steps we have taken to move the process forward to ensure that the ingredients are in place so that these types of projects can continue to prosper. The government has launched its regional offshore assessments in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which will provide the information and analysis for future offshore projects. It will inform and improve impact assessments. It will engage indigenous people in various communities across Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the like, and will identify optimal areas for future development.

We need to be in support of this. If the Conservative members want to support Atlantic Canada, they need to change their vote now. It is very important.

In our 2023 budget, our government has indicated new and improved investments and major tax credits for those types of investments and enhancing smart renewables and electrification pathway programs. These are investments that would allow us to continue to prosper quickly and move the agenda forward in this area.

The amendments are not difficult. They would modernize and expand the mandate quickly, like other countries are doing, so we can get it done; improve alignment with the Impact Assessment Act, which is very important; and establish new tools to support government marine conservation agencies. That is what we are talking about today to move the dial quickly so that Canada and Nova Scotia can take their place.

What are we going to do? It is simple. This Parliament needs to approve and pass Bill C-49 so it can get royal assent. What will happen next? The provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador will mirror the same amendments so they can move this project forward. Then we will see prosperity and the important role we play in the world with respect to climate change will also be enhanced. Nova Scotia will launch a call for bids by 2025. We will be there by 2030 for sure. That is how it works, in partnership between the provincial and federal governments.

I think of Mr. Casey, who was told the day before the vote that if he voted against the budget he would not be thrown out. If members want they can google the article where he spoke about his 30 years in Parliament. He said that one of the worst experiences he had was when right after he voted against his government with respect to supporting Atlantic Canadians and Nova Scotia he was told to pack his bags because he was out of there. That is what happened.

We will stand with Atlantic Canadians today, tomorrow and every day.

• (1330)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the passion from the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook. However, I do have a real question related to the bill despite all the rhetoric we heard about the former member of Parliament. It is related to the new licensing regime for exploration, which is capped at 25 years.

Part of the bill talks a lot about empowering indigenous Canadians or using the consultative processes with regulators in conjunction with indigenous Canadians to respect their inherent rights. What the bill does not explicitly outline is if an indigenous resource company has a licence will the government take it away after 25 years?

• (1335)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, let us talk about indigenous people. As my colleague just said a little while ago, indigenous people have been consulted. They will be consulted as we move forward. The chief spoke with the Atlantic caucus a couple of weeks ago and it is 100% in favour of this.

The licences going to 25 years is good. It was lifetime before and if nobody moved on it, then there was no progress. This is important to ensure that we move forward. Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador are excited, are in favour and are asking the Conservative Party of Canada to vote with us to move and improve the economic situation in Atlantic Canada today, not tomorrow.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the passion and exuberance he displayed during his speech. I agree with him completely. The climate events we are experiencing, such as flooding, forest fires and various changes, are significant.

What exactly are oil and gas regulations?

Can my colleague clarify what his government plans to do about oil and gas and the environment?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very important question.

As she knows, the environment is very important to us, as it is to her party. In fact, all of the parties, except the Conservative Party, understand the need to advance climate action.

I have been here since 2015. We said that the environment and the economy go hand in hand, and that is exactly what we are doing here. This bill will enable us to meet our environmental responsibilities while growing the economy, creating wealth and showing global leadership. This is where Canada stands. We are in the perfect position, and we will get where we are headed with or without them.

We are ready to go.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that we have heard a lot of talk and a lot of hot air from the Liberals on how committed they are, but the Americans have moved dramatically ahead with the IRA, under Biden.

Government Orders

Over \$110 billion are moving projects forward right now. There are 27 offshore wind operations off the Atlantic that will be in operation by 2025. One off Rhode Island will give energy to 250,000 homes and one off Martha's Vineyard will give energy to 400,000 homes, yet we still have not received the promised tax credits needed to compete. They still have not been finalized. We are still dealing with the regulatory framework.

Why has the United States moved so much further ahead on this, taken so much more opportunity? Why are we still standing in Parliament talking about what could be done when we see what is being done in the United States?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is that Biden does not have to deal with the Conservative Party across the aisle. We do. That is one part of it. The second thing is that all the countries like the United States and the United Kingdom are expanding their mandates to increase the investments in that area. There are a trillion dollars on the table of investment by 2040 and Canada is well placed to be the leader in the world. Let us come together for Canada.

[Translation]

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise in the House to say a few words on behalf of the people in my riding, Halifax West.

[English]

Bill C-49 would modernizes the mandates of the offshore boards, including Nova Scotia's, to unlock the full potential of offshore renewable energy.

Just two years ago, the Nova Scotia government announced its intention to stop using coal to generate electricity by the year 2030, shortening its deadline by a decade. It also set an ambitious target of having 80% of its electricity sourced from renewable energy in the same timeframe. It recently amended Nova Scotia's electricity act so that the province could issue requests for proposals and contracts for things like large-scale batteries and renewable energy storage solutions.

Offshore wind and hydrogen have been identified as a priority for Nova Scotia. The province's government has indicated to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources that it wants Bill C-49 passed without delay.

The province has already officially said that it wants to launch a competition in 2025 for offshore land leases, with the intent of getting enough turbines in place to produce five gigawatts of power. That is enough energy for roughly 1.5 million homes.

Government Orders

The provinces joined the Regional Energy and Resource Tables, which will help them identify funding and financing opportunities in low-carbon energy sectors and optimize their policies and regulatory approaches.

With a greener future, less severe weather and job creation as their north star, Nova Scotians have already begun unlocking the economic opportunities that come with expanding Canada's renewable energy sector.

That is why I support making amendments to the Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador accord, so we can facilitate the launch of wind energy projects off our shores, a whole new renewable energy industry for Canada.

• (1340)

[Translation]

I am going to focus on why these amendments make so much sense for the province of Nova Scotia. As a former minister in Nova Scotia, I know how important it is for our levels of government to work together to achieve great things, such as capitalizing on Nova Scotia's incredible potential.

[English]

In Nova Scotia, we have some of the best and most consistent wind speeds in the world that provide world-class conditions for offshore wind projects. Of course, Nova Scotians are already very familiar with technology used to harness wind power.

Almost 15% of our province's power comes from our 300-plus wind turbines, making Atlantic Canada a provincial leader in wind power generation. It is truly inspiring.

The initial work is already happening. This March, Nova Scotia's provincial government teamed up with the federal government to launch a regional assessment of offshore wind development off the coast of Nova Scotia. The assessment seeks input from indigenous groups and a range of stakeholders. Independent committee members have a year and a half to report back to governments on their work, which will include analyzing future development opportunities and the potential socio-economic, health and environmental impacts of offshore wind development.

The proposed amendments to the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act are about ensuring that future offshore wind projects are subject to the highest possible environmental and safety standards, under the guidance of an independent expert regulator.

The act was put in place in the 1980s and provided a solid base for today's offshore regime. The act set up the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board and it made Nova Scotia an equal partner with Canada, allowing it to jointly govern offshore oil and gas-related activity while sending proceeds back to the province.

[Translation]

Since the act was passed in the 1980s, we took the opportunity to make some much-needed changes to ensure that we are keeping up with modern technology and international best practices.

[English]

For example, we are updating the offshore petroleum board's land tenure regime. We are limiting the term of a significant discovery license to 25 years. This will ensure that these licences cannot be held forever, which is currently the case.

To make the regulation of future offshore wind projects as efficient as possible, we are proposing that the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Board's responsibilities be broadened to include renewable energy, such as offshore wind.

It makes sense that a board that is already so familiar with the offshore, its legislation and its management be given this job. It gives these projects more stability and makes them more desirable to the companies that are considering investing in offshore wind and other renewable energy sources.

• (1345)

[Translation]

The board understands the challenges of operating in a difficult offshore environment, and it has decades of experience in safety and environmental standards, oversight and review procedures.

[English]

The renamed Canada-Nova Scotia offshore energy regulator will undergo a significant transition as its duties expand. It will regulate the entire life cycle of offshore wind and other renewable energy projects from site assessment to decommissioning.

The board already ensures that offshore projects are operating safely and protecting the environment. Specifically, the boards are in charge of land tenure, including licensing, providing offshore authorization and approval, monitoring compliance with the accord and carrying out enforcement activities.

With these amendments in place, the board will administer the governance framework jointly created by both federal and provincial governments and ensure the best practices in land rights management are being employed, specifically in the areas of how the land will be used, project bidding procedures, determining how to evaluate bids and granting licences for commercial projects.

A regional assessment of the suitability of the offshore wind around Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia has officially begun. These regional assessments are getting input from indigenous people, the fishing industry, experts on environmental issues and others. They will also inform the project-specific assessments carried out by the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada.

It is clear that developers are interested in making offshore wind a reality. Some have expressed interest in developing offshore wind projects. Others want to get in on related facilities like on-land turbine staging sites and plants for producing hydrogen and ammonia.

For example, the enterprise Brezo Energy is developing a technology for a floating offshore wind project, and it says Nova Scotia is a perfect fit for them.

Another company called Novaport has promised that shovels will be in the ground this year for an offshore wind marshall yard in Sydney, where turbines will be stored and assembled.

Nova Scotia has already approved two large-scale green hydrogen electrolysis and ammonia production plants along the Strait of Canso. This aligns well with the proposed Atlantic loop that will provide the backbone for an interconnected Atlantic power grid. The loop will make it easier for neighbouring provinces to trade clean electricity and enable critical load balancing.

Last, with these amendments, we will be making marine conservation tools stronger, and we are improving the alignment of the accord acts and the impact assessment act.

This bill is a great move. It makes sense. We cannot fail to attract Canada's share of the forecasted \$1 trillion in global investment in offshore wind by 2040, and it requires regulatory certainty. It would make Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador global leaders in hydrogen exports, a source of secure energy that we know Europe needs. It would create well-paying jobs for Canada's highly skilled energy workers.

These amendments are an essential part of our broader climate plan, and they will help bring our emissions down, making Canada more competitive, and stop feeding into the climate-linked natural disasters that my constituents have been experiencing this year.

Nova Scotia knows that this is the time to act. We know that this is good for Nova Scotia, this is good for Newfoundland and Labrador, this is good for Atlantic Canada and this is good for Canada. Let us get this moving and get this to committee so we can work together and get this going.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, is the member aware that the bill would give federal cabinet the power to cancel a petroleum drilling project on a whim at any point, overreaching provincial jurisdiction and disrespecting indigenous interests?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, this is what I know. When the bill was announced, I was in the foyer and partook in the announcement. I also know that the minister from Nova Scotia was at the announcement and represented Nova Scotia's interests. I know Nova Scotia is on board with this. I have also had the opportunity to speak to chiefs from my province from the indigenous

communities, and they are on board with this. I know the petroleum board itself is on board with this.

This is a partnership between the federal government, the province, indigenous people, Nova Scotians and Newfoundland and Labradorians. This is a good thing. If there are issues with it, let us get them worked out at committee and move this along.

● (1350)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will repeat the question I asked previously. I know how passionate the member is about the protection of marine environments, especially shorelines.

Can she guarantee that no project, not even for an offshore wind farm, will be undertaken in marine protected areas and that no marine area boundaries will be rearranged to accommodate some developer?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, that is a good question.

Before this bill was introduced, we worked for months with Nova Scotia, with Newfoundland and Labrador and with other stakeholders. I am confident that we will be able to work together to improve the bill in committee.

[English]

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member for Halifax West's support for offshore wind and for climate action. My question is about being cohesive.

As she likely knows, environmental and indigenous groups are continuing a legal challenge of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change's decision to approve Bay du Nord. Bay du Nord is Canada's first-ever proposed deepwater oil drilling project off the coast of Newfoundland. It is expected to produce a billion barrels of oil and 400 million tonnes of greenhouse gases. This new fossil fuel infrastructure is what the UN Secretary-General calls "moral and economic madness".

Will the member bring her same passion to opposing Bay du Nord?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Mr. Speaker, I have the same passion that my colleague from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook has, except I also have my own Lebanese and Arabic kind, which I am not going to go through here.

I believe the environment and the economy work together, and I believe this is a good piece of legislation for Nova Scotians and for Newfoundland and Labrador. It is one that has been built on. When it is passed, both provinces will still have to pass their own provincial laws. I know that both provinces are waiting for this to happen. I urge parliamentarians to take it seriously, as I know they all do, and pass it along to committee, because this is good for the provinces and the country.

Statements by Members

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to this particular bill. It is good to be back in the House after our break. It was not really a break but constituency time, with very busy summers for a lot of us. It is good to see so many familiar faces on all sides of the aisle and to have this discussion.

Today, I rise to speak to Bill C-49, an act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts. It has a lot to do with Atlantic Canada. The bill would have direct effects on development throughout the region of Atlantic Canada.

A lot of things about the bill may be well-intended, but the realities of it, as it is written, could have devastating consequences for the resource sector, and not just in my region. It would have an echo effect across the country. It is very important that we get the balance right and that we take the time get the bill right and fix it. If we cannot fix the bill, we should do everybody a favour and make sure that it does not pass in its current form. Without amendments and without these concerns being addressed, the bill could lead to a lot of unintended consequences that could be devastating economically throughout the region and for much of the country.

I come from the beautiful province of New Brunswick. It is an outstanding province. In fact, it is a place where half has not yet been told and its potential has not nearly been realized. Part of realizing the potential we have as a province and as a region is about unlocking the key to ethically and environmentally responsible extractive resources and the development of our natural resources, and getting those resources to market. It can be a pathway to our region's prosperity, and it must not be overlooked. However, the consequence of passing bad legislation is that it could hamper development and lead to more hurdles for our resource developers and those in the area of green, innovative technologies and resource development, such as tidal, wind and solar. If we do not get the bill right, it could have unintended consequences that would hurt future development in those areas, which are critical to our energy security going forward.

We know that if we do not get energy security and food security right, inevitably it will directly affect national security. It is so important that we get these questions right and make sure that we pass bills that enhance our energy and food security, not hamper them. This bill, as it is written, would cause a lot of hurdles for developers as they look at coming into our region and potentially investing in not only the new areas of resource development and extraction but also the existing ones. If we put in place further bureaucratic hurdles and do not correct what is wrong with the bill, we are sending a message to investors in the resource sector to not come to Atlantic Canada, because they would never get through the bureaucratic, regulatory maze and all the requirements. At the end of the day, if they do happen to get through all the hurdles, the government could shut them down at any time at the whim of any particular minister, because the bill as written puts unbelievable power in the hands of a federal minister.

I do not believe the bill will lead us to work collaboratively enough with the provinces, the key stakeholders or those who are

going to be directly affected by the decisions we would make. We have seen this already with the enactment of the marine protected areas and some of the enforcement around them. What can happen is that, at the whim of a particular minister, a certain area of our ocean could be blocked off and there would be no more development or fishery. This would bring devastating consequences to our harvesters, to those in the fishing sector and to those in the energy sector.

We need to get this right. We need to make sure that we address the concerns that will be laid out throughout this debate and fix the bill. If the bill cannot be fixed, we must not pass it, because the consequences of it going through could be devastating to a region that already has tremendous economic headwinds against it.

We have huge potential, and I speak on behalf of fellow Atlantic Canadians. We do have a great love for the environment and a great care for our natural resources. We believe we can do both. We can protect our environment and responsibly develop our resources. We can do it hand in hand and not at the cost or devastation of one sector.

● (1355)

It is time we got the balance right, and this bill does not get the balance right. I challenge our friends on the other side to go back to the drawing table and fix what is wrong with this bill, which is going to bring devastation to the resource sector of this country.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back in Ottawa with all my hon. colleagues, and it is always an honour to rise in this chamber on behalf of the people of Richmond Centre.

Over the summer, I had meetings with constituents on matters such as affordability, housing, health, public safety and, of course, climate change. I was pleased to update them on the work our government has done and is doing.

Through those meetings, I saw inclusivity and genuineness. I saw that we all want to make Richmond a better place in every aspect. I am proud to serve as the member for Richmond Centre and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community, city and provincial partners and my friend and colleague, the member for Steveston—Richmond East, for their continued service and championship for Richmond.

Most importantly, I thank my constituents for sharing their inputs and priorities and for their continued trust and support. There is more to be done, and let us continue to work alongside one another. Together we can build a better community for everyone.

* * *

● (1400)

CARBON TAX

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to say thanks to the residents of Portage—Lisgar for entrusting me to be their member of Parliament. It is a distinct honour and privilege to be in this chamber and to represent my friends and neighbours, and I recognize the responsibility I have to be their voice in Ottawa. The concerns they shared with me at doorsteps, at community meetings and at various events in the past number of months have stuck with me.

Today in this House, I reaffirm my commitments to them, including my pledge to oppose the NDP-Liberal government's carbon tax. After eight years under the Prime Minister, life has become unaffordable for so many Canadians. The Liberal government's carbon tax on the farmer who grows the food and the trucker who ships the food is a tax on all who buy the food. Now the Prime Minister wants to quadruple that tax.

The Leader of the Opposition will axe the tax, so everyone pays less and brings home more.

* * *

ORCHID GALA

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise, particularly as the only female member of Parliament from Nova Scotia, to raise awareness of the distinct health needs of women and advocate for improving access to services.

Today I want to highlight the Orchid Gala, which was organized to support the creation of the Deanne Reeve Pelvic Health Suite at the Dartmouth General. Deanne Reeve lost her life to a late diagnosis of cervical cancer, and the suite will focus on gynecology and urology services, reducing wait times and increasing patient comfort. Up to 40% of women will experience pelvic floor dysfunction in their lives, and this expansion will ensure that they have a place to turn for care in the Halifax regional municipality.

Although hurricane Lee cancelled the gala this weekend at the last minute, the organizers worked with the United Way to deliver the prepared dinners to people in need in our community and reach their fundraising goal.

I thank Sheri Morgan, Liz Rigney and all the sponsors for their advocacy. I am honoured to have been included, and I look forward to what is next.

* * *

[Translation]

ANTICOSTI ISLAND

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, finally. After the Manicouagan-Uapishka Biosphere Reserve in my riding

Statements by Members

of Manicouagan, our fabled Anticosti Island has now become a UNESCO world heritage site.

This recognition is first and foremost the result of the hard work and dedication of the people of the municipality of Anticosti, the Minganie, the Innu nation and the Côte-Nord. Thanks to their vision, pride and generosity, our country-within-a-country has gained international recognition.

I sincerely thank everyone, near and far, from Port-Meunier to Montreal, who contributed to this recognition: Mayor Hélène Boulanger, former mayor John Pineault, reeve of the Minganie RCM Meggie Richard and her predecessor, Luc Noël, and *utshimau* Jean-Charles Piétacho. *Tshinashkumitin*.

This is a very moving moment. People of the Côte-Nord love this age-old island, its history, beauty, immensity and its thousands of deer. This is such a proud moment. Our cherished jewel will now be protected for all time.

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MONIQUE BÉGIN

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am humbled to rise and pay tribute to Monique Bégin, a member of Parliament who was a pioneer in the House for many years. She played an important role in improving the lives of all Canadians.

She was the executive secretary of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada. Fifty years ago, she was one of the first three women from Quebec to be elected to the House. She was a leading advocate for women's progress, an academic who worked to create opportunities for women and who defended our universal health care system without fail.

She should be an inspiration to all girls, all women and all Canadians, as well as to other women MPs like me who have the privilege of serving in the House.

* * *

● (1405)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Arpan Khanna (Oxford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is the honour of a lifetime to be able to serve the hard-working people of Oxford. Oxford is a great community full of doers. We have the best farmers, the best auto workers, amazing truckers and great Canadians who want to roll up their sleeves and get to work.

Statements by Members

However, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, Canadians are working harder and harder, but they are barely getting by. The dream of home ownership is now fading away. The cost to buy a home, mortgages, rent and the amount needed for a down payment have all doubled.

Nine out of 10 young Canadians now believe they will never own a home. That is not the Canadian dream. Even if someone is fortunate enough to have bought a home, now the coalition's carbon tax is making families and seniors choose between heating and eating.

Who will pay the cost of the Liberal-NDP government? That is right: We all will. The Liberal-NDP government is not worth the cost.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Jimmy Lai, a 75-year-old U.K. citizen imprisoned in Hong Kong. Mr. Lai is a well-known supporter of the Hong Kong pro-democracy movement and the founder and owner of Apple Daily, which was one of Hong Kong's most popular Chinese language newspapers until its forced closure in June 2021.

Since 2020, Mr. Lai has been imprisoned in Hong Kong for exercising his right to freedom of expression and peaceful protest, his advocacy for democracy in Hong Kong and his journalism and writings. He is currently awaiting trial under the controversial national security law and sedition laws in relation to various Apple Daily publications. He is at risk of facing life imprisonment.

No person should be prosecuted for standing up in defence of universal human rights, freedoms and democracy. I stand in solidarity with Jimmy Lai, and call for his immediate and unconditional release.

* * *

MUSIC COMPETITION WINNER

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like everyone to listen up as I share the wisdom of Nodin Outten-Joseph, a graduate from Kapapamahchakwew Wandering Spirit School in my community. Nodin is a national winner of the Your Voice is Power competition for his work on coding to make music.

He stated that his work “Represents the need for the voices of Black and Indigenous Peoples to be listened to by those in positions of privilege and power”, so we should listen up.

About his experience, he said, “As I crafted the elements of my song I learned that in the act of responsibly interweaving Indigenous language into music, the music itself becomes a vehicle for activism and an intrinsic creator of equity”.

He said that his music includes a profound power found in diversity, as well as a desire for the destruction of colonial structures and world views. This is a destruction that does not end in death, but in rebirth.

I would like to congratulate Nodin. I thank him for his strong voice and power.

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CARBON TAX

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise proudly today as the newest member for Calgary Heritage. My deepest thanks go to my family, friends and volunteers whose shoulders I stand on. Most importantly, my gratitude is with the great people of Calgary, for whom I will never forget the core mission, which is to serve them, to fight for them and to restore the promise of Canada for them.

The carbon tax is an attack on our way of life. It is an attack on the many Calgarians I have met who are wondering how they are going to put food on the table. The prosperity they need rests with our energy sector, yet the very tax crushing them comes from right across the aisle.

To all my friends back home, I have a message: Hope is on the way. We will axe the tax, get our resources and ingenuity to market and replace woke nonsense with common sense. We will restore the promise of Canada by firing the Prime Minister and hiring our Conservative leader to bring it home.

* * *

● (1410)

TERRY FOX RUN

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, “I just wish people would realize that anything's possible if you try; dreams are made possible if you try.” Terry Fox asked us to carry on when he was unable to complete his Marathon of Hope for cancer research.

This past Sunday in Oakville, I joined about 1,200 people, including Canada's National Para Ice Hockey Team captain and gold medallist Tyler McGregor, to take part in the 43rd annual Terry Fox Run. Tyler lost his leg to the same cancer as Terry did, but he was given an 80% chance of survival. He is living proof that Terry Fox-funded research dollars make all the difference.

I want to thank my volunteer committee members; the Town of Oakville; our top teams, Team Darrell and Team Win/Primal/BronzeRunners; and our volunteers, our sponsors and everyone who took part and donated to see Oakville raise \$150,000 this year. I thank Canadians for continuing Terry's dream of a world without cancer.

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA**

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, everything feels broken. The NDP-Liberal coalition has made life impossible for many Canadians. Groceries, housing—everything is expensive, and the half-measures proposed by this government will make no difference whatsoever.

Canadians do not need out-of-touch, insensitive politicians who do not care about their everyday concerns and struggles. Canadians want and need a leader who lives in the same world as they do, who can empathize and understand their reality. Canadians want a leader who speaks from experience.

The leader of the Conservative Party of Canada was raised in a modest environment and has the ability to connect with people. He was right when he said, “It doesn't matter who you know or where you're from, but rather who you are and where you're going”.

That is the kind of leadership we need. It is just common sense.

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

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, everything feels broken in Canada. Under the NDP-Liberal government, Canada is unaffordable, unsafe and more divided. The Liberals have vastly expanded the size of the federal government while driving participation in the entrepreneurial economy to record lows.

The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost, but we can put the pieces back together by giving Canadians, newcomers and entrepreneurial-minded Canadians a foundation for success. We are going to build a Canada with a competitive tax regime and a labour pool that meets the demands of today's market. Instead of brushing off small businesses and labelling them as tax cheats, we are going to support them by creating an environment where they can thrive. We will be a government that spends within its means, leaves more in the pockets of hard-working Canadians and lets Canadians get ahead.

We are going to bring back the Canada we know and love. Let us bring it home.

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*[Translation]***VOLUNTEERISM IN GLENGARRY—PRESCOTT—RUSSELL**

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to recognize some remarkable constituents in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

[English]

Yesterday, we held a ceremony to honour 20 outstanding individuals who have dedicated hours upon hours to improving the communities they call home.

[Translation]

Volunteerism is at the heart of our communities. Without volunteers there would be no music concerts, baseball leagues for our young people, fundraising for social causes, francophonie monuments in our villages, and so on.

I want to thank those who took the time to nominate the following people: Bernard Boulerice, André Brisson, Elizabeth Caddell, André Chamailard, Robert Deguire, Paul Emile Duval, Reine Hébert, Liette Hotte, Alain Hupé, Connie Johnston, France Lamarche, Denis Tardif, Murielle Lanthier, Pierre Leroux, Don McDougald, Benoît Paré, Nicole Picard, Francis Lauzon, and François and Rachel Sigouin. I thank them very much for their contribution.

[English]

I congratulate them.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, recently I crossed a new Rubicon in 23 years of public service. I had to ask the OPP to come and answer phones at my office because we were being overwhelmed with threats of violence against me, my staff and my family.

Welcome to public life in 2023, where death threats and intimidation are becoming part of the playbook of the far right. It is not just politicians: We are seeing death threats against journalists, school board trustees and medical professionals. What is bubbling up in the conspiracy swamps of 4chan, Reddit and X is increasingly crossing the line into real life. Call it “pitchfork politics”. It represents a serious threat not only to public safety but also to the very nature of democracy itself. These extremists make these threats because they can get away with it.

It is time to mandate the RCMP to establish a registry of online domestic extremism. The RCMP needs to have the resources to identify the sources of any threat, to make contact with them and to keep track of them in a public registry. Democracy is in a very fragile place, and we need to work together to keep people safe and our system working.

Oral Questions

• (1415)

[Translation]

MÉTRO MÉDIA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Métro Média, the company that owns Journal Métro and 16 other local newspapers, is declaring bankruptcy. It is ceasing operations. Over 70 people, including about 30 journalists, are losing their jobs. This is yet another blow to Quebec news, which has already been very hard hit.

The closure of a local newspaper hurts in many ways. Obviously, it affects access to local information, a key component of a healthy democracy. It also affects the connections a newspaper helps build in a community, the fundamental role that newspaper plays in the development of a sense of belonging in a city, region or neighbourhood. Diversity of information and the local perspective offered by local media cease to exist.

Sixteen local newspapers are closing their doors. That is devastating for our communities, for the journalists, for information and for democracy. We need to do more to protect our local media. Clearly, what we are doing now is not enough.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “just inflation” cost everyone. Most young people feel they will never own a home. Rent has doubled, the Liberal-NDP inflationary deficits are driving up interest rates and families cannot afford their mortgages. Mortgage payments on a typical home are up 151% since the Prime Minister took office.

The Prime Minister just said this about young people affording a home, “that loss of of of hope and optimism is devastating for people's morale. Of course, they're going to they're going to grumble at government.” Grumble? No wonder young people's morale is down when a national Bank of Canada's report says that it now takes 37 years to save for a house in Vancouver.

Former Liberal finance minister John Manley said that the Liberals' deficits pressed on the inflationary gas pedal, which forced the Bank of Canada to press harder on the brakes with higher interest rates.

Who will pay the cost of the Liberal-NDP runaway inflation which spiked at 4% today? We all will. The Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

* * *

BRIAN O'NEILL

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the game of hockey has lost a true stalwart. Brian O'Neill served 52 years with the National Hockey League, nearly all of those as executive vice-president.

Hired by Clarence Campbell in 1966, he oversaw the 1967 expansion, supervised the draft, managed scheduling and was the league's disciplinarian. During his tenure, 6,595 players played in

the NHL in a total of 52,092 games. In 1994, he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame in the Builders category.

Brian O'Neill's leadership was rooted in his integrity, humanity and good humour. To quote NHL historian Dave Stubbs, he was as “honest as a rink is long, and as playful as a game of shinny.”

Commissioner Gary Bettman has spoken of Brian's elegance, grace, dignity, meticulous attention to detail and important counsel.

To Brian's wife of 68 years, Jean, and children Sean, Darcy, Nancy, Patrick and Sandy, we offer our condolences.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

FINANCES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the inflation rate is accelerating again, proving that after eight years in office, this Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

Inflation is higher in Canada than it is in the United States or Japan. The cost of everything is rising, even though the Prime Minister and his ministers announced that inflation was going to fall.

The reality is that these rising costs are the result of an inflationary deficit that the government racked up five months ago. That money is now circulating in the economy and inflating prices. We can even hear apocalyptic music in the background.

When is he finally going to balance the budget to lower inflation and interest rates?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians are struggling. That is why we are there to help them by lowering the cost of day care and child care and by sending them a grocery rebate this summer.

Maybe the Conservatives would have cut these investments and supports, but we will continue to be there for Canadians as we manage our finances responsibly, with the lowest deficit and best debt-to-GDP ratio of any G7 country.

We will continue to support Canadians and grow the economy.

• (1420)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three years ago, I warned this Prime Minister that printing money and doubling the national debt would cause inflation. He refused to admit it. Now it has become a reality.

Five months ago, I warned him that an inflationary deficit would cause the problem we are experiencing today. In fact, even the Minister of Finance said that deficits add fuel to the fire of inflation. Then she added \$60 billion of fuel to the fire of inflation.

When will they balance the budget to reduce inflation?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the opposition leader is saying is that he would not have sent the grocery rebate to 11 million Canadians. He would not have invested in dental care for low- and modest-income Canadians who do not have access to dental care for their children. He certainly would not have cut child care fees in half. He would not have been there for Canadians in these tough times.

We did that by carefully managing the deficit and our public finances in order to lower inflation, but also—

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today's accelerating inflation rate proves that after eight years, the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. After he and his ministers pumped their fists in the air and declared victory over inflation, it has now gone up 43% in two months. Through all categories, it is higher in Canada than it is in the United States and Japan. Worse, it may force the Bank of Canada to raise interest rates again, causing Canadian households, which are the most indebted in the G7, to go bankrupt.

Will he balance the budget to bring down inflation and rates before that nightmare unfolds?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past year, we have demonstrated that we were able to bring down inflation from the highs of 8.1%, while at the same time being there to invest in Canadians.

What the Leader of the Opposition is saying is that he would not have been there to help 11 million Canadians with the grocery rebate. He would not have been there to help Canadians with dental care for kids whose families cannot send them to the dentist. He certainly would not have been there to cut child care fees in half right across the country, on the way to \$10 a day.

Those are measures that have helped Canadians while maintaining fiscal responsibility and seeing—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, doubling the debt on Canadians is not fiscal responsibility, and forcing Canadians to live in tents is not compassion. That is the reality.

After eight years of the Prime Minister, life is miserable, especially for the poorest among us. His solution is to make everything cost even more. Inflation is now accelerating. He has not brought it down. He stacked 4% inflation on top of the previous 8% inflation, which means Canadians cannot eat, heat or house themselves.

Will he reverse his disastrous policies so Canadians can pay their bills?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition continues to talk down Canadians, talk down the Canadian economy and say that everything is broken, we are getting to work helping Canadians through this difficult time.

We are eliminating GST on construction of new apartment buildings to make sure that people can get rentals, and we are encouraging all provinces to do the same. A number of provinces have stepped up, which is going to make housing more accessible for millions of Canadians.

We are also moving forward on extending the repayment deadline for CEBA loans to help small businesses. We are working directly with grocery chains to stabilize food prices.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the ways that the Prime Minister doubled housing costs was by flooding the economy with \$600 billion of newly created cash, which bid up the price of homes and forced Canadians to overpay. Then many bought at rock-bottom low rates because he promised that they would never go up. His inflationary deficits pushed them up, and now one-fifth of all Canadians are actually unable to pay the interest on their mortgages. Their mortgages are growing in size and when they renew, it will be on a bigger principal at a higher rate.

How many Canadians will go bankrupt? Will we have a mortgage crisis when that happens, yes or no?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians are struggling right now. I heard from a mom from Oakville who actually said that her mortgage costs went up the same amount as her child care costs came down. Thank God they cancelled each other out, but people should be doing better than that. That is why we are going to continue to be there for Canadians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. Are we ready to continue?

The right hon. Prime Minister, please continue.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, every now and then the Conservatives show their true colours and react over the top, not just with rhetoric but in attacks on things like child care, which we know they disagree with. We know they do not agree with making child care more affordable, and every now and then they show it.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in the midst of a housing crisis, \$900 million earmarked for housing in Quebec is being held hostage in Ottawa's coffers. Why? The reason is that this Prime Minister says that he will not give Quebec the money unless he can impose conditions on it.

Simply put, the only thing the Prime Minister should be asking Quebec is into which account he should transfer the money. We are in a crisis and the Prime Minister is delaying \$900 million in housing starts. I am appealing to his sense of responsibility.

Will he finally transfer the money?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are well aware that everyone has a responsibility in addressing the housing crisis. The federal government has an important role to play, as do the provincial and municipal governments.

We implemented a \$4-billion plan to encourage municipalities to speed up the construction of housing in Canada. Right now, we are working with the Government of Quebec to figure out the best way to get this money to the municipalities so that housing can be built, just as we are doing across the country.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to understand why this has not been resolved yet. With the exception of Quebecers who are struggling to find housing, no one needs good news about housing nearly as much as this Prime Minister does. It would be a win-win, especially for him.

He has \$900 million worth of good news on his hands, yet he is the one who is dawdling.

What is he waiting for? He should pay out the money and finally make an announcement that is good for Quebecers.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we look forward to being able to send this \$900 million to municipalities in Quebec, but everyone knows full well that we have to work with the Quebec government to ensure that this money is appropriately allocated to the municipalities.

We are working in good faith. I can confirm that this \$900 million is there for municipalities in Quebec, and we are very eager to send it to them.

* * *

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been struggling with food prices for almost two years now. Here is a classic Liberal response. They asked the CEOs of the big grocery stores to come to Ottawa, to nicely ask them to stabilize the prices, not to bring them down but to stabilize them.

All the while, the Liberals do not want Canadians to know that they met with the grocery lobbyists over 57 times in the past two years. They had 57 opportunities to ask them to lower the prices, but did not.

Why should Canadians trust this “could have, should have” Prime Minister now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry convened the heads of the five great grocery chains across this country to talk about how we are going to stabilize grocery prices, how they were going to make life more affordable for Canadians.

We are there to work with them to make sure that it happens in ways that continue to support our hard-working farmers and food producers across the country, and continues to put high-quality, affordable food on Canadians' tables from coast to coast to coast.

We have said clearly that we expect to see a concrete plan from those grocery CEOs. If they do not come forward with strong enough measures, then we will take measures. We are going to stabilize—

• (1430)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Burnaby South.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the shocking allegation that a Canadian citizen was killed on Canadian soil by a foreign government rocked our country.

People fleeing violence and persecution have always thought of Canada as a safe place, but now that sense of safety and security has been rocked. People are afraid for their lives.

My question to the Prime Minister is as follows. For people who have received active credible threats of violence to their lives here in Canada, what is the plan to provide them with protection so that they can be safe in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, millions of Canadians can trace their roots and origins to different countries in the world, some of which do not hold the same values and rules that we do.

It is important for everyone to feel safe in Canada. That is why keeping Canadians safe is one of our absolute top priorities, why we continue to work closely with security agencies, and partners and allies around the world to ensure that the rule of law is respected and citizens are kept safe.

We know there is much more work to do. We will continue to stand strong for the rule of law and continue to keep Canadians—

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

FINANCE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP leader just now asked why we should trust the Prime Minister. Why does he continue to trust the Prime Minister, and to prop him up over and over again?

The Liberal-NDP coalition pile-drives Canadians further, up to 4% now. This finance minister was doing victory laps just two months ago, saying that she stopped inflation. It has gone up 43% since then. After eight years of this incompetency, the Liberals are just not worth the cost anymore. They have doubled the cost of rent and mortgages, and the time it takes to save up for a down payment.

When will the Liberals stop fuelling inflation and pressing the gas on their inflationary spending so that Canadians do not lose their homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today the Conservatives have shown their true colours. The Leader of the Opposition actually bragged about his comments three years ago. That is when he railed against big fat government programs. That was the emergency support we provided to Canadian families and to Canadian businesses to get through COVID.

Thanks to those programs, we have nearly one million more jobs in Canada than before COVID. Our government is proud of supporting Canadians then, and we are proud—

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

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is coming from the minister who, three years ago, said that interest rates would stay super low. Then the government piled up so much debt that the interest rates went up. Now Canada is the most at risk in the G7 for a mortgage default crisis.

Maybe the minister should take advice from former Liberal finance minister John Manley who said that their deficits are like pressing the gas while the Bank of Canada is slamming on the brakes with their interest rate hikes. These interest rate hikes have not been seen in the last three decades.

When will the Liberals stop the inflationary spending and balance the budget so interest rates could come down and Canadians would not lose their homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me tell the House who we do not intend to take advice from. We do not intend to take advice from the party that was going to leave Canadians high and dry when COVID shut down our economy.

Instead, we supported Canadians, and that support worked. It kept businesses going. That means we have one million jobs more than we had before.

We are going to continue working hard for Canadians. We have removed the GST on purpose-built rentals to get more homes built faster.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mortgage costs for Canadians are going up because of the Liberal-NDP government's spending and deficits. Even the current finance

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minister said that spending and deficits are like pouring fuel on the inflationary fire. John Manley said that it is like pressing on the gas pedal while the Bank of Canada is pressing on the brake with higher interest rates.

Canadians are realizing that the current Prime Minister is not worth the cost. When will the government stop its inflationary deficits so that Canadians can keep a roof over their heads?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me bring some facts into this conversation. Canada's AAA credit rating was reaffirmed last week by DBRS Morningstar with a stable outlook. We have the lowest debt and deficit in the G7. When it comes to housing, we are rolling up our sleeves and getting the job done. We have lifted the GST on purpose-built rentals. Provinces across the country are following us. We are going to get more homes built for more Canadians.

The only thing the Conservatives can offer is austerity and cuts.

● (1435)

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how about a fact? When one month in 27 months the interest rate goes below 3% the current finance minister declares victory. She said that the government's plan to bring inflation down is working, but that is not what is happening. In fact, it is going up because of rising energy costs, but the current government is determined to make energy more expensive by increasing the carbon tax. Here is an idea. Why does it not reduce the carbon tax or other taxes on energy and make it affordable again for Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a little point of fact, I think my hon. colleague just confused the interest rate with the inflation rate. I guess it is an easy mistake to make if one is a Conservative who does not really care about facts.

Let me tell members what our government is focused on. We are focused on Canadians. We are focused on fighting for Canadians. That is why, together with our industry minister, we met with the leaders of Canada's grocers yesterday and told them to stabilize prices now. We are going to make sure that happens.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians faced another blow this morning with the news that inflation in Canada increased to 4%. This has a direct impact on all Canadian families.

However, as recently as July, just two months ago, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said, "Canada's plan to bring down inflation is working". No, minister, it is not working.

Oral Questions

After eight years of this Liberal government, is the Deputy Prime Minister aware that her reckless spending has a direct impact on the 151% increase in mortgage payments for Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am aware of something very important, something that the Conservative leader admitted today.

Today, he was proud of something he said at the beginning of the pandemic. He is proud to have said that supporting Canadians and small and medium-sized businesses was not the right thing to do.

We are proud to have done that and to have supported Canadians. We continue to do so, for example with—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has a short memory, to say the least. She does not remember that, a mere two months ago, she said her plan was working. Today, it is clear that it is not.

I happen to have a quick question for her. Does she remember who said that deficits “pour fuel on the fire of inflation”? Does anyone know who said that? It was the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister of Canada. She is the one who said that.

My question is for the Minister of Industry. Does he agree with his colleague that, if the government does not control spending, it is pouring fuel on the fire of inflation? Does he agree with his colleague?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if my colleague opposite wants to lecture anyone about economics, he should start with his colleagues, who do not understand the difference between the key rate and inflation.

We fully understand the importance of fiscal responsibility. That is why Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. That is why our AAA credit rating was confirmed just last week. Those are the facts.

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GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's stunt with the CEOs of the major grocery chains is not going to affect our grocery bills anytime soon. Ottawa asked them to come up with plans to stabilize prices within three weeks. Really? If they do not, then what?

Obviously, Quebecers cannot go shopping elsewhere. If the big grocery stores do not lower their prices, Ottawa is threatening to hit them with a new tax. Who will they then pass those costs on to? That is the obvious question. It is all well and good to include the major grocers in the discussion, but everyone needs to be at the table.

When are we going to see measures that will make a difference to Canadians' wallets?

● (1440)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is not a stunt when we

are fighting to stand up for Canadians. What happened was unprecedented: We called together the five major grocery players in Canada so that we could convey to them the frustration that millions of Canadians experience every week. We told them to table specific, concrete plans to stabilize prices in Canada.

That is exactly what Canadians asked us to do, and that is exactly what we are going to do. We will continue to fight for Canadians, no matter what the Bloc Québécois may think.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, those who are often forgotten, when we talk about groceries, are the farmers and processors. They are the ones who produce our food. Right now, they are not getting any support from Ottawa to deal with higher basic costs, for labour, for example. There is nothing for them to help with inflation and their record level of debt. There is nothing for them to help with weather-related damage. Then Ottawa is surprised when the price of food goes up.

Will the government commit to supporting our farmers and processors? That is what will affect us at the grocery store.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important question.

One thing that was clear yesterday with the major grocery chains from across the country is that we must not allow any measure to affect our farmers, the small and medium-sized businesses across the country that contribute to the food chain. Speaking of yesterday's event and the federal government's unequivocal demand, it is up to the large grocery chains to stabilize prices in Canada. We are here for supply management. We are here for our farmers. We will continue to support the little guy in the supply chain.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this situation is particularly urgent, especially for fruit and vegetable growers in Quebec. The rains this summer have been disastrous for their crops.

Produce growers urgently need the federal government's help. If the federal government does not intervene, some farms will disappear, and that will have an impact on food prices.

Will the government act responsibly and step up to help our fruit and vegetable growers before it is too late?

[English]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my sympathy certainly goes out to the farmers with the weather we are facing in Quebec and right across this country. We have the CAP program and the business risk management programs, which we worked on with the provinces and the territories right across the country. My hon. colleague is well aware that the province applies tabulations sent in to the federal government and we make sure we compensate the farmer. We will continue to do that, working hard with farmers to make sure they are able to continue.

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FINANCE

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just two months ago the finance minister said, “Canada’s plan to bring down inflation is working.” Clearly, the Liberals are experiencing inflation differently, because it is not going down; it is up again today. After eight years of the current Prime Minister, mortgage payments are up 151%, and Canadians are suffering. He is not worth the cost.

When will he admit that his inflationary spending is leaving Canadians homeless?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect to my hon. colleague, she would recognize the disastrous consequences that would have befallen Canadian households if we had not been there for them during their time of need. Their argument ultimately boils down to the fact that we should not have provided support to families to keep food on the table and that we should not have provided support to Canadian employers so workers could remain on the payroll. That is what would have caused Canadians to be without homes, but the Conservatives want to talk about housing plans. The only plans they have are to raise taxes on the people who build homes, and that is just foolish.

We are going to continue to put forward programs that will allow us to build more homes, and we are going to put forward measures to support Canadians during their time of need.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have heard repeatedly from the Prime Minister that the cost of living is not a priority, and Canadians are feeling the consequences. Here are a few quotes from the Prime Minister. “You’ll forgive me if I don’t think about monetary policy.” Or how about this: “We took on debt so Canadians wouldn’t have to.”

When will the Prime Minister admit that it is not his debt; it is taxpayers’ money? More importantly, when will he start caring about monetary policy so Canadians can afford to live?

• (1445)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I find it fascinating the Conservatives’ new-found interest in making life more affordable for Canadians. What is funny is she does not realize that many of her colleagues voted against the Canada child benefit, which puts more money in the pockets of nine out of 10 Canadian families and stops any child care cheques from going to millionaires. They opposed

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increases to old age security for seniors when they turn 75. They opposed increases to the Canada student loan and Canada student grant programs, and they opposed increases to the Canada workers benefit.

We cannot be fooled. Their record in government was lower wages and higher unemployment. We have turned the ship around and we will be there to support Canadians in their time of need.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are failed plans. After eight years of the Prime Minister, finding an affordable place to live is a crisis. Under the NDP-Liberal government and its out-of-control spending, inflation and interest rates are both skyrocketing.

Rents have doubled, mortgages have doubled and people are becoming homeless. Will the Prime Minister stop his inflationary spending so Canadians can keep a roof over their heads?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect, our plan to make sure that Canadians have a roof over their heads is to build more homes. We advanced a plan that is going to cut the GST for people who are building homes for Canadians. We are changing the way that cities build homes. We will grow the capacity of the workforce to build those homes. Realistically, when we dig into the housing plan, if we can call it that, that they put forward the other day, they plan to cut funding for home building and put GST back on some homes that need to be built.

We will be there to build the homes Canadians need, and we will be there to support people during their time of need when it comes to addressing the cost of living.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, two months ago, the finance minister declared victory over inflation. However, just today, inflation went up again: over 43% since that declaration. Even former Liberal finance ministers Bill Morneau and John Manley agree deficits lead to inflation, yet the government keeps piling more and more on the inflationary fire, which is costing more and more Canadians their homes.

Does the Prime Minister have any plans to keep his promise to balance the budget so Canadians can keep their homes?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to global inflation that is felt in every corner of the planet, what is the Conservatives’ solution? It is to slash support to the most vulnerable people, as if that is going to help global inflation.

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What is their plan on dental care? We have an opportunity. For the nine million Canadians who do not have the opportunity today to have good oral health, we can make sure that this is not only a matter of dignity for them but also a matter of prevention, and the Conservatives are going to fix global inflation by taking away dental care. No, it is the same old Tory plan: Make the most vulnerable pay and pretend that global problems are not actually what is at fault.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on Monday, families and advocates took to Parliament Hill to demand that the government search the landfills in Winnipeg. This is a human rights issue. It is a dignity issue. While the Manitoba Conservative government and the Liberal government sit by, human remains of loved ones remain in a garbage dump.

Will the government stop playing jurisdictional games, uphold its international human rights obligations and provide the much-needed resources to search the landfills?

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a heart-wrenching issue and is part of our sad reality of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

I had the opportunity in Ottawa yesterday and in Winnipeg last month to meet with the family members, along with members of the Assembly of Manitoba Chief as well as the Long Plain First Nation chief. I understand the deep frustration that exists with families and communities.

Our approach must be victim-centred, trauma-informed and indigenous-led in order to support healing, and we look forward to working with the families to reach that end.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, meeting with those agencies does not equal action. Why do we still end up in landfills? The government's response to the MMIWG2S+ crisis is not enough. The NDP is working with families, survivors and advocates to push for a red dress alert, because should we go missing, we must be found.

When will the government stop stalling and implement a red dress alert system to save lives?

• (1450)

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we look forward to working with the opposition and all parties to implement the red dress alert. We know that it will save lives. It is so important in order to address the national tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. We will continue to work to ensure that women and indigenous women are protected across the country.

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LABOUR

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I commend the Minister of Labour for his leadership during the long-shore workers strike in British Columbia. Workers in Surrey—

Newton and across the country have been loud and clear that they support legislation to ban the use of replacement workers. This morning, workers gathered on Parliament Hill to call for legislation as soon as possible.

Can the minister tell us if and when this government will prohibit the use of replacement workers in federally regulated industries?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member of Parliament for Surrey—Newton can tell his constituents exactly what I told workers who gathered on Parliament Hill this morning. We will table legislation to ban replacement workers this fall because we believe in collective bargaining, because replacement works distract from the table, because they prolong disputes and because they poison workplaces for years afterwards. I hope that all parties in this House, as they did for paid sick leave, will join us and vote unanimously to ban replacement workers.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, farmers cannot afford the Prime Minister. On Friday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that by 2030, Canadian farmers will be paying close to \$1 billion in carbon taxes alone, carbon taxes that are driving up inflation. Do members know who is paying for that inflation? It is Canadians. Canadians are literally paying the price. The cost of apples is up 61%, carrots are up 72% and potatoes and oranges are up 77%.

Will the Prime Minister axe his plans to quadruple the carbon tax so that Canadians can afford to feed their families?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's question, but I think my hon. colleague realizes that when hurricane Fiona hit eastern Canada, it destroyed barns, it killed cattle, it destroyed wharves and it cost an enormous amount of money.

It is quite obvious that we have to do something about the environment, and we are doing something about the environment. I know my hon. colleague is well aware that farmers stand with us to do something about the environment.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the new Minister of Agriculture still believes that farmers support the carbon tax. He is up for a rude awakening.

The previous agriculture minister said it is not like we can pass a law that will reduce the price of food. I have great news: She was wrong. The Prime Minister can reduce the cost of food right now by axing his inflationary carbon tax, which is driving up costs for farmers, processors, truckers and Canadian consumers.

Inflation is up another 4%, and a quarter of Canadian families are skipping meals because they cannot afford food. How much will Canadians have to pay to feed their families when he quadruples the carbon tax?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives. Canadians have heard the Leader of the Opposition advocate crypto to Canadians. When it comes to groceries, Canadians are saying, “Thanks, but no thanks, Leader of the Opposition.”

We know what we are doing and yesterday was the first step. We called on the big grocers to be part of the solution. We expressed the frustration of millions of Canadians. We asked them to come up with concrete plans to stabilize prices. On this side of the House in this caucus, we will fight for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-Bloc coalition seeking to drastically increase carbon tax 2.0 is fuelling inflation across the country. It is outrageous. Everything costs more because of this obsession of the Liberal Party and the Bloc to drastically increase the inflationary carbon tax.

Will the Prime Minister and his coalition with the Bloc listen to reason and cancel their plan to drastically increase the inflationary carbon tax?

• (1455)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have had enough of Conservative buzzwords. Canadians expect their parliamentarians to take real action. That is exactly what we have done by meeting with every major grocery chain for the first time in Canada.

We have a message behind which all parliamentarians should unite: We understand the frustration that Canadians feel, and the major grocery chains have a part to play in stabilizing prices in this country. Instead of throwing buzzwords around, the Conservatives should join us in fighting for Canadians and stabilizing prices.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government and its coalition with the Bloc want to drastically increase the cost of living for Canadians. Voting Bloc is costly. Gas taxes will be sky-high. Electricity bills will go through the roof. Grocery bills will skyrocket. Rent prices will balloon.

Will the government reject the Bloc's demand to drastically increase inflationary carbon taxes? The Bloc is against common sense.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that statement was chock-a-block full of nonsense. They want to talk about common sense but, in 2023, not having a climate change plan makes no sense. In 2023, putting assault

weapons back on our streets makes no sense. In 2023, rolling back women's rights makes no sense. While they would take us backwards, we move forward.

* * *

LABOUR

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, a large union demonstration was held today on Parliament Hill to demand anti-scab legislation now. We may well have tabled, retabled and re-retabled bills to prevent the use of strikebreakers, but Ottawa will not budge. A mockery is being made of the right to free collective bargaining. Honest workers and their family members are paying the price. Will the government prohibit the use of scabs?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have complete trust in the collective bargaining process. We are on track to introduce legislation by the end of the year. We have to move ahead quickly without sacrificing quality. This is the most recent version of the policy intended to protect the collective bargaining process.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it has been a year since the longshore workers at the Port of Québec were first locked out. Some of those workers have lost their homes. Couples have divorced. People are drowning in debt. This is more than a labour dispute. It is a real tragedy for dozens, almost a hundred families. What is more, the longshore workers in Quebec City are at a disadvantage in this fight. It is like David and Goliath, but this time David does not have his slingshot.

This government, which claims to be progressive, is 40 years behind Quebec. When will it finally understand—

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Labour and Seniors.

[English]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were indeed a great number of lessons learned over the summer with the B.C. longshore strike, and indeed there were lessons learned over the course of labour relations at both ports, in Montreal and in Vancouver. We will be taking a careful look at both of those situations and the relationships between government, business and employers to make sure that the collective bargaining process is sacrament, but also to make sure that the supply chains of this country are protected.

*Oral Questions***CARBON PRICING**

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the government, Canadians are seeing record inflation, and they are seeing their grocery prices skyrocket thanks to the carbon tax. Tiff Macklem, the Bank of Canada governor, agrees and said that the carbon tax announcements that have it going up increase inflation each year.

The NDP-Liberal carbon tax has increased the cost of apples by 61%, and that is just one example. Everything is more expensive.

Will the Prime Minister cancel his plans to increase his inflationary carbon tax?

• (1500)

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, this is the first time I get to stand in the House on behalf of the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. I would like to express solidarity with and condolences to all of the families who suffered this year's unprecedented wildfire season.

I will read a quote called “a good idea” from a well-known Conservative: “I wholeheartedly support, especially [in] the production of energy, [identifying] its negative environmental impacts...and includ[ing] the costs of [mitigation] in the price of the product.... It's the idea behind using carbon pricing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions”. This quote is from Preston Manning, the political mentor of the leader of the official opposition.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not rocket science; it is basic math that the NDP-Liberal government just does not seem to get. If it costs the farmer more to grow the food and costs the trucker more to ship the food, it is going to cost Canadian families more to buy the food.

After eight years of raising taxes on families, farmers and truckers, they want to quadruple the carbon tax. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

When will the Prime Minister cancel his plans to increase his inflationary carbon tax?

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, what the Conservatives just do not seem to get is that there is a cost to climate change as well.

I appreciate the opportunity to remind Canadians that the price on pollution is a rebate program. Over the next couple of weeks, the tax-free quarterly payment goes out. That is the first week of October. My colleague is from Ontario. For a family of four, this happens four times a year, and it is \$244 quarterly for families in Ontario.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister said that she would not pour fuel on the fire of inflation. She added \$44 billion in new spending in the 2023 budget, throwing a return to balanced budgets out the window.

Now we have the Bloc Québécois trying to convince people that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. They should have a word with our farmers, who receive bills on which the words “carbon tax” are right there in black and white. I could table one if they agree.

On this side, everyone understands that axing the carbon tax is the right thing to do for our farmers.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am neither a Quebecker nor a francophone. I am also obviously not a member of the Bloc Québécois. However, there is one thing I know about Quebec: The Quebec nation is the environment leader in Canada. Quebec is the leader when it comes to climate action.

Our government recognizes that. We admire Quebec's environmental leadership. We understand that Quebeckers—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Pontiac.

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GROCERY INDUSTRY

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many families in my riding are finding the cost of living to be a challenge, and they are having a hard time making ends meet. Times are tough, especially at the grocery store. Prices are going up.

What gives me hope is the discussions that are currently taking place with the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry. He reached out to major grocers, major retail grocery chains, to talk about how to stabilize prices.

Could he update the House on the progress of those talks?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that important question, which is informed by empathy. This is about understanding Canadians who are having a hard time paying for groceries.

That is why, at the Prime Minister's behest, we invited food executives to come and explain themselves here in Ottawa. On behalf of the entire House and millions of Canadians, I expressed people's frustration with the rising cost of food.

What I can tell members is that this is a step in the right direction. The executives committed to working with us on a concrete plan to stabilize prices. We will continue to fight for all Canadians.

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, Canadians simply cannot afford the Prime Minister, as 20% of Canadian families are skipping meals, half of Canadians are living paycheque to paycheque and credit debt is at an all-time high, with the average non-mortgage debt being \$21,000 per consumer.

Will the Prime Minister not show some compassion for Canadian families and cancel the costly carbon tax?

• (1505)

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as it is my first opportunity to rise as the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, I would like to thank the residents of Kanata—Carleton for putting me in the House and the Prime Minister for his confidence.

We are building a nationwide system of child care that is affordable, inclusive and high quality. This is literally putting hundreds of dollars back into the pockets of Canadian families. This is transformational, and we will continue to work with the provinces and territories to make sure this happens.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is part of the problem. After eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, Canadians simply cannot afford the Prime Minister. Even the governor of the Bank of Canada agrees that his costly tax on gas and groceries is increasing inflation. Twenty per cent of Canadian families are skipping meals, but the Prime Minister thinks nothing of spending \$10,000 a month on groceries.

Why does he not show some compassion for the Canadians who put food on his table, and axe the tax?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, what is not honest about that statement is that it is not acknowledging the money that is coming back to eight out of 10 Canadians.

I would also say we are not talking about the costs of a climate that will not bear crops. Just take respiratory illnesses. Does everyone know that 15,000 people die a year prematurely as a result of respiratory illnesses related to air pollution? Do we know that in the heat dome that occurred in B.C., we lost 619 lives? Do we know the costs on our health system and productivity are a loss of over \$100 billion a year as a result of climate change?

We need to act.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what the member does not know is our farmers could produce more if he would stop cutting their legs out from under them. There is a 76% increase in the cost of carrots, a 76% increase in the cost of potatoes and a 76% increase in the cost oranges.

There is no doubt the carbon tax is inflationary, but do not take my word for it. Take the word of the governor of the Bank of Canada, who recently said that every time there is an announcement and the carbon tax goes up, that increases inflation each year. When we tax the farmers who grow the food and tax the truckers

Oral Questions

who truck the food, that increases the price of food across the country. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

When will the Prime Minister and his NDP government cut the carbon tax so Canadians can put food on their table?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly ensuring affordability is extremely important in the design of a price on pollution that penalizes polluters but does so in a manner such that eight out of 10 Canadian families get more money back. I would just say that having a relevant plan to address climate change, including a price on pollution, is required to have a relevant economic plan for the future of this country.

Today I was very pleased to speak in the House to Bill C-49, which would develop an offshore wind industry that would be extremely important for Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. I see across the House a whole range of MPs who spoke against that. My goodness, they are going to need to explain it to the constituents in Atlantic Canada and to the premier of Nova Scotia.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has underscored the need for many European countries to reduce their reliance on Russian energy and strengthen energy security. Earlier today, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources was joined by the Romanian minister of energy to announce a significant milestone in our two countries' collaboration on nuclear energy.

Can the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources update the House on this significant announcement?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for all of his hard work with respect to nuclear energy in Ontario.

Today I was extremely pleased to announce that Canada will be making available up to \$3 billion in export financing to Romania for two new CANDU reactors. This will help Romania in its efforts to phase out coal and will reduce European reliance on Russian energy for Romania, Moldova and Ukraine while supporting sustainable jobs and major economic opportunities across this country.

Oral Questions

This announcement sends a clear message that Canada is a committed ally in the fight against Russian tyranny and against climate change and that it is successfully building a prosperous low-carbon future.

* * *

● (1510)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are paying the price of a housing crisis, a mental health crisis and now the climate change crisis, yet the Liberals think that now is a good time to cut up to \$7.6 billion in indigenous services. We have seen this devastating austerity from Liberals and Conservatives in the past: cuts that will hurt indigenous peoples, families and communities.

Which programs are the Liberals targeting: housing, health, education, or Jordan's principle, and why are the Liberals not going after the billionaires to recoup the money they owe Canadians, instead of making cuts on the backs of indigenous peoples?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, after a decade of entrenching poverty for first nations, a newly elected Liberal government got to work on reconciliation. First nations community services have increased by 156% since then. That is for things like school, water and health services. I have been clear and so has the government: Programs and services for indigenous peoples will be protected.

Reconciliation is good for Canada and for our economy, and it is something that the leader of the official opposition has never understood. Indeed, under the Harper government, first nations organizations faced a—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, from hurricanes to floods to catastrophic wildfires, Canadians are living the urgency of the climate catastrophe, yet in the boardroom at Suncor the only urgency the members see is making as much money as possible from burning fossil fuels, even as our planet is on fire. We need better from CEOs like Rich Kruger.

Therefore, to the energy minister, when will the government stop giving a free ride to big oil and institute a credible emissions cap that will hold big oil accountable and protect the future of our planet?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would say that it is important in the context of the fight against climate change that every sector of the Canadian economy play a role. That is what we are doing through the emissions reduction plan we have put into place. Concurrently, we need to look to take advantage of the economic opportunities that can be enabled through a shift to a lower-carbon future.

Earlier this week, I was speaking at the World Petroleum Congress and spoke very clearly to the oil and gas sector about the need to decarbonize to remain relevant and competitive in a low-carbon future. Certainly we are going to continue that conversation with all of the CEOs in the energy sector and in other sectors.

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PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the gallery of His Excellency Sebastian Burduja, Minister of Energy for Romania.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order.

The carbon tax came up during question period. I think I demonstrated that the carbon tax applies in Quebec. I have supporting evidence. I ask for the unanimous consent of the House to table this bill received by a young—

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

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[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS**

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after discussions between the parties, I believe if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

That the membership of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be amended as follows: Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) for Mr. Nater (Perth—Wellington).

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[English]

CANADA-NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR ATLANTIC ACCORD IMPLEMENTATION ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-49, An Act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I was saying previously, it is so important that we get this right as it relates to Bill C-49. The critical importance of natural resource development, along with the critical importance of getting the renewable sector right and making sure that we expand the economic opportunities for the region of Atlantic Canada, are absolutely vital and important to not only the citizens of Atlantic Canada but also the nation as a whole. Our country has been—

The Speaker: Order. I will remind everyone we have debate going on.

I am hearing people talking. If members are having discussions, if they do not mind, I would ask them to take them outside, either to the lobby or the beautiful new meeting rooms on the other side in the antechamber. I will leave it to members to do that so we can hear what the hon. member has to say.

The hon. member for Tobique—Mactaquac.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Mr. Speaker, when we are considering resource development and this bill, I think all Canadians want us to strike the right balance. They want us to balance out the responsibility to be good stewards of the environment and to ensure we care for the planet, not only for our generation but for future generations. That is an utmost priority for all Canadians as well those who live in my region in particular, including New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. We want to hand over to future generations a planet that is cleaner and greener and we want to develop our resources in a responsible fashion.

As a region, the people from the area I represent, and I believe this is true throughout Atlantic Canada, want to ensure they have an economically viable future for themselves and their families in their local communities and throughout Atlantic Canada, so not only do we reap the benefits of that hard work and that development but that future generations do as well. Striking that balance is of the utmost importance.

What I find concerning with this bill is that it would put way too much power in the hands of too few, and that could be detrimental to the development of vital resources, to our nation's national energy as well as our nation's food security and to our nation's future as a secure country in which to invest and do business. If we do not get it right and if we allow this type of control in the hands of very few, the consequences could be devastating for economic development in Atlantic Canada and across Canada as a whole.

Government Orders

We have raised very legitimate concerns that we want the government to look at carefully, and hopefully we will amend and correct the bill so that the development that does happen is responsible and it cares for the environment, which we all want to ensure. At the same time, we do not want it to prohibit those who want to build Canada's economic future. We want to ensure that we take advantage of the tremendous resources across the country from coast to coast, including Atlantic Canada, which has unbelievable potential to develop its resource sector.

This is not the time to hamper investment; this is a time to look at ways to enhance investment into our region.

Atlantic Canada wants to contribute to our future economically as a country in a way like never before. I will pause here for a moment to recognize something that oftentimes gets lost.

We talk about things with respect to government bringing in legislation and passing things based on ideology, thoughts and philosophy, no matter how well intended, but in all of this it is no secret that national unity is at stake. Under the current government and Prime Minister, we have for too long pit one region against another and caused certain regions to feel alienated, left out or perhaps taken for granted. In fact, we know that is the case.

On behalf of Atlantic Canadians, I love Canada and every region of it. We have been blessed in Atlantic Canada, directly and indirectly, because of the resource sector in the western part of Canada. On behalf of those of us on the east coast, I thank our western provinces and friends out west. They have allowed our resources to be developed. They have allowed the money, the proceeds and the revenue that has been generated from that extraction and from those resources to be distributed throughout the country to regions and provinces like mine.

We benefited from those transfer payments, and we would be remiss not to thank western Canada and the resource-developed regions of our country that have made it possible for revenues to be transferred to our provinces so we can have good schools, hospitals, build roads and develop.

However, just as much as I believe in that, it is so vitally important that we as Atlantic Canadians also have the opportunity to develop our own natural resources, prosper as a region and elevate the economy of our families. It is unfair to hold back a region like Atlantic Canada that has endless potential by putting in prohibitive measures and over-regulating a sector or putting too much power in the hands of too few that could, at the whim of any particular minister, shut down an entire sector of our economy.

Government Orders

• (1520)

There are big cautionary signals coming from this bill. I challenge the House to look beyond the noise and the rhetoric to see the facts. We hear a lot of noise about how we have to protect the planet and heal the oceans, and about how we are going to reduce carbon and do all things. That is the noise.

When we get beyond the noise and the chatter, the reality and the facts are that we rank 57 out of 63 nations. We have not met our targets, despite our virtue signals. We have not met those objectives, despite great soaring rhetoric. We talk about planting billions of trees, but only a handful are actually in the ground.

It is time that we look beyond the noise. Canadians expect us to stop all the chatter, talk and great sounding rhetoric about this to get to a place of achieving actual, attainable results that will do good for our country and the world.

The reality is that we are not measuring up in meeting these targets, but we are certainly punishing the very sectors that have led to Canada's prosperity to this point. Those are the facts.

The noise says that we are meeting these targets and doing great, but the facts are that we are ranked 57 out of 63 nations. Facts are stubborn things. They have proven, when it comes to both the environment and the economy, that the government is all noise and no results. Canadians want real results.

I believe we can have both responsible and good, wholesome environmental stewardship along with economic prosperity and resource development that is, at the same time, responsible. They are not mutually exclusive. Canadian energy is the best energy in the world, and we need to make no apologies for Canadian energy. We need to stand up for Canadian energy. It is the most responsibly extracted energy on the planet. Why are we displacing Canadian energy with that from countries that do not have near the environmental regulations that we have as a country?

It makes no environmental sense, nor does it make energy sense or economic sense. It is important that we get the balance right. This bill is not going to go a long way to help us get the balance right. We have to correct this bill. There is so much noise that the facts are getting lost. However, Canadians are perceptive. They are getting beyond the persuasiveness of rhetoric, and they are asking, "What is it that the government is accomplishing to position Canada to prosper in the future?"

We talk about just transition. The government loves to talk about that, but it is a just transition to what? It is not a just transition to move segments of our population from prosperity to poverty. That is not just. That is an unjust transition to poverty. We need a true, mobilized transition to economic empowerment accompanied by environmental responsibility. We could do that. Canada has proven it can do that and be a leader in that space.

I am quite encouraged by some of the developments we are seeing within our resource sector. We have some of the greatest clean technologies in the country. We have some of the most environmentally responsible resource projects in the world. We are a leader. We have to stop taking a back seat. We have to stop talking down our

energy sector, stop talking down our resource sector and stop putting impediments in the way of our development.

What we need to do instead is to start championing our energy sector, our resource sector and our good environmental practices. We need to tell the story of the great results we are attaining as a country and as a natural resource industry in this country. Why is it that we are talking down Canadian energy when we should be saying that we have a good news story to tell? We are all for all of the above. We want to transition in areas where it is possible. We are for wind, nuclear, solar and, yes, even tidal.

While the government talks about transition, we are shutting down some of the renewable energies and projects that have incredible potential. This is because of cumbersome regulation and misplaced priorities.

• (1525)

We had the sustainable energy project with respect to tidal energy in Nova Scotia. The Liberals pulled the plug on it. Why? It was so encumbered and hampered by over-regulation and cumbersome rules that it was no longer economically viable and it made no sense to continue so they stopped it. How is that good for the planet when we are sitting on the cusp of innovation and it was the only tidal project in North America? We pulled the plug on it as a country. We talk about how we are all for saving the planet and transitioning to a new green economy, yet we pulled the plug on those viable projects.

Here is another one. A mill in Nova Scotia was going to use its waste for producing biodegradable goods. We pulled the plug on that. Why? Because it would take 20 years to get the approvals it needed in order to proceed with the project.

We are scaring away investments into our renewable energy and resource sector and we are not investing in the areas that could have the most impact and have the biggest and most-resounding results for our country economically and environmentally.

Government Orders

We have a great news story to tell. Another concern we have with Bill C-49 is as it relates to our indigenous partners and friends. It talks about how the regulators would be empowered to talk with our indigenous leaders, but never once mentions the obligation and absolute primary importance of the Crown to deal directly with our indigenous friends to get these projects off the ground. Surely, history has taught us a lesson, which is to engage with our indigenous friends at the beginning of the process for these projects and make sure they are welcomed and equal partners at the table with us as we enter into these areas of innovation and production. We can get great things done for the country because, as we hear from indigenous leaders across the country, they want to partner with us on this. They want to be at the table for all of these types of projects. They want to prosper economically and do good for the environment as well. Let us welcome them at the front end and make sure that a bill like this includes them meaningfully, and instructs the Crown to deal with them directly rather than the regulators. Let us not make this a secondary priority, but one of the primary priorities.

I conclude my remarks by simply saying that we have an opportunity to position Canada to be the most energy secure and one of the economic powerhouses in the world while at the same time being one of the most environmentally responsible jurisdictions on the planet. It is time we get it right. Let us stop talking down Canadian resource development and stop throwing up roadblocks to resource development for all regions of our country, including Atlantic Canada. Let us prioritize it and get them at the table. We have a great opportunity. Let us get the balance right. Let us fix this bill. If we fix the bill, then we will do good for everyone, but if we do not fix it we have no choice but to stand against it so that our country can move forward.

• (1530)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was absolutely flabbergasted listening to that speech. There are a couple of things I want to say.

Has the member opposite talked to the energy industry in Atlantic Canada? It wants this piece of legislation advanced as soon as possible. Has he talked to the premiers of Nova Scotia or Newfoundland and Labrador? They want this legislation advanced as soon as possible. Has he talked to indigenous leaders in Atlantic Canada? They believe in this legislation. The Conservative Party is hiding behind this idea that the delineation of consultation to a regulatory authority is somehow stepping away from the Crown's responsibilities. This matters to Atlantic Canada. The Conservative Party is standing against prosperity in Atlantic Canada.

My question is very simple. The member said that he believes in the principle but not the legislation. Will he support it to get it to committee so he can supposedly make it better? Will the Conservative Party support getting this to committee so we can advance it?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's passion and exuberance regarding the question, but the bottom line, once again, is that the government has missed the mark. This legislation is poorly written. We cannot vote on legislation based on our aspirations or because we hope that it is good; we must vote on bills as they are written. Right now this has so many concerning loopholes in it. They need to be addressed as quickly as possible so we can prioritize the priorities of our regions, ensure

that true stakeholder engagement takes place, and that those in every sector that will be most affected by the decisions of the current government through this legislation will be incorporated into the process not on the back end once a bill comes in, but on the front end. I think the government has done a terrible job of consultation up to this point with those who are going to be most affected by the ramifications of this bill. We have to get it right. That is why we on this side of the House are standing up firmly against it.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the last Liberal speaker questioned whether or not my colleague had talked to any leaders in Atlantic Canada about whether or not they wanted the bill. I wonder if the member could speak to the fact that most premiers in Atlantic Canada asked for the carbon tax to be removed. In fact, some of the Liberal caucus is actually all of a sudden starting to ask for the carbon tax to be removed in spite of the fact of voting for it multiple times over this session of Parliament. I am just wondering if my colleague could talk about how that decision to keep the carbon tax in place is harming the economy of Atlantic Canada as well as not doing anything to lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill for that great question and, absolutely, I could not agree with her more that the carbon tax is having devastating consequences on Atlantic Canadians. They feel it every time they fill up their car. They feel it every time they fill up their fuel tanks for their homes. They feel it every time they go to the grocery store, because everything that is trucked and shipped is affected by the carbon tax.

Honestly, I do not know about anyone else, but there is not a whole lot of access to metros and subways throughout Atlantic Canada. In fact, we have to drive everywhere we go, whether it is taking our kids to sports or going to work. No matter what it may be, we are driving vehicles, and we depend on them. Our industries depend on them. Our trucking sector, which is vital to our region, and those in the resource sector and our mills all depend on fuel. They depend on natural resources.

The carbon tax is punitive, useless and ineffective. It has shown no results as it relates to reducing carbon in the atmosphere. We have asked for a metric on it. We have asked for any type of reduction that can be shown by this government as a result of the implementation of the carbon tax and that somehow emissions have gone down, but it has no proof of that. There is no metric that has been provided yet to the House that substantiates the use of the Liberals' signature landmark piece of legislation as it relates to the environment: the carbon tax. There is no substantiation.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, to the hon. colleague for Tobique—Mactaquac, I cannot move to my question without personally thanking him for his really kind email this summer sending prayers after my stroke. I am so grateful.

In the debate all day today I have heard Conservatives say that they do not like C-49. I have been specific about the thing I would like to see changed, which is to go back to the original Canada-Nova Scotia and Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador offshore petroleum board acts and remove the conflict of interest that exists that promotes petroleum. However, I do not know, and I have not yet heard from my Conservative colleagues what it is that they want changed in C-49, because it is good legislation and we need to move it forward.

• (1535)

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for Saanich—Gulf Islands. It is so nice to see that she is recovering and doing well. I wish her all the best for a full and speedy recovery, and I continue to pray for that. I look forward to seeing her back in the House in person.

As it relates to Bill C-49, what is really important is that we feel, overall, that the bill is detrimental to the future development of resources in this country. It tramples all over provincial jurisdiction as well. It causes huge concerns for those who may want to invest in Canada, invest in our resource sector and help grow Canada's economy. They see it as a further impediment to growth, and many premiers have raised huge concerns as it relates to the bill. We will continue to stand against it, because the bill would hamper development, hamper our economy, hamper our economic viability in the future and hamper investment into a vital resource sector in this country that will lead to our future prosperity.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it seems like the Conservatives have an idea that they should be in control of what goes on in individual provinces. I will go back to the days of Stephen Harper when Danny Williams was the premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and there was a great feud built up, because the federal government wanted control of everything. Again, we are seeing it here today from the Conservatives: They want control.

Both premiers of Newfoundland and Nova Scotia are in favour of this bill and are asking for it to be done quickly. So what do the Conservatives have against Newfoundlanders and Nova Scotians, and from an MP from New Brunswick?

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I want to assure my hon. colleague from across the way, the most distinguished member from Avalon, that we have definitely heard the concerns of the region. That is why we are standing against this bill on principle.

We have heard the concerns and the reflections of the premiers from a couple of the provinces, but we also have heard concerns about various bills that the government has brought in, namely the carbon tax that the hon. member would be very familiar with, that his premier and others have expressed huge concerns about its implementation and do not want this bill. They do not want that tax or for it to be fully implemented anywhere, or continue to be implemented and raised as we go forward.

I am sure my hon. colleague would agree with me. Yes, I think maybe the government should start listening to the premiers and scrap the useless carbon tax because it does not do any good.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member mentions the need for spending and partnership with the oil and gas industry in order to make the transition. I do agree that the oil and gas industry invests greatly, generally speaking, in green technologies.

I think the member for Lakeland mentioned yesterday the amount of spending that goes on in green technologies by the industry. Recently the oil sands companies have been on track for their second-highest profits in a decade, yet they have made no new investments to reduce emissions.

I would like to know if the member believes this kind of voluntary approach has promise.

Mr. Richard Bragdon: Madam Speaker, I would say this. The energy sector in Canada has been doing an incredible job up to this point in innovating and leading the way around the world with some of the best practices for extraction for energy as it relates to carbon capture initiatives and turning lands back into usable, functional areas and environmentally, eco-friendly development.

This sector has had some of the best innovators. Instead of getting credit when the sector has exceeded and gone beyond in those areas, we have always found that the government of this country continues to lambast the sector, come against the sector, ridicule the sector and talk down the energy sector of this country at a time when we have a great news story to tell, when we say that Canadian energy is the best energy in the world. It is a great place to invest. It is the best place to get clean, ethically and responsibly developed resources.

I think we need to be telling the good news story of energy in Canada and not the bad.

• (1540)

[Translation]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to speak to Bill C-49 today.

[English]

For centuries, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador have relied on the ocean's industries. Others across Atlantic Canada have too. It is what we know. It is who we are. It feels somewhat historic when we talk of the Atlantic accord. If one is not from Atlantic Canada, one might not realize the significance of this agreement, particularly for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Atlantic accord is fundamental to the respect and recognition shown between the federal and provincial governments. It was an agreement signed in 1985 that bound the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to a common understanding that the people of our province are the principal beneficiaries of their offshore oil and gas.

The Atlantic accord recognized what my province brought into this country. It recognized the historic resource strengths of Atlantic Canada, and today it recognizes that strength for the future, because now the accord will apply to renewable energy, to wind energy. As a Newfoundlander talking about wind, it may come as a surprise that this is neither a joke nor a complaint. We have huge opportunity harnessing the wind in our offshore, wind that will power not just the grid but some groundbreaking hydrogen projects. The province knows it, the private sector knows it and we know it. It is why we are working so closely together to manage and develop that resource.

This bill represents a moment of opportunity, and out my way we know to seize opportunity when it comes our way. Times were bleak after the cod moratorium, until first oil, until Hibernia, until we started to build our offshore. I remember first oil. We were not entirely sure we knew what we were doing, but we knew it was possible. We knew what could be done, and jointly managed and regulated through the soon-to-be former C-NLOPB, we stayed the course and people prospered. We did this in one of the harshest environments in the world to operate in, but we found a way. We always do. More importantly, we built up one of the most skilled labour forces the world has ever seen. People noticed and companies noticed, much like they are looking to us now.

In 2019, we renewed the accord. We established a Hibernia dividend for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, with \$3.3 billion of secure long-term and predictable payments that run from 2019 to 2056. More importantly, we recognized the province as the principal beneficiary of its resources.

Now it is time to renew the accord again. In fact, to call these “amendments” to the accord kind of feels wrong. What we are talking about here really is a natural evolution, because the world is evolving and because where we get our energy and how we get it are evolving. We need to evolve with it. Now is the time to renew the accord again.

The Atlantic accord will include renewable energy so Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can be the principal beneficiaries of that too. We are not losing what we have built in the offshore. We are proud of it. The people of my province, and the governments there, are hand in glove when it comes to the energy mix. We accept the world as it is. We embrace it. We applaud the engineering skill that built the West White Rose gravity-based structure because it is the same skill that will construct the wind turbine monopiles that are stored right next to it in Argentia, Newfoundland.

Think about all the jobs that come with this work. As Minister of Labour, I certainly do. When we have a good management structure in place, the more projects we attract and build, the more jobs they bring, and they are good jobs. Right now, there are oil and gas companies across Canada making sure the expertise of our workers can be used to build new renewable energy projects. We are going to

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need every worker we can get because big things are happening and they are happening quickly, so they must be managed properly. They must be managed as they always have been in the past 25 years, with the remarkable success our offshore has benefited from.

It is with great pleasure I tell the House that by passing Bill C-49, we will secure Atlantic Canada's future and Newfoundland and Labrador's birthright as a force to be reckoned with in the global offshore wind and renewable energy sectors.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am hoping the hon. minister will look down at the note that was just provided to him. He may wish to split his time.

● (1545)

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, let me add a few points. I do not want to cede any time on this. I have worked too long and too hard on this Atlantic accord, on both its renewed nature in 2019 and the \$3.3 billion that we were able to get for the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, as it should get, and I am excited about what we are doing right now with Bill C-49.

What we are doing now is taking on a trusted structure, something that business knows, something that the industry knows and something that workers know. Through the Atlantic accord, we have built up agencies that provide investors stability so that they know what they are dealing with, and now, as we build a very exciting new chapter in Newfoundland and Labrador's energy industry, we want to make sure that those things still guide our way. They are things we worked so hard to build through the Atlantic accord and the C-NLOPB, with names that I think would be familiar to all sides of the House: John Crosbie, Bill Marshall, Brian Peckford, Progressive Conservative governments from both Ottawa and St. John's that together worked very hard to make it happen, Brian Mulroney and Pat Carney. These were people who had vision for this province and vision for what was at the time a very nascent industry.

I grew up on a rock in the middle of the ocean, and anyone who grows up on a rock in the middle of the ocean or in a town in Labrador like I did cannot afford ideology. They grow up seeing the world as it is, not as they wish it to be. They accept the world as it is; they are clear-eyed about it.

From the Minister of Rural Economic Development to the member for Avalon, the member for Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, the member for Labrador and the member for St. John's East, we knew the accord would need to reflect a change in the times. As companies and markets look to renewables, Newfoundland and Labrador needs to be well managed and needs to be well positioned, and when it comes to energy, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians do not need to play catch-up.

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We are leaders. We like to lead. Even our province's oil and gas industry association, its biggest champion, NOIA, the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil and Gas Industries Association, changed its name to reflect this global shift in energy. It is now Energy NL. I was meeting with them just yesterday at the World Petroleum Congress in Calgary. Sustainability and reducing emissions has become the name of the game. They realize that. They know it; they embrace it. Energy NL's vision is of a sustainable and prosperous lower-carbon energy industry.

This bill is going to change another name. The Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act will become the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic accord implementation and offshore renewable energy management act.

With all of this wind, including the wind I just used, we are now seeing big hydrogen projects on our doorstep, first-of-their-kind facilities. When I was the natural resources minister and we were developing Canada's hydrogen plan, never did I think that I would be standing on the tarmac of Stephenville airport on the west coast of Newfoundland and seeing the German Chancellor's plane landing with the CEOs of Siemens and Mercedes-Benz. They said they could have invested anywhere and created a green hydrogen industry, but they chose here, they chose us, because we are well managed and well regulated and because we have the best workforce in the world.

To members who have not been out my way, let me say that we have wind. The winds off of the Atlantic coast rival those of the North Sea, which is the birthplace of the world's offshore wind industry. This gives Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia a once-in-a-generation opportunity to become leaders in an energy sector of the future, to support our region's industrial future and to create good jobs that will exist for generations to come.

It is expected that the offshore wind industry will attract \$1 trillion of investment by 2040. We would have to be out of our minds to think Newfoundlanders and Labradorians and others across the country are not going to be ready for what is to come. We are talking about renewable energy. That is good change coming. Change always makes some people anxious, but this is not about politics. This is actually about the market. Industry understands something that skeptics do not: The world is looking for renewable energy, for wind, for solar power.

● (1550)

We can sit on our hands and let those industries be built in other countries, letting workers in other countries get those good jobs, or we can get in on the ground floor and make sure that it is workers here who get those jobs, that it is Canadian workers, Atlantic Canadian workers and Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who get that work. They are the ones and we are the ones who should be selling renewable energy to the world and taking home the profits. By passing Bill C-49, we will secure Atlantic Canada's future as a force to be reckoned with in the global offshore wind and renewable energy sectors.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister spoke about the importance of petroleum drilling projects like Hibernia and White Rose to his province. I am sure he is aware that within the NDP-Liberal government, there are those

who continually war on oil and gas and want to shut it down. Is he not concerned that Bill C-49 contains measures that would give cabinet the power to decide on a whim to shut down important projects like Hibernia and White Rose without provincial input or necessary indigenous consultation?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, what keeps me up at night is anybody from that side having their paws on my offshore industry anymore. Let me tell members what the Conservatives managed to do in their time in office, because it is absolutely remarkable. It would have taken someone 300 days to get the environmental permissions to drill an exploratory well. Through their magic, they made it 900 days. Do members know what we did just a few years ago? We made it 90 days.

This may seem counterintuitive to all sorts of people, but by working with the C-NLOPB, we managed to reduce 900 days to 90 days and increase the environmental oversight. That is what good management does. There is a reason Danny Williams had an "Anything but Conservative" campaign going on for the better part of 12 years back in my province. It is because of what the Conservatives did and would do again to an industry that has given so much to my province. Pay attention to it.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on his new position as Minister of Seniors. I hope we will be able to meet together soon to discuss this matter. I spent part of the summer on the road, meeting with groups across Quebec.

Concerning Bill C-49, we have a lot of questions for the government. With the summer we just experienced, we need to move past environmental window dressing and on to practical actions aimed at achieving a true energy transition. The environmental issue is a Bloc Québécois priority.

Can my colleague reassure us and confirm that he will co-operate by answering our questions? Will he genuinely agree to think of concrete ways of achieving this energy transition?

[English]

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, first I will say that I look forward to working with the hon. member on issues regarding seniors.

There is a place that I will go back to again this weekend because I am very fond of this place. It is called Argentia, Newfoundland. It is a historic place because just off its shores is where Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt signed another Atlantic accord in the middle of World War II. It is a deepwater port. It has great access to the eastern seaboard, and it is right there that we are seeing what is called a monopile marshalling port, the first of its kind in the eastern seaboard. It is where we are going to build and collect the large foundations for offshore wind.

Transitions are not overnight events. Transitions take time. Perhaps one of the biggest differences among the members in this House is the view on how much time that is going to take. I understand that, particularly after the summer we have had. However, it is happening in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is happening because it is a place where, as I said, we cannot afford to have ideology; we are about pragmatism. We are making those moves. Even as an oil-producing province, we are moving forward on lowering emissions and keeping our people employed in excellent jobs.

• (1555)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like, first of all, to thank the Minister of Labour for appearing at today's rally. The labour leaders who were there heard his very firm promise on anti-scab legislation, and we will definitely be watching him for that important follow-through.

My riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is about as far away as we can get in this country from Newfoundland and Labrador, but we do share a similar environment. I am from a coastal community, on both the east and west coast of beautiful Vancouver Island, and while the Pacific is not as rough as the North Atlantic, I realize the potential that comes from offshore wind and tidal resources. I celebrate the fact that we are trying to actively encourage that development.

I want to ask the minister, though, about the concerns we have heard from some conservationists and fishers regarding the lack of transparency when it comes to wind farm development in marine protected areas. I wonder if the minister can provide an update to this House on how marine protected areas will be treated when it comes to this important type of development.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, indeed, we will be following up. As the member said, he heard my words at the workers rally today, and, as I said, we will be introducing that replacement worker ban legislation this fall. This is something that workers in this country have been looking for, I would say, since Canada's inception. It will most certainly be a momentous day, but it will have to be managed carefully, and we will work together to do that.

I would answer the member's question on marine protected areas in the same way. I doubt there are people anywhere, frankly, who are more attuned to what can happen if we take our eyes off the environment of Newfoundlanders, because within 20 or 30 years during the industrialization of our fishery, we saw the world's single biggest source of protein, the North Atlantic cod, decimated, and we lived with those consequences in 1992. We are thankful to the oil and energy industries for, frankly, coming to our rescue at the

time in Newfoundland and Labrador and also in Alberta and Saskatchewan, which I am happy to say that we helped build.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that it is important we move rapidly to develop our offshore wind resources, but I dispute the minister's statement that it is a matter of opinion how fast we move in transition.

I ask if he has looked at the most recent report from the United Nations. The climate summit is occurring there tomorrow. It is very clear the world is not on track and that what we will experience in terms of extreme weather events in the future if we do not take dramatic action before 2030 will make this summer's events look like a Sunday picnic of perfect weather. We are right now on the cusp, standing on the edge of too late, and we are acting as though we have time for this leisurely transition. We do not.

I would ask the hon. member if he would reconsider and have the Prime Minister's cabinet reconsider, listen to climate scientists, cancel the Trans Mountain pipeline, ban fracking and do those things that are required. They are not easy, but they are required.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, no, it is not easy, and no, I will not reconsider it. I would invite the hon. member to listen to the energy workers of this country about the amount of change they have gone through, the amount of change they continue to go through and the frustrations they feel.

I would challenge the hon. member to say who she thinks will do all this work on transitioning our energy sector. Who does she think will lower emissions? Who does she think will build up renewables? It is workers. It is workers I represent in St. John's South—Mount Pearl, people who have built an industry and now hear about the massive change that is happening, and it is. However, we on this side of the House listen to workers, not only because they are important but also because they are absolutely essential to this transition.

In my time as minister of natural resources, the first thing that crossed my mind in that industry was that we not lose the good workers in our oil and gas industries, because they are precisely the people who will build up renewables. They are precisely the people who will lower emissions. Who does she think does this work? That is why they are our greatest asset. That is why they are our greatest resource. That is why they are my top priority.

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• (1600)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to be back in the House. I have just a simple question regarding the approval process. Will this help projects like tidal energy be approved faster so we can have more clean energy in the Maritimes and on the east coast? We see right now that it is a bit of a slow walk and it should be approved a bit faster. We are hoping this legislation would help that out.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan: Madam Speaker, I would assure the hon. member that the intention of keeping what we know is to give those assurances to investors. The first thing we want to do is make sure we are attracting investment. We want to deal with entities we know and regulations we know, and build on those rather than trying to reinvent the wheel.

Whenever we get involved in an industry like renewables or like oil and gas, like anything, frankly, there has to be a certain amount of regulation. One person's red tape is another person's regulation, and one can go crazy with it certainly. We began with 300 days. The Conservatives made it 900 days, and we made it 90 days and actually increased environmental oversight. It is important to be smart about it and listen to the people close to the ground.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here, back in the House. Today I will be speaking about Bill C-49, which is the act to amend the Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Atlantic Accord Implementation Act and the Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Resources Accord Implementation Act and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

I have listened to the debate today, and a lot of times, members opposite have said they want to know what it is that the Conservatives do not like about the bill. Therefore, I am going to tell them what I do not like about the bill, and I am one of the Conservatives over here.

Let us start off with the name change to remove the word “petroleum” and change it over to “energy”. I am not opposed to “energy” at all, but words are important, and we have had an entire history of a war against oil and gas in this country from the NDP-Liberal government. Continually it has shut down projects. There were 18 LNG projects on the books when it came to office, and it shut them all down. It has shut down pipelines and shut down various expansions, so I think the removal of the word “petroleum” tells us where it thinks it wants to take this direction in the future.

We just heard the minister from Newfoundland talk about the importance of petroleum drilling projects there, so I am very concerned about the bill and the change to get away from petroleum, because Canada could be self-sufficient. We import \$15 billion a year of dirty dictator oil, and the government seems fine to continue that. That is the wrong direction. We should be taking our environmentally sustainable oil and gas and making sure we are self-sufficient here in Canada. The whole eastern part of the country could use that.

That is the first problem I have with the bill.

The second thing about the bill is that it would award new powers to the regulators. Today we have people who are regulators in

the petroleum drilling industry. Now, with a wave of the magic wand, they would be regulators of offshore renewable energy. This is another example of the Liberals expanding regulators' scope when they are not experts in that area. They did the exact same thing with the CRTC when we were talking about Bill C-11 and Bill C-18, and the CRTC has said clearly that it had no experience overseeing digital media, but the government made it the regulator of it. This is an opportunity for disaster.

I am not opposed to renewables. When I was a chemical engineer, I worked in renewables. I worked on solar projects, wind projects and even offshore Lake Erie wind projects, so I am a fan of transitioning and coming to better renewable energy, but let us learn the lessons from Ontario. All of those solar and wind projects were done in a hugely subsidized way that drove the cost of energy in the province of Ontario from eight cents a kilowatt hour to 23¢ a kilowatt hour and made us totally uncompetitive.

I am thus very interested in the details of this offshore renewable energy and what kind of subsidization the government is going to do, because if it does the same it did to batteries and puts \$31 billion of taxpayer money into trying to attract people to build a facility, then the taxpayer is on the hook, and this is not an economically sustainable thing. It is another concern that I do not see that detail here in the bill.

The most concerning element of the bill is the addition of a new layer of decision-making and the granting of ultimate authority to federal and provincial ministers. It would increase the timeline for a final decision to 60 to 90 days from 30, with the possibility of an indefinite extension as the call for bids is issued.

I have an issue with letting federal ministers have the power to, first of all, issue land licences in a province. The province's jurisdiction has to be respected, and we have seen numerous occasions where the government wants to overreach into provincial jurisdiction, with the carbon tax, for example, and with many of the other health initiatives the government has had where it has wanted to reach into provincial jurisdiction. Clearly the provinces have pushed back, as they should. We need to make sure that, if ministers are being given these powers, there is some kind of limitation on those powers, because we know that we have already heard concerns about the bill with respect to indigenous consultations being given to the regulators.

• (1605)

The regulators would have the responsibility to consult with indigenous peoples. That is an abdication of the responsibility of the federal government. I am not sure that the regulators actually have the resources to do adequate consultations, which could result in court cases and challenges that would further delay and cause uncertainty in projects as they move forward. That is a concern to me, absolutely.

The other thing that gives me great concern is that the bill would give the federal cabinet the authorization to end any operational petroleum drilling on a whim. We have just gotten through saying that the government is against oil and gas. It is trying to shut down fossil fuels. Now we would be giving cabinet the power, federally, to arbitrarily, on a whim, shut down petroleum projects that we have heard from the minister from Newfoundland are extremely important to the province. This would be without the province's permission and without adequate consultation necessarily.

This is an obviously bad idea. We can see where this is going. The first initiative of the government would be to shut down as much oil and gas as it can. That is what it has done in Alberta. I am from Sarnia—Lambton, which accounts for 30% of the petrochemicals. Believe me, when the minister came to Sarnia to hear the concerns of the people about getting a transition, we were not even mentioned in the plan in the go-forward. That tells us exactly how much the Liberals care about the oil and gas workers at risk in this whole equation.

The bill would also create a new licensing system for offshore drilling. There is language in the bill that says the government would impose a 25-year cap on licences. Any licences would be limited. After 2050, everything would be off. Why would we do that to ourselves as a country? We do not know what is going to happen in the next 25 years. We do not know whether or not there will be wars or a need for those resources. Why would we arbitrarily limit our licences and cut them all off at 2050, especially considering the expression of indigenous people to have economic growth and get involved in projects? If they have a licence, is their licence going to be pulled as well after 2050, arbitrarily?

We do not need to restrict ourselves in this way. It is concerning to me that this would be in the bill, because there is no need to do that. If it is decided in 2050 that the situation warrants fewer licences, that is the government of the day's decision. Again, it is very troubling to see what is in here.

Today, petroleum activities are subject to a fundamental decision by the existing review boards in Nova Scotia and in Newfoundland and Labrador. A decision on approving or rejecting a project allows 30 days for provincial or federal ministers to respond, or the regulator's decision is accepted. However, for offshore renewable energy projects, under this new process, the regulator would give recommendations to the federal and provincial ministers. Ministers would have 60 days to respond, with a 30-day extension allowed if given in writing, and with, again, the possibility of an indefinite extension if they decide a call for bids is issued.

This is exactly, once over again, Bill C-69, in which the government took the approval process for projects and made it longer, and made it possible, at a minister's whim, to restart the process as many times as necessary to frustrate the private investors and drive them out of the country. This is what has happened with multiple projects: the LNG and the pipeline projects I have mentioned. More than \$80 billion of foreign investment has been driven out of the country. The uncertainty of having to spend billions of dollars and wait six years to get a project approved keeps anybody from wanting to do a project in Canada unless the taxpayer is willing to give them \$31 billion to do it.

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This is not moving in the right direction. We need to be nimble when it comes to our decision, responsible but nimble. Again, I do not agree with the red tape regime that would hinder both traditional and alternative energy development in the bill. The broad, unilateral, discretionary cabinet power for arbitrary decision-making increases timelines and adds uncertainty around onerous requirements that are already driving away investment.

• (1610)

I want to read a quote from Saskatchewan premier Scott Moe, who talked about the lack of consultation with provinces. He said, "They're un-consulted, notional targets that are put forward by the federal government without working with industries, provinces or anyone that's generating electricity". The provinces are concerned that they are going to see infringements from the government and I think, based on what has happened before, that they are right to think that.

There was a project that was a renewables project. It was in New Brunswick. It was the first North America tidal power project deal, and the Trudeau Liberals killed it. Sustainable Marine Energy started developing an alternative—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member knows we cannot use the names of current members.

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I apologize.

Sustainable Marine Energy started developing an alternative energy project in the Bay of Fundy. After 10 years of hard work, it was providing clean, green energy, which is what we all want, to Nova Scotians. For all their trail-blazing efforts, Sustainable Marine Energy was awarded a tide of red tape from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The repeated delays and a bombshell permit rejection, which the Liberal government refused to justify, were the straw that broke the camel's back. After five years of insurmountable regulatory challenges, the pilot project in Digby county was cancelled.

Let us think about the common elements here. Even though the project was the kind of renewable energy that the Liberal government is saying it wants to have, the company had to jump through hoops for 10 years. Finally, the government was able to pull the permit. The federal government can pull the permit without any justification. This is just a precedent of what is to come with the other projects currently existing in the petroleum sector on the coast. I am very concerned about that.

Government Orders

The other thing I would say is that Bill C-49 contains language to put Bill C-69 in it. It directly references the Impact Assessment Act, which, as I said, is a process that makes project approvals longer and their consultations more complicated. At the same time, someone could start and stop the process as many times as they wanted. There is lots of uncertainty. I am very unhappy about that one.

If we look at the access to offshore infrastructure, this bill says that the cabinet, the governor in council, would regulate access to that infrastructure, including enforcing tolls and tariffs. Here we go again. It is another opportunity for the Liberal government to toll, tariff and tax something that is already in place.

Who is going to pay the extra cost of those tolls, tariffs and taxes? The consumer of the energy that has been created will ultimately pay those costs. Have we not learned anything? We have seen the carbon tax get put in place. It drives up the cost of gasoline. It drives up the cost of home heating.

People in the Atlantic provinces are already struggling. All the premiers have asked for the removal of the carbon tax, and even the Liberal MPs from that area are asking for the removal of the carbon tax because it is increasing the cost of everything. It is increasing the cost of food.

They are not just taxing the farmers and putting tariffs on the fertilizer, which is another tariff and another cost that is being passed along, but they are also taxing the transporting of the goods to the processor. There is a carbon tax on the processor. They are shipping it to the grocery store with a carbon tax on that.

At the end of the day, the consumer is paying. When I see clauses such as this saying that the government can enforce tolls and tariffs on the infrastructure, I am concerned for the ultimate consumer because these costs are significant.

If we think about the carbon tax, we know from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the carbon tax is costing, depending on what province one lives in, from \$1,500 to \$2,500. Then there is the second carbon tax that was put in place, and the cost of that is another \$1,800. That one is in every province, even in Quebec, although they are trying to deny that it is.

We talk about extra tariffs on top of that, and Canadians are out of money. The government is out of touch when it comes to understanding that there is no more money that people can pay. They were within \$200 of not being able to pay their bills before the pandemic. Now, with the increase of all these taxes, people are borrowing money to live, and some of them have lost their houses and become homeless. People are skipping meals. They cannot afford to eat. Honestly, I am very concerned when I see this kind of language in the bill.

There is also a financial stipulation in the bill. It came with a royal recommendation, which says there is some level of federal funding that is required. An obvious question may be how much the funding is. There is no answer to that. It was not in the budget. It was not in any of the forecasts.

• (1615)

Where is this magic money going to come from? Are we going to run additional deficits? That is inflationary spending. We keep telling the government about this. In fact, the finance minister herself said that it would be pouring fuel on the inflationary fire to have this extra spending, but then we see things such as this, where there is extra spending. It is not even defined how much it would be. That is not going to be an acceptable alternative, as far as I can tell.

I will be clear that Conservatives support the development of renewable resources, but we support those developments without political interference. We do not want the government of the day picking winners and losers and deciding what to shut down based on its ideology. That is not where we want to be. We want to see the free market drive this. There is an opportunity to create jobs, create prosperous industry and do the right thing for the environment. That is what Conservatives want to see.

I do not think this bill is capturing that. I think there is a lot of political interference put into the mechanisms of this bill in ministerial powers, cabinet powers, and tolls and tariffs. There are lots of mechanisms for the government to interfere.

Canadians are struggling, and the government's new draft regulations on clean electricity will push up costs even higher. Reporting from CTV in August indicates, "Electricity infrastructure expenses are expected to increase significantly over the next several decades as maintenance and increased demand is estimated to cost \$400 billion". That is already before we know how much the offshore renewables are going to cost.

I ask members to remember the lesson from Ontario, which was that it drove the price of electricity up so high that we were uncompetitive and people could not pay their power bills. This is not just a lesson from Canada. Germany experienced the same thing. It went heavy on renewables, which drove the cost of everything up. It then went back onto Russian oil and coal. Of course, we refused to take \$59 billion to put Germany on low-carbon LNG from Canada, so Australia took that deal. It was the same thing with Japan, which gave us the same offer. Saudi Arabia took that deal.

Gee, I wish we had \$120 billion more to put in our health care system so that everyone in this country could have a doctor. That is what I think. All I can say is that those are some of the concerns I have. There are many things in the bill that I do not object to. There are some administrative things that are taken care of. Those are fine.

Government Orders

Do I think we can fix all of this at committee? Call me skeptical, but my experience under this NDP-Liberal coalition is that its members will ram through an agenda to shut down oil and gas, and it does not matter what reasoned amendments the Conservative Party will bring at committee, as they will be refused. They will ram-rod it through. They will time allocate it to make sure this thing is rushed through. They will be skimpy on the details and say, "Trust us. We'll get it in the regulations." I have been here long enough to know that that is not good for Canadians.

Our job here as the official opposition is to point out what is wrong with these bills. It would be so nice if we could be consulted before the thing was written, when it could still be altered, but here we are with something that honestly has way too much political power in it. I do not think it is going to be good for the Atlantic provinces. They do not think it is going to be good for them. They are already crying out against the policies of the government with respect to the carbon tax.

Those are my initial thoughts. I may have more thoughts as we go forward, but I would be happy to take questions.

● (1620)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member's closing comments were interesting. We have heard a wide spectrum of support for Bill C-49, not just from the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc in the House, but from provincial entities as well.

The questions I have for the member are about her concern that we are going to have to time allocate this to get it through and that we are going to try to ram through the legislation. Is that to say that the Conservatives have no intention of seeing the bill ultimately go to committee? Is the member already conceding that the Conservatives are going to filibuster this legislation? Why do the Conservatives not believe in at least having the opportunity to see this legislation advance to the committee stage? Why does she insist that the Conservatives have to be time allocated for this bill to ultimately pass?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I am judging from experience. The behaviour of the past is a predictor of the future. The government continues to time allocate all the time. Am I saying this is not going to committee? No, I am listening to the debate and to what other people are saying, but I am pointing out the things that I think are shortcomings in the bill.

The government says that it is urgent, because we have climate change and it is an emergency. Let us talk about that for a minute. In 2005, our emissions were 732 megatonnes. Every party in this House committed to reduce that 30% by 2030. That means we need to get to 512 megatonnes. Today we are at 819 megatonnes. The government's plan has done nothing. I believe in real action. Using offshore renewables and reducing emissions are good things, but the government cannot be the one pulling the strings and deciding who the winners and who the losers are.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her statements. I find that, oftentimes, the member speaks quite eloquently to her

point. I think she is a champion not only for her community but also for conservatism across the country.

I would humbly submit that, in this place, New Democrats have often been consistent in our message that we do have a climate crisis. It is a great day in Parliament when Conservatives speak directly to the climate crisis. In my home province of Alberta, we have seen and continue to see outrageous wildfires that are polluting our air, destroying traditional hunting and harvesting grounds, and changing our environment for the worse. This is harming and scaring our children and the next generation. We spoke about, for example, free market decisions and how the Conservatives' values relate to the free market.

I would like to remind the member that Conservative governments right across this country, in particular in my home province of Alberta, have directly intervened in the free market by way of a moratorium on all renewable projects for six months. Can members imagine the kind of interference that would be? Can they imagine if a government had that kind of power to intervene and stop projects in this way? That is what is happening in Alberta right now. There are 118 renewable energy projects worth \$33 billion, including one of the largest renewable energy projects in the country. This is an extreme interference in the free market. Whether it is a pause or a cancellation, it is a direct attack on the free market, which is something the Conservatives often tout as a victory for capitalism in this place. How does the member circle that square when it comes to support for renewable projects and oil projects?

● (1625)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, at the start of the member's question, he talked about all the forest fires. I feel terrible about the impacts of the forest fires in B.C., but I want to point out that 14 years of carbon tax did nothing to help that.

I also want to point out that if we look at the 819 megatonnes of emissions we had this year, 290 megatonnes so far were due to forest fires. The Liberal government said that it was going to spend \$500 million to buy more water bomber equipment and train more firefighters to reduce the length of time that these things burn. It has not done that.

Why does the member and his whole NDP team continue to support the government on disastrous policies that are not addressing climate change and are making life more expensive? Why do they not get a divorce?

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I would say to my hon. colleague from Sarnia that it is important to distinguish the measures that reduce emissions, or at least provide a break with respect to growing emissions, from the global phenomenon. Overall, Canada's record is one of failure under successive governments to reduce emissions. In Copenhagen, the previous government under Stephen Harper promised to reduce emissions, but it failed to do so; emissions went up. Similarly, in Paris in 2015, the government under the current Prime Minister pledged to reduce emissions, but they have gone up.

The individual use, particularly by the Province of British Columbia, in bringing in place a carbon price initially held emissions and reduced them. That was contaminated by the provincial NDP government when it changed the way our revenue-neutral carbon tax worked in B.C.

However, the global phenomenon of increased emissions and global warming has what is referred to as a feedback loop. This is something the member for Sarnia—Lambton did not identify. Burning forests add carbon dioxide to the atmosphere, but those burning forests are themselves caused by the carbon dioxide we already added to the atmosphere. One cannot attach that to a policy tool used in one jurisdiction and call it a failure. We really need carbon pricing, and it needs to go up.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I would say that it is a global problem. If we look at the percentage of the global problem that is due to people using heavy oil and coal, we can talk about that 50% and how Canada's LNG could actually cut that by 75%. That would be something worth doing in the world. Instead, our 18 LNG projects were cancelled. Can we guess what happened then? The 18 LNG projects popped up in the Nordic countries, so the carbon footprint did not leave the planet; only the jobs and prosperity for Canadians did.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her passion.

I am very worried. This is not the time to take overly polarized positions on any specific projects or initiatives in that regard, whether good or moderate, or whether they require further study. We absolutely must focus on the environment. If there is one thing the House should agree on, it is a consensus to move forward as quickly as possible.

It is no longer the eleventh hour. We are well past that. With that in mind, I firmly believe that political fervours that lead people to power or that encourage people to please their base are no longer an option. We must work together. That is why the Bloc Québécois wants to act responsibly right now.

From my colleague's point of view, what will it take in terms of climate change or extreme climate events for the Conservative Party to finally decide to take real, conscientious action for the environment?

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party has an absolutely sound and real climate change reduction plan. We

would reduce emissions, increase absorptions and get a plan to actually mitigate the impacts of climate change, floods, etc., that we are seeing.

The Conservative leader has talked about small modular nuclear reactors, which could replace diesel in the north and be used, for example, to generate electricity for greenhouses for food security. We have talked about the need to increase rail in this country and to build rail with housing close to it. We have heard about those things and about LNG. There are a lot of opportunities to reduce emissions in terms of increasing absorption. Carbon sequestration is a key technology that Canada should be leveraging. We would certainly be able to actually plant trees, not just talk about planting trees.

At the end of the day, we have to have a plan, because we cannot be calling in the military every time we have a flood or a fire. It is not resourced to do that work, and we have to have a plan, because we know we are going to continue to see impacts.

• (1630)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the labour minister said something very interesting when I asked him a question about tidal energy. He said Liberals really enjoy working with proponents they know. He was not talking about bringing in other outside foreign investments. I firmly believe that Liberals like giving money to Liberals. They are pretty good at that. The one interesting thing is that, when we listen to his speech, every now and then we can hear the actual truth.

In this bill, there is an indefinite review process by ministers that would perhaps allow for some political manoeuvring. What does my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton think about that clause in this bill?

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I am absolutely in agreement with my colleague. In my books, it is back to the drawing board on this bill, because there is so much wrong with it that I am not sure we can amend it and fix it.

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly will not need all my time, as I will be sharing it with the member for Winnipeg North. He will probably have the bulk of the 20 minutes. Since the discussion on the topic began, I have thought it was necessary for a Newfoundlander to stand up and say a few words on it. I know the minister spoke earlier, and I compliment him on his speech.

It is a pleasure to rise and speak to Bill C-49, which is an act to amend the Atlantic accord acts with the provinces of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a crucial piece of legislation that matters in the global race toward our net-zero future, and Canada is in the driver's seat to be a leader on just that.

The legislation is required to do just that. The Atlantic accords first signed between the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador in 1985 and subsequently signed between Nova Scotia and the federal government in 2005 are symbolic of the importance of the work that was done to fight for regional equality in Atlantic Canada. This was done to ensure equity in how the resources of oil and gas at that time were to be distributed in the federation and for the benefit of our provinces. While the oil and gas sector still plays an important role in Newfoundland, today, by amending the accords, we would be setting the path to how best to govern, manage and, ultimately, benefit from the resource of offshore wind.

There are many ways to look at the benefit offshore wind represents to Canada. First and foremost, this opportunity is crucial in our fight against climate change. The science is clear: We need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and projects on the Atlantic coast can do just that by harnessing the wind for our collective benefit. The power can help Canada not only to decarbonize its current electricity capacity but also to ensure that it has excess power to supply to other provinces as well.

Beyond the domestic focus, this opportunity represents an enormous export potential for green hydrogen to be transported as ammonia for industrial uses around the world, helping to decarbonize the world. I know that the province of Newfoundland and Labrador just issued permits to four different companies that are interested in creating wind energy in Newfoundland and Labrador and in producing hydrogen to be shipped to other European countries. They are not approved yet, but they are authorized to go to the next level to get that done. As the labour minister mentioned earlier, this is something that will help workers in Newfoundland and Labrador create a new field of expertise. Thus, the workers who built our oil industry will also help build our wind energy.

In his speech, the minister also mentioned the Port of Argentia becoming a port to house the so-called monopiles that will be used in offshore wind energy projects. I had the opportunity to be in Argentia and look at some of those, as they were sitting on the land, that came in the first shipment. They will be used for projects off the east coast of the United States, and Argentia will play a major role in that.

They are able to do that with the help of the federal government. It was only a couple of months ago that the then minister of transport announced major project funding for the Port of Argentia to build and expand its wharfage. It was a \$38-million investment from the federal government for a \$100-million project that the port is taking on. It has reinvented itself. At one time, Argentia was a U.S. naval base and served the area well, and of course it was a great economic driver when it was there at the time. However, today, it has this to depend on as another major economic driver for that full area.

It boggles my mind to hear people say that nobody wants this to happen. The premiers of both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador are asking for the renewal of the accords to be done and signed off on by the federal government and the provinces. They can then go out and attract new industry to come to the provinces and create good jobs and good family incomes in the meantime.

Government Orders

• (1635)

Somebody spoke about working with proponents we know who already have a record in this field. That is exactly what it is. These people who are coming to set up the wind farms, whether onshore or offshore, have the experience. They have done it before in many regions around the world and they are certainly looking forward to doing it in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Hopefully, it does get approval to go ahead in both areas.

I know the member mentioned the carbon tax and nobody standing up against it. I would remind people in this House that it was I, as an MP from Newfoundland and Labrador, who stood and voted with a Conservative motion to eliminate the carbon tax on home heating fuel. I still stand by that and I support that vote. I had my own reasons for doing it. I wanted to let the people I represent know that I am prepared to stand up and speak for them when necessary in this House.

I will close off here and answer any questions that anybody has on this particular piece of legislation.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member probably knows that I share roots in Newfoundland. That is where my mother and her family were from and I hope that he sees the Labradorite that I cherish from St. Paul's and I am wearing on my neck for this debate today. Of course it is always tough to debate a Newfoundlander and Labradorian who, also like the labour minister, among Canadians, is uniquely skilled at oration and speeches.

I appreciate the member's measured comments because there has been a lot of mischaracterization of the issues that Conservatives are raising about this bill today. We recognize that the provincial governments support the bill. I know that the key thing they wanted was the incorporation of the provincial ministers for having a say. We respect provincial jurisdiction and I am glad to see that.

However, there are some realities around expanding the scope of the mandate of the regulators dealing with a whole bunch of environmental issues and local impacts in renewable offshore development that would require new expertise, technical abilities and skill sets. Does the member have any comment around wanting to see, as we do, clarity in the bill in terms of resource provisions that would be required for regulators to meet their new mandates and any other of the real logistical, practical implications that would be required to support both petroleum offshore drilling and renewable offshore projects as well?

Mr. Ken McDonald: Madam Speaker, it is great to know the member has some roots in Newfoundland and Labrador. I always tell everybody that there is no place like home. I look forward to each and every day that I can get on a plane to fly back to Newfoundland and be in my riding. I appreciate the time I spend there. I do not necessarily appreciate it as much to be here in Ottawa, but I am a bit of a home person.

Government Orders

Passing this bill would give it the opportunity to go to committee and see if there are amendments that need to be done to strengthen the bill or to make sure we are not overstepping our boundaries when it comes to dealing with individual provinces and individual boards. I look forward to the bill's getting passed, going to committee for review and if there are some adjustments that need to be made to it, that should be the place that it happens.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague with whom I have the great pleasure of serving on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. He chairs that committee and we have spent a lot of time together trying to save our fisheries. I would like to ask him two questions.

We worked hard on the right whales file. We have seen all the effort that is being made by our fishers to keep right whales as safe as possible and ensure their survival. We know that takes a lot of energy and causes a lot of stress for our fishers.

What should we make of the marine gas exploration initiative in an area known to be frequented by right whales versus the efforts fishers are making to save this species?

Meanwhile, Quebec is a role model in terms of wind energy. We know that social licence is needed to implement this type of mechanism, which is a great alternative to gas exploration.

Are you sure you are going to get enough social licence from your people?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would like to remind the hon. member that she needs to address her comments to the Chair.

The hon. member for Avalon.

[English]

Mr. Ken McDonald: Madam Speaker, I believe it is a good sector. I understand what the member is saying about the protection of whales. However, I have not heard of any incidents, even in the offshore oil industry, that have damaged whales or pods of whales. There is more concern around the fishing gear in the water. They become entangled and drown, or whatever.

I know in Newfoundland we are only looking at having the monopiles onshore and not offshore, with the wind energy. Nova Scotia may be looking at offshore, I do not know. I do not know the habits of the whales in that area.

This past summer I managed to get quite a few nice pictures of whales in my riding. They were putting on a bit of a show in the area. They were free to do—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That last question goes to the hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are talking a lot about offshore wind. I used to live in Newfoundland, and it is a windy place. The door blew off my Jeep once at Point Verde, just south of Argentia.

I want to mention that what we need in Canada is increased inter-provincial interties of electricity. We have heard talk of the Atlantic Loop and how that plays into all of this. Investments in those interties would help us develop renewables across the country.

Mr. Ken McDonald: Madam Speaker, all I will say about the Atlantic Loop is that I think all parties are onside with creating the Atlantic Loop.

It is very important to get New Brunswick and Nova Scotia off coal, for example. I think that would allow it to happen. It would take a lot of money and a lot of effort to do. The power that comes from, and I will use Churchill Falls as an example, and goes into Quebec may not be enough power to actually satisfy the demands. We may have to look at developing Gull Island or some other project in Labrador. The water is there, the flow of water is there. It is the cleanest energy that we could produce. I think we should be driving it more each and every day to help produce clean energy projects.

I would be remiss if I did not say I am not against all projects offshore. I have two family members who worked in that industry for many years, and one of them still does.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member.

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, every so often, when we bring in legislation, there are some surprises.

Yesterday, it was quite encouraging when we brought in Bill C-48 on the bail reform issue and we saw parties come together to recognize the value of the legislation and understand and appreciate how important it was to get it passed.

In fact, later yesterday, after a few hours of debate, a Conservative member suggested that we go ahead with unanimous consent and pass it through the system.

That was a bit of a surprise. I was quite pleased about it. I thought it surprised a number of people. It was quite encouraging because it shows that, if the House recognizes something of great value, collectively, where we have all parties onside, we can accomplish things very quickly inside the House.

I look at Bill C-49, which we are debating today. I am not from Atlantic Canada, as we all know, but I understand the importance of regional development. The Atlantic accord is of critical importance to Atlantic Canada, to two provinces in particular, Newfoundland and Labrador, along with Nova Scotia.

Government Orders

We understand and appreciate all of the efforts. I have had a number of Conservatives stand up and ask why it took so long to bring it before the House. It is not like one can snap one's heels together, wave a wand and make legislation appear. There is a lot of work that is done prior to bringing the legislation forward. There is a timing issue. There is a great deal of consultation that takes place.

As for my quick readthrough, in terms of the legislation, and the passion that I have seen from my Atlantic colleagues in dealing with this legislation, and they are a passionate caucus, as we know, this is good solid legislation that should be supported.

What surprises me today with Bill C-49 is that it is one thing to say one does not want to pass it today. It is another thing to come out saying one opposes the legislation. That is what we are hearing from the Conservative Party today.

The Conservative Party of Canada does not support the principles of this legislation. This is legislation that has the support of every other political entity, from what I understand, inside the House. It also has the support of provincial jurisdictions of different political stripes. We have heard member of Parliament after member of Parliament, at least from some opposition benches and the government benches, talking about how important this legislation is.

Even the Minister of Labour and Seniors came forward, in a very passionate speech. He was not the only member of the caucus who spoke passionately about the importance of this legislation to their respective provinces.

Renewable energy is so critically important when we talk about economic development into the future. I know that first-hand from being a parliamentarian for over 30 years, first as an MLA in Manitoba, and the impact that Manitoba Hydro has had on the residents of Manitoba, to the benefits of Canada as a nation.

It is a renewable energy. It is one of the reasons why, and I do not know if it still is today, and if not, it would be very close, the cheapest energy price in North America, in terms of electrical rates, is in Manitoba. It now might be two or three. I know that when I was a MLA, for a long period of time it was number one, the cheapest rate.

● (1645)

I can tell members that here is an opportunity. When we talk about Canada reaching its climate targets and looking at offshore renewable energy projects, one can very easily get excited to think of Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and other coastal communities, because the opportunities are great.

However, I do not understand why, in looking at the legislation, the Conservative Party of Canada wants to say “no” to Atlantic Canada. It makes no sense whatsoever. When I listen to the energy that is coming from the government benches, which is being driven by my Atlantic colleagues, like the member for Avalon talking about how important this legislation is, there seems to be a disconnect with the Conservative Party.

It was interesting when the member for Avalon posed a question earlier to a Conservative member asking why he did not support the bill. The Conservative member stood up and said that the it is the principle of the legislation and that it is about the carbon tax. Real-

ly? I do not think that a number of the Conservative speakers who have stood up really understand what the legislation would do, as they were trying to rope in the issue of a price on pollution and, as that one member implied, base an opinion on a price on pollution to not support the bill. It seems to me that they are being somewhat misguided. I have not heard from any Conservative member, and I have been here all day listening to member after member speak on the legislation, specifically why this legislation cannot be passed.

● (1650)

We had the former Conservative member stand up and speak for 20 minutes about, based on the past, we are going to see time allocation and that we are going to see some opposition parties working with the government in order to get the bill time-allocated in order to pass. Well, I can assure the Conservative Party that there will be time allocation on this bill if the Conservatives are going to filibuster it, because we on the government side see the value of this legislation to Atlantic Canada and to Canada as a whole, which is the reason we will fight tooth and nail to ensure that we see this type of regional economic development take place. If that means working with New Democrat and Bloc members in order to ensure we get time allocation so that we can get legislation passed, I am game for that.

We recognize that we are talking about our environment. We are talking about future jobs and opportunities. I want to see Newfoundland and Labrador continue to be a “have” province. I want to see the prosperity of all regions of our country. I recognize the value of renewable energy, because of the example of Manitoba Hydro. I see where government does play an important role. What I do not see is why the Conservative Party would take an issue such as this and deny two provinces the opportunity where there was an agreement.

After this legislation passes, with the support of at least some opposition parties, and it will pass, it will receive mirror legislation from provincial legislatures in order to enact and make sure that it turns into a reality so that the people who live in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia will have wonderful renewable energy resources being developed and opportunities well into the future.

● (1655)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member says that he was listening to the debate all day, but it seems like he has not heard what the Conservatives have said.

On the point about the carbon tax, I think the reason the member was raising it is because the Atlantic premiers said they did not want the carbon tax. They have also asked for a suspension of the clean fuel regulations. They also, by the end of Bill C-69 leaving the Senate, opposed Bill C-69. The government ignored all of them. I think that is why this is being brought up.

Government Orders

Since the member wants to know what issues the Conservatives are raising in the actual bill, if he were to read it, I will tell him. It is because this bill would not only allow for the potential arbitrary decision-making to end both existing and future offshore petroleum drilling, but that would also impact renewable energy offshore development according to this bill.

This bill is an attack to end offshore petroleum drilling, as is the government's track record, and it will also hold up the development of renewables too. This bill actually triples the timeline for final ministerial decisions on renewable offshore energy development. In section 28 and 137, it gives the ability for cabinet to arbitrarily prohibit development in areas. It imports—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. parliamentary secretary the opportunity to answer and for other questions to be asked.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is interesting how the Conservatives want to critique the bill in order to try to justify an irresponsible position, when all one needs to look at is us having a Progressive Conservative premier who is actually in agreement with the legislation. We have other jurisdictions that are provincial. What the member is actually implying in her critique of it is that those jurisdictions also got it wrong. I believe the consensus within the legislation that we are proposing to pass is in fact—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Montcalm.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, at first glance, Bill C-49 does not seem to do away with the annual process for the auction and sale of exploratory drilling permits.

Why then was the word “petroleum” removed from the names of the two boards if their mission still involves offshore oil and gas development? Is this more smoke and mirrors from the Liberals when it comes to the environment?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect that if we saw the legislation pass into committee, the member would be afforded all sorts of opportunities to get some of the specifics answered at the committee stage. If there are some issues opposition members would like to see amended in some fashion, that would provide an excellent opportunity to do so. I am not familiar with the specifics of the question that was posed.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, the provincial Conservative government in Nova Scotia is moving aggressively to establish a significant footprint in power supply from offshore wind. Clearly, it sees the benefits of tapping into the enormous potential of renewable energy. As New Democrats, we see there is enormous potential for a thriving offshore renewable energy industry in Atlantic Canada. We need to seize this potential, while making sure it is done right.

Will the government guarantee that benefits from offshore wind projects will flow directly to local workers and that local fishing communities will be supported?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ultimately argue that there are many winners in the passage of this legislation and will conclude my comments by saying that we have to remember there has to be mirror legislation from provincial jurisdictions in order to enact into law the regulatory bodies.

For example, if we can somehow get this thing passed before the end of the year, we still have to have provinces bring it into their jurisdiction potentially, which can also take time. That is why, in good part, it would be nice to get a commitment from the official opposition that they would like to see this legislation pass before the end of the year.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, Tip O'Neill once said all politics is local, but in the case of Newfoundland and Labrador and the climate crisis, it is rather the crucible of events. We have the extreme traumatic event of Hurricane Fiona that impacted Newfoundland and Labrador so strongly. People from that province now take a different view about the climate crisis; it is personal.

This is a really exciting opportunity. Onshore wind in Newfoundland and Labrador may lead to green hydrogen. Offshore could be huge. However, the federal cabinet thinks it has to have a sop for Newfoundland and Labrador so it approved the Norwegian Crown corporation Equinor with Bay du Nord, which is an abomination in the face of the climate crisis.

Can the hon. member suggest that we perhaps could get policy coherence from the government, say no to Bay du Nord and move more rapidly on onshore and offshore wind?

• (1700)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, Canada has some very aggressive climate targets that we want to be able to achieve. We passed legislation not that long ago regarding that, and this legislation ultimately will help Canada address those targets. What we have found over the years, with all the disasters that have taken place, is even more and more Canadians are looking to governments to show leadership on the issue of climate.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to enter into debate in this place about the important issues facing Canadians, and to be back after a summer break. I am sure I am not alone, but I would like to take a moment to specifically talk about the fact I had the opportunity to travel across Battle River—Crowfoot and the more than 60 municipalities I have the honour of representing; over 53,000 square kilometres of beautiful east country Alberta real estate.

Although I make it home every weekend, it is always good to spend a little more focused time chatting with those good common-sense thinking Canadians who make up those communities across east central Alberta. I can tell the House that what I heard from so many of them emphasizes exactly what I am going to talk about regarding this bill. It comes back to the basic foundation of trust.

One needs to be able to trust, whether it is a bill like we see before us in Bill C-49, whether it is the words of a Prime Minister or whether it is the actions of a cabinet behind closed doors and the cabinet confidences associated with that and the whole range of other elements that make up our institutions within this country. From the thousands of kilometres I drove across east central Alberta, communities where there is no such thing as public transit, from small hamlets to the small city of Camrose, I know these folks are ready for somebody they can trust. Definitively, I can say they do not trust these Liberals. They do not trust their agenda. They do not trust what they say. The unfortunate reality is that history proves that point.

I bring it back now specifically to Bill C-49. We are talking about, in broad strokes, a bill that brings forward a whole host of changes that have the intent, and I use the word “intent” specifically, to provide that framework to allow for renewable development in two of Canada's Atlantic provinces.

I heard the previous speaker, who I do not think actually spent much time listening to some of the concerns Conservatives brought forward over the course of this debate. It is a laudable goal. What is unfortunate is the Liberals, the NDP and I think the Bloc as well are so blinded by the politics of these energy issues that they refuse to acknowledge the reality that exists. I am proud to represent a constituency that is, and I am not sure it is the most but certainly one of the most, bullish on renewable development. There are wind farms being built.

I also am proud to be involved in my family farm. I could go on a lot about some of the complaints I heard from farmers, but I will save that for another day. What is interesting is about the vehicles driving by. In fact, we had to time some of the moving from one field to another and moving large equipment on the roads because of the shift change that was being dealt with at some of these renewable developments.

People in Alberta get energy. We get oil and gas and we get renewables. We get the whole spectrum of it, but the unfortunate reality is the government does not.

I brought forward the issue of trust. I heard about it constantly over the course of the summer. The reason that is so key when it comes to the debate surrounding Bill C-49 is because the government is saying it wants to accomplish all of these things. It is saying it wants to model these regulations and have these objectives, but by the way, it is allowed to interfere in the process, so to just trust it. It is going to model it after the Impact Assessment Act, Bill C-69, so it is saying to just trust it on that.

They have dealt with the consultation of the provinces, and I heard many times from members of the Liberal Party that we should support this because there is provincial support. I acknowledge this fully. I am glad there was that consultation that took place and I am glad they were able to come to some sort of consensus.

• (1705)

However, what I find absolutely tragic is that we cannot trust what the Liberals say because, time and time again, when it fits their political narrative, they will throw their provincial partners under the bus. Bill C-69 is referenced in the context of this bill. All 10

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provinces in this country wanted that repealed, so how dare the government stand up and righteously say that provinces support the bill? There are not many issues that all 10 provinces of this country will agree upon unanimously, but the Prime Minister accomplished it with the opposition to one of the most absurd pieces of legislation to cross the floor of this place. Forgive me if I come back to the basic premise that we simply cannot trust the Liberals.

When it comes to many of the details of this bill, we look at how it could add red tape. Liberals say that it is okay because they will create a framework and it will be dealt with in regulations. The unfortunate reality is that, when those words are uttered by Liberals, it effectively means that they will accomplish nothing.

I will sum up the energy situation in our country after eight years of a Prime Minister who is absolutely clueless on energy. If I could sum up the conversation of those eight years, I would sum it up in two words: missed opportunity. Why is that? We have seen the untold cost of these additional delays, the red tape, the impacts of Bill C-69, the carbon tax and the fact that the Liberals seem to care more about piling things on their desks than actually dealing with these problems. Hundreds of billions of dollars of investment are gone. That is a missed opportunity, and I will say why it is so significant and why I highlight it here.

We talk often about the fiscal situation of the country, the debt and the deficit. I know provinces talk a lot about investing in schools and hospitals. Municipalities will talk about paving roads and water infrastructure, the whole deal. However, when it comes down to it, the missed opportunity here is the hundreds of billions of dollars that did not get invested in our economy. That means fewer schools, fewer hospitals, fewer paved roads. That means fewer resources to invest in the benefits that the Liberals talk so much about. It is a missed opportunity.

There are the situations around wind, solar, battery production, minerals and resources. These are all very real issues. Once again, I would sum up the last eight years as a missed opportunity. The American president came to this very House and said he wanted to partner, but why would any company invest in a country that it cannot trust would ever be able to build a mine? Once again, I ask the question about trust. There is a whole host of questions on whether the Liberals can be trusted, and their history shows otherwise.

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When it comes to the development of renewables, a tidal project got cancelled because the government cannot be trusted when it comes to dealing with the economy. Specifically, that project was cancelled because of cost overruns. Again, we come down to a very fundamental premise: Can we trust that Bill C-49 would build renewable energy projects in Atlantic Canada? The Liberals' history makes that very question one that we cannot answer. The Liberals stand and say a lot of things about that, but the reality speaks otherwise. We need to make sure that we are pragmatic in the way we approach energy issues. There is one way that I think we should be able and willing to do that.

• (1710)

I often hear from my NDP colleagues, and there are only two here from Alberta. They seem quite quick to diminish our oil and gas sector. Sometimes when I listen to them speak in this place, I wonder if they have forgotten that they ran for federal office and not provincial office. I certainly hear quite often from my constituents after they have listened to either question period or some of the debates, and they ask that very question.

We need to be pragmatic and realistic about energy. We need to ensure that, when we are talking about solutions, we understand the impacts that exist. I know there has been a whole host of conversations about renewable projects in Alberta. I did talk about how there are those investments being made, and I know there are other investments.

I had the opportunity for a couple of years, and it was truly an honour and a privilege, to work with former Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall. He was proud to be leading at a time when Alberta had fallen into a deep socialist chasm where it had a government that was so clueless that it tried to tell farmers that, if they set foot outside their front door, they might be subject to the rules and regulations put forward by a bureaucrat in the province's capital. Can members believe that? It was a dark time for the province of Alberta and one that I am very thankful the people of Alberta resoundingly rejected only a number of months ago.

However, when it comes to the energy reality we have to face, costs are up. On that subject I hear two things, and quite often they are disconnected. We hear Liberals talk about wanting to address things such as the cost of living crisis, but they also want to increase costs.

Let us look at the former of those two. The Liberals want to address the cost of living crisis, often in the form of government payments. There was support, and I believe it was unanimous support, to increase the GST rebate, which the Liberals renamed the "grocery rebate". I am not sure the Prime Minister should be bragging that his economic management has led us to so many Canadians not being able to afford groceries without the help of the government. That is a whole other conversation, though.

The cost of living crisis is real. I was replying to some constituents' emails today, and seniors are talking about how they cannot afford energy. They just got a power bill, and they are scared about their upcoming gas bill, not to mention the fact that winter is coming. That is part of it, but let us look at why. Let us have a realistic, pragmatic look at why that is the case.

Part of the reality is a carbon tax. The Liberals do not like it when we bring this up to bridge the connection I am about to make because the reality is that they want costs to go up. The carbon tax, by its very design, is made to increase costs, yet we have the government talking about how one has to address affordability. Can members believe that? The Liberals are intentionally making costs rise, yet they talk a whole host about affordability. That is part one.

Now here is the latter of the two points I made, and it is related to the environment. Let us be real here. The carbon tax and the Liberals' environmental plan are not accomplishing the objectives that they set out to, nor are they truly even an environmental plan. The Liberals talk often about needing to address climate challenges, yet they have failed to do so every step of the way. It is terribly ironic how they laud an increase in costs, yet they are not accomplishing anything. They are subjecting Canadians to so much pain, yet there is no gain. I said that we needed to be real here, and it is that lived reality that so many Canadians are facing.

• (1715)

When it comes to the realistic nature, we need to be a country that can say yes to development. Processes and structures have to be in place to ensure we respect the environment and to ensure human rights. Alberta specifically, but our nation generally, is a leader in this. I applaud my provincial counterparts in Newfoundland.

I spent close to a decade batching wells and throwing pigs. That may be a strange reference to many in the House, but basically that is doing environmental work in the oil patch. If members have questions about that, I would be happy to talk to them about what batching wells and throwing pigs is all about.

The lived reality of what Alberta is, and the unprecedented prosperity in the western world, quite frankly, that we have seen, is an example for so many. I applaud Newfoundland and Labrador. They are visionaries in being able to continue to use their resources, to look at the opportunities that exist and be a leader.

I believe the press conference was in Newfoundland. I may stand corrected on that. When the German chancellor came to Canada with a metaphorical cheque in hand, saying they want our LNG, what did our illustrious Prime Minister say? He said, "Sorry, there is no market for it." What he forgot to add is that was because he had closed down the market. It is that reality that exists.

I have had conversations with constituents. One constituent called me a number of weeks ago. I want to bring this up because I think it is an interesting idea. Often what happens is that the thinking that takes place in Ottawa, our nation's capital, and sometimes even in corporate headquarters and whatnot, is a little blinded to the reality that exists. Let me throw a couple of things out there.

For those who have seen wind development, they are impressive machines. They are absolutely massive. For those who have seen them moved on trains and trucks, I would note the resources that are required to move them. They are massive machines. I had a constituent bring up an interesting point the other day. They asked, “Why not put solar panels on a windmill?” Why not? Maybe there is something that could be practical about that.

I had another constituent who was frustrated because a solar project was being built without adequate consultation. I am paraphrasing, but he basically shared how frustrated he was that 160 acres, a quarter section, was going to be gravelled over and have solar panels built on it. A quarter section of land was going to be gravelled over, productive ranch land. This constituent brought up to me something that was really interesting. He asked, “Why do they not build the panels an extra three feet tall, and then at least goats or sheep could be run on the land?”

The reason I wanted to bring those things up is that, so often, in what is being discussed in this place, we lose sight of what matters to Canadians. We lose sight of regular folks going about their business, the individuals who are hard at work. They are those who are working in the oil patch, those who are building the wind turbines, those who are driving the trucks and those farmers who are currently, in many places, in the field, including my father. I will say hello to my dad, and I think my wife was in the grain cart today, so I will say hello, sweetheart.

So often, we forget the reason why all of us are here is not for some ideological objective. It is not for some nuanced, political whatever. We are here because of the people. Let us make sure we work for the people. When I spoke to many people across my constituency this summer, they said that they could not trust the Liberals. I stand here today in this place and say history proves that right.

● (1720)

Therefore, we need to work at bringing back trust to our institutions. When it comes to making sure there is energy development in this country, let us get it right, because whether it is traditional energy or new energy, Canadians deserve better than what they have been getting from the Liberals.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member said something about making sure that when we are in this House, we should not lose sight of what is important to people. In my community of Don Valley East, as in many communities across this country, climate change is real. People are feeling the impact of climate change. I just did a survey. It was among the top three issues, so I know it matters to people in my neighbourhood.

As to my question for the member opposite, he talked a lot about the environment and keeping our environment healthy and clean with renewables. I would like to know if the member believes in climate change. I know his party, at its previous convention, voted against accepting climate change as real. I would like to know from the member if he and his party actually believe in climate change.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, do members know how rich it is for a Liberal MP to ask a farmer whether he believes that climate change is real? I can tell him that for more than five generations my family has not only dealt with the realities of climate, but has understood it better, I would submit, than the vast majority of

members on that side of the House, who try to politicize and dictate to Canadians.

The member specifically said that climate change and the concerns associated with that issue were among the top three concerns raised by his constituents. I am sure it was, so let us have a plan that actually addresses it. What he conveniently forgot to mention in the question was that affordability and housing were probably the first two.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is my first time standing in the House this session, so I just want to welcome you back and welcome all of my colleagues back.

My colleague's speech was entertaining. I have to say that he spoke more about goats than he did about climate change, so I have a bit of concern about the priorities there.

He did talk about reducing red tape and about costly delays, and he did talk about missed opportunities. A large part of his conversation today was about missed opportunities, so he will not be surprised that I am going to ask some questions about missed opportunities in our province, in the province of Alberta, where the leader has stopped renewable projects. We have a Conservative leader who has stopped renewable projects in the province, costing \$33 billion and thousands and thousands of Alberta jobs.

The member can talk about how the trucks got in the way for him, but realistically, if he wants to talk about missed opportunities, that has to be one of the biggest missed opportunities in this country. I would like to hear his thoughts on that.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member would so selectively listen to what I said. Here is the reality. If the member understood the pragmatic realities that energy is facing, she would understand that the point I was making about goats, which bears specific emphasis, is that they are blinded by ideology and refuse to recognize practical reality. It is why her party and its sibling party, or whatever they would call it, their officially connected Alberta party, were so resoundingly rejected in the last election.

When it comes to the issue of where Alberta stands on renewable development, here is the reality. We have the most renewable development in this country. We are proud of that and there will be more. What we also need to ensure is that there is a firm regulatory framework to allow that to happen. We have done it with oil and gas and we will do it with renewable energy. The fact that her party is so blinded by politics speaks to why it was rejected in the last Alberta election.

Private Members' Business

● (1725)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am so happy to see my friend from Battle River—Crowfoot. I am going to hone in on something he said in his speech about transportation needs, because it is critical.

Because of having a stroke, I could not take a plane to Ottawa, and as I needed to pursue foreign interference, I took the train. I thought of him while crossing the trestle bridge over Battle River. I thought, “I know who the member of Parliament for Battle River—Crowfoot is.” I want to let him know exactly how often one can get public transit from Vancouver to Kamloops. It is a shockingly poor two times a week that someone can get Via Rail out of Vancouver to get to Kamloops and Edmonton.

By the way, we took the train back and we were stopped. Edmonton was as far west as we could go because Via Rail cancelled the train due to the fires, so we rented a U-Haul truck out of Edmonton and drove to Kamloops. It is a long story, but would the hon. member join our passenger rail caucus so we can do everything we can to boost accessibility, for particularly low-income Canadians, to reliable public transit in rural and remote areas because all of the buses packed up and left? Any comments would be welcome.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question because it highlights that we need to ensure that we provide opportunity in our country, and that includes for rail development. I have in my constituency one of those Via Rail stations, in the community of Wainwright, and it is unfortunate that there has been reduced service. Although the Liberals brag a lot about investing in transportation, it certainly has not come to Battle River—Crowfoot, nor has it been seen in the Via train situation.

We have to acknowledge that we must provide opportunity on all fronts, even if that is passenger rail service. I know the province of Alberta has been leading the country by ensuring that it is opening the door to say that there is potential to have high-speed passenger rail service from major urban area to major urban area. I think the rest of the country could learn from that. In addition to passenger rail, I am proud to have communities that are actively working to ensure that we increase rail capacity, period, because more rail capacity in our country is good for the economy and it is good for industry. Ultimately, if we can get passenger trains on that rail, it is good for passengers as well.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal-NDP coalition claims it cares about climate change and renewable energy, yet it had its Ottawa gatekeeper bureaucrats cancel a viable tidal wave energy project in Nova Scotia just this year. That company lost close to \$40 million.

Why would any company want to invest in renewable energy in Canada when it sees this kind of thing?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, that is a good and valid question, because the member is right. When it comes to the idea of capital, it goes to markets where it can see a predictable return on investment. Talking about economic terms like that probably flies over the heads of many of the left-leaning members in this place. The reality is that the Liberals have created more boundaries, road-

blocks and reasons as to why so few are deciding to invest in Canada on many fronts. Energy is a big part of that, whether it is renewable or traditional.

We need to be a country that says “yes” again, that allows mines to be dug to get rare earth minerals and that allows windmills and solar farms to be built. In addition to those things, we have to be willing to say “yes” to oil and gas and we have to be willing to say “yes” to major infrastructure. However, the sad reality is that—

● (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry.

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

RADIOCOMMUNICATION ACT

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC) moved that Bill S-242, An Act to amend the Radiocommunication Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, access to high-speed Internet on our phones, tablets or computers has become not just a want but a need and a necessity to participate in today's economy, to go to school, to be educated, to communicate or, even as we saw this summer, for public safety.

The Internet, which was a luxury when I was a kid, has now transformed into a public utility. Nary a function in today's society can be completed without it, yet 40% of rural Canada is not connected to high-speed Internet. Almost 60% of our first nations communities are not connected to high-speed Internet. Especially troublesome is that those in rural areas who are connected find it inadequate and expensive.

In a 2021 poll conducted by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority, 68% of people said that the organization they communicate most with online is their bank. A strong Internet connection may also be a factor in determining someone's health care, as 28% of Canadians consulted a doctor virtually in 2021. As this nation faces a shortage of doctors and health care practitioners, that number is only going higher.

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There are also simpler conveniences that come with reliable Internet, such as food and grocery delivery, car sharing, social media and online booking portals. Farmers these days now have equipment with software that can only be updated online using the Internet.

Rural Canadians suffer most of all as the world goes more digital and they are stuck in the stone age. Why does this matter? Well, it matters because Canada is rural. Of the 3,700 municipalities in Canada, only 94 are urban or have over 100,000 in population. That means 97% of Canadian municipalities are rural.

Even in my home riding of Bay of Quinte, only a three-hour drive southwest of Ottawa, with Belleville, Prince Edward County and Quinte West, when travelling east to west and north to south, we often lose cell coverage. A lot of my residents do not have reliable high-speed Internet, and we are a three-hour drive from over 10 million people in a part of this country that should be considered urban and have reliable and cheap high-speed Internet.

The answer to those problems is to have more competition with more companies competing, and especially to have more Canadian companies competing and filling in the gaps when it comes to technology and spectrum. We must get more rural Canadians connected to the Internet and get more cellphone towers in Canada. The government's role is to ensure that the rules and regulations in place benefit rural Canada as much as they do urban Canada.

This bill is for rural Canada to ensure that when Canada gives a public utility resource like spectrum or spectrum licensing to a company, the company uses the spectrum to connect rural parts of this country and its over seven million people to high-speed Internet. The bill is entitled "use it or lose it", and it will mean that if a telco buys spectrum intended to service a geographic region in Canada and within three years does not service 50% of that geographic area, the minister has legislative options to ensure that another company will.

I would like to personally thank Senator Patterson from the great Nunavut and his incredible staff, who have already passed this bill and shepherded it through the Senate. When discussing this bill, the senator revealed that this is his last year in the Senate. He actually turned 75 on almost the last day of the year that he can serve as a senator. He told me that if his generation is going to be remembered for anything, it will be the last one that remembers the world before the Internet. Can members imagine that? With this bill, Senator Patterson will be remembered for protecting this public utility for all of rural Canada.

The senator talked to me about the importance of this bill in the north, in the Northwest Territories, in Nunavut and in the Yukon. When it comes to the Internet, we are either five years ahead or five years behind. In rural Canada, we are certainly five years behind.

In the north, Northwest Territories Premier Caroline Cochrane, during a recent wildfire when phone and Internet lines were out, stressed that they had been asking for upgrades for decades, with no response. She said, "It angered me that we have been pleading and begging to have the same infrastructure that people in the south take for granted. Not extra, just basic infrastructure."

• (1735)

P.E.I. resident Julie Lauren pays \$161 per month for her home Internet service. Just for context, that is more than eight times what Australians pay. She lives in Bonshaw, P.E.I., a rural community just 30 minutes outside of Charlottetown. To have high-speed Internet at home, Lauren says that the only company she found that provides reliable service in her area is Starlink, a United States-based satellite Internet provider operated by the American company SpaceX. Most Canadians either cannot afford Internet or cannot get it because it has not rolled out yet.

Worse, how many times in the past have telcos abused the Internet spectrum, a public utility, as their own real estate and asset and profited from it? There are many examples of this very thing having happened. In 2008, after a competitive auction that lasted 331 rounds, Quebecor Media and Videotron Ltd. shelled out \$96.4 million for the exclusive rights to a block of wireless airwaves in Toronto, outside of its own market of Quebec. However, the telco never built a wireless network in Canada's most populous city, and in June 2017 sold the unused licences to Rogers Communications for \$184.2 million, netting an \$87.8-million profit. A month later, Videotron earned an even larger windfall of \$243.1 million by selling a handful of spectrum licences to western Canadian telecom company Shaw Communications Inc. In 2013, after scrapping its on again, off again plans to launch wireless services, Shaw sold 18 licences to Rogers for \$350 million, nearly twice the \$189.5 million it bought them for in 2008.

The message could not be clearer. Spectrum is a public utility, a public good. The government owns it and leases it to companies with the idea that they will use it. Spectrum should not be flipped like a piece of real estate; it should be developed. It should be given to companies to develop, especially in rural Canada so it can get the high-speed Internet it needs.

Private Members' Business

Although the government says it can do just that by law, there has been very little done about it. This bill would give the minister powers to do something about it. The minister's new powers would include repealing licences that do not meet the geographic deployment conditions. Right now they are met only by population. A lot of the time what will happen to spectrum licences if the licence holder fulfills the population conditions, which in tiers two to four include an urban component, so, for example, if a licensee fulfills the Toronto component but not the northern King region or Vaughan component, is that it can still hold on to that licence even though those rural users do not have Internet. This would make sure it is geographic, that 50% of the geographic area must be met, not just the urban area. It would include consent to an agreement to transfer the licence to a new provider if the original owner has partially deployed service.

Therefore, there would be a provision to use it or share it, so it would not be as cruel for those who are actively trying to deploy spectrum. It would give the minister the power to make a decision to work with that provider as long as it is working with the ministry and the minister. It would allow a spectrum licence to be shared among two or more companies to deliver the service through an assigned geographic area, which is not just use it or lose it but, if need be, use it or share it, which I think is very innovative.

These amendments came from the Senate. I would like to congratulate the senators on the many important amendments to the bill. There were many great improvements to its original form. One of the amendments was to ensure that those buying tier one to tier four licences would not be able to meet deployment conditions by simply deploying to the urban areas with those large geographic tiers, but would also be required to provide service to smaller rural and remote areas nestled within, in order to meet the obligations under this legislation. We are trying to work with those providers.

It also laid the foundation for other amendments focusing on the use-it-or-share-it regime, which would allow the minister to make the decision to share parts of the spectrum with companies that could fulfill the obligations of the spectrum rollout. In addition, it would provide ministerial flexibility to either outright revoke the licence or reallocate tier five areas, which are rural, within the licence, to other providers who are already able and ready to service the underserved areas. A lot of those were independent service providers, like a company called Storm, which is actively working on that.

The amendments also include a provision that would clarify the intent to ensure that licence holders cannot sell the licence up to and including three years minus a day, in an effort to avoid penalties for not complying with licence conditions. We would be giving the minister the power also to ensure that companies, on the 299th day prior to the 300 days the government has to revoke this, are complying. We would be giving the power to the minister, which is very important.

Another amendment would require the minister to start a competitive bidding process within 60 days not only of the revocation of a spectrum licence but also where the licence holder has voluntarily surrendered the licence as a result of not being able to meet its licensing obligations.

• (1740)

A further amendment addressed the concerns over the ability of smaller proponents, small companies, to raise the required capital to participate in the competitive bidding process, giving the minister the flexibility to use competitive bidding or other reallocation processes such as a first-come, first-served model when a licence is revoked or surrendered. Again, we have many small businesses that want to participate in this licence process. Let us give the minister the power to select those smaller companies, especially when it comes to rural Canada and the north.

Not all companies are bad, and spectrum auctioning is a necessary process where there is much demand and little supply like in urban Canada, but in rural Canada there is less supply, and this bill is awfully needed to fix that. Therefore, this bill would be a small start in the spectrum policy review in Canada, especially in rural Canada.

Senator Patterson noticed the importance of this bill in raising awareness of the major problem of connectivity including in indigenous communities, and the impact this plays on Canada's reconciliation process, especially as it pertains to enhancing the language and culture of those in remote communities. The senator also made many comments close to my heart on how the government should develop incentives and policies that foster competition and facilitate the entry of Canadian companies into the competitive market.

Canadians have had bad or worse connectivity in rural and remote areas in Canada. The really bad news is that most of Canada is rural and that 40% of rural Canadians do not even have access to high-speed Internet. That number is almost 60% for our first nations peoples. This is at a time when Canadians need fast, reliable Internet and cellphone coverage for their economic well-being, for their kids' education and perhaps, most important, for their safety.

This bill would ensure that those companies that win spectrum auctions actually use the spectrum they are buying in rural areas of Canada that need it. This is, with no small effect, to work on ensuring that the Canadian government and its minister of industry have a role to play in ensuring that the spectrum licences in this public utility purchased by companies are being put towards providing good, fast, reliable Internet for Canadians, or that a use-it-or-lose-it provision would ensure that, at the very least, the asset owned by the Canadian public is not just speculative for companies trying to earn another buck.

I want to thank Senator Patterson of Nunavut for putting forward this very important bill, a very timely one for when he retires. It is my hope that we in this place can support the work he has done in the Senate and this great first step to address rural connectivity in Canada.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, without question, this is a very important issue. I am thankful the senator raised this issue. We know that when it comes to rural and northern communities, there are still big challenges.

The member spoke about other levels of government. I would like to know what role the member sees when it comes to building more capacity in regard to municipalities and provincial and territorial governments. What roles do other levels of government have to play?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, the federal government takes the lead. Certainly, we have given the role to municipalities and provinces in terms of also fulfilling these obligations. However, it ultimately comes down to the company. The company is the one responsible for that spectrum, which is a taxpayer-owned entity, and for rolling that entity out in a timely and affordable fashion.

We realize that Canada is a large geographic area, so perhaps one of those answers is that we need more companies. The answer we have stated all along from this side of the House is that we need less government and more people in order to fix a lot of the problems here. We need more Canadian companies that can provide those services, provide spectrum and Internet to Canadians so Canadians have cheaper Internet and so they have Internet as a whole.

• (1745)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by acknowledging the leadership of my colleague from the Bay of Quinte on the issue of affordability of telecommunications services. We have seen him take strong action a number of times in the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, and I want to point that out.

In this context, does he acknowledge that Bill S-242 would still cause some market disruption? Reducing time limits could result in licences being auctioned off, which could increase rates, and that increase could be passed on to consumers.

This disruption to the industry may not be desirable, especially in rural and remote areas in a riding like mine. Therefore, will the member support the motion I moved at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, which he witnessed earlier, so that we can do an in-depth study on the elements related to the convergence and the modernization of the act?

How can we ensure that we create programs that are much better suited to building cell towers, for example, in remote rural areas?

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, when this bill gets to committee, I will definitely be in favour of any amendment that is going to improve it.

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For the most part, the amendments in the Senate have already satisfied some of my colleagues' concerns, including the effects on rural Canada and those companies, specifically with respect to the fact that the minister would have all the power to determine what happens if spectrum is unused. The biggest provision of this bill would be that of punishing only those who are grossly negligent in terms of not using spectrum that they said they were going to sell, in other words, using spectrum only for speculative activities by buying and selling it for more profit. If companies want to develop that spectrum in a rural area, I think they are going to find support from the minister in ensuring not only a use-it-or-lose-it provision but also the use-it-or-share-it provision that is in this bill.

We are going to be happy to discuss that at committee and make this bill the best it can be going forward.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the differences with the New Democrats' policy on Internet broadband is to actually have spectrum fund the build-out, which right now requires about \$6 billion.

I would ask my colleague if there are any regrets through the process we have had, in which \$21 billion has been raised through spectrum auctions since 2001. Conservative and Liberal governments have taken that money in. At the same time, there has not been oversight, and we have some of the highest prices. What are the member's thoughts in terms of why we have taken in so much money and have not had any type of connection with our spectrum auction policy with the \$21 billion that the governments have collected from Canadians?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, the simple answer is, yes, the government has taken all this money in, and at the end of the day, Canadians have paid more for Internet and cellphone than ever before. Canadians pay the highest cellphone bills in the whole world and they pay double for the Internet what the Americans and Australians do.

The answer from our side is to make sure there is more competition. Perhaps we should also ensure that when we are collecting all that money for spectrum, we should be looking at an urban component and a rural component, because the rural component needs help and the urban component is doing just fine.

[Translation]

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House as our parliamentary work resumes to represent the people of London West. Today I am pleased to speak to the important role that spectrum plays in the Canadian economy and in the daily lives of Canadians.

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[English]

I am pleased to see Bill S-242 draw attention to this important issue, and I look forward to studying this matter. Spectrum is a finite public resource and important enabler of economic activity, and Bill S-242 seeks to ensure that unused spectrum is being put to work. I think we can all agree on this goal.

[Translation]

As we conduct our study of this bill, it is very important that we reflect on the way it takes spectrum into account. Spectrum is increasingly having to support a wide range of economic and social activities, including mobile connectivity. Spectrum supports public safety networks, research, industrial applications, national defence and satellite services. The rules on spectrum also have to ensure that Canadian institutions and businesses can take advantage of smart technologies that can allow businesses to be more efficient, productive and innovative.

By supporting the use of automated, robotic and remote operations in industries such as mining, agriculture and manufacturing, spectrum can support business growth and economic development in remote rural regions and even in southwestern Ontario.

● (1750)

[English]

The government recognizes this and is supporting innovation through its spectrum licensing processes. For example, our recently announced non-competitive licensing framework will support the adoption of innovative technologies that our economy's productivity will ultimately depend on. My hope is that Bill S-242 can accommodate important spectrum measures such as these.

Bill S-242 has an important goal to put spectrum to work and get Canadians connected. Every Canadian, regardless of where they live or work, deserves access to reliable and affordable high-speed Internet. We saw the importance of this during the pandemic, when everybody had to work from home and figure out ways to continue to be productive. Furthermore, further study of this bill should be considered, including its interaction with existing and planned policies, and focus on ensuring that it would accelerate the objectives of universal broadband access and efficient spectrum use.

The Government of Canada has already committed to connecting 98% of Canadians to high-speed Internet by 2026 and 100% of Canadians by 2030. This is ambitious. We have made available over \$7.6 billion to expand access to high-speed Internet in underserved areas. Through our universal broadband fund, we have already helped connect over 200,000 underserved homes to high-speed Internet. With an additional 80,000 homes getting connected by the end of this year, that is a total of 750,000 homes to come.

[Translation]

The main proposal in Bill S-242 is to implement an overall target of 50% deployment in each spectrum band. Further study should examine how that objective will help us address this gap to achieve universal broadband coverage.

Most of these sectors are on track to be connected soon through our funding programs and 5G spectrum rules, which already require wireless services to be deployed to more than 97% of the popula-

tion. At the same time, this bill must still allow for innovative approaches that improve access to spectrum in rural areas, for diversity of use. For example, the non-competitive licensing framework I mentioned earlier takes an innovative approach to spectrum licensing. It enables access to shared 5G spectrum for a wider range of users and utilities than ever before, and allows small providers and non-traditional licensees to cover small specific-licence areas that are suitable for business cases. This could be a private network within a plant or a mine, coverage to support aquaculture, precision agriculture, or wireless broadband services for consumers. This framework will provide small Internet service providers, innovative industries, remote rural communities and indigenous peoples with quick and easy spectrum access.

[English]

However, it is licensed spectrum; it is a public resource, and it needs to be used. That is why we are already putting strong "use it or lose it" policies in place as part of our licensing policies in our spectrum auctions. As we release more spectrum, we continue to increase our deployment requirements using more ambitious targets, as well as smaller licence areas to ensure that coverage is targeted to rural communities. Our upcoming 5G spectrum auction later this year will feature our most ambitious deployment requirements to date, which will require operators to increase their coverage over time and expand into rural communities to meet our targets.

We are also strengthening older deployment requirements and pursuing policies that will provide new users with access to unused spectrum. This will also be in areas where deployment conditions have been met. As these processes come online, we will see even further progress in closing the connectivity gap across the country.

● (1755)

[Translation]

Finally, I believe that the potential impact of this bill on investment and implementation is worth studying. Bill S-242's deployment objectives will be implemented as quickly as the bids that could face significant uncertainty about exactly what is being sold during the next 5G auction.

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We also have to look at the potential impact of the bill on planned and existing investments, the 5G spectrum, and whether the rules for spectrum holders have now been changed. As the bill is drafted, operators will have to significantly modify their multi-year investment plan to comply with all the new deployment conditions. This could cause major upheaval in the sector. I am sure that is not the intent of the bill. The study can be more thorough and must look at the best way to maintain and improve existing investments in the network.

[English]

This is an important bill, and it is an important topic. I look forward to hearing the discussions of my colleagues and how we can continue to make sure that every home in Canada is connected and deployment is supported. The government has already started to connect families, and 750,000 families will be connected through our connectivity plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, to begin, I want to take a moment to extend my condolences to the family, friends and loved ones of my friend Mathieu Leblanc, who passed away recently. Mathieu was a colleague of mine from FAECUM and the University of Montreal and Quebec student movements. He was a supporter of the labour movement. It was very touching to see all of the things his family and friends had to say about him on social media over the past few days. Beer always tasted better when I drank it with him. I offer my condolences to his family. We will all miss him.

I am rising today to speak to a subject that is of vital importance to my region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue and all of the regions of Quebec. Cell coverage is becoming a critical issue for all communities. The smart phone that we all carry in our pockets is a tool that enables us to be in contact with our family, friends, jobs, businesses and institutions. Landlines do the same thing for those who still have them at home, but they are a tool that is being used less and less frequently.

In my region, like many others in Quebec, insufficient cell coverage can cause all sorts of problems.

To start with, I should mention our diminished capacity to attract residents, especially in rural communities. This hits close to home for me. My office manager, Christian, lives in Destor, a rural neighbourhood of Rouyn-Noranda. It can be hard if not impossible to reach him at home on a cell phone. The only option is to contact him through an Internet application, even though he lives just 45 minutes from downtown Rouyn-Noranda. Many other Abitibi-Témiscamingue residents face the same situation: they can only be reached using technologies other than cell phones. With the advent of telework, being unable to get a clear cell phone signal means that residents living in rural neighbourhoods far from large towns or cities become second-class citizens, unable to reap the benefits of this new work arrangement.

There is also, and perhaps most importantly, the issue of safety. Accidents happen. For example, on the road to Duparquet, at “9 Milles”, as it is known in the area, cell coverage is spotty. Inevitably, that increases the risk in the event of an accident. Crucial

life-saving minutes are lost simply because there is insufficient cell coverage on our main roads. This is just one example of the many cell coverage dead zones on our main roads. They can stretch for 15 to 20 kilometres and, in some places, even further. La Vérendrye park, which I visit every week, presents this same challenge.

Regarding the conditions for issuing spectrum licenses, Bill S-242 says that the promoter must undertake to “deploy the spectrum to provide service to at least 50% of the population.” That is not enough. If a promoter is only required to connect a minimum of 50% of the population, as the bill states, they will favour the most profitable areas of the spectrum. This will leave a large number of citizens without cell coverage, creating second-class citizens, as was the case with Internet coverage until recently. Let us just say that, in the context of the cellular network, those who make the company money were already connected.

The bill has to be able to offer the service to those who do not yet have it. What we are seeing is that it is the same companies and the same geographic realities as for the Internet. Before talking about competition, we need to talk about connecting more people in rural areas, in other words accessibility. It is a matter of equality of opportunity for rural and remote communities that are currently not well served.

People who opt for a rural lifestyle are being penalized right now. We are undermining land use, a core value. Our villages, our rural and remote communities deserve better. We must use legislative and financial incentives to encourage the full use of the spectrum allocated for rural and remote regions. Getting connectivity to keep pace with supply and demand, and the realities of competition, is rather slow and has reached a limit in the rural and remote regions. It is simple: companies do not serve places where it is not profitable.

We also need to limit the reassignment of a spectrum licence, because transferring licences from company to company only adds to the connectivity delays. This also creates uncertainty and this uncertainty can have a rather dramatic impact on price increases.

The government needs to fund the deployment of infrastructure to connect residents in unserved areas. Telecommunications companies must be required by law to serve as many residents as possible and share infrastructure more effectively to avoid building too much infrastructure.

● (1800)

Forcing telecommunications companies to serve as many residents as possible and share infrastructure more effectively means that the majority of people will be connected, but there will always be residents in areas where there is no access, and the government will have to act for the benefit of these people.

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That is why adequate funding is needed to connect these Quebecers and Canadians as quickly as possible. We need only look at the Quebec government's operation high speed. Since the money was sent to Quebec City, the plan was put in place quickly. Since 2021, the trucks of the employees installing the network have been everywhere, and the network is being rolled out at lightning speed. This is particularly true in Abitibi—Témiscamingue, where Videotron works.

By sending the money now to Quebec City, which is already prepared to act on this issue, cell coverage can be improved more quickly. I especially commend Quebec City for its leadership. This crucial and critical infrastructure will be built quickly in sparsely populated areas if we can count on the government.

The fact is that any debate on Internet and cellphone coverage always comes down to this: Do we want to occupy more of our land or do we want to concentrate people in and around big cities and major arteries? That is implicit in this debate. Choosing to live in the regions, choosing to live in rural areas, means using our lands and bringing them to life. Competition exists in our big cities, and to a certain extent in our towns, but the issue is not whether there is competition; the issue is access to services. To develop competition, we must have at least one player already on the ground. It is a matter of equal opportunity for rural communities, which are often underserved.

The issue of duration is relevant in itself and is raised in Bill S-242. Should we impose a deadline or not, and what deadline would be acceptable? Take, for example, the deployment of high-speed Internet in Quebec, launched in 2021. Even today, two years later, most of the connections are fast because the operation was subsidized. It is important to understand that this deployment will not happen overnight. This timeframe calls for consultation with the community to ensure that this time requirement can be met. It is one thing to demand this of a major player in the industry. It is quite another to demand it of a new or smaller player in the field.

The issues of Internet access, cell service in rural areas and cell network convergence deserve to be studied in greater depth. Can the government create a program to build cell towers in regions where there is no service?

That is why I decided to move a motion a few minutes ago at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology. My motion addresses these issues and will enable us to study them with various industry players. It will also allow for in-depth consideration of the accessibility and affordability of wired and wireless products. The committee could seek input from the CRTC, the Competition Bureau, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry or the Minister of Rural Economic Development, all of which could be of interest here. That will give us the data and recommendations we need to ensure that we respond appropriately to consumers' concerns and needs.

People are using wired services less and less, and wireless communications are taking over, so we have to study this issue in depth. I truly believe that a committee study is the best way to develop a regulatory framework that will meet the needs of Quebecers from Gaspé to Rouyn-Noranda.

The Bloc Québécois will vote against this legislation. We ask that the House engage in a much deeper process of reflection, similar to the one followed for high speed Internet. This issue has been a key commitment for me, and the reason I entered politics in 2019. If I may use a redundant expression, it was the priority priority of my election campaign.

Back then, in the kind of rural area where I live, it became clear that existing services could not provide Internet access. The programs in place planned to take five years to install 50 kilometres of fibre optic cable, during which time no one would be able to connect to the Internet. It was a major problem. Seven, eight, even ten types of programs were being operated by different service providers to provide Internet access in certain regions, but none of them were compatible. We complained loudly to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology.

COVID-19 also sped up the process, as people found themselves teleworking or studying from home. I think that the federal government has realized its program's shortcomings because we pressed the matter. At the same time, following the example of Abitibi-Ouest, the Quebec government created operation high speed. They mapped the area, figured out the needs and awarded the grants. I commend their leadership, and I hope the same will happen with the cellular network very soon.

• (1805)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to talk about this issue. I also want to thank Senator Patterson for putting forth the legislation, which we will hopefully move to the industry committee.

It is really important to understand a couple of things about the spectrum auction. I know that, when we talk about these things, people's eyes usually glass over; they do not see this as something that connects to them and their family on a regular basis. However, it is at the root of the problem in terms of the reason we have high prices. I say that because, from Jean Chrétien to Paul Martin, Stephen Harper and our current Prime Minister, the philosophy has been to grab the cash from these companies and then have no terms and conditions related to pricing, consumer rights or any of those things. The profits these companies have and the way they treat the general public would make a robber baron blush.

It is important for the public to understand this: We control all this. We always have. That is not in dispute. It is something that is not going to change. We issue out the public airwaves. The public space above us, which we own, is a series of different products in terms of speed and the way it can be accessed by companies, but we control it 100%.

There has been \$21 billion that has come in to the government coffers under Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, Stephen Harper and now the current Prime Minister. At the same time, these robber barons have been allowed to set up a system with low competition, high charges and fees, and conduct that is not appropriate.

We can remember that, recently, because of their own turf war, these companies failed Canadians who needed to make 911 calls during an emergency. We lost control of emergency services because of two children having a fight in the playground. What was the response? It was not a whole lot. We had to come up with a legislative solution. The minister was actually out of the country and had to call the companies and beg for us to get back online. That is the nature of these companies.

When I came here originally, Bell Canada would not even follow through with the mandate for pay equity for its women workers at the time. We had to bring in the CEO of Bell, who was actually later hired by the Prime Minister for a side job, to get equal pay for women in their own company. We had hearings here in Ottawa on that. This is the routine behaviour of some of the industry toward Canadians on a regular basis.

I can go on with a few other examples. I congratulate the minister for the TTC, but why did it take the minister's intervention to get cellphone service sorted out properly in an area that is dangerous and is used by millions of people each day? Again, the children on the playground had to be brought together to get a solution.

On the Shaw-Rogers takeover, how outrageous is it that the minister still has not responded? I wrote him a letter about it. Our Competition Bureau took that to court, because we would not do the right thing in this place to stop the takeover and have fewer entries into the market. The Competition Bureau, which is the public interest, took them to court to challenge it. It is a routine thing that other countries do.

What did Rogers do? It sued the Competition Bureau, and outrageously, it has to pay Rogers \$8 million for the Competition Bureau just to protect Canadians. Meanwhile, the Competition Bureau has to do all kinds of legislative work and other types of work. Basically, the watchdog ends up paying the robber baron at the end of the day.

What would this bill do? There are a couple of things New Democrats have been calling for. Number one is cellphone service as an essential service, flat out, full stop. It is involved in one's life and emergencies. Remember when the government, for immigration, put out that one could get on the immigration file very quickly? With a higher speed of service, one actually got the spots from the government. The government did that, and it was a policy. Therefore, one's speed affects not only that but also one's work, school and the way one can be involved in life.

The rural component is really abused in this country. In fact, since the pandemic, the speeds have not improved very much. Meanwhile, urban speeds are going up again. Again, New Democrats have called for this to be an essential service.

• (1810)

In addition, we called for stopping the cash grab as a policy that ends up putting those profits, or subsidies, back into the companies. An alternative model, which other countries have used, is to demand that when a company gets a spectrum, it has to have some low-cost service fees for seniors, persons with disabilities and low-income earners, and the speeds have to be the same. We can do that

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through a mandate the way they do the RFP, request for proposal, on how we sell the spectrum.

Instead, we have added diction for the \$21 billion and growing. Until we actually change that process, we are going to pass on that \$21 billion. This is not only in terms of the cost going to the public, and where it has gone in the past many years is unbelievable, but also in terms of the expense, which will go to consumers. What do the big companies do? They pass on the cost of the spectrum to their customers.

Let us think about this as a Canadian. Our own government takes our resource, gobbles it up, sells it and then tries to squeeze every single cent it can out of the spectrum auction for whatever else it can get. It then passes on that cost back to the people.

I previously mentioned those former prime ministers. The other thing they have in common is that they have cut corporate taxes when these CEOs and these companies are making record profits. There are no terms and conditions, despite the product, the spectrum, being our own. I do not care if someone is a Canadian on Bay Street, up north, in Alberta, in Quebec, in Newfoundland or in Ontario, and I can go on, but we all own this equally.

It is now a toll road in the sky. That is what we have created with our natural asset. By the way, not all toll roads are created equal. If someone is from a rural area, they get a double whammy. Not only is their resource used against them for the price and costing, but they also get a poor product. That is just plain and simple.

This bill stops one of the worst practices we have. I really want to thank Senator Patterson for this. If someone were to buy spectrum, we were allowing the purchaser to then resell it. How stupid is that? It is not in the public interest that we would actually go out there, try to squeeze what we can out of a company and then let the company that got the spectrum sell it for a profit without doing any work, with no terms and conditions.

Where do people think that cost goes? We get a double layer. How about double or triple taxation? This is unacceptable. Again, this goes back to Chrétien, Martin, Harper and now the current PM in terms of the philosophy. Senator Patterson's bill fixes that one problem. Companies will no longer be allowed to go and do that. We are actually ransoming our asset against ourselves.

When we go to committee with this bill, it will only touch on certain things. Not all those things are going to be dealt with, but these are controllables right now. We have to lower the price of cellphones and services, but we need a prime minister and a minister who are willing to put in place terms and conditions as never before to build out our system, as opposed to just trying to do a cash deal, take the money and run.

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We are at \$21 billion, and right now, it is estimated that to connect all Canadians at a reasonable rate, it should be \$6 billion. By the way, the reasonable rate is set by the CRTC, and the NDP says that should be the floor, not the ceiling. It should be the best, not the worst that someone can get. With \$6 billion, we could actually roll out the proper coverage and connection. Our policies should be based upon that.

What is really unfortunate about this is that we have done it to ourselves. It is up to us to fix this now. We cannot continue to have a policy that does nothing other than to be a cash grab for the prime minister of the day, with the fallout of high prices, low accountability, and low standards and services from companies that have to be reined in because of the way they aggressively pursue actions against their own customers.

• (1815)

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak to Bill S-242, an act to amend the Radiocommunication Act. If passed, Bill S-242 would require spectrum holders to significantly increase the deployment of this finite and valuable resource.

Most Canadians will ask what spectrum is, and that is a great question. Spectrum is intangible, but it is an extremely valuable asset worth billions of dollars. In fact, the most expensive auctions in the entire world are for spectrum. Access to spectrum decides who can go online, determines who can use the Internet and can even save a person's life through a call to 911. However, to help understand the importance of spectrum, let us go back over 100 years to April 14, 1912: the day the RMS *Titanic* crashed into an iceberg over 300 nautical miles off the coast of Newfoundland. The tragic result was that over 1,500 people perished.

Some will say that it was solely an iceberg responsible for the fatalities of the *Titanic*, but many experts have pointed out that managing radio interference could have prevented the fatalities the night the *Titanic* sank.

Radios use spectrum bands to communicate through different frequencies, and back in 1912, radio communication was the most common way to communicate wirelessly. Historians say that the electronics of the wireless telegraph on the *Titanic* created so much noise that it interfered with the communication systems on ships nearby. In fact, multiple ships warned the *Titanic* of nearby icebergs the day it encountered its own.

To make matters worse, a ship by the name of the SS *Californian*, only 16 kilometres away, did not receive the *Titanic*'s urgent call for help on the night of April 14. This was not because it was too far away, but because its only wireless operator had turned off the communication system after an earlier dispute with the *Titanic* over radio interference. As a result, not one SOS message was received by the *Californian*, although it was the closest ship to the *Titanic*.

This failure to manage spectrum prompted the swift passage of the Radio Act of 1912 in the United States. The Radio Act enabled the federal government to license wireless operations, and although spectrum was mainly used for radio communications in 1912, to-

day, spectrum is the foundation of Internet and cellular connectivity in our digital world.

As such, although times have changed, the consequences of mismanaging spectrum continue to exist. The reality is that Bill S-242 was introduced because of the current government's mismanagement of spectrum. Rural Canadians in particular suffer as a result of this mismanagement.

As the Conservative shadow minister of rural economic development and connectivity, I will focus on how the current Liberal government's mismanagement of spectrum has failed rural Canadians.

Later this year, the Liberal government is set to auction off the 3,800-megahertz band of spectrum. This spectrum is needed to connect Canadians with high-speed internet and cellular service. However, if telecom companies fail to use the spectrum they purchase, then Canadians will not be connected with the reliable Internet and cellular service they need. Moreover, because the government sets the rules for spectrum auctions, along with the requirements for deploying spectrum, the government directly influences how many Canadians will be connected with this essential service.

Unfortunately, if we examine the deployment requirements of the upcoming spectrum auctions, we can clearly see how little the government cares about connecting Canadians in rural and remote areas. The government has irresponsibly signed off on a plan that will shut rural Canadians out of accessing high-speed Internet and cellular services for decades.

For example, the deployment requirements for most urban regions in the upcoming auctions require a minimum population coverage of 50% over 10 years. Regions that include cities such as Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Regina and St. John's all require telecom companies to connect 50% of their population within 10 years. Members may think that 10 years is a long time for only 50% of the population to be covered with the newest technology, and I would agree. However, when we look at the connectivity requirements set by the current Liberal government for the upcoming spectrum auction, a massive discrepancy exists between how quickly urban Canadians and rural Canadians will be connected.

• (1820)

This is shocking in today's digital age when high-speed connectivity is vital to economic and social prosperity. Rural Canadians should be furious that the current Liberal government has signed off on a plan to connect rural Canadians much more slowly than the rest of Canada in the upcoming spectrum option.

For example, the good people of Timmins, Ontario, should be furious to learn that only 35% of them can expect to be connected with the Internet and cellular services needed in today's digital age within a lacklustre 10 years. In Grand Falls-Windsor and Gander, Newfoundland, the government is only requiring telecom companies to connect 10% of the population over 10 years. It is clear how little the Liberal government cares about Smithers, British Columbia, because it will only require telecom companies to connect 20% of the Smithers region with this spectrum band over an outrageously slow time frame of 20 years.

When we look at its plan for connecting Canadians, it is clear how little the government cares about connecting the rural and remote Canadians who need this service the most. The longer the spectrum deployment requirements are, the longer Canadians will wait to be connected. The Liberals love making announcements when it comes to reliable Internet and cellular service, but they have failed to deliver, miserably.

This Prime Minister does not care about rural Canadians. In fact, he has yet to learn what realities they face. I was recently in Yukon where a local first nations development organization told me that predators will deliberately prey on individuals along highways without cellular service because they know their victims cannot call 911 for help. These are the realities of the government's failed connectivity plan.

This Prime Minister pretends that his government has connected rural Canadians with high-speed Internet and cell service, but rural Canadians know he is misleading them. Earlier this year, Canada's independent Auditor General confirmed in her damning report to Parliament what rural Canadians already knew. Despite billions of dollars in announcements and multiple so-called strategies, over one million Canadian households and over 50% of first nations still do not have access to high-speed Internet. This report did not even include the many cellular dead zones across Canada that are threatening the public safety of Canadians, especially those in Atlantic Canada who just faced deadly hurricanes.

However, results do not matter to the current government, because the Liberal government measures success on how much of Canadians' money they announce instead of how many Canadians they can connect. In fact, since the Liberals introduced their universal broadband fund, they announced over \$200 million in taxpayer funds for Bell Canada, over \$38 million for Telus and over \$5 million for Rogers. I cannot forget to mention the Liberals' disastrous Infrastructure Bank. The government announced over \$640 million for Bell and \$660 million for Rogers through its Infrastructure Bank, which has failed to complete countless projects.

It would be one thing if these billions of dollars resulted in high-speed Internet and cell service for all Canadians, but that is not the case. Connectivity projects across Canada are not getting built because government gatekeepers are slow to approve applications; connectivity projects are not getting built because there are so many bureaucratic programs that organizations are losing track of their applications; and connectivity projects are not being built because there just is not enough competition. The Liberals love announcing billions of dollars in taxpayer-funded money, but fail to connect Canadians.

Private Members' Business

This is a problem because the government can connect Canadians through better spectrum policy. Rural Canadians cannot afford to wait any longer to receive dependable quality and affordable service. As urban communities become connected at a much faster rate, the future of economic growth in rural Canada is at risk. It has become clearer that the current approach is not working.

In conclusion, sending Bill S-242 to committee is important so it can get studied, and improved if needed. We know the consequences of poor spectrum management. In 1912, it contributed to the sinking of the unsinkable *Titanic*. Today, it determines whether rural and remote Canadians sink or swim in our economy and our society. Canadians are counting on us to connect them. Let us bring it home.

● (1825)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the mover of the bill made reference to the fact that he was but a child when the Internet was around. It made me reflect on myself. When I was a child attending school, the Internet did not exist, so there is maybe a bit of a generational gap.

During the eighties the Internet really started to come upon Canadian communities with the old dial-up service, dial tones and so forth. With the advancements in technology that we have witnessed over the last number of decades, today it is safe to say that when we think of the Internet, it is an essential service. It is of critical importance.

When I think of many rural communities, if not all of our rural communities, I think about how they can dramatically benefit from the Internet. We need to understand and appreciate the way in which communities, both rural and urban, can benefit through the Internet. We have heard a number of citations, such as about the economic power of the Internet. We can talk about health services today that are on the Internet, along with the many different types of services that can be acquired. It is truly amazing.

When we talk about the spectrum I can appreciate the fact that over the last couple of decades the spectrum issue has been on the floor of the House of Commons. It is something ministers have had to deal with.

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I start to get a little bit offside with some of the comments, whether coming from the Conservatives or my New Democratic friends, in particular, when they start making accusations or expressing concerns about how this government has allegedly been neglecting rural connectivity. I would argue that there has not been a government that has spent more time, energy and financial resources in ensuring that rural communities are being connected. They talk about hundreds of millions of dollars that have been collected through spectrum auctions or the selling off of spectrum, which has been estimated somewhere in the neighbourhood of about \$20 billion. It is a significant amount of money.

This government has also invested hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars into rural communities related to Internet access. The government has done that because, as I indicated, we have recognized the importance of rural economic development plus the social benefits of expanding and ensuring rural—

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has expired. The hon. member will have six minutes and 40 seconds the next time this matter is before this House.

As I said, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

Pursuant to order made earlier today, the House shall now resolve itself into committee of the whole to consider Motion No. 28 under Government Business.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

(House in committee of the whole on Government Business No. 28, Mrs. Carol Hughes in the chair)

The Deputy Chair: Before we begin this evening's debate, I would like to remind hon. members of how proceedings will unfold.

[English]

Each member speaking will be allotted 10 minutes for debate, followed by 10 minutes for questions and comments.

Pursuant to an order made earlier today, members may divide their time with another member. The time provided for the debate may be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each. The Chair will not receive any dilatory motions, quorum calls or requests for unanimous consent.

We will now begin tonight's take-note debate.

Before we do that I would like to remind hon. members that pursuant to Standing Order 17, every member participating in person desiring to speak must rise in their place.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (for the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons) moved:

That this committee take note of the allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Mississauga—Malton.

As this is my first time rising in the House today after the summer break, I would like to take a moment to thank the constituents of Brampton East for putting their faith in me as I continue to advocate for them here in Ottawa.

I want to start today by offering my sincere condolences to the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian tragically killed on Canadian soil.

As the Prime Minister said yesterday in this very chamber:

Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Canada is a rule-of-law country. The protection of our citizens and the defence of our sovereignty are fundamental. Our top priorities have therefore been, one, that our law enforcement and security agencies ensure the continued safety of all Canadians, and two, that all steps be taken to hold perpetrators of this murder to account.

Our law enforcement and security agencies are actively pursuing this with the utmost importance and severity.

As I said, all Canadians deserve to feel safe and our government will do everything it takes to ensure Canadians and our sovereignty are not violated and Canadians are protected.

The Prime Minister of Canada raised this very serious concern directly with Prime Minister Modi just recently while he was in India and urged the Government of India to co-operate with Canada on this important matter. This is something our government is working closely on with many of our important allies around the world.

Canada is a country that respects international law and freedom of expression without violence. We will always stand up for these principles and values that we as Canadians, regardless of where we come from across the globe, hold very dear to our hearts.

As Canadians, it is important that we remain united. It is essential that we remain steady in our democratic values and principles.

I must say that this is a very difficult time for many families in my riding of Brampton East, those who come from India, with ties with India and the broader community.

Many constituents have reached out to express their deep and serious concerns on this matter. It is important to note that all parties in the House unequivocally stand with Canadians and stand united against all forms of foreign interference. It does not matter on this issue if one is a Liberal, Conservative, NDP, Bloc or Green. We heard from all leaders of these parties yesterday in this very chamber, who stood up together against the killing of Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

For those listening at home, there is one unifying message from all parties in the House, that no form of foreign interference will ever be tolerated and we will hold steady in our pursuit of justice. At a time when many from the Indo-Canadian community have deep concerns, it is important that we stand together and stand united.

As Canadians, we are proud of our multiculturalism. We value all religions and backgrounds, and we have a mutual respect for one another and our beliefs. Canada is a country made up of immigrants from across the world and it is our diversity and inclusivity which makes us stronger and keeps us united.

Diasporas from all around the world come to Canada for a better life for their families because of our values, the rule of law, the strength of our democratic institutions and so much more.

In my riding of Brampton East, we have gurdwaras, mandirs, masjids and churches, to name a few. I have witnessed first-hand the value of diversity in my riding and the mutual respect communities have for each other.

This is not just a representation of Brampton. This is a representation of many communities across Canada. During my recent visit to Richmond, B.C., I visited the “Highway to Heaven” and witnessed a Buddhist temple, synagogue, monastery and so many places of worship side by side.

The “Highway to Heaven” is home to many religious institutions from the Buddhist, Sikh, Hindu and Muslim faiths across Canada.

From coast to coast to coast, Canada truly is a diverse country and this is what makes us Canadian. As Canadians, we truly are one big family, and we need to continue standing together. Our values of multiculturalism, inclusion, resilience and respect bring us together and define what it means to be Canadian.

We value the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, which protects the rights and freedoms of Canadians, including freedom of expression and the right to equality. We all deserve to feel safe and be safe in our communities.

As I conclude today, as we saw in the chamber yesterday from all parties that this is a time for all Canadians to stand together, hold steady, be calm, be there for one another and hold strong our principles and values as Canadians.

• (1835)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Chair, I would like to thank my colleague across the way for his comments, and I would like to stand in solidarity with the South Asian community of my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. They do not simply live there, they helped build my community. I am thinking of the temple in Paldi. They helped, as a part of the forestry industry, and are an integral part of the fabric of my community.

The revelations yesterday have shocked many in my community as well. Right now, we need a moment of openness and transparency. The community, in the weeks and months ahead, will be looking for answers. I would like the parliamentary secretary to commit to the House today whether the government will be providing measured objectives and status updates on how this investigation is pro-

ceeding, so this community could have answers on how the pursuit of justice is proceeding.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, just like in his community in his riding, in my community, they have come together on this very important matter to stand united as Canadians against foreign interference.

As this is an active investigation, I do not think it is fair for me to comment on the investigation itself. I think it is fair to say that we stand together against foreign interference in all its forms.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Madam Chair, my colleague said during his speech that the Prime Minister had raised the issue with the Indian Prime Minister during his recent visit to India for the G20.

My question is quite simple. Why wait until yesterday, the first day that Parliament resumed, to share that information with parliamentarians?

We know that the Prime Minister had some trouble coming back. He ran into some technical problems, but he has been back for a number of days now.

Why wait until yesterday, when Parliament resumed, to make this dramatic statement?

[English]

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, the Prime Minister did indeed raise this issue, but it is not the first time the issue was brought to that level of government, through ministers, parliamentarians and MPs feeding into the system about our communities' concerns.

I know many of the MPs met with the public safety minister to express these concerns that we are hearing from our communities. We will continue raising the voice of our community to ensure that justice is served.

• (1840)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Chair, first off, I have a large Sikh population that I represent in Winnipeg North. I know there is a great deal of concern on the issue. I also have a very strong, caring and passionate feeling towards India, a country that I believe Canada needs to have a wonderful, positive, growing relationship with well into the future.

I was caught by the member's comments when he said that we should remain calm and believe in the fact that Canada is a nation that has a strong belief in the rule of law and that justice will be served. Could the member expand upon his thoughts? He made reference to, as I believe, remaining calm and depending on the system that has served us so well for so many years.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Chair, as leaders in our respective communities across the country, I think it is on us to ensure that the community knows that our institutions and security agencies are working hard at this investigation.

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I think it is about our principles and values, which we need to continue to remain united and hold strong as Canadians. Any type of foreign interference is not going to be tolerated in any of our communities, but it is on us as leaders to stand within our communities to unite our communities in standing for our principles and values.

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): Madam Chair, yesterday, the Prime Minister rose in this chamber to speak about something that strikes at the core of sovereignty of Canada. Now I wish to speak to all Canadians. As the PM said, over the past number of weeks, Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty. Foreign interference is unbecoming of any democracy, as is the potential link of the foreign interference of a country that proudly proclaims itself to be the largest democracy in the world. The government of India needs to take this matter with utmost sincerity and seriousness. We are not looking to provoke or to escalate, but we are a rule of law country. The protection of our citizens and the defence of our sovereignty are fundamental.

Many news outlets in India have reported on this issue and have already made conclusions, which are so outrageous that they can only be defined as misinformation at best. They should know that this was not a political calculation for votes. This is an immense country with many vast and diverse diaspora communities, and they are all equally Canadian. The remarks yesterday were made in spite of how diaspora communities vote, and not for diaspora votes.

For many Canadians, including those from the Sikh community, yesterday confirmed what they already knew and felt. Many deep-seated fears were realized. In the Sikh community, people grow up learning and hearing about the Indian state, how it has treated Sikhs and how it keeps an eye on Sikhs in Canada. To hear that there is a potential link between the murder of a Sikh living in Canada and the Indian state strikes at the very heart of the security that a lot of Sikhs came to Canada to find.

A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian. Now, we will test the veracity of those words. A Canadian was killed on Canadian soil. In seeking justice, we must heal the divisions of the past and not create further divisions. As Canadians, we are one people with a common future. For the strength of our democracy and the harmony of our people, we must come together and close rank. We must stand united against foreign powers that seek to undermine our fundamental freedoms.

It is true in Canada that we have divergent views. This is not a sign of weakness. The strength of democracy is shown most in how openly we can air those divergent views. I call on all Canadians to unite. While there will be time to debate our differences, now is the time to find common ground. Despite the pain, we must be patient. We must trust our institutions to do the important work of carrying out justice. We will wait for, and we will demand, justice.

• (1845)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Chair, the Prime Minister was transparent with the House and Canadians yesterday when he told us this news. I am grateful to him for that. However, it has created public concern, particularly in the Sikh community in Canada. There is a very large Sikh community here, and we are starting to hear from people. They are worried and more fearful for their safety, knowing this information. We can imagine that they have families and loved ones in India.

What is the government's message to reassure these people who are on Canadian soil right now?

[English]

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Madam Chair, as a member of the Sikh community of Canada, I know Canadians stand united against foreign interference in all of its forms, including the targeting of diverse Canadians who come from diverse countries.

I am an immigrant myself, and I have family within India. I share the same concerns that my hon. colleague raised. Again, there is an ongoing investigation. I cannot comment on that investigation, but we will stand united against all forms of foreign interference.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, as we know, the issue of foreign interference is real and is happening here in Canada. Earlier it was exposed through CSIS that there has been significant foreign interference from China, even targeting members of this Parliament. The latest revelation from the Prime Minister about India is particularly disturbing. This situation is very serious. People in my community in Vancouver and, I would say, across the nation are wanting to stand united to recognize the importance and significance of this issue.

To that end, with respect to the public inquiry that is finally now before us, what message do we want to bring to the commissioner as the commissioner looks into foreign interference, most definitely interference from China but also this instance and other instances? What suggestions—

The Deputy Chair: The hon. member for Mississauga—Malton.

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Madam Chair, the federal government chose Justice Hogue to lead the independent public inquiry, and she will be tasked with investigating the interference by China, Russia and other foreign states and non-state actors in the 2019 and 2021 elections and otherwise. Her background is legal, as is mine. It is to respect the rule of law, and she was appointed under the Inquiries Act. The commissioner will act and operate independently from the government and will have a full range of powers.

At this moment, I think it is inappropriate for me to comment on how the commissioner should do her job.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, in my riding of Brampton East, the South Asian community, Sikhs, Hindu, Muslims and various diasporas in my riding, have reached out with various degrees of concern about foreign interference. I would like to hear from the member if he has heard the same thing from some of his constituents in Mississauga—Malton?

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Madam Chair, the member's riding is a neighbour to my riding, and we share some of the same communities. I have heard the same concerns from folks with family member abroad, both immigrants and individuals who were born in Canada who have families overseas. Individuals fundamentally respect the rule of law no matter where they come from or where they are, and the rule of law is what this country stands for as well.

We will continue to advocate on behalf of the constituents of Brampton East, as well as for the constituents of Mississauga—Malton.

• (1850)

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Chair, I would like to ask my colleague opposite how he can explain the lack of reaction from Canada's partners, who were so quick to react regarding the two Michaels. Apparently, no one is standing up this time.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[English]

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Madam Chair, my answer to the member is an resounding yes. We should call on our partners who respect the rule of law to hold countries that engage in foreign interference to account.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Chair, yesterday we learned from the Prime Minister that the Government of Canada had intelligence that linked the Indian government to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar outside a Surrey gurdwara in June.

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to offer and convey my sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Nijjar for their loss. I know that it must be incredibly difficult, especially given the circumstances that have since unfolded and the horrific public nature of this murder.

One thing is clear. If the allegations that have come to light are true, they not only represent a murder, but also an egregious violation of Canada's sovereignty. Canadian citizens and all persons in Canada must be safe from interference from foreign governments, and they certainly must be protected from extrajudicial killings. There must be no question that Canadians on Canadian soil should not have to worry about their safety in relation to authorities beyond our borders.

[Translation]

If these allegations are true, they represent an outrageous affront to Canada's sovereignty. Our citizens must be safe from extrajudi-

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cial killings of all kinds, most of all from foreign governments. Canadians deserve to be protected on Canadian soil.

We call on the Indian government to act with the utmost transparency as authorities investigate this murder, because the truth must come out. We must know who performed the assassination and who was behind the assassination. The Conservatives will continue to work to get these answers.

[English]

Canadians deserve the facts of what happened here. They must be provided with the truth. That means that the Canadian government must share the evidence that it has. It also means that the Indian government must provide transparency and co-operate with authorities as this murder is investigated. The public deserves to know who was responsible for this murder and why it occurred. Canadians can rest assured that Conservatives will not rest until we get these answers.

Conservatives and all Canadians stand with those diaspora communities of Indian origin who have been impacted so directly by these tragic events. We appeal for calm as we navigate these difficult circumstances. We also must stand for the rule of law, one of the foundational principles of Canada. We must defend it vigorously so that no Canadian is deprived of it.

[Translation]

All Canadians now stand with diaspora communities of Indian origin. At this time, the official opposition makes an appeal for calm.

We are all Canadians. This is our country. We must be united for our home and for each other. Let us all lock arms and join hands in condemning this murder, standing with the family and friends of its victim. Let us all put aside our differences to stand up for the rule of law, one law for all of our people, a law made in this chamber by Canadians for Canadians.

[English]

No matter our background, we are all Canadians. Canada is our country and we must be united as we confront these challenges. We all condemn this murder, and we all stand with the families and friends of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. That is the Canadian way.

• (1855)

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank the hon. member for his important remarks today.

Would the hon. member agree that we need to stand together against all forms of foreign interference?

When families in my riding came to this country, including my own family, we came to this country because of our respect for international law, our rules and principles. I am hoping the member can expand on standing up together against foreign interference as we saw yesterday in the chamber.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, of course, Conservatives have been calling for stronger measures to protect Canada against foreign interference.

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My hon. colleague is correct, people come to Canada from all around the world because of what Canada offers. We are a diverse country, because people come to Canada for our freedoms; for the ability to live their lives the way they choose; to raise their children the way they want; and to pass down their culture, faith and language to the next generation of their families. That is why so many people come from all over the world. All different backgrounds, all different cultures come to Canada, and we are united in that freedom. So, absolutely, Conservatives believe in taking strong measures to defend our institutions, our country and our people against any form of foreign interference, especially when it comes to a tragic situation like this.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Chair, I was listening to my colleague's speech and it made me realize that I am going to get some mileage out of the speeches made by my Bloc Québécois colleagues. They took turns asking questions that seem important, at least to me, yet I have not heard any answers.

First, my colleague from Montarville asked how it is possible that the Prime Minister, who has known about this for some time, waited until yesterday before announcing it in the House. There may be a good reason, but I would like to hear it.

The other question is the one from my colleague from Trois-Rivières. Perhaps the previous speaker can answer. Why are other governments not supporting our Prime Minister's statement and his request to get to the bottom of this matter? I am curious and trying to understand the dynamic.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, I thank my colleague for his questions. However, these great questions should be directed at the government. I am an official opposition member and I do not have the information that the Prime Minister has. I do not have access to the information from our intelligence agencies.

I think that my colleague raised questions that many Canadians are asking. Only the Prime Minister or a member of his team can answer those questions. The Prime Minister did not go over all the information he received that led to the statement he made yesterday.

The hon. member could ask a member of the party in power that question when he has another opportunity to do so during this debate.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Chair, I would like to again state that I stand in solidarity with the South Asian, and particularly the Sikh, community in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, and I would agree with the member. They are looking for transparency and openness during the course of this investigation.

My question to the House leader is this: If the credible allegations head toward a path where the facts become incontrovertible and we do have hard evidence of the involvement of the Indian government, does he have any ideas on what Canada's response, vis-à-vis India, should be in its international relations with that country?

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, I think it is premature to talk about what might happen should information come to light. I think we should focus on the need for that information to come to light, and that is why it is our position that the Prime Minister should disclose the information he has that led to his statement yesterday. I think only then can we start to talk about what might come after that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, I want to thank the leader of the official opposition for taking the tone he has taken, as did the hon. member just now, that we need to see more evidence and that we need to know. These charges are grave. I am as alarmed and aggrieved as any member in this House. I would have liked to have, right away, in response to the Prime Minister, extended condolences, support and deep sympathy for the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. Unfortunately the official opposition chose to deny me the unanimous consent to speak then, but that does not stop me from thanking them for taking the very sober tone that we need to see the evidence.

Would the hon. member's leader reconsider the offer to have top-secret security clearance so that those of us who are leaders of opposition parties in this place, but particularly the leader of the official opposition, have access to materials that are classified and top secret? I ask, because I think, especially given the gravity of these recent revelations from the Prime Minister that the Government of India may have committed murder on Canadian soil, we need to see all the evidence. Does this House leader believe the leader of the official opposition might reconsider rejecting the opportunity to get top-secret security clearance?

• (1900)

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands knows full well that this offer was made in relation to a different kind of foreign interference, the foreign interference by the Communist regime in Beijing, and that it was part of a multi-faceted attempt by the government to avoid transparency on that issue.

Our position is that the Prime Minister made a very public statement yesterday. He rose in this House and made a very public statement. He delivered a statement to the media. He is making very public allegations, so we do not believe there is any reason to have secret briefings where those who attend those briefings have to keep those secrets. We believe Canadians have a right to know what happened, and the evidence that led to the Prime Minister's statement yesterday should be released so that all Canadians can understand what is going on.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I am listening to the House leader of the opposition, and what he has just said is that he is asking for evidence that is to go before courts for people who have not even been charged yet to be disclosed in public, so that everyone may know, and then those who are not even charged yet could possibly run away, go away and hide their deeds.

I think I have a lot of respect for the member. He has been a Speaker here. He understands the rule of law and order and knows, I hope, the basic fundamental principles of law and order and evidence in court proceedings that one cannot do that. It would be very irresponsible for a Prime Minister of any party to ever get up and give evidence in this chamber.

I think the duty in this chamber was to give reassurance, so I ask the hon. opposition House leader to clarify why he would want evidence of an ongoing investigation to be given out in public.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, that is just complete nonsense. I did nothing of the sort. I said that the Prime Minister had information. He had evidence that led him to make a very public statement and a very public determination yesterday. That is all we are saying.

We are not in any way saying that something might rise to the level of an actual court proceeding. We are saying that the information that was provided to the Prime Minister that led to the statement should be made public, that the evidence that he has should be put forward so that Canadians can understand what is going on. Perhaps they are trying to dance between the semantics of certain definitions of words, but I think it is safe to say, that when the Prime Minister rises in this place and makes such a statement, the gravity of which is so profound and so serious, it does merit an explanation for Canadians.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Chair, I do not think anybody is trying to dance around anything. I would just like to seek clarity on what was just said.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition issued a similar statement to what the opposition House leader is saying. Would he agree then that any evidence that would be germane to this case and that would be gathered by officials in their investigation should not be made public, even if it was given to the Prime Minister at one time? Would he agree that should remain—

The Deputy Chair: A brief answer from the official opposition House leader.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Chair, I guess we could start with the government releasing some information. In all different areas the government has an aversion to transparency and accountability. It would be a great conversation to start. It can start by sharing what it believes it can at this moment. I think Canadians would welcome that.

• (1905)

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Madam Chair, yesterday, in a spectacular statement, the Prime Minister accused India of being behind, so to speak, the assassination last June of a Sikh separatist in Canada, Hardeep Singh Nijjar. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of my party, to express my most sincere condolences to the members of his family, who must be going through an even more difficult time after hearing this news from the Prime Minister yesterday.

Like my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, I must say that we appreciated the transparency from the Prime Minister in this very worrisome affair.

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Like the House leader of the Bloc Québécois, I am once again offering our party's co-operation in getting to the bottom of things. We must not overlook the importance of this revelation. If it turns out to be true, it would amount to an outright, extraterritorial and extrajudicial execution on Canadian soil, in violation of the rules of international law, which is an extremely serious act. If by chance the Prime Minister's allegations, which seem to be based on intelligence information, were to turn out to be false, we would have to conclude that the Prime Minister was very imprudent, not only because of the seriousness of the charges, but also because of the importance of India and the importance of the Indian and Sikh communities within Canada.

The tone has changed since yesterday. The Prime Minister is now calling for calm, and I think that is very wise. We need to avoid histrionics and speculation. We need to get to the bottom of things. Calling for calm will force us to consider what is happening. As we know, relations between Canada and India have already been strained for several years. Canada has accused India of this extrajudicial and extraterritorial killing, and India has been accusing Canada of harbouring Sikh separatists on its soil for several years now. India is even accusing Canada of having connections to the Khalistan separatist movement.

I must admit that, as a separatist, I think the idea that the Liberal government would have any connection whatsoever to any separatist movement in the world is a bit far-fetched. That being said, I still think that we need to take a close look at what could have happened, given the gravity of the events.

I want to thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for drawing my attention to Sam Cooper's article in *The Bureau*, which refers to a confidential version of the report of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, or NSICOP, on the Prime Minister's trip to India. I can talk about it more openly because I was not a member of NSICOP at the time and because that media outlet reported on it today.

According to the article, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, planned a major intervention in 2017 to shut down rapidly growing Indian intelligence networks in Vancouver that were monitoring and targeting the Sikh community. Again according to this article referring to the NSICOP report, Ottawa apparently blocked the CSIS operation because of "political sensitivity" and because Ottawa feared it would have an impact on the Prime Minister's upcoming trip to India.

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• (1910)

As well, the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians stated that, in about 2016, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS, discovered, and I quote, “‘an increase in the volume’ of Indian intelligence activity in Canada, targeting the Indo-Canadian diaspora and government institutions.”

If this were true, it would also be extremely troubling. It would mean that the Liberal government deliberately interrupted a CSIS investigation to avoid impacting the success of the Prime Minister's trip to India, scheduled a few months or weeks later. We know that the trip, despite efforts by the Prime Minister and his family to dress up like our Indian friends, was not a major success.

One reason for the poor showing is that the government had inadvertently, although the RCMP was aware, invited a Sikh separatist named Jaspal Atwal to one or two receptions held in India, which had apparently angered the Indian government.

As we know, relations between Canada and India are extremely tense, so much so that it was with great interest and hope, I think, during the Prime Minister's trip to that country for the G20, that we watched the meeting that was planned between the Prime Minister and the Indian Prime Minister. We thought at the time that it would be an ideal opportunity to rebuild bridges and reopen lines of communication.

What we found out today and yesterday is that the Prime Minister instead admonished the Indian Prime Minister for this alleged killing of a Sikh separatist on Canadian soil.

I want to reiterate that we very much appreciated the Prime Minister's transparency yesterday. We expected nothing less from him, having been accused these past few months of waiting far too long to disclose sensitive information about Chinese interference in Canada.

I think he learned his lesson. He decided to inform Parliament quickly, but it depends on what is meant by “quickly”. Maybe in the wake of his meeting with the Indian Prime Minister he should have informed Parliament of this information or informed the public of this strategic or sensitive information.

When asked about this issue yesterday, the new Minister of Public Safety said that, since information was starting to leak, they thought it was a good time to tell Parliament about it. Coincidence can be an amazing thing sometimes. The government got wind of leaks just as Parliament resumed, just as it needed to get back on track because it was lagging in the polls. It needed to make an impression as Parliament got back to work.

I am not suggesting anything about anyone's motives. I am just pointing out that coincidence can do very good things. That raises another question: Why did the government wait until there were leaks to disclose the information? Had there not been a leak resulting in yesterday's announcement, might the Prime Minister have waited much longer to inform the public, thereby risking further accusations of taking too long to inform the public and Parliament of possible foreign interference on Canadian soil, this time with extremely tragic results?

Obviously, there are a lot of questions and, unfortunately, not a lot of answers.

• (1915)

We asked some questions earlier. Why wait until yesterday to share this information? We did not get an answer. Why are so few of Canada's allies speaking up? We did not get an answer.

I want to reiterate that we need to work together, to the extent possible, in order to get to the bottom of this situation, because this story is extremely concerning. We need to give answers to Canadians and Quebecers.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Chair, this killing, this murder, happened just a few kilometres from where I live. It has affected the entire Sikh community in the greater Vancouver area, in British Columbia and in Canada. We know that there is an extreme right-wing organization that has been repeatedly involved in killings, murders and violence, not only in India, but also in the UK and North America. I am talking about the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or RSS. It is a right-wing organization that advocates intolerance towards religious minorities.

My question is quite simple. One of the things the NDP has been talking about since we learned this information, since yesterday, is the importance of banning this organization, the RSS, in Canada. It is about ensuring that this organization can no longer carry out its activities, its threats and all the negative things it does to target religious minorities here in Canada.

Does my Bloc Québécois colleague agree with this approach?

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Chair, certain legal, legislative provisions allow the possibility of designating certain organizations as terrorist organizations. Our colleague has raised very legitimate concerns. If, at the end of a serious assessment, we are confident that these concerns are warranted, I feel it would be appropriate to consider including this organization on the list of terrorist organizations. For the time being, however, the matter requires further clarification. Again, I think we need to get to the bottom of things before moving forward on this matter as well.

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank the member of Parliament for Montarville. I have had the good fortune of serving on the foreign affairs committee with him and have travelled with him as well.

Maybe he can remind people in other democratic countries who might be watching this how democracies work. We can work in the same place, travel together, vote in the same election and have different political views, and we do not feel any reprisal or threat.

The reason I say this is that I get this question many times when we are speaking to our Indian counterparts. They ask us to quash independent movements or independent views that are held here in Canada, whether contrarian or not. They tell us to do that, but they forget that in a free and democratic country, people have the ability to express themselves. We constantly give a reminder that we have members from the Bloc who differ in their opinions on the sovereignty and boundaries of this country, but they are able to do it freely and openly, even in this House. I would like to hear from the member opposite about how he is able to do that here in this wonderful country.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Chair, I certainly agree that I have this freedom of speech as an elected member of this House even if my political views go against those of most political parties represented here.

However, that did not happen out of nowhere. In the 1800s, people shed their blood in Quebec and Ontario, or Lower Canada and Upper Canada, as they were called at the time. The Patriotes of Lower Canada and the Reformers of Upper Canada fought for a number of civil and political freedoms and for a truly democratic and responsible government. If the current sovereigntist movement in Quebec can hope to achieve its goal in a completely democratic and peaceful manner—as we saw in 1995 when 94% of the population turned out to vote without any acts of violence whatsoever before, during or after the referendum—it is because these people made it so that we could enjoy the democratic institutions we have today that make it possible for us to have civilized debates without violence.

• (1920)

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Chair, in his speech, my colleague has brought awareness not only to the values of democracy we hold so near and dear here in Canada, but also to the incredible threat that these kinds of actions by foreign states pose here in Canada.

It is no secret that Canada, through the treaties it has made with first nations, has become for people a beacon of safety and so much more that their lives can represent when freed from the risk of violence and the risk and threat of death. What we are talking about today is something incredibly serious: the reality that Canadians are feeling scared and, in the worst cases, are being targeted by foreign governments like Prime Minister Modi's government.

In my community of Edmonton Griesbach, we have a great diaspora community of Muslims who built our province and built our city, and right now they are fearful. They are scared that action will not be taken. Will the member agree with the New Democratic Party's call that RCMP members, the police, should be involved in the protection and security of those who face great risk in our country?

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Chair, I would like to start by saying that I think Canadians and Quebecers are in for a rude awakening. I think this stems in large part from the vision we have always had of ourselves. We see ourselves as rather friendly, open-

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minded people, people who seek dialogue and compromise and who seek to end conflicts on the world stage.

We must never forget that peacekeeping was a Canadian invention. We are doing far too little now, but it was still a Canadian invention. That is why the idea that foreign interference can happen here in Canada and Quebec is totally unexpected. People in Taiwan are much more accustomed to this kind of thing. They have even developed ways to protect themselves against foreign interference and disinformation.

This is all new to us, because we think everyone is nice and plays by the rules. We could not have imagined that this peaceful country seeking collaboration and compromise could be subjected to this kind of behaviour by foreign states. It is a rude awakening, to be sure, but we have to face the facts and take action to deal with this new reality.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Chair, I would like to ask the same question that one of my Bloc colleagues asked earlier. In fact, it was the member who just spoke who asked the question, but no one was able to give him an answer. I would therefore like to know what he thinks about the fact that none of Canada's allies have taken a stand on this.

I find that to be a very interesting and important question given the context and the rather serious allegations. I would imagine that such allegations are not made on a mere suspicion. There must be reasons behind it.

Why have the rest of the international community or Canada's direct allies not spoken out? What does my colleague think about that?

• (1925)

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Madam Chair, I will be brief.

Obviously, I have not been in touch with the foreign capitals that are allied with Canada to see how they feel about the statement the Prime Minister made yesterday. However, one thing is certain. As my colleague from Trois-Rivières said, the arbitrary detention of the two Michaels was a proven, indisputable fact.

In this case, although the allegation may be based on intelligence information, we are still talking about an allegation. As long as that allegation has not been proven, it is difficult for the foreign capitals to take a stand, even if the situation is extremely worrisome for all of the world's democracies.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Chair, let me begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with the eloquent member for Edmonton Strathcona.

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I am somewhat saddened to take part in this debate today. As our leader, the member for Burnaby South, aptly said yesterday, we offer our condolences to the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The member for Burnaby South mentioned his conversations with Mr. Nijjar's son.

This situation concerns a Canadian citizen who was killed on Canadian soil, probably at the instigation of a foreign government, according to the allegations. I think that all members of the House are united and aware that the Canadian public should never accept such an outrage. The fact that a foreign government decided to kill a Canadian on Canadian soil is something no Canadian government, or the Parliament of Canada, should ever accept.

This was the reason for our concerns starting last June, when Mr. Nijjar was killed just a few kilometres from my home in Greater Vancouver. Suspicions about interference by the Indian government had already surfaced. A few months later, the allegations seem increasingly credible. As we have heard many say, an exhaustive investigation is imperative to uncover all the facts.

That is why the NDP pushed so hard on this in the spring. We moved a motion in the House that was adopted by every member of the recognized parties and the independent members, except for the members of the Liberal Party. The motion called for a public inquiry into foreign interference, which included China, Russia, India, Iran and other states. The motion was adopted on May 31, as members will recall, with a crushing majority. We continued to apply pressure and we concluded an agreement with the recognized parties such that the inquiry is set to start now. Justice Hogue, who is highly respected, will start her work in the coming days. Obviously, India's interference needs to be examined just as much as that of China, Russia and Iran. It is important for Canada to have a strong response.

[English]

In my riding, in my community, there are gurdwaras that do incredible work: Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, which is celebrating its 41st anniversary this very weekend; the Khalsa Diwan Society; the Gurdwara Shri Hargobind Sahib Sikh Society; and Guru Nanak's Free Kitchen. All of these organizations are doing incredibly important work in our community.

These Canadians who contribute, to such an enormous extent, to the life of our community and our region should not have to fear that something they say may be taken and interfered with by a foreign entity and a government like the Modi government.

It is vitally important that Canada take action to ensure that this does not happen again. That includes, as my colleagues have said, offering RCMP protection. It includes reviewing the status of all Indian diplomats in this country. We have expelled one. There are dozens of diplomats. We need to review their status. I know my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona will speak more in depth on that. We pushed and have succeeded in having the inclusion of India in the public inquiry into foreign interference.

• (1930)

Finally, the RSS, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a notorious extreme right organization that has been involved in violence not

only in India but also in North America and in Europe, needs to be banned in Canada.

These are the responses of the member for Burnaby South and the NDP caucus to the horrendous allegations we have all heard this week.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his speech, which, as usual, was full of common sense and sensitivity.

According to him, what prompted the government to actively wait to call an independent inquiry when these revelations had already been piling up for some time?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Chair, I always appreciate my colleague's comments.

I can think of no explanation. The evidence has been out there for months. That is why the NDP moved a motion calling on the special rapporteur, David Johnston, to resign because he did not have the confidence of the House. The motion also called on the government to immediately launch a public inquiry into foreign interference.

As the member knows, the vast majority of parliamentarians from all parties, except the Liberal Party, voted in favour of the motion, and the government did listen to reason. The important thing is that the public inquiry has been set up, and the work will begin in the coming days. This is extremely important to reassuring all Canadians that there will be no possibility of foreign interference in the next election.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, this is an incredibly serious issue we are discussing tonight in the House of Commons. My colleague has brought forward some very compelling arguments and some very compelling facts.

One of the things I find interesting is that the official opposition is not participating in the debate today. I have to ask why that is the case. I wonder whether it is because Stephen Harper in fact called Modi a great leader and a good friend. I am wondering whether the member could talk about why he thinks the official opposition is not in fact participating adequately in this debate.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Chair, the member for Edmonton Strathcona has hit a very important point. Over 100 members of Parliament from the Conservative Party are here in the House of Commons normally. That would mean the normal rotation for questions would be every third question. They have risen only once since this debate started over an hour ago. They only made one comment, and that was a speaking place they could not give up.

I am questioning, and I think Canadians should question, why the official opposition is absent from asking those questions and raising these concerns. There is no doubt the Modi government has been cited numerous times for human rights violations, concerns raised by human rights organizations. There is no doubt these concerns and these allegations are serious. One would think it would be more than the NDP, the Bloc and the Liberals speaking on these issues. I do not understand why the official opposition is absent tonight.

• (1935)

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Chair, much like the member opposite for New Westminster—Burnaby, I have numerous religious institutions in my riding. My friend and colleague from Brampton East spoke about the Highway to Heaven, which he had an opportunity to visit with me. It is a five-kilometre stretch with over 20 different religious institutions located right beside one another and living in harmony. Many people are troubled by what they are hearing and the news we have learned recently.

I want to speak about some findings we heard about from multiple witnesses during a recent committee study on foreign interference, where witnesses revealed that under the Harper government, a number of MOUs were entered into directly with the RCMP, allowing 25 China policing agents to repatriate criminals from Canada. Does the member think this practice set a precedent to allow foreign policing or intimidation of diaspora communities on our Canadian soil?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Chair, my colleague has raised a number of different issues, but I want to say this quite simply. Like the “Highway to Heaven”, the region of Richmond where all faiths are together, it is a hallmark of Canadian society that all faiths work together, that there are interfaith conferences and that we respect each other's religions. This profound, despicable act that took place in June, the killing of Mr. Nijjar, is something that cannot be tolerated by any Canadian, accepted by any Canadian, and we must all give voice to our unity at this time.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, as this is the first time I am speaking in the House of Commons since this session started, I want to take a moment to say that it is always a great honour to stand up and represent the smart, caring and kind people of Edmonton Strathcona.

I also want to take a moment to express my deepest sympathy to the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

It is incredible to have to have a debate like this in the House today. It is beyond the pale that we have to stand in the House of Commons and talk about the fact that a Canadian citizen was murdered on Canadian soil by a foreign government, and there is credible evidence to the fact that this has occurred. It breaks my heart.

Not only did this horrific crime happen, but the reason it happened is to sow fear in the hearts of every member of the Sikh community. This hurt our Muslim brothers and sisters. This hurt our community of diaspora across this country.

I met with folks today and have met with folks time and time again who have told me about how afraid they are. They have told me about how angry they are about how little has been done to pro-

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tect them in this country. They came to this country to be able to be safe and raise their families. One woman I spoke to today told me that she would have second thoughts about going to a political rally right now because she would be worried about her safety in Canada. The fact is that this is what we are dealing with right now, and I do not think we can let go.

It is important to recognize that the same thing happened when we were talking in this place about Chinese interference. The diaspora community at that time said “We have been telling you for decades that this is a problem.” Again, we are hearing this from our diaspora communities, and we need to listen to them. We need to hear their experience and their voices. We need to make sure that they feel safe in their communities.

It does not matter if we are Sikh, Jewish, Muslim or Christian: We must be able to practise our faith in this country without fear. We must be able to live in our community without fear. However, we know that right now, for so many Canadians from coast to coast to coast, that is not the case.

I have raised this issue in the House, and the New Democratic Party has raised this issue in the House many times. I have raised this in committee. The fact is that the Modi government is committing human rights abuses in India. The role we have to play in terms of protecting Canadians is an important role that has to be addressed. We have to find ways to protect Canadians better. We have to make sure that the RCMP is protecting people. We have to make sure that the RSS has been banned from Canada.

There are many things we can do, but let us not forget that Canada, as a democracy, as a country that believes in the international rule of law, has an ethical and moral obligation to talk about human rights when they are being abused around the world. It is not enough that we talk about it in Canada; we have to talk about what that looks like around the world. We have to be able to name that the Modi government has attacked people within the country of India, and that women, members of the LGBTQ2+ community, Dalits, Sikhs and Muslims have all been targeted by that government. In a country like Canada, with a feminist foreign policy and a strong belief in multilateralism and the international rule of law, if we do not stand up, if we do not say that this is not all right, if we do not call out that government for this behaviour, if we do not call out Modi for the attacks he is making on vulnerable people in India, it hurts us. It hurts who we are a country.

Going forward, we need to do everything we can to make sure that what happened does not happen again in Canada. We need to hold those responsible to account. We need to find justice for those who have been impacted by Indian interference in our country.

• (1940)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I appreciate the member's passionate speech; she is known for her passion toward human rights.

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If we talk about India, even today we are getting news from Manipur that Christian women are being gang-raped in public. Holy Bibles are being burnt. When this is happening there, would the member think that we still need to have free trade talks when human rights are at risk?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, it has been a belief of mine for a very long time that Canada has moved too far away from our core values when it comes to our role in the world. We cannot put trade in front of human rights. Trade cannot be the priority instead of human rights.

We are looking at the Indo-Pacific strategy, which is a strategy that the current government has brought forward.

Making sure we are not engaging to the same level with China because of the human rights abuses that we know China is committing against the Uyghur people is very important. However, to then say that the human rights abuses by the Modi government that we are hearing about day in and day out do not deserve the same condemnation and do not deserve our standing up and calling out that government for these abuses is wrong. If Canadians believe in human rights, we believe in human rights when they are in Canada, we believe in them when they are in India and we believe in them when they are in China. We believe in human rights anywhere in the world.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her speech. She is always passionate.

I am a member of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, where I had the opportunity to hear from members of the Chinese diaspora. They came to tell us that they are Canadians and that they are scared. That is what we heard over and over.

What does my colleague think the government should do to protect diasporas whose members are, in fact, Canadian citizens?

• (1945)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Chair, that is a very important question. I am a member of the Canada-China committee as well, and at that committee we have also heard members of the diaspora telling us time and time again that they are afraid, that they need more action by the government and that they need more steps taken to protect them. This is not something that is new. In fact, one of the things that I mentioned in my speech is that they have been actually telling government representatives about this for 30 years.

Therefore, a couple of things need to happen. When we look into the foreign interference study, we need to make sure that we are looking at China, Russia, Iran and India, because those are the four countries that we have been told have the biggest influence on our democracy or carry out the biggest interference in our democracy. That is one step that we can take.

We need to have a registry so that we can know who these players are. We need to understand. Most importantly, we need to listen to the diaspora when they tell us what is happening in their communities. When they tell us that they feel unsafe and when they tell us

that things are happening that are wrong and are an attack on our democracy and our sovereignty, we need to listen, and I do not think we have done that very well.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Chair, I certainly appreciate the depth that the members bring, both for Edmonton Strathcona and Edmonton Griesbach. They have spoken numerous times through the course of this debate so far this evening.

We know about the mosques and gurdwaras across Alberta in Lethbridge, Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Fort McMurray and throughout Alberta. This is an important issue. We have had two members speaking up repeatedly during the debate, but there has not been a single Conservative MP from Alberta who has spoken even one word in this debate this evening.

To my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona, why are Alberta Conservatives completely silent in this important debate?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Honestly, Mr. Chair, I wish I could answer that question. The people of Edmonton, the people of Calgary, the people of Alberta deserve to have their representatives engage in this debate, and that is not happening. I expect that it has to do with the fact that, as I mentioned earlier, Stephen Harper has said that Modi is a great leader. He is a good friend of Stephen Harper, and he was the prime minister who was in power when the current leader of the official opposition was part of his cabinet.

The leader of the official opposition has said publicly that we should not be critical of India. I am sorry, but when we hear what is happening in India, there is no other option but to criticize those attacks on human rights by the Modi government.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am rising today on behalf of the residents of Brampton South on an important issue. I will be splitting my time with the President of the Treasury Board.

It is a fundamental right that every person, regardless of their background, should have the right to safety and security. When these rights are threatened, we must all speak up.

On June 18, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen, was murdered by two masked men outside a Sikh gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia. I wish to join my colleagues across the House in offering our thoughts to the family and loved ones of the victim.

Homicide investigators said the incident was targeted. They are releasing descriptions of the suspects and are pleading for information. What was even more concerning was to learn that our national security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between foreign state agents and the alleged criminals. This is a matter that strikes at the very heart of our sovereignty and our values as a country.

Today I want to share my thoughts in this important take-note debate, which is supported unanimously. This alleged involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty. This is a serious allegation that is contrary to the fundamental rules that free, open and democratic countries conduct themselves with. Canada is a rule-of-law country, and it is our responsibility to uphold these principles and the principles of international law.

As the Minister of Foreign Affairs has said, this government has been guided by three principles since these allegations came to light: number one, that we will seek the truth; number two, that we will protect Canadians at all times; and number three, that we will protect Canada's sovereignty. This is what Canadians expect of us.

We must recognize that foreign interference poses one of the greatest threats to Canada's sovereignty and national security. Any form of interference not only puts the integrity of Canada's democracy at risk but also undermines our country's ability to safeguard institutions and our sovereignty. This government has always been clear that we will never tolerate any form of foreign interference and we will always protect our democracy. That is why we have taken strong action as a government to protect our democracy and our electoral system from foreign interference by pursuing a foreign influence transparency registry, conducting a review of our national security oversight processes and investing in our national security institutions. It is part of our comprehensive approach at ensuring that the integrity of our democratic processes remains robust and resilient. That is why we must ensure that this killing is thoroughly investigated.

I am a proud Bramptonian, and our city has always been a place where people from diverse backgrounds come together, work hard and contribute to our shared prosperity. It is these residents, like those across the country, who have the right to feel safe and secure within their community. I want to assure all residents in Brampton and in communities across the country that their safety and security remain our top priority.

No matter one's background, culture, race, religion or affiliation, acts of violence or foreign interference against any community need to be investigated, and they are investigated.

As the Prime Minister has said, the intention here is not to provoke or escalate. We should remain calm and grounded in our democratic principles and values as we follow the evidence.

I urge all of us to stand united in protecting values important to Canadians.

● (1950)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, yesterday when I heard the Prime Minister's remarks in the House, my thoughts first went to people back home in Winnipeg. I think of folks I see in the community, folks I see when I visit Guru Nanak Darbar and folks at the Khalsa Diwan Gurdwara. I wondered how that news would be received back home in the community.

I have had the opportunity to reach out, talk to some folks back home and hear about the concern people have. Tonight, we have heard a number of ways that concern takes shape. People are concerned, for instance, about going to political demonstrations. Peo-

ple are wondering about visits home and what may happen when they go back to see family, depending on their own political views.

There is something that we are grateful for in Canada. It is something that we treasure and fight for, to have people be able to take the political positions they take without fear of violence and death. I am very proud of the work that the NDP has done to get a public inquiry into foreign interference under way.

Can the member reflect on how that public inquiry may help bring more truth to light for Canadians and lay out a path that helps allay some of their fears?

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Chair, yes, I said that in my speech. I am from Brampton, and Bramptonians are concerned, like other Canadians are. That is why the Prime Minister made the statement. Let us remain calm and steadfast in our commitment to our democratic principles. We have full trust in our law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies, and they are working hard on that. In the meantime, we all stand together. That is what all Canadians expect us to do and that is what we are ready to do.

● (1955)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Chair, from the beginning of this debate, we in the Bloc and the other parties have deplored the events that have taken place. My colleague opposite is from the region where the crime in question took place.

I would like to hear her thoughts on our concerns. While we sympathize with everyone affected, and despite our desire to learn more, does my colleague have any idea why the Prime Minister waited until Monday to make the statement?

Also, is she aware of any discussions the Prime Minister may be holding with leaders of other countries to find out why we did not receive the support of other countries in this matter initiated by the Prime Minister yesterday?

[English]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Chair, wherever the crime is committed, it was committed on Canadian soil. I am from Brampton. It was committed on the west side of Canada, but it is in Canada. Wherever it was committed, we are all Canadians and it is unacceptable on Canadian soil. That is why I mentioned that the Prime Minister is so transparent and our government is transparent.

The hon. member knows that we cannot comment when the investigation is going on. Our number one priority is to protect Canadians. That is what our government has committed to do. We all committed to do that. That is what Canadians expect from us and that is what we are doing.

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Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Chair, these credible allegations of a link between the Government of India and the killing of my constituent, Mr. Nijjar, are immensely troubling. It is a substantial attack directly on Canadians and Canadian values, with a specific focus on Sikh Canadians.

Can the member speak to the importance of all Canadians coming together to denounce this and affirm shared Canadian values?

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Chair, no matter where we come from, no matter what our background is, safety and security is the main thing. We all share these sentiments and we all stand together, and that is why the debate is happening. The investigation is going on and we are all looking forward to that.

[Translation]

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Chair, as you may be aware, I come from a family originally from India.

[English]

Both of my parents came from India. They have passed now, but my father was from Tamil Nadu and my mother was from Jandiala Guru, a small town outside Amritsar. Many years ago, they immigrated to the province where you hail from, Mr. Chair, Nova Scotia, and settled in a small rural town of 5,000 people.

[Translation]

I was born there. Life was good there. I really like the province of Nova Scotia.

[English]

I want to say that, regardless of where we hail from, we all in this country should always defend the rule of law, human rights and Canadian sovereignty free from foreign interference. That is iron-clad and what I am here to speak about this evening.

● (2000)

When I was young, we were one of the very few South Asian families in the province at the time. That did not matter because the people of Kemptville, Nova Scotia, embraced our family and we had a wonderful childhood there. I will say that is the story of towns and cities across this country. In fact, it defines Canada, and we need to hang on to the respect and integrity that typifies so many towns and cities across our country.

My parents' way of raising us was to enrol us in all of the extracurricular activities they possibly could so that we felt as though we were very much a part of the community, but I, like many children of immigrants, understand the anxiety, emotions and affinity people have regarding their ancestral home. We have all learned to embrace our backgrounds and all they entail as part of the Canadian identity. Diversity and inclusion are our biggest strengths. My ethnic background is part and parcel of my entire identity, which is made up of different components, including being a mother, a professor, now a member of Parliament, a Canadian and a Canadian of Indian origin in fact. I am a Canadian who is very proud of my Punjabi and Tamil heritage.

Yesterday, like so many, I was appalled to learn about the credible allegations of possible involvement by a foreign government in

the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar. I want to extend my deepest sympathies to the family and loved ones of Hardeep who are having to relive this horrific incident. My thoughts are with them and, today especially, I am thinking about my parents and what this means for so many of us who have our roots in India. I know this is a very difficult time and as the process unfolds it will continue to be difficult, but I want to be very clear that our government takes any and all allegations of foreign actor interference in Canada extremely seriously.

Canada is a country that is governed by the rule of law, and the protection of our citizens and the defence of our sovereignty are fundamental to our society, to our security and indeed to our very being. As the Prime Minister said, we must let law enforcement and security agencies take their course for the continued safety of all Canadians and we must take all necessary steps to hold the perpetrators to account.

Today I have shared things that I have never shared in this House of Commons before, because we do need to remain unified and empathetic, and we must remain a country where our democratic principles and the rule of law are protected. All Canadians have the right to feel safe in their communities and free to practise their religion of their choice, and our government will always protect this right.

I hope that we can remain united and allow the justice system to run its course, but I want to echo what the Prime Minister said. We will remain committed to democratic principles, the rule of law and human rights.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Chair, speaking about sharing things that have never been shared in the House and the kinds of feelings this is bringing up, in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam I have had a lot of community outreach this week: people reaching out to me and sharing their stories.

I wonder if the member would not mind expanding on the impacts of what kinds of feelings are coming out from Canadians and immigrant Canadians who have come here for safety in Canada.

● (2005)

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Chair, I thank the hon. member for her service to her community on behalf of all Canadians. I have heard from many constituents as well as members of the broader South Asian community, and I will say that there is concern coming from the community and Canadians generally about the Prime Minister's words yesterday, especially because people want, need and should be able to feel safe in their own communities. It is for that reason that I thought I would stand in this House this evening to express how important it is for us to have confidence in a government that will always protect the rule of law, democratic principles and human rights.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Chair, as I scope the room and have been listening to this, I unfortunately have not heard too many of my Conservative colleagues speaking. However, the one who spoke, the opposition House leader, brought up some legal questions and said we need more evidence and that the Prime Minister should share what he knows with this House and with Canadians.

My good friend, the President of the Treasury Board, has been my professor. She is a legal eagle and she has also been part of the cabinet and knows what is said in cabinet as well as evidentiary laws. I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board to reiterate about the only thing the Conservative caucus members have asked, which is whether the Prime Minister can reveal information in an ongoing investigation. Has the Prime Minister, without credible evidence, ever made a statement such as this before?

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Chair, I can confirm the veracity of the statement made by my hon. colleague just now relating to our past collegial relationship as professor and student.

I will say that it would be highly imprudent for anyone to comment on potential or actual evidence in the process of an ongoing investigation. Therefore, the question for us to adduce such evidence while an ongoing investigation is occurring is simply inappropriate. We cannot and should not be involved in an independent investigation, which must take its course, especially for the grieving families of the victim.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, we are hearing from diaspora communities that they are afraid. They are afraid of violence being perpetrated against them and their loved ones.

The threat against this particular individual was known, yet this individual still lost his life, was still murdered. I am just wondering what the government can do to reassure members of the diaspora community. What can the government do to make Canadians feel safe again in their homes, in their communities and in their places of faith?

Hon. Anita Anand: Mr. Chair, of course, this affects not only members of the Sikh community but every single person in Canada. Every individual, regardless of age, ethnicity, cultural background or religion, must feel safe and secure in their own community. That is fundamental to our democracy, it is fundamental to a country governed by the rule of law and it is absolutely central to the Canada that we know and love.

In this instance and every other, we need to make sure that law enforcement can take its course and can bring perpetrators of illegal actions to justice. That is fundamental to operating and living in a country governed by the rule of law. Such is the country of Canada.

• (2010)

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, I will begin by offering my sincerest condolences, and those of the Bloc Québécois, to Mr. Nijjar's family as well as to the Sikh community.

In my riding, there are not many people who belong to the Sikh community as such, yet I have still received many calls in the past

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day from people who tell me that these things should not be happening. They are asking why the diaspora community is not protected. Certainly, that is one of the first questions we must ask ourselves, but we must also take a step back and look at the big picture for a moment.

We did not just start hearing about foreign interference yesterday. There were many discussions in the spring, of course, but the topic has been on many lips for a few years now. Last spring, I asked dozens of questions, all of which went unanswered. The government downplayed the situation and said to be patient.

We rose numerous times to call for an independent public inquiry, a request that was repeatedly refused. Most days this spring, the government denied that an inquiry was important or needed. Our requests were brushed aside until it was impossible to brush them away any further. The government has been “actively passive”, to use a phrase I am fond of. It was quick to do nothing. However, its “do nothing” approach became an “allow interference” approach.

It is a sad observation to make today when we look at the state of the world, particularly with the situation in Ukraine, with Armenia. The world today is not as idyllic as it once was. There are rogue states. If we take off our rose-coloured glasses for a moment, we will realize that some of these rogue states are our partners. Some of our partners are rogue states.

Interference can take several forms. Of course, there is social media propaganda, for example. People can be manipulated into believing a lot of things. There is also corruption among elected officials, like we discussed at the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, or the infiltration of institutions. Some people thought that the Trudeau Foundation had been infiltrated, which may or may not have been true. There can also be direct action, as we saw in Vancouver in the case at hand.

Throughout the spring of this year, we talked about Chinese interference, although my colleague mentioned China, Iran, Russia and India, which are the four countries in question. Witnesses told the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and the Standing Committee on Ethics that they were getting FaceTime calls in the middle of the day showing them their grandmother back in China and that they were scared. I myself saw and heard from frightened witnesses at the Standing Committee on Ethics.

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We called for a public inquiry until this one could start. The commissioner was appointed recently. September 18 marked the start of the commission's activities. That same day, however, the Prime Minister told the House of Commons what happened in British Columbia in June. It was a rude awakening for several people who believed that this kind of thing only happened in other countries. This incident happened here at home. We found out that Mr. Nijjar was killed on June 18, 2023, and that the Government of India was alleged to be behind the killing. How is that possible when India is our partner? How is it possible when Canada is investing so much money with India under the Indo-Pacific strategy? It is impossible but true.

According to Sam Cooper, in 2017, the Prime Minister's Office apparently blocked a CSIS operation due to "political sensitivity" on the eve of his trip to India, which has since become famous for a variety of reasons. That is not all. In 2019, CSIS reiterated in a classified report marked "Canadian Eyes Only" that Indian interference had continued unabated.

● (2015)

It has been mentioned often this evening, but we cannot help but wonder why. Why is this information tolerated, downplayed and kept secret when, as we now know, people's lives are on the line? People may escape death, yet still have their lives ruined. These kinds of things are not acceptable, and we cannot pretend that we did not know. The government was notified.

The National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians also said that the government usually discounted warnings from CSIS about the behaviour of China and India toward diaspora communities. That goes to show that CSIS, the Prime Minister's Office and NSICOP all knew about it.

Honestly, it is hard not to wonder whether foreign interference is a sign of the times. It is happening more frequently now. Is it due to a lack of awareness about the importance of international relations? Is it due to a lack of courage by government? Is it purely, simply and unfortunately the product of indifference, neglect and tolerance of interference?

A fundamental distinction must be made, given everything that has been said so far. Intelligence must not be confused with evidence. We cannot jump to conclusions. We need to understand that intelligence suggests something, whereas evidence demonstrates something. The two concepts are not one and the same; they are on different levels. However, when I read the reports, I saw that they contained a lot of intelligence. A lot of intelligence does not equal evidence, but it should give one pause. It would seem, however, that despite the amount of intelligence at its disposal, the government once again decided not to listen to CSIS.

I want to say it again: We are not in a world where everything is rosy. There are rogue states that no longer hesitate to use any means necessary to advance their own interests. One example is surveillance. At the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, we conducted a study on Pegasus, a powerful surveillance tool used mainly by rogue states. There are ways of manipulating peoples' thoughts, as I was saying earlier, with propaganda and the conspiracy theories that abound these days.

In the present case, it is important to note that after yesterday's condemnation in the House of Commons, Canada's friends, allies and partners did not appear to step up to support the Prime Minister. This surprises me, because when the two Michaels were detained, allied states quickly rose up in unison and supported him unreservedly. However, in that case, we were dealing with evidence, not with intelligence or allegations. There is a distinction there.

I wonder why no one is stepping up to support Canada this time. To move the debate forward, the government will have to present credible, irrefutable evidence. If it must act, it must do so in the public interest and set aside partisan interests. Speaking of partisanship, as my colleague from Montarville pointed out earlier, these allegations are coming at a very opportune time for the government, which was embroiled in all kinds of problems. That has been completely overshadowed by the matter before us this evening.

At the end of the day, the problem is that the relationship of trust between the public and the current government has been damaged. Trust is what makes it possible to believe without requiring proof. When we do not believe, we demand proof. Because of the government's laissez-faire attitude toward foreign interference, people doubt its intention to act. That distrust is harmful to the public interest.

Members of diaspora communities need to know that the government will protect them. They need to know that it will take swift and sure action in response to foreign interference and protect them. The people of Quebec and Canada need to know that the government has a credible plan to address foreign interference and that it is not just avoiding the issue, as we saw last spring.

In conclusion, we cannot put the economy ahead of security. Even though Adam Smith said that trade is security, this is about an economic partnership with a state that interferes in our affairs. That is not sustainable. We are just putting off dealing with the problem. We can no longer afford to be naive. We need to tell it like it is: The world is a tough place. We need to face the facts and take action. The government has to maintain both security and the sense of security.

● (2020)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Chair, this matter is extremely sad. A Canadian citizen was killed on Canadian soil. The fact that the allegations and suspicions we heard in June have finally been addressed means that progress is being made. However, we must take action, and I think we all agree on that.

This evening, the NDP proposed that, with the help of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, we increase protection for populations that may be vulnerable to this type of violent interference by foreign governments. We must also look at the situation of Indian diplomats and conduct a review. There are dozens and dozens of Indian diplomats, but so far, only one has been expelled.

We must also ban Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a violent organization that was involved in the massacre and violence against Muslims and Sikhs in India, but that also represents a threat in Europe and North America. Of course, we also recommend that the public inquiry include India. I know that my colleague voted in favour of this motion, which includes India in the public inquiry into foreign interference.

Does my colleague support this line of action? Does he agree that words are not enough and that we need to put words into action?

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for his wise suggestions.

Many times this spring, I said that, while we were debating about whether interference had occurred, the interference was continuing to happen. While we were debating the need to appoint a commissioner or a rapporteur or what have you, the interference was continuing to happen. It continued happening and Mr. Nijjar was murdered in June.

Yes, it is high time we put words into action, rather strong, rigorous action, with the specific intention of protecting the public.

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his speech, which, as always, was informative, sensitive and reasonable. I would say that it was an ethical speech.

That being said, he raised the issue of the lack of support from other governments. He also talked about how long the Prime Minister waited to make his statement in the House after he received the information. It is possible that this delay was just fine.

It may be just fine that no other country has supported the Prime Minister's position so far. That does not mean that the other countries do not agree. Maybe we will find that out later. It may also be just fine that our Conservative friends are silent on the issue.

Nonetheless, this leaves me with a lot of questions. I am not sure if my colleague from Trois-Rivières can elaborate. In his view, is there a connection between those delays? Is it possible that the information obtained is not as reliable as we would like to believe? Perhaps it is reliable and I am asking completely useless questions.

I would like my colleague to say a bit more on this aspect of the issue.

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Chair, I always enjoy listening to the thoughtful and, most importantly, informed, speeches of my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord.

Was the information incomplete? Was the statement premature? Was an unsubstantiated judgment made? A lot of questions remain unanswered, and these grey areas are exactly why we find it hard to trust. The entire statement lacks sincerity. There have been so many twists over the years, sometimes it feels we are watching a terrible play.

In any case, I would hazard a guess that the lack of support may be due to a lack of evidence. It may be the result of a premature statement. Many questions could be asked. Nevertheless, we really

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have to get to the bottom of this. Like my colleague, I would like to hear my Conservative colleagues' views on the matter.

● (2025)

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Chair, I want to thank the member for the introduction of the reality of how this has not necessarily be taken seriously in the past, this intimidation, this interference and this potential harassment of Canadians on Canadian soil.

I just wonder if the member has any other suggestions about what should be done now to protect the communities that often come to us with intelligence and stories about how they do not feel safe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague for her important question.

The people who came to testify before the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics told us that, first, they wanted to be heard and, second, they wanted to be believed.

When people tell me they have gone to the RCMP only to be rebuffed and have no one believe them, this tells me that there must be more of an effort to listen to them, to hear what they are saying and to see what can be done. Looking away is the best way to see nothing.

I think we need to make an effort to communicate and open a dialogue with the diaspora communities. That dialogue cannot take place over loudspeakers or through the media; we need to make contact and be sincere.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Chair, on issues such as this, which pertain to Canadian sovereignty, Canadian dignity and respect for our processes, safety and democratic institutions are paramount to the discussion. It is central to the need to see a consensus of members of Parliament. It is good to see the Bloc Québécois is prepared to work with parties of all stripes to ensure we can come to a unified solution on behalf of Canadians, particularly those Canadians who are right now in fear for their lives and have been raising the alarm. I am proud of the fact that the government has been honest with this information and has brought it to the House of Commons for us to delineate.

Would the member comment on the absence of the Conservatives' voices on something so important as this? One would think they would want to protect our democracy and protect our institutions, and their absence in this discussion is shameful.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Chair, my colleague raised a very valid point.

All of us here are members of Parliament, regardless of our political affiliation. Our ideologies may differ. Members are familiar with mine. However when it comes to protecting Canadians, we must all speak with one voice. Any division is unacceptable when it comes to safety.

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I thank my colleague for his question, and I hope my Conservative friends will heed the call being made directly to them this evening to get involved and to be deserving of the position they hold.

[English]

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Chair, before I begin, I want to advise the House that I will be splitting my time with my good friend and colleague, the member of Parliament for Surrey—Newton.

I want to begin by offering my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, who was tragically shot to death outside of what is supposed to be a sacred place of worship, the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia. His death was shocking and disturbing to all Canadians, particularly the Canadian Sikh community.

The allegations of a potential link between the government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, on Canadian soil is unthinkable and absolutely unacceptable. Canada is a country of the rule of law. The protection of our citizens, our rights, our democracy and our sovereignty are paramount. Actions taken by any foreign government or actor that would seek to harm or kill a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is a grave violation of our sovereignty. It stands against the fundamental principles of a free, open and democratic society.

Let me be very clear. We will not allow India or any other nation to interfere in our democracy. So far, our government has taken a number of concrete steps to address the situation. Last week, at the G20, our Prime Minister personally raised his concerns about the situation directly with Prime Minister Modi. Yesterday, our foreign affairs minister expelled a top Indian diplomat from Canada. Our security agencies are conducting an extensive investigation to ensure those responsible are held accountable. As the situation evolves, our top priority remains ensuring the safety of Canadians at home and abroad.

I want to take a moment to now speak directly to our communities here in Canada. Over the last few days, I have had a number of conversations, including in my community of Brampton West. I want them to know our government is listening. There is no denying that this is an extremely difficult time for families right across the country within diaspora communities across this country. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, our government knows many in our community may be feeling angry or even frightened right now.

We also know our community is resilient. Our community is strong, and our community will get through this together. This is the time for unity. Right now, we, as Canadians, regardless of our political stripes, our faith, our race or religion, must unite and be steadfast in our values as Canadians, our values of freedom, acceptance, democracy, and above all, the fundamental belief in the rule of law. It is these values and our commitment to celebrating our diversity that truly makes us stronger, that makes us who we are as Canadians. This is who we are and what we do as Canadians, and we cannot allow this to change us. It is these values that will guide us for the truth.

Seeking truth and justice is also at the heart of what it means to be a Sikh. Like I said, Canadians are strong, our community is strong and our democracy is strong. I want to reiterate what our Prime Minister said and to reassure the House and all Canadians, especially those impacted by these horrific events, that all steps will be taken to hold those responsible for this killing to account.

The safety of Canadians is our top priority, and we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure Canadians feel safe in their homes, in their communities and in their places of worship.

● (2030)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Chair, I want to thank the hon. member for her speech and commitment tonight to this take-note debate. As so many of us have, I am sure, I have been trying to reach out to folks in our own communities, our own ridings, from the Sikh community.

I had a really moving conversation with one fellow who was very specific, and he spoke to the fact that he has felt threatened. He tries to brush it off and say that it is not about him, that it is about a bigger community. Throughout my community in London, the London Sikh Society gurdwara works so hard and contributes so positively to the community. He does so as well, but he said he feels threatened.

Some of the things that we are calling for are additional supports and protections from the RCMP going forward for those community members who also feel threatened. Could she talk about that and whether the government will support that?

● (2035)

Hon. Kamal Khera: Mr. Chair, I thank my friend from London for her relentless advocacy on behalf of her constituents. London has a resilient community. I have had the opportunity to visit some of the places and the gurdwaras she mentioned.

She is right. In our communities, we have all spoken to our constituents, who we know are angry, hurt and anxious about what this means. I also know of constituents who have families back home in India right now or Canadians who are in India right now.

These are real concerns, but I want them to know that all of us together in this place are united. We are all Canadians, and it is time for us to come together to ensure that we uphold our values as Canadians and that we are there for them.

As a government, we have taken a number of steps to ensure the security of Canadians, particularly when it comes to places of worship. We, of course, recently doubled our security infrastructure program so that places of worship can have the capacity to ensure that they have the security and infrastructure that is needed to support them.

There is an awful lot of work that I know we are doing on this side of the House, and I would love an opportunity to work with my hon. colleague to do more.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, information came to light from the hon. Minister for Emergency Preparedness, speaking to CBC News. He said that the Prime Minister told us what he told us yesterday because he had reason to expect that this was going to come out in the media, and he wanted to make sure the House was notified before it came out as a media leak.

I find this aspect of what we are debating tonight deeply troubling. The allegations of foreign interference from the spring, in relation to the People's Republic of China, were also based on leaks in the media from CSIS operatives.

I wonder if the hon. member has anything to share about how the Prime Minister knew this, and if this, again, was a leak to the media. It could only be from the RCMP or CSIS. Could my hon. colleague shed any light on this?

Hon. Kamal Khara: Mr. Chair, I will not comment on the investigation itself. I do not think that would be appropriate.

As we know, there are laws that are followed but, as a country, the rule of law reigns. It is paramount to protect our citizens and defend our sovereignty.

I just want to reassure the House and all Canadians that all steps will be taken to hold those responsible for the killing of Mr. Hardeep Nijjar to account.

We are a country that is governed by the rule of law, and we are going to make sure we follow through on those processes.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Chair, on June 18, a respected community leader from my riding of Surrey—Newton was brutally killed at Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Surrey—Delta in my constituency.

I want to extend my thoughts and prayers for the soul of Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar to his family, friends and loved ones.

The tragic assassination of Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar has shaken the entire community. Every Canadian deserves to feel safe. Canada is a country of diversity, peace and inclusion. We cannot and will not tolerate hate and violence.

Over the past several months, the leadership and congregation of Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara and members from the community at large have expressed concerns pertaining to the involvement of the Government of India in the killing of Mr. Nijjar. Shortly after Mr. Nijjar's killing, the former minister of public safety and member for Eglinton—Lawrence, met with the leadership of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara and the B.C. Gurdwaras Council to listen to their concerns. I want to commend the gurdwara leadership for the advocacy and professionalism that they showed while the meeting with the former minister was in progress.

I have listened to the concerns of many Canadians who are scared and worried about their safety and well-being. It has been heartbreaking to hear the stories from people on how the murder of Mr. Nijjar has impacted their lives.

Following the killing, I sponsored an electronic petition that called upon the government to address concerns related to India's alleged involvement in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadi-

an soil and to ensure the safety of all Canadians. Earlier today, I had the opportunity to present the petition in this chamber. Along with all the signatories and a countless number of community members, I anxiously await the government's response in the coming weeks.

I want to thank and commend the Prime Minister for showing strong leadership in bringing this matter before Parliament and standing up for all Canadians. I commend him for not only stating it here in Parliament but also, in fact, bringing it face to face with Prime Minister Modi during the G20 summit. The Prime Minister's address to Parliament and to all Canadians did bring a sense of relief for the Sikh diaspora; unfortunately, it has also brought back trauma that many Sikhs have felt over the past several decades. Since 1984, democratic and human rights have been violated in order to label and discredit the Sikh community across the globe, including right here in Canada. Many Sikhs have lost their lives in India and throughout the world.

As the Prime Minister mentioned yesterday, our top priorities are that law enforcement and security agencies ensure the continued safety of all Canadians and that all steps are taken to hold the offenders to account. We must continue to highlight the importance of unity during these challenging times. It is crucial that we come together to condemn this heinous crime, support the grieving family and stand up for the principles of the rule of law.

Canada is built on the values of justice, fairness and inclusivity. Let us uphold these values and ensure that they prevail in the face of adversity. The truth surrounding Mr. Nijjar's assassination must come to light. We must uncover all the facts.

I want to state that the Sikh community will continue to fearlessly advocate against abuses of human rights; it will not be intimidated or frightened by the actions of any foreign government. Constituents can rest assured that I will continue to bring the voices of my constituents to Ottawa.

• (2040)

Let us remain calm and steadfast in our commitment to democratic principles and our adherence to the rule of law. This is who we are and what we do as Canadians.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Chair, I thank the member for his words. We have shared many conversations as we have gone back and forth to the province of British Columbia. I feel those heartfelt words today. I know the member expressed that the community has come forward with concerns; it is scared and worried.

I know there was some mention of keeping in contact. I just want to ask the member this: Will the government do more to protect and safeguard Canadians' human rights here in Canada?

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Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Chair, when it comes to the safety and security of Canadians, as I mentioned in my speech, the Prime Minister personally assured me yesterday and has assured the House that we will do everything to make sure that every Canadian, irrespective of their background, feels safe. The government will take every step, moving forward, to protect their safety and security.

• (2045)

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, I often listen to my colleague opposite, and he always speaks from the heart.

I would like to ask him for a heartfelt answer. As a member of the community involved, and knowing that diasporas are affected, what does he think should be done to better protect and reassure communities and make them feel safer?

[English]

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Chair, the member is concerned about how we can all work together. Personally, I would love to see that. As members of Parliament, in 338 constituencies, we should be able to reach out to the Sikh diaspora and other diasporas that feel intimidated or at risk from foreign interference.

We have to go to them and bring that voice back to the minister and the government about what can be done. It can only be done collectively, as a team, not just by one party.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I want to thank my colleague from Surrey—Newton for his heartfelt speech. It definitely struck a chord with me.

I know that the member has shown great leadership in his community and in his riding, since this incident occurred there. The particular part in his speech that struck a chord was about discrediting the community. I know that the Minister of Emergency Preparedness talked about this today in an earlier statement as well, how the community is often discredited when it speaks and is asked about its political allegiances to this country or another.

Could the member shed some more light on that?

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Chair, I just want to thank the hon. member and her family, who have been involved in Sikh diaspora issues for many years.

It is very important that we stand up for human rights, not only in Canada but also around the globe. Any person who tries to raise their voice, whether it is a minister in this cabinet, the leader of the NDP or myself previously, can have consequences for raising those issues. The consequence for me was that I was refused a visa to travel to India. This is how the Government of India intimidates people and our Parliament, let alone the public.

We all have to come together, whether as Conservative, Liberal, Bloc, Green or independent members, to condemn that so-called democracy and stand for the rights of Canadians.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Chair, I would like to start by saying that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Rivière-du-Nord.

I too would like to offer my deepest condolences to the family and friends of Hardeep Singh Nijjar and to the entire Canadian Sikh community, which is quite large. I believe my colleagues have already made it clear that our hearts and thoughts are with them. What happened last June is deeply disturbing. When I think of the loved ones and family members who did not get this information until months later, that is even more distressing, as it forces them to experience that grief and pain all over again. Our thoughts are with them.

I appreciate my colleagues' tone this evening. This is a rather non-partisan debate and a subject that should be non-partisan. Our role, as parliamentarians, is to reassure Quebecers, Canadians, the Canadian Sikh community and everyone. The government may have failed to do that. I do not necessarily want to dole out criticism right away. Obviously, we applauded the Prime Minister's transparency in the statement he made yesterday. That was appreciated, but it raised concerns among the Canadian Sikh community, particularly among those who claim to have been victims of intimidation by the Indian government for many years, people who feel even less safe today. What message is the government sending those people to reassure them? Perhaps I did not really hear it.

It is important to say that this incident is quite simply a form of foreign interference. During the last parliamentary session, we talked a lot about all forms of foreign interference. Even some of our colleagues here in the House were being intimidated. However, the fact that a foreign state was allegedly involved in the murder of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is even more worrisome and raises a lot of questions. I think that it is good that we are having this debate this evening, but, unfortunately, we are not going to get answers to the questions being raised.

We are talking about some pretty serious accusations. Earlier, I heard a minister say that it was inappropriate to make accusations while an investigation is under way, so I was not quite sure what the government's position was. Such serious allegations must not be based on mere suspicions. The evidence must support them. It feels as though only some of the information has been shared with us. Canadians have the right to know the information. We completely understand that an investigation is under way, but as I said, it does raise some questions.

We are running out of time, but, essentially, I would like to come back to the all-important questions that my colleagues raised earlier, especially about the fact that we have not yet seen any of Canada's allies or other states in the international community speak to these serious allegations. We were told that the Prime Minister may have informed certain states before even informing the House and Canadians.

We have to wonder why. Is it because some states do not necessarily agree, or are they afraid of this confrontation or of a strained diplomatic relationship with India? We are obviously headed toward a very tense diplomatic relationship now, if that is not already the case. It must be said that Canada is standing up to the great state of India and there have been some hiccups in the past, particularly when Canada refused to extradite Canadians of Indian origin.

• (2050)

We are told that the government knew about foreign interference by India for several months, even years. We are talking about foreign interference and ways to prevent it. How are we talking about this only now when the government may have been aware?

This raises several questions.

[English]

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I can understand that there is a lot of concern and confusion right now, and a lot of questions are being raised, but I also want to point out the fact that a take-note debate is for us to raise our concerns in this House, any questions we may have and the things we want to see happen in the future. What I am looking forward to seeing is the public inquiry that will be taking place, which will be led by Justice Hogue. I am happy to say that the scope of that inquiry has been expanded thanks to our government and the support from the NDP. We know the Conservatives were fixed on just setting down the issue of China.

I want to know how the member feels about having a broader scope to make sure that all Canadians are protected and that our democratic institutions are safe from harm from the many countries out there that seek to attack Canada.

• (2055)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Chair, obviously, when it comes to an issue as important as foreign interference, we need to address it seriously. We have been calling for this much-discussed independent inquiry for quite some time. It took a long time for the government to embark on this and get involved. The Bloc Québécois has been asking for this to happen for a long time.

At the time, we were talking a lot about foreign interference by China. Today, given what we know, it is undeniable that we need to broaden our scope when we talk about foreign interference. If Ms. Hogue addresses the issue of India, it will be very interesting for us to have the information about this particular foreign interference. We are open to the judge proposing solutions and things the government can do to protect Canada from any form of foreign interference.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, the reason we are here today is that Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar was murdered. We have now heard that CSIS knew there were threats against his life for some time.

I wonder what next step we need to take as parliamentarians. What does the government need to do to make sure that this same incident and horrific tragedy does not happen to other members of

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the Sikh community and other members of diaspora communities in this country? What are those steps? Do we need to involve the RCMP? Do we need to make sure that there is a foreign registry? From the member's perspective, could she speak about the steps that would protect the Canadians who I know are feeling extraordinarily vulnerable right now?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Chair, that is an excellent question. I do not necessarily know the answer, but I think the first step is simply to talk about it.

I greatly enjoyed listening to my colleague's thoughts just now, when she asked what we are here for if not to speak out against things happening in certain countries, like injustice against religious minorities, various other minorities and vulnerable people, for example. I consider it our duty as parliamentarians to speak out against these things and then discuss them.

Then we can come up with solutions together, but we need to talk more about what is going on here, at home. God knows injustice exists here like anywhere else. This is part of our role in a world of international relations among nations. These conversations may not be easy, but we certainly need to have them.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Chair, I thank my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia for her speeches, which are always insightful and sensitive.

I would like to ask her the following question. After seeing all the hesitation and avoidance that the government was careful to display all spring, does she believe that the government will really do anything about this situation, apart from the inquiry that is already in progress?

These facts are weighing heavily on our minds this week.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Chair, I always act in good faith. I give people the benefit of the doubt even though a person tends to lose confidence after repeated failures. However, I also trust in law enforcement and the intelligence agencies. I know that they are able to do the necessary work. I have therefore decided to act in good faith in this case, but obviously the government should send a strong message about its response to foreign interference, regardless of what form it takes, particularly in this case.

• (2100)

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Chair, it will come as no surprise when I say that I, too, offer my deepest condolences to the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. They have been in mourning since last spring, and we are reigniting that grief with our debates in the House this week. They have my deepest sympathy.

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I do not want to turn an emotional debate into a partisan one, but I feel it must be said: Canada is in a bit of a mess. I am looking at what is happening right now. On Monday, the Prime Minister announced something that he said he had known for a few weeks. When we asked why he did not mention it before, we were told that the investigation is ongoing so it cannot be discussed. It is almost as if he told us that there is a fire, but he will not tell us where. That does not strike me as particularly nice, and I am not sure that it is helpful. That said, as my colleague from Trois-Rivières mentioned earlier, it is clear that other governments are in no hurry to support the Prime Minister in his statement and his demands.

What does that mean? Is it because the information was not reliable? If so, the Prime Minister's statement yesterday was premature. If it was indeed premature, he may have caused more harm by making the statement too soon than he would have caused by waiting, even though he might have been criticized for waiting too long.

I have never governed a state, and I may never do so, unless Quebec chooses independence, and even then I doubt I will be in charge. Still, when governing a country, one should make sure one knows what one is talking about before stirring up a hornet's nest. Is that what happened here? I do not know, but I am astounded that more detailed information is not available.

Is there a connection between the potentially unclear information the Prime Minister got, the weeks of waiting before he made his statement and other governments' silence? We do not know.

I think that the first thing we should do is offer support to the diaspora of all these communities living in Canada. As I said at the beginning of my speech, when we look at what is happening, we are in a bit of a mess. There is foreign interference and we have to name a commissioner to look into it. Justice Hogue is going to do excellent work, I am sure of it, but we have a long way to go. We are not there yet.

In the meantime, Chinese communities in Vancouver and Toronto seem to be struggling with clandestine Chinese police stations. The government does not seem to have reacted to this situation other than to condemn it. Nothing was done to stop it.

Now there is the murder of Mr. Nijjar last spring which is alleged to be tied to the Indian government. The government is reacting several months later and does not want to tell us what is happening. They are talking about another inquiry that we know nothing about and over which we have no control.

How do we reassure the Indian diaspora here in Canada? How do we reassure the Chinese diaspora here in Canada? How do we reassure all the other cultural communities living here? I get the impression that the government has quit. When we ask questions, they do not want to provide answers.

Here we are halfway through the government's mandate. Two years have gone by; we have two left, unless everything blows up before the end of this four-year cycle. If we look at the other options, what are they? Where is the official opposition that should be here vigorously condemning the situation and maybe sharing some pain and suffering, putting forward its ideas and its point of view? It is not here. Between the "we do not know, so we cannot talk about it" silence and "we are not there, and we do not want to talk

about it" silence, Quebec is in an uncomfortable position within the Canadian federation.

I would like to reiterate my deepest condolences to Mr. Nijjar's family. I hope we can find a way to provide reassurance and support to all these communities, a way that is more than just lip service, motions of support and new national days of this, that or the other, a way to really be there when people need us.

● (2105)

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I would have liked to have asked His Majesty's opposition, the Conservative Party members, a question, but unfortunately nobody is speaking today, so I will reiterate what the member for Rivière-du-Nord was just saying. A lot of Bloc members were given a lot of time and a lot of Conservatives were not. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition supported the Prime Minister's statement and reiterated a similar statement. This take-note debate was also agreed upon unanimously.

Did Conservatives give any information on why they would not be speaking today? Did former prime minister Harper call and say "Conservatives shut up. Go home. It's time to not speak. You cannot speak about India, but you must speak about China"?

If I recall prior to the House rising in June, it was all about foreign interference, but now with another country coming up it is dead silence. I see canaries on the other side who are not chirping today. Could the member make some comments on that?

The Chair: I would just remind members not to call anyone names and also be careful about underlining whether someone is here or not here.

The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Chair, I hope that what I am about to say will not surprise my esteemed colleague, for whom I have a great deal of respect. No, Mr. Harper did not call me.

I understand his questions. I have the same questions. As I said earlier, this raises a number of questions. Who governs this country? I tell my constituents that if they want reassurance, they have to make sure they have Bloc Québécois members in Ottawa. Without us, no one can say that everything is fine.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, I have a question for my colleague and friend from Rivière-du-Nord.

The matter is clear. We now understand that the victim of this terrible murder, Mr. Nijjar, had been warned by police and by CSIS that he was being threatened and was not safe.

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[English]

I am going to say this in English. It is late.

I am very troubled that our security forces and the RCMP were unable to keep Mr. Nijjar safe. As to this aspect, I wonder if my friend from Rivière-du-Nord has any thoughts or comments. It strikes me as a failure of our security services, and I wonder if he feels the same.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Chair, I thank my Green Party colleague, who always does excellent work and who is remarkably sensitive and diplomatic.

I understand her questions. I am asking myself the same things. Why were authorities unable to keep Mr. Nijjar safe? If I understood correctly, he was given information at one point, but that does not seem like much in terms of ensuring his safety. Over the past few years, incidents have occurred on the Hill that have led us to question what we need to do to keep parliamentarians safe.

People are also wondering how to keep cultural communities across Canada safe. I think that some serious work needs to be done. I have been here for eight years, and we have been talking about the problems with the justice system for eight years. We talked about it again recently. The government has been unable to appoint judges, so trials get dropped because the judges who are there do not have time to conduct them. We are not keeping the public safe. As I said before, unfortunately, I think things are looking pretty grim in Canada.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Chair, my colleague always fights for justice and human rights. We work together on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights.

I was deeply interested in his speech. He mentioned that members of the diaspora are truly worried about what is happening. These people often have to flee violence in their country of origin. What more does he think we can do to help members of the diaspora feel safer?

• (2110)

Mr. Rhéal Éloi Fortin: Mr. Chair, I will be brief and tell my colleague that we will never form government. Unfortunately, I cannot tell her how to go about that. She is a member of the Liberal Party. I suggest she discuss it with her Prime Minister, party officials and cabinet. That is where the answer is. They are the ones in charge.

She and I are condemning the same events. However, all I can do is speak out against them and condemn them. I hope that she is in a position to intervene. I also have a great deal of respect for her, especially for the work we did together on the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. I trust her.

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member of Parliament for Brampton North.

The announcement by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons regarding the credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen are deeply troubling. All Canadians deserve to feel safe in their communities, and that is the highest priority of our government.

As the Prime Minister described, our top priorities at this time are that our law enforcement and security agencies ensure the continued safety of all Canadians, and that all steps be taken to hold the perpetrators of this murder to account.

I am thankful for the opportunity to address the recent allegations surrounding the death of the Sikh community leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, particularly in relation to the RCMP's involvement in this investigation.

Mr. Nijjar was a husband, a father, a businessman and a community leader. Only weeks before his assassination, he was at UBC attending his son's graduation, where I saw him with his family. He was smiling, as a proud father would seeing their son earn such a prestigious degree.

On Sunday, June 18, it was Father's Day. After spending time with his family, he did what he would do every evening, which was to go to Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara and serve the congregation, not only as the president, but also in physically helping to build the new hall adjacent to the gurdwara. As he was leaving the gurdwara, Mr. Nijjar was shot and killed in cold blood in Surrey, British Columbia.

The community was shocked, and they wanted answers. Concerned MPs immediately met with the then minister of public safety. They were assured that no stone would be left unturned, and that the law enforcement agencies would investigate this with full resources at its disposal.

Yesterday, when Prime Minister Trudeau announced that there are credible allegations linking agents of the—

The Chair: Members need to remember that we can only call other members by titles or riding names, so maybe the parliamentary secretary could back up in his speech a bit.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Chair, yesterday, the Prime Minister announced that there are credible allegations linking agents of the government of India to this killing. The RCMP continues to investigate this murder. Investigators are working diligently to gather information and evidence to bring justice to Mr. Nijjar and his family.

To ensure the integrity of the RCMP investigation and those involved, I am not in a position to discuss specifics. Those responsible will be held to account.

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The implications of foreign actors actively pursuing targets in Canada poses a significant threat to Canadian sovereignty and the safety of our citizens. It is of great concern. Any involvement by a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of Canadian sovereignty. India's involvement in the extraterritorial killing of a Canadian on Canadian soil will not be tolerated.

We are engaging with our Indian counterparts at many levels on this issue and expect their full co-operation in ensuring both that those responsible for this egregious act face consequences and that this never happens again. Given the seriousness of the situation, we have also engaged with our closest allies on this matter.

I know that many Canadians, particularly members of Canada's Indian diaspora community, are feeling angry and perhaps frightened right now. Rest assured that Canada is a country governed by the rule of law, and Canadian law enforcement authorities will take all necessary steps to hold perpetrators to account. CSIS, the RCMP and the broader security and intelligence community are working closely with other government departments, international partners and local police forces to ensure the safety and security of Canadians at home and abroad.

As the member of Parliament for Surrey Centre, I will continue to engage with Canadian communities to hear their concerns and work with them to foster trust and open communication channels. Public safety remains a top priority for our government.

• (2115)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Chair, I would like to first congratulate my colleague on his new appointment as parliamentary secretary. I also want to thank him for bringing forward a more personal story and perspective on Mr. Nijjar. That is very important.

Tonight we have talked a lot about how shocking it is that a Canadian citizen was killed on Canadian soil. I know that the member has been on the foreign affairs committee and has a strong understanding of the human rights abuses that are taking place under the Modi government in India right now.

I wonder if the member could speak a bit about what Canada could do, how Canada could respond to some of those human rights abuses that are happening outside of Canada, in India, at the moment?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Chair, the member for Edmonton Strathcona has been a big champion of human rights, wherever they may be.

This is something that comes to me as the member of Parliament for Surrey Centre, a very diverse riding, where I hear complaints from Dalits or those who have been subjugated in very inappropriate ways in India, who have faced human rights violations. Christians and Christian minorities, particularly, have been facing gross violations. A lot of tribal people in some of the more rural areas have faced similar fates. Muslims in many parts of India have faced great atrocities and challenges. Women all over the country have faced those challenges.

Canada's role is to always make that a priority whenever it deals with foreign affairs matters. We need like-minded allies to also support that. When the world speaks as one voice, I think people have to listen. Canada, which touts being a democracy, should be answerable to other democracies around the world and should uphold those rights. That is how we will get that done, just like members of Parliament in this House today have shown unity, especially the NDP and the Bloc, in condemning this action by the Indian government.

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Chair, the Prime Minister's statement yesterday has really shaken many young people. I have been speaking to many young people with South Asian backgrounds and it is very troubling to see how hurt they are today.

Can you maybe give a sense to young people, especially those who may be watching, of what they should be doing or how they can overcome some of the challenges they may be facing today or some of the questions they may have today that really shatter who they are? With something like this happening in a place like Canada, how can they feel safe, how do we make sure they are protected and that they can feel very much at home in their country?

The Chair: I would remind the member to speak through the Chair.

The hon. member for Surrey Centre.

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Chair, the question was very poignant. Growing up in this country, we have heard many others speak in the same way. It was very troubling when we heard accounts of events that usually happened in other countries, perhaps in India and abroad. For many Canadians, especially those in the South Asian diaspora, it was their worst nightmare to find out that while speaking here, they could be targeted. To them I say they can rest assured that this country has their backs. This country will not sell them out for a trade deal. This country, this Prime Minister and this government will ensure that their rights are protected and we will voice that in all accounts. It was an unprecedented statement that the Prime Minister made, which assures a lot of those young people.

The second thing I would like to say is that they need to show that they are better, that they have communal harmony here regardless of their faith. They can be from the Indian diaspora. They can be a Sikh, a Christian, a Hindu, a Muslim. We all get along very well. If people come to Surrey, they will see our places of worship, where people commingle. Members of all communities come and go. We should maintain that integrity and decorum. We should maintain that Canada is a beautiful, diverse, multicultural country and no one should ever tamper with that.

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• (2120)

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I am thankful for the opportunity to address the issue that was brought to light in this very House yesterday. It is the issue of credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian citizen murdered on Canadian soil. This is an unacceptable violation of sovereignty and international law. I want to provide my sincerest condolences to Mr. Nijjar's family and friends and the Sikh community at large.

The Prime Minister brought this issue to light because our government remains committed to combatting foreign interference and to protecting Canadians and communities targeted by foreign state actors. We are taking leadership in safeguarding our democratic institutions and protecting our sovereignty. This will never change.

The RCMP and our security agencies are aware of foreign interference in Canada and are leveraging all tools at their disposal. We are also working closely with our democratic international partners and will continue to share as much information as possible with Canadians.

It is within the RCMP's mandate to investigate criminal or illegal activities occurring in Canada that are found to be backed by a foreign state actor, and it currently has over 100 investigations looking into foreign interference activities. The Government of Canada is aware that certain foreign governments have attempted to threaten and intimidate individuals in Canada or their relatives abroad. We take this issue very seriously, and we look forward to the expanded mandate given to the public inquiry led by Justice Hogue exploring this issue more in depth, despite the Conservatives only wanting the focus to be on China. Seeing their absence in the House for this debate tonight and the Conservative—

The Chair: The hon. member, being deputy whip, should know that we cannot say whether a member is in the chamber or not in the chamber.

The hon. member for Brampton North can maybe back that up and continue.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Chair, you are right, but it does sadden me to hear the silence in this chamber from Conservative voices tonight and the walking back of their leader's statement this morning.

This past year, we have been talking a lot about foreign interference, the safety of Canadians and the integrity of our institutions. It is unfortunate that we do not have a partner in the Conservative Party when it comes to making sure that all Canadians are safe and that we are looking into the actions of all foreign governments.

Since coming into office, our government has taken robust action to safeguard our democracy and institutions against foreign interference by investing in the RCMP to better protect Canadians from harassment and intimidation, increasing its investigative capacity and more proactively engaging with communities at risk of being targeted. We are creating a foreign agents registry, and through Public Safety Canada we are also establishing a national counter-foreign interference office to coordinate our efforts.

Members can rest assured that where there is evidence of state-backed harassment or intimidation, CSIS and the RCMP apply the full measures of their mandates to investigate these threats. I will also reiterate that if a member of the public suspects criminal foreign interference activities that do not pose an immediate threat to life, they should report them to the RCMP or CSIS through phone and online reporting channels, including the national security information network web portal. The Government of Canada is working diligently every day to keep Canadians safe using the full extent of our national security and intelligence agencies.

Finally, I know that many Canadians, especially those of Indo-Canadian descent, are feeling deeply concerned over the revelations that were brought to light yesterday. I have received many calls from people in my riding of Brampton North, and I have been saddened to hear from so many that they are not surprised, as they have long suspected and feared the reach of the Indian government outside of its borders.

This is a sad reality, but our government has made it clear that we will not tolerate it, and our top priority will continue to be the safety of Canadians and that all steps be taken by law enforcement to hold the perpetrators to account. This news should not in any way be seen as an attack against one community or an endorsement of another. We must all work together and call for justice. We call on the Indian government to co-operate with the investigation so that we can have further transparency and so that justice can be served.

• (2125)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Chair, because the hon. member is a deputy whip, I want her to explain why, if every party had the same number of spots to speak today on this debate, some parties are not speaking. Is it their will or that of others?

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Chair, this is an interesting question. I think I am maybe at liberty to speak to it. As far as I was aware, all members originally were participating in the House. Perhaps there has been a sudden change of heart. I do not know why that is.

There were a few other things I wanted to say, especially to Canadians who are watching today. I want to remind them they are a peace-loving people and I want to remind them to stay calm and steadfast in our commitment to diversity, religious freedom, democracy and the rule of law. That is so important as we have this conversation and as events continue to unfold in the coming weeks and months.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Chair, I know a lot of us, and I mentioned this before, have probably been reaching out to those in our community who are greatly impacted by this, members of the Sikh community.

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I was having a conversation tonight, and one of the community members asked me, “What will it take for us to be considered as first-class citizens in this country?” It really just broke my heart, and I did not know what to say to him. I said it is about solidarity. It is about that non-partisan coming together and speaking out against what we know is wrong.

As a member of the government, could she speak to my constituents as well on how we are all working together, for the most part, to do just that and to make their lives safer and better, as much as we can?

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Chair, it is something that, being born and raised here in Canada myself, I have struggled with. I know many around me have, and there are many in our caucus who have shared these types of sentiments. It is unfortunate, and it saddens me greatly to hear that even today there are members of our Canadian society who feel they are looked upon as less than. I want to say to them that they are Canadian and that this government will always stand for their rights and their freedoms in this country, and their right to be treated as an equal Canadian, as all others.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Chair, leading in to the summer, the member and I both sat on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. I chaired it, and the member participated in it, and she participated for a lot more hours than we had planned, because the official opposition wanted to keep meeting and having meetings on foreign election interference. It was a really important topic.

In the riding of Waterloo, where I am really proud to serve my constituents, for the most part there is a lot of confidence in the independent judicial system. They know that politicians, elected officials, have roles to play, but so do our security agencies, the judicial process and police organizations. The list goes on.

I would like to hear from the member as to what is taking place right now. What is the importance of the Prime Minister's speaking yesterday, and who are the right authorities to ensure the situation is dealt with in a way that anyone who needs to be held to account is held to account and that justice is served for the loss of this individual?

• (2130)

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Chair, the member for Waterloo is definitely an excellent Chair of the procedure and House affairs committee. She has led that committee through many challenges we as members face and that Canadians look to us to overcome.

Within that committee, we talked quite a lot about this issue. We had witnesses appear before committee who told us there are many actors involved in foreign interference in Canada and that those include countries like Iran, China, Russia and others. They stated “and others” many times, and I pressed those witnesses to explain which other countries those were. In our deliberations, we constantly came back to China being the only concern that particularly the Conservative Party had, but now it goes to show we must be concerned about all foreign state actors in order to protect all Canadians and to protect our institutions to the greatest extent possible.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Chair, it is an honour to rise in this place virtually to join the debate. I want to start by thanking members for the opportunity to have this

speech but also to say that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast are grappling with something deeply shocking. It was only yesterday that the Prime Minister stood in this place. I was, as I think all of us were, completely astonished with what he said and the implications of what he said for rule of law and for the notion, which we have been grappling within this place since the spring, of foreign interference, initially in our electoral process but now also the alleged foreign interference by governments in the most deeply alarming and troubling violation of sovereignty and of decency and morality.

We really do lack for words, which is rare in this place. However, I do want to be mindful that the Prime Minister chose his words carefully and so will I. We do not yet have facts that say that the state of India was involved directly in the killing of a Canadian. The Prime Minister said, “Canadian security agencies have been actively pursuing credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the Government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar.” I want to stay with those words and try to keep my remarks within the bounds of what the Prime Minister has told us we know and we can talk about, and not assume that we have all the facts because we do not.

However, I do want to say how deeply we wish to share our condolences and sympathies with the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar. It is clear now his son has been talking with the media. Not only was his father warned that his life might be at risk, but a recent media story says he met regularly with—

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I apologize to the hon. member. We lost sound, but we can hear the member now.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, in forming my thoughts, I find this a very difficult topic because we have had allegations of foreign interference and now nothing could be more disturbing, troubling and unacceptable than the murder of a Canadian on Canadian soil. However, we have obligation as parliamentarians to stay calm and to allow the investigation to take place. We must, and I think we all are united in this, insist on justice being done and that the perpetrators be found.

I have questions at this point, as we stay calm and seek the facts. What on earth is going on with our security agencies that they were unable to keep Mr. Nijjar safe on Canadian soil? They had warnings. They knew. That is a question that I have in my mind, and I hope that we can get to the bottom of that as well. We need to know for a fact whether the Indian government was involved in killing a Canadian. We need to know, and we do not know that yet.

I am reminded of the Air India inquiry. The Air India inquiry, of course, looked into the 1985 bombing, which is the single largest terrorist attack ever in Canada. It killed 329 people. However, Mr. Justice Major's report, and I remember this with great clarity, told us that we could have averted that bombing if only CSIS and the RCMP had communicated with each other to avert the attack. Now we know that in June Mr. Hardeep Singh Nijjar was murdered and our security forces had advance warning, but they did not prevent his killing. I want to ask some of those same questions. Were they talking to each other? What steps were taken? What steps were not taken?

I am also quite shocked by the news that has come out through the CBC from comments made by the Minister of Emergency Preparedness that the Prime Minister chose to tell us this yesterday because otherwise the information was going to be in the media. Therefore, once again, we are drawn back to not a suggestion but the reality that in our security agencies we have people who think it is okay to leak information to the media. I go back to the report of the Right Hon. David Johnston, former special rapporteur. We know how that went, but Mr. Johnston made it very clear that we have to find out who leaks information from our security agencies because it brings Canadian security information and our security forces into disrepute with our Five Eyes partners. Security agencies need to understand—

• (2135)

The Assistant Deputy Chair: I apologize, but we do have to go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Chair, I have listened to the member's questions tonight, specifically about some concerns around the intelligence that comes from our public safety department. I wonder if she could expand a little. Does she have any thoughts about what is going on there?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Chair, the question is, what is our role as members of Parliament? That is one thing I put that lens on in trying to figure out what I was going to say this evening. We can always comment on what we know about Prime Minister Modi and his anti-human-rights record and so on. However, what do we really know, and what, as parliamentarians, should we have a responsibility to oversee?

I think we need to pay a lot more attention to what is going in CSIS and the RCMP. We have not focused on the RCMP much in the House, and it may seem unrelated for some members. However, the mass casualty report points to an agency that has deep rot and real problems. We can look at CSIS, and I do not understand how we could allow the people in CSIS to call themselves whistle-blowers when they violate national security legislation, apparently with impunity. Apparently someone has done it again. We need to look at that.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Chair, I too want to join the chorus of my colleagues in the House today in sending my condolences on behalf of the communities of Edmonton Griesbach, as well as many communities in Alberta, to the family of Mr. Nijjar, who was ruthlessly murdered outside of a B.C. temple. This is an egregious attack on safety, security and the

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feelings of dignity that Canadians expect when they come to Canada, when they become Canadian.

Turtle Island, this place, my ancestors, the indigenous people of this land, by way of treaty, have made commitments to share this place, to have a peaceful place and to have a place we can all call home.

The troubling news delivered by the Prime Minister just yesterday, that a fellow Canadian, a member of our community, a member of our country, could be so ruthlessly gunned down and to have alleged connections confirmed by our intelligence agencies to the Indian government is truly heartbreaking. It is heartbreaking not just for Canadians who value our systems, our safety and our institutions but it is heartbreaking for the world that we have come to a place where human lives can be so easily taken because of political dissent, because of an opinion that someone might hold.

I want to be able to put my words into some context for those who may feel blindsided, who may feel as though this has come, figuratively, out of nowhere.

My friends, this is not a new instance for many of the diaspora community members who know India.

In the last eight years alone, India has gone from a vibrant, diverse and populous democracy, a beacon of how large and successful democracies can be, to a deteriorated state in which majoritarianism has directly eliminated and is trying to eliminate the rights of Muslims, Sikhs, Dalits and Christians right across India. This includes lynchings, killings, shootings and unprecedented violence against community members simply for who they are.

I am troubled by tonight's debate because the chorus of my colleagues from the Liberal bench, the Bloc Québécois, the Green Party and New Democrats has come together at a time when our country needs us to, to dwell deeply on the concerns of many Canadians, on the concerns of their safety. Absent, of course, are Conservative colleagues, who very often in this place speak of other foreign governments and their interference in our democracies.

However, they are now silent. When a Canadian has been gunned down, they have no words, not even words of sympathy for a fellow Canadian who has been killed. Shame.

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I call on the Leader of the Opposition to make his truth known to Canadians, make the truth known of his party's close affiliation to that of the Prime Minister of India, of Modi's BJP government. It has been said that the former prime minister, a Conservative prime minister, Stephen Harper congratulated and celebrated Mr. Modi and his government. These are the reasons why we hear silence today. My friends, these are the reasons why we are hearing silence at a time when we must come together to protect our institutions and to protect Canadians.

I now want to speak about some of the partner organizations here in Canada. They should continue to do their work, continue to do what is right, continue to speak truth to power, because here in Canada, we will continue to protect them. We will continue to fight every single day so that their rights are protected, so that their dignity is protected and so that their security is protected.

New Democrats stand for that. Canadians expect that. We will continue to fight for that.

• (2140)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Chair, the member mentioned in his speech that the Conservatives are not speaking in the House today and that their leader is backtracking from the statement he made yesterday in the House. I just want to find out from the hon. member if the Conservatives got a call from Prime Minister Modi or former prime minister Stephen Harper to not speak on this topic and to backtrack from the statement that the Leader of the Opposition made yesterday in the House.

• (2145)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague, who is a champion for his community, particularly right now. His leadership is important not only to Canadians but, of course, to many of those of Indian descent. I want to thank him for his words today and for championing something very difficult. To the member and his family, I wish them all the best.

As to why we are hearing silence from the Conservative Party today in the face of what is a tremendously serious issue to our national security and our sovereignty, I will simply quote the prime minister of yesterday, Stephen Harper. He once said that Prime Minister Modi was a good friend and was the best partner that Canada could have in India.

I would challenge that narrative and suggest that when a Canadian dies, when a Canadian is shot dead, it is time to speak. Now is the time to oppose such words. My deepest request to the Leader of the Opposition today would be to retract those words. Retract and condemn those words by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in light of the news we have now heard.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Edmonton Griesbach, for his powerful speech. I think it was a difficult speech to make, but what we need in the House more than ever is for us to speak truth to power and to challenge each other to stand up, because what is at stake is Canadians' safety and Canada's sovereignty.

To that end, my question is this. The Conservatives feel that we must take on foreign interference with China. It follows, then, that if they want to ensure all Canadians are protected against foreign

interference, should they not stand up in the House today in this take-note debate, join with all of us, the Liberals, the NDP and the Bloc, and stand united to send a clear message to the Indian government that we will not tolerate this kind of action and this kind of threat to Canadians? No matter where we come from and where we are in our communities today, we are united as one and we are all equals as Canadians.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Chair, when I decided to put my name forward to represent the fine people of Edmonton Griesbach, I knew it was on the principle of knowing that it would be my duty to protect Canadians. It is our duty to protect our country. It is our duty to protect the principles of the right to free speech, the right to dissent and the right to exist in a peaceful country. I do not back down from that commitment and pledge today. However, I would suggest that the Conservatives fulfill their oath of office, represent the communities they say they represent, stand in this place and make clear that we will not tolerate when Canadians are murdered.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Chair, earlier today in the debate, it was mentioned that there are those in this place who are putting trade policy before human rights. I would like to hear my hon. colleague's reaction to that and thoughts on it.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Chair, in the great tradition of many New Democrats prior to me and many of those who fought for freedom and justice elsewhere, it has been clear that people must stand before profits; they must. We do this because the dignity of Canadians, the dignity of our morality and the dignity of our country are at risk when we fail to do so.

It is up to each and every one of us now at this very delicate moment to be united, to stand with all Canadians and to send a strong message to Modi that we will not tolerate this. We will find those who have done this, and we will bring those to justice who dare harm the sovereignty of Canadians and the protection that we all hold so sacred.

• (2150)

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Windsor—Tecumseh.

Canada offers a promise to live in a democracy where fundamental rights are safeguarded and guaranteed. That is why Canada is home to so many Canadians who have come from every corner of our planet, with many proudly represented in this House. They come to Canada because they know that we protect the rights of minorities and that Canadians have the right to express their views peacefully. Standing up for human rights should not label one as a terrorist.

Canadians understand that this country thrives because we listen to each other and work together, even when we disagree. I would say especially when we disagree. I have always said that it does not matter if one came to this country 300 years ago, 30 years ago or three years ago; we are all immigrants to this land. Only the first nations of these lands can say these lands were their original home. As Canadians, we share a common value. We are stronger when we learn from each other and peacefully share different ideas. It is crucial that these principles be safeguarded.

The potential involvement of the Indian government and the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is a grave violation of our sovereignty. It goes against the principles that we hold so dear. The perpetrators of the murder of Hardeep Singh Nijjar need to be brought to justice, and protecting the integrity of the investigation is crucial. I want to thank the law enforcement and intelligence agencies for the work they are doing on behalf of Canadians. Our government keeps working to modernize and enhance Canada's security and intelligence organizations, and we are providing them with the tools to take action and disrupt foreign interference and threats. I have complete confidence in their work, and I know that they will do everything in their power to protect Canada's sovereignty.

As we move through this extremely difficult time, my message to Canadians who were originally born in India, or whose families originally came from there, is to stress that calm, kindness and unity are of the utmost importance right now. I say this to Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and more. Let us not give a foreign state an opportunity or reason to point a finger at us. Those who seek to undermine Canada's sovereignty will do and say things to delegitimize and undermine our existence as Canadians. To that I say the following: Whatever our faith, we are Canadian; whatever the colour of our skin, we are Canadian. We are Canadian, and Canada is a free and strong democracy.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Chair, I really enjoyed the speech the minister just gave, and in particular, how he referenced that, unless we are of indigenous descent, we have all come here over the last few hundred years. As a matter of fact, I am a first-generation Canadian, as both of my parents came from Europe after World War II.

I think people have always sought to come to Canada because they are looking for a place where democracy is supreme, where we have the opportunity to thrive and where we have the freedoms that come with being able to express ourselves. Therefore, when we have a potential attack on that democracy and those freedoms, it seriously calls into question how we can see ourselves as Canadians moving forward and what we can do in order to protect that. Could the minister comment on that?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, Canadians have been coming here to Canada, to these lands, for a better life and better protection, whether it was 300 years ago, as I said, or even 30 years ago. When we come together, we learn from one another. Multiculturalism is thriving. We celebrate our diversity; however, we also celebrate where we came from. I am personally very proud of the fact that I was born in the small village of Bombeli in India.

I too have concerns about human rights violations, not only in India but also all over the world. I stood up very strongly, and still do

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to this day, to Russian aggression in Ukraine. In Canada, we have the opportunity to stand up for human rights, because that is what Canada represents. Our message to all the first generations who are born here, who have not seen the history and the past of where their families have come from, is that they should not take for granted what we have here. That is what we are talking about and protecting today.

● (2155)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, the minister is absolutely correct in indicating that multiculturalism and those of us who are immigrants helped build this country. We are equal partners in the sense that we make contributions while we also face challenges. We, of course, are living here on the lands of indigenous peoples, who have allowed us to be here as settlers.

What is troubling me the most in this debate tonight is the fact that the leader of the Conservatives and the Conservative caucus want Canadians to believe that they are friends of the immigrant community, yet they are entirely silent. When the life of a member of our community has been lost, potentially at the hands of a foreign government, how is it that the Conservatives are silent in this debate? We know that foreign interference is a real threat in this country right now. Where are they for the immigrant community, who are Canadians here in Canada and have made Canada their home? When their lives are being threatened by a foreign government, why are the Conservatives not here to speak up and to challenge the Indian government, which may well be involved in the loss of life of a Canadian?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, I think the official opposition's silence speaks loudly right now in comparison to the voice it had when it came to the foreign interference of one particular country. Hardeep Nijjar's family and son would understand the Sikh values of fighting for others' rights very well.

We should not let this incident just be about one country. This is a message to all communities that our country and our government will stand together. It is a message to the Chinese community, Iranian community and many others that are feeling the anxiety of this. At the same time, hopefully, they are listening to the silence of one particular party as well.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Chair, after 1984, when the Golden Temple was demolished by a military attack in India, there was a genocide of Sikhs in Delhi. After that, emotions were very high in the community across the globe when he was growing up. In fact, one casualty was here at home. I am speaking of the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, whose own maternal uncle, her mom's brother, was brutally killed just because he was restless and emotional. Many people among his own constituents face the same consequences.

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Could the minister comment on that?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Madam Chair, many families, including my own, have very similar stories to this. I was 14 years old at that time, and I remember trying to serve my country in the military and constantly being attacked and being accused of being a terrorist. Fortunately for me, I had ability as a police officer and status as a member of the military. However, many Canadians do not have that, and every time they stand up for human rights, they are called out.

One of the things we will always do is stand up for fundamental human rights. We will also stand up for the rule of law in our own country.

• (2200)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Chair, Canada is home to the largest proportion of Sikhs on Planet Earth: more than in India, more than in the United States and more than in any other nation in the world.

We think of the many vibrant Sikh communities that now exist across Canada, in Vancouver, Surrey, Brampton, Calgary, Montreal and many more cities. With each passing day, more and more Sikh Canadians are calling my community of Windsor—Essex their home. They design and build cars at Stellantis and Ford. Sikhs care for seniors and residents at Windsor Regional Hospital and Hôtel-Dieu Grace hospital. They open businesses and restaurants, and share their culture and tradition with us.

On County Road 42, there sits a beautiful gurdwara where Sikhs in my community have gathered for more than two decades. It is a place of peaceful worship. It is a place of community, where families come together, where young Sikh Canadians go to Punjabi school and attend Khalsa Camp in the summers, where international students come to share in a meal and get a taste of home and where, in fact, the community prepares meals for each other, for the hungry and homeless in my community and for visitors like myself.

I have been to the gurdwara many times to celebrate Vaisakhi, to light a candle for Diwali, to share in the grief when three international students from St. Clair College lost their lives in a tragic car crash, and to speak with the incredible truck drivers who, day after day, deliver the food, medicines and car parts that make our community go.

More recently, this summer I visited with my friend, the hon. member for Brampton West, the Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, herself a Sikh, to meet with young Sikh Canadians attending Khalsa Camp. On another occasion, the Minister of Housing and the Minister of National Defence joined me at the gurdwara. There were three ministers, a Sikh, a Muslim and a Hindu, all welcomed warmly at the gurdwara. That is the best of what Canada is about.

To think for even one second that a member of my community could be killed just steps away from the gurdwara for their political beliefs, by a foreign agent working for a foreign country, is abhorrent to me. It is an offence to every single Canadian who believes in democracy, freedom of speech and the sovereignty of our laws and our country, Canada.

This is not new. For Sikh Canadians, such intimidation is not new. In the last 24 hours, I have had a chance to speak with members of my Sikh community, and they tell me the same thing. They worry that if they protest the treatment of farmers in Punjab, that they or their families could be targeted.

I see protests and rallies on Parliament Hill almost every single day, for all sorts of issues. Just today, I attended a union rally calling for the elimination of replacement workers. Peaceful protest is what Canada is all about. It is how we expand our freedoms. It is how we improve quality of life for all of our citizens. I cannot imagine someone fearing for their life because they are expressing their political view, but here we are.

My family knows this fear. In the old country, in Poland, my father was a local leader of the solidarity movement that fought for the rights of workers in communist Poland. Just after midnight on December 13, 1981, the police came to our door and arrested my father. Thousands of solidarity leaders were rounded up and imprisoned. For weeks, we did not know whether my father was alive or dead, all because he dared to speak up and stand up for justice and rights. Like so many immigrants, my family came to Canada to flee oppression and political persecution.

Canada accepted my family as political refugees and gave us safe harbour. That is the dream for millions of immigrants and new Canadians. That dream has been shattered with the news of the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

I had a chance tonight to speak with the family of Mr. Nijjar, who call my community home. To them, and to all Sikh Canadians, including those back home in Windsor-Tecumseh, we stand in solidarity. The Sikh faith compels us to speak out against injustice, and so we must and so we will. We will pursue the truth. We will bring justice, but let us do so together, united as Canadians.

• (2205)

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Chair, I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary a question.

He has been witness to a lot of debates here on foreign interference. All members of this House and all parties in this House have condemned any form of foreign interference, particularly when we had the debates on China's foreign interference in Canada. I find it very surprising. Every other party has spoken to condemning foreign interference by India, but one party is definitely silent in here. Does it mean that we are only to stand up for them when foreign interference affects their votes as a Conservative? Or does it mean we stand up for any foreign interference when lives are at stake?

In this case a person lost his life, and I do not see that other side speaking. I want to know if it only matters when Conservative votes get lost and a member from Steveston loses an election. Can the member for Windsor—Tecumseh speak to that?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Chair, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his incredible work and for being the voice of immigrant communities and new Canadian communities from across the country, coast to coast.

Solidarity means that an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us as Canadians. It is up to all of us in this House to stand together and to stand firm against this type of assault. This is an attack on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is an attack on who we are as Canadians, and my hon. colleague is absolutely right.

The silence from the opposition members is absolutely deafening—

An hon. member: Just one party.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: It is one party, and that is the Conservative Party. Its silence is absolutely deafening, and it is absolutely telling.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Chair, building on that last question, we would almost have to assume, based on the lack of intervention into this debate by Conservatives, that it is an orchestrated, coordinated and collaborated attempt to be absolutely silent on the issue. The only individual to speak was the House leader for the Conservatives who had a 20-minute spot to speak. He spoke for only five minutes, and since then we have heard from no Conservatives. They have not even gotten up to ask a simple question. This is not an issue of politics; this is an issue of solidarity. This is an issue of realizing that we all come together because we all respect and value the rule of law in this country.

I am wondering if the parliamentary secretary can comment on the incredible absence we have seen in this House today, not just in speeches, but in the simple act of just getting up and asking a question and showing that solidarity.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Chair, when our ally, Ukraine, was attacked viciously by Russia, all of us rose in the House of Commons to speak, to show our solidarity. We were here for late night take-note debates and emergency debates. We were here; we stood up and we cheered on the Ukrainian allies when they were under assault. We said, *slava Ukraini*, yet here we are and one of ours, a Canadian citizen, was killed and there are serious significant allegations that it is tied to a foreign agent and a foreign country, and where is the official opposition? Where is the Conservative Party, in terms of its voice? They are not here. We have not heard from them. That is absolutely appalling, and it is something I hope my colleagues across the way will reflect upon. I am sure Canadians will reflect upon that as well.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Chair, I hear from constituents in the riding of Waterloo and I hear about the things on their minds. When something is on their mind it is on my mind, because my job is to represent them. I have some good friends and a very close uncle who live in the member's riding. I do

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want to commend the member on his speech today. It was very personal, and it reminds me of the Canada we know exists and is here. That means that we all stand together and we make sure that we take care of each other.

With that, I would like to hear from the member as to what advice and guidance he is offering to Canadians at this time. We know that we have an independent judicial system; we know that action is being taken; we know that the government wants to see that action taken, but what is the best thing for Canadians to do at this time, especially Canadians of Indian descent, of Sikh faith and Punjabi-speaking communities? What is his advice to all those people?

● (2210)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Chair, our national anthem says, “stand on guard for thee”, and I think it is important that we stand on guard for each other, that we protect each other and that when one of us is hurt or one of us killed, we stand up and we show up. That is the very basic thing that Canadians expect from us, that we rally together, show up, support each other and stand in solidarity.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Madam Chair, I will be sharing my time with the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

When I first learned of these allegations, they shocked me, and when I thought about these allegations even further, I became very angry. A Canadian citizen was killed in Canada by a foreign government. Those are the allegations. That should shock and anger all of us. There is no other response. A Canadian is alleged to have been killed in our country by a foreign government.

This is a time for unity. This is a time for unwavering commitment and to let people know that. These are people who are now very afraid and who have seen a foreign government step into our sovereign nation and killed someone. We have to send a message that this is wrong. This can never happen in our country, and there will be the most severe consequences, using the full weight of the judicial system of our country and using the full weight of our security apparatus, to ensure that every single person implicated in this matter is found, brought to justice and prosecuted with the full weight and power of the Canadian justice system. That is what needs to happen.

We need solidarity. A Canadian was killed. That means everyone in this House should stand together and say we demand justice and we demand action.

It is a fundamental attack not just on our sovereignty, but on our freedom of speech and right to be secure and safe. It is a fundamental right that every Canadian should be safe in their country and should be free to express their thoughts, to express dissent, to criticize and to critique our country and other countries' policies and decisions of government. That is absolutely what it means to be in a democracy.

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Let us also be clear that there is a significant propaganda machine that the Government of India has put in motion. Let us talk about the Government of India and separate it from the people of India. We do not hold the people of India guilty for the actions of the government. The people of India, in a sense, have contributed immensely to this country. New Canadians who come from India and South Asia have contributed in so many ways and in so many sectors, whether it is in health care, in business, in the arts or in the cultural sector in the communities we all live in. They have contributed immensely.

Our concern is specifically about the allegations involving the Government of India. For a moment, let us reflect on what the Government of India is about. We are talking about its Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. This is a Prime Minister who was once chief minister of Gujarat and was implicated in the massacre of thousands of Muslims.

This is a current government that makes no qualms about wanting to divide the country, exclude minority communities and oppress critics, academics and journalists. There is the systemic oppression of women, minority communities, the poor and those of low caste. This is a government that is rife with human rights violations.

It really begs the question when we see other parties, like the Conservative Party, try to stand up and parrot the propaganda of the India government: Whose side are they on? Who are they trying to defend? We should see solidarity in defending Canadians and a Canadian who was killed.

We have a number of things we want to ask for, and this is what I want to make clear. For now, what we are calling for are a number of concrete steps.

First and foremost, I wrote a letter to the commissioner of the public inquiry to indicate that India now must be included in the public inquiry. We need protections offered to anyone who has received threats to their lives. We need to make sure there are diplomatic sanctions and a review of all diplomats from India in Canada. The RSS, which is a paramilitary, far-right network from India, must be banned in Canada.

We need to take the threat to Canadians seriously. We need to see serious action. This is a call to arms for us to defend our democracy, to defend our freedom of expression, to defend our freedoms in this country and to use the weight of a democratic nation and our allies to defend justice, to defend freedom and to defend the security and liberty of life.

• (2215)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Chair, as the leader of a much smaller opposition party, for me it is a moment for solidarity. I really appreciate the fact that I am able, through great good luck, to immediately follow my friend from Burnaby South, the leader of the New Democratic Party, to echo his words that we need to show solidarity, and that every Canadian from every ethnicity and every part of the world who has found their way here to our country needs to feel welcomed and know they are valued. Of course we recognize that we are on lands that

we have stolen from indigenous peoples. The majority of the Canadian population came from somewhere else.

I have found the speeches from colleagues and friends about their own journeys and their families' journeys to these shores to be very moving. We do unify as Canadians. I just want to thank the hon. leader of the New Democratic Party for his words.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Chair, I thank the member for her kind words. I want to send a message to people right now who are thinking about what this means for them. It is to people who might be afraid, who might be scared, and who might be worried about their advocacy, their human rights work or their critique of the Indian government, or any other diaspora community. There are those who are wondering, if they criticize their country of origin's government policies, that they might fear violence against them as well. I want to send a message that I stand with them, and we will not back down. We will remain unwavering and resolute in our pursuit of justice.

We believe that right now the pursuit of justice and ensuring that those responsible will be brought to justice will deter this from happening. That has to be our goal. This should never happen again in our country. No Canadian should lose their life in this way. That is what our commitment is, to ensure that this never happens again.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Chair, the hon. leader of the NDP mentioned the intimidation by the Indian government when someone speaks out against human rights violations. I can say that he has faced many challenges.

I will give a personal example. When I presented a petition on genocide in 2010, I was denied a visa to India for three years. I want to know from the leader if he is aware of many situations like this of oppression and intimidation, including of himself.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Chair, I thank the member for sharing the personal story.

As elected officials, we sign up for being in the public eye and maybe receiving repercussions for the positions we take, but we are also protected as members of Parliament. I am deeply concerned, as the member pointed out, that there are so many people from so many diaspora communities, including those in the Sikh community who critique the abuse that Sikhs have received under the Indian government, but there are many other diaspora communities. They are not just from India and not just other folks who have been oppressed in India.

I think about the Iranian community and those who have raised their voice about the oppression that their community faces in Iran. I think about those who have championed democracy in Hong Kong and are defending the rights of Taiwan, and of the real and serious threats that they have had against their families. This is a serious moment. We know that those threats exist.

We know that Canadians have been threatened and intimidated, and we know that we have a responsibility in the House to say enough is enough and that it will not happen in our country. We will use all the tools we have to get to the bottom of this. We will use the power of light to shine transparency on what happened and ensure that this never happens again to any community anywhere in our country.

• (2220)

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Chair, I have been reflecting on and talking to many of my constituency members about the murder or assassination that happened at the gurdwara, the Sikh temple of worship. It is appalling to see that Conservatives will come to the temple, will walk with us in solidarity in our Nagar Kirtan parade, but today cannot stand in solidarity with Canadians in this horrific crime. What does the member have to say about how the community feels and how this assassination occurred at the holy Sikh temple in Surrey?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Chair, when we first learned about this incident back in June, there was a real pain the community. It is a place of prayer, a place of worship and a place of community coming together. Gurdwaras have free langar, a place where people can eat. It is a place of sanctuary, like many other places of prayer.

To have a leader of the community at a place of prayer and sanctuary be murdered in that way was shocking and painful. What has made that pain even worse now is the allegation that this was tied to the Indian government or the Indian state. This has only reopened those wounds and made them even more painful.

That is why it is offensive that instead of showing solidarity, we have a party in this chamber, the Conservatives, not standing in solidarity in a moment where there should be unity, where we should be sending a clear message that this is wrong, we all denounce it and we all stand together in the pursuit of justice in ensuring all the weight of Canadian jurisprudence and legal system is used to hold those accountable.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, I want to thank my leader, the leader of the NDP, for pointing out the work that needs to be done. I deeply appreciate the letter that has been sent to the commissioner to ensure the inquiry includes India.

The Conservatives have been silent in this debate tonight. It is such a false pretense when they advance the notion that they believe in freedom and democracy everywhere, when they say they stand for human rights everywhere. A Canadian has been targeted and whose life has been lost, and we need more than ever for every member of this House to stand together united with one voice to send a clear message to the Indian government or any actors who threaten our sovereignty and the lives of Canadians in this way that we will not tolerate it. We need to be true to that calling of standing for freedom for everyone everywhere.

When the Conservatives are absent in this, what message does the member think they are sending to the immigrant community, particularly to the Indo-Canadian community, who are now fearful of the situation and who fear their activism in the community and their fight for justice will be threatened?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Chair, my colleague said it so well and so clearly. This is a moment to defend freedom, freedom of expression, freedom to exist in safety and security, and that has been threatened. When any one of us is threatened in this way, we should be able to put partisanship aside and say this is a matter of our national unity, this is a matter of sovereignty, this is a matter of a Canadian on Canadian soil being killed by a foreign government. That is a direct attack on our sovereignty that requires a unified response to denounce it, to demand justice and to demand a full in-

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quiry and an investigation into anyone implicated in this matter, and that is what New Democrats are going to do. That is what we are going to continue to push for, with the concrete steps we laid out. That is what all of us should be doing. It is very disappointing to see the deafening silence of the Conservatives on this matter.

• (2225)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Chair, I send my condolences to the family of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

This is a tragedy and must spur serious action from the government on these allegations of foreign interference wherever they arise. It is the duty of the federal government to pursue the facts and justice for Mr. Nijjar and future protection of every Canadian at risk of foreign surveillance, harassment and intimidation.

We must come together across party lines to protect Canadians. As Conservatives choose to be silent tonight in this important debate, it sends a message to all Canadians living in fear of foreign governments in countries they fled that the Conservatives will not stand up to protect them in difficult times.

Many Canadians need our protection. I am thinking about the Iranian community. I joined them this weekend in Vancouver as they commemorated the one-year anniversary of the murder of Jina Mahsa Amini. This weekend, communities across this country came together to stand for human rights, dignity and democracy. They stood together against violations of human rights.

My constituents from Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra want action on violations of human rights in countries across the world, and they want the same thing here in Canada. Here in Canada, they want accountability. They want to make sure that they are safe and that every Canadian is safe. They have shared concerns with me. I know they have shared concerns with many members of Parliament in this community where they do not feel safe. They need a space where they can share their experience, where they can share their feelings and where they feel that they are being heard.

Protection of Canadians' safety and upholding human rights and justice are a fundamental foundation of a stable and thriving democracy, and we must, especially the 338 of us here, stand for that every day. To do this, the government must do more to ensure that there is RCMP protection for people who may be at risk.

The NDP is asking for diplomatic sanctions, a review of all the Indian diplomats in Canada and the inclusion of India in the foreign interference inquiry.

I will close with the thought that it is time for this government to take foreign interference seriously and it is also time for the official opposition, the Conservatives in this country, to come together and unite for Canadians in Canada.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Chair, I understand that this is the last speech, and so perhaps I will ask the member her opinion of what has gone on tonight.

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Never in the eight years that I have spent in this House have I seen the Conservatives so utterly silent on an issue. They have not given a single speech other than the five minutes right at the very beginning. They have not asked a single question. It is absolutely clear to me that there is an orchestrated attempt within the Conservative caucus and somebody has said that nobody is speaking on this. They have silenced the members, which is the only thing I can interpret from this, but I do not know why. I cannot understand why. It would be so easy for all of us to come together and be in solidarity on this. I wonder if the member, as the last speaker tonight, can provide her thoughts on why that might be.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Chair, every time I stand in the House, I stand for the constituents of my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra, and I expect that the Conservative do the same for their ridings. They come out to rallies, they talk about human rights and they like to filibuster committees. At the end of the day, they have a responsibility to stand in the House for the constituents in their ridings. I would say, as I stand in the House today: Do not elect a Conservative. If people want to be safe from foreign interference in this country, the Conservatives will not stand up for them.

• (2230)

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Chair, I thank the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam for her speech.

The member talked about democracy. Mr. Nijjar was the president of the Sikh gurdwara in Surrey, democratically elected.

I saw Conservative members stand in solidarity at the Regina Nagar Kirtan parade. I believe the Conservative House leader was with me that day. I saw the member from Sherwood Park giggling and laughing across from him, tweeting away, but not about solidarity with this tragic loss. I would ask the member how that makes her feel when she sees members from the Conservative Party pander when they want support and votes, but in a moment like this, when Canadians are hurt and want solidarity with all politicians, we hear silence.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Chair, as the member was asking me that question, I was thinking of all the mothers, grandmothers and all the women who have come to my office to talk about how their voices have been silenced across the globe. We know of the human rights infractions around women. This week is Gender Equality Week, I will mention. I think about the importance of standing up for human rights and of actually protecting our communities.

As a woman, I hear these stories and feel an obligation to protect our communities, and democracy is the way to do it. We do it with our votes and we do it with our pens. That is how we do it.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Chair, I want to thank my colleague for showing up at the one-year anniversary rally for the Iranian community.

As we know, as parliamentarians, we use our words in this House to express our points of view, to bring forward the thoughts and visions of our communities and to advance the perspective of our communities in this Parliament. It is often said that words alone are not enough, and we support our words by our actions. Part of that, particularly in this take-note debate, is to show up in the House and participate in the debate. However, we have not seen the Conservatives engage in that way.

The leader of the official opposition spent \$3 million on a makeover, wanting Canadians to believe that he is somebody else. However, actions speak louder than words, and at this moment in time, the lack of participation by the Conservatives in this critical debate shows the true colour of who the Conservatives really are. Would the member not say this?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Chair, I want to thank the member for Vancouver East for always standing up for constituents and Canadians.

We know that in times of trouble, in times of necessity, we must come together. As the member said, it has been shown today that there is no solidarity from the Conservative Party here. I am not sure what the party's objectives are, but it certainly is not to stand up for the protection, safety, justice and democracy of Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Chair: It being 10:34 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, the committee will rise.

(Government Business No. 28 reported)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 10:35 p.m.)

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