



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

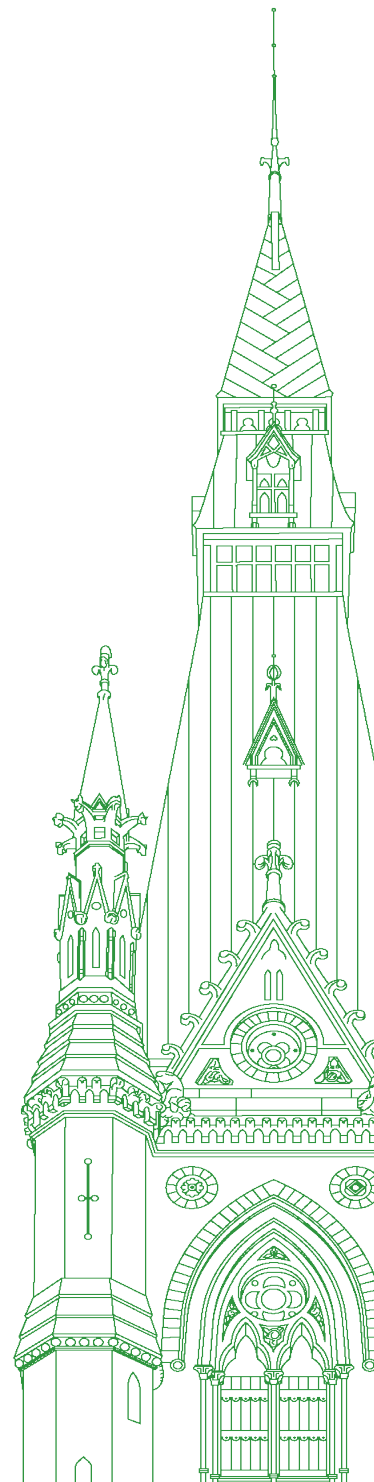
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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, December 2, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1000)

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. President of the Treasury Board is rising on a point of order.

Hon. Mona Fortier: Madam Speaker, I would be very honoured to take the time today to table, in both official languages, on behalf of 89 departments and agencies, the departmental results reports for 2021-22.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1005)

[English]

HISTORIC PLACES OF CANADA ACT

Hon. Filomena Tassi (for the Minister of Environment and Climate Change) moved that Bill C-23, An Act respecting places, persons and events of national historic significance or national interest, archaeological resources and cultural and natural heritage, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is truly a pleasure and indeed an honour to speak in support of Bill C-23. For me, Bill C-23 has really important personal connections. Part of this connection arises from the more than 30 years I spent prior to politics working with Parks Canada. I worked in and managed many well-known and well-loved national parks, such as Pacific Rim National Park Reserve; Yoho, Kootenay and Banff National Parks; Wood Buffalo National Park; and Riding Mountain National Park. I also worked in and supported national historic sites, such as the Dawson Historical Complex, the Chilkoot Trail, HMCS *Haida*, Fort Langley, Fort Walsh, Fort George, Fort Malden and Woodside, among others.

Along with my extensive career with Parks Canada, I also carried Bill C-374 through the House in the 42nd Parliament, where the bill, which would have advanced reconciliation through the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action 79(i), received unanimous support. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it to completion and died in the Senate with the dissolution of Parliament at the end of the 42nd Parliament. I am truly

honoured to be back and now seeing my private member's bill and much-needed changes in support of protecting Canada's national treasures covered in Bill C-23 and being debated in the chamber today.

Before digging into the importance of this bill, I must respectfully acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe peoples. I also respectfully acknowledge that the lands, waters and ice where we live, work and play all across Canada are the ancestral and traditional territories and homelands of first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The Government of Canada honours their connections, stories and histories.

I am aware that such an acknowledgement is perhaps a small step along the path of reconciliation, but it is not without meaning. Acknowledgements such as this are a gesture of respect and awareness, a recognition of the original stewards of this land now known as Canada and a recognition that the history of this land did not begin with the arrival of Europeans. It is also aligned with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As my fellow members know, Canada has committed to its full and effective implementation. It is for this reason that Parliament adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act in June 2021. In that sense, the bill we are debating today represents another important step along the path of reconciliation.

Let me explain. Bill C-23 has two main goals: advance reconciliation and promote inclusion through better heritage designations; and create stronger protection for federal historic places. The bill was developed with the principles of inclusion, transparency and sustainability in mind.

With respect to improving federal heritage designations, Bill C-23 would enable the government to advance its commitments to implement all the relevant calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I refer specifically to call to action 79, which calls on the Government of Canada to collaborate with survivors, indigenous organizations and the arts community to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. The commission stated that this should include, at a minimum, the following three items:

- i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.
- ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.

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iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history.

This first point was the content of my private member's bill, and I am honoured to see this item and the entirety of call to action 79 back before the House.

I am pleased to say that the government has made significant progress toward the implementation of these important actions. In budget 2018, for example, the government committed close to \$24 million over five years to recognize and integrate indigenous peoples' histories, voices and perspectives at heritage places administered by Parks Canada. In budget 2022, the government committed to providing Parks Canada with \$25 million over three years to support the commemoration and memorialization of former residential school sites.

In terms of policy, in 2019, Parks Canada released its new system plan, entitled "Framework for History and Commemoration". Based on extensive public consultation, including with indigenous groups and communities, the new framework describes how the agency will address four strategic priorities, including the history of indigenous peoples and diversity.

The history of indigenous peoples includes the whole of indigenous experiences since time immemorial, such as indigenous histories, indigenous connections to the land and the complexity and diversity of indigenous cultures, as well as the legacy of colonialism and its impact on indigenous peoples. The commemoration of residential school sites, as well as the history and far-reaching legacy and impact of residential schools on generations of indigenous peoples, is integral to this effort.

• (1010)

By way of context, I would remind members that the designation of persons, events and places of national historic significance is based almost entirely on nominations from the public. Anyone and everyone can make a recommendation for designation.

Individuals or organizations may submit nominations to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, which in turn makes recommendations for designation to the minister. The board is supported in this work by Parks Canada, which provides professional and administrative services, including the historical and archaeological research needed to enable proper evaluation of nominations.

In September 2020, following its nomination by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, the Government of Canada designated the residential school system, a tragic and defining event in Canadian history, as an event of national historic significance. Coinciding with this designation, two former residential schools were designated as national historic sites: the former Portage La Prairie Indian Residential School in Manitoba and the former Shubenacadie Indian Residential School in Nova Scotia.

The process leading to these designations exemplifies the Government of Canada's commitment to working with indigenous peoples and communities to share the experiences of indigenous children in these schools to ensure that this history is never forgotten.

The former Portage La Prairie residential school is located on the reserve lands of the Long Plain First Nation. It was nominated for designation by the first nation. Following the nomination, Parks Canada and the Long Plain First Nation worked collaboratively to identify the historic values of this former residential school and co-authored the report submitted to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

The designation of the site of the former Shubenacadie Indian Residential School followed a similar collaborative process. The site was nominated by the Tripartite Culture and Heritage Working Committee of the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum. Parks Canada and the committee collaborated in identifying the historic values of the former school and co-authored the submission to the board.

Since these initial designations, Parks Canada has also worked with the Muskowekwan First Nation for the designation of the former Muscowequan Indian Residential School in Lestock, Saskatchewan, and with the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre and the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association for the designation of the former Shingwauk Indian Residential School in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

Parks Canada continues to collaborate with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and its network of residential school survivors, with indigenous cultural heritage advisers, with federal colleagues and with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to consider other former schools for designation and determine the most appropriate ways to commemorate the history and legacy of the residential school system in Canada.

With these recent residential school site designations in mind, let us pause to reflect on the importance of non-federal owners of national historic sites for the overall system. Not all national historic sites are owned by the Government of Canada. In fact, the vast majority of national historic sites are owned by other governments, not-for-profit organizations and individual private property owners.

Under Bill C-23, all existing national historic site designations would be retained, no matter who owns the site. The cultural heritage conservation programming, such as the national cost-share program offered by Parks Canada to non-federal owners of national historic sites, would continue to be available.

National historic site designations reflect 100 years of work by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in collaboration with the public. Bill C-23 builds on this century of work. It would maintain the essential role played by the public in proposing new designations. It would respect the board but with expanded membership. Let me also point out that there are no plans to change the names of these iconic national historic sites, which are, I stress, located in communities across Canada.

In addition to recommending new designations, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada also has a mandate to review designations that have been made in the past. This is necessary to ensure they reflect present-day knowledge and scholarship.

We have seen a number of examples of national historic persons whose legacies are now controversial because they are known to have held racist or anti-Semitic views or to have proposed and carried out colonial policies and actions against indigenous peoples. I hope we can all recognize in today's thinking that certain designations are outdated, such as the discovery of the Mackenzie River, the discovery of Prince Edward Island and designations of fur trade posts without acknowledging the original peoples with whom these places of commerce conducted their trade, as we see at Fort Langley National Historic Site.

• (1015)

As part of the implementation of its new framework for history and commemoration, Parks Canada is collaborating with the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and other partners to review designations of national historic sites, persons and events made by the Government of Canada since 1919. The review includes examining the content that appears on the bronze plaques associated with these designations and installed as part of the commemorative process.

I am certain all members will agree that indigenous voices must be an integral part of this review, as well as in consideration of future nominations for designation. Bill C-23 would address this important consideration by expanding the current membership of the board to include representation by first nations, Inuit and Métis as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These representatives would be appointed by the Governor in Council following consultations with indigenous groups.

I would remind the House that this change is consistent with Bill C-374, my former private member's bill. Many will recall that this was passed unanimously by the House of Commons in 2018, but subsequently died in the Senate. In fact, the bill before us would strengthen that initiative by requiring that the work of the board be informed by indigenous knowledge, and that indigenous knowledge be considered on an equal footing with other sources of information.

Indigenous peoples continue to suffer the impacts of colonialism while slowly healing from the legacy of the residential schools system. The time is now to proceed with this bill. It would help to ensure nationally significant historic persons, places and events would be truly representative of Canada's history and meaningful for all Canadians, including indigenous peoples, youth and members of diverse groups across the country.

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In 2019, the Environics Institute's "Canadian Youth Reconciliation Barometer" found that 89% of indigenous youth and 87% of non-indigenous youth thought it was important "for all non-Indigenous Canadians to understand the true history of how Indigenous Peoples have been treated by governments and society in this country." Bill C-23 would help make this vision a reality. We are committed to presenting our history in a manner that is both representative and meaningful.

We are also committed to ensuring that the historic places that inform and inspire us today are preserved for generations to come. This is history that we can see and touch. Historic places help to tell the stories of Canada while delivering social, economic and environmental benefits to communities of all sizes in every province and territory. Indeed, national historic sites administered by Parks Canada alone contribute over \$600 million a year to Canada's GDP. Directly and indirectly, they support more than 6,000 jobs across the country, including in rural, remote and indigenous communities.

It would probably come as no surprise to many Canadians that the vast majority of the more than 300 federally owned historic places, including the Parliament buildings, have no legal protection. Canada is the only country in the G7 without comprehensive legislation for the protection of historic places. The federal government is also behind the provinces and territories in this area, all of which have heritage legislation in place to protect and conserve historic places under their respective jurisdictions.

In the federal realm, this has been pointed out by sources ranging from the Auditor General to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, which is a committee that I was part of in the 42nd Parliament and that studied this issue for the first time. There is no coherent framework for the protection of heritage assets entrusted to the care of the Government of Canada. Instead, they are protected or not protected through a range of legal and policy obligations adopted over the years.

As a result, current federal heritage designations do not necessarily lead to protection nor conservation unless the site is also designated as a heritage railway station or a heritage lighthouse. Both of these have specific protection under separate legislation arising from private members' bills. Heritage railway stations and heritage lighthouses are the only federal designations that automatically include legal protection. Rectifying this situation is essential and urgent.

In its 2017 report, "Preserving Canada's Heritage", the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development noted that many of our heritage places are disappearing or are under threat. It issued a stark warning: Once the heritage value of a historic place is lost, the damage cannot be undone. It is lost forever.

Government Orders

• (1020)

The Auditor General echoed these concerns. In the fall 2018 report, “Conserving Federal Heritage Properties”, the Auditor General noted the deterioration of a number of federal heritage buildings. Just as concerning is that it found the custodians of these historic places, which were the federal authorities that own these buildings, had incomplete and inaccurate information about their holdings.

Complete and current information matters. It allows Canadians and parliamentarians to fully appreciate, understand and discuss the condition of heritage properties, as well as the potential consequences of not conserving them.

While the organizations that were audited, including Parks Canada, have undertaken to address the issues identified by the Auditor General, it is clear that a more comprehensive legislative approach to protect and conserve these irreplaceable places is needed. That is what Bill C-23 would provide transparently and sustainably. In direct response to the recommendations of the Auditor General, it would introduce a legal obligation for Parks Canada to establish and maintain a public register listing all previous and new designations made by the minister.

To further enhance transparency, departments would be required to report the condition of historic places for which they are responsible. This type of disclosure would provide an incentive for departments to be proactive in maintaining the heritage value of historic places under their care. There would be clear direction to departments on how to carry out modifications to historic places properly and in a financially responsible manner while respecting greening and accessibility requirements.

The bill would provide a common and mandatory benchmark of respected, flexible and sustainable guidance on these matters. There would also be a requirement for departments to consult with Parks Canada specialists prior to making any changes to a historic place that could impact its heritage value.

This would be Canada’s first act dedicated to the designation and protection of federally owned historic places. It would result in transparent decision-making, the sharing of accurate and meaningful information with Canadians and parliamentarians, and the sustainable protection of federally owned historic places.

Bill C-23 would be inclusive. In addition to the new representatives for indigenous peoples, Bill C-23 would provide clear authority and direction to revise and, when needed, to revoke designations that no longer reflect current understandings of the complexity of Canadian history.

Bill C-23 is the product of extensive engagement and input from indigenous partners and groups; federal departments; representatives of the provinces, territories and municipalities; and other key stakeholders, including national heritage organizations.

The bill would represent concrete action for reconciliation. It would reflect the Government of Canada’s commitment to identify, protect and conserve historic places in Canada through collaboration and engagement with indigenous partners; provincial, territorial and municipal governments; and heritage stakeholders.

If adopted, it would replace the current incomplete legislation and policies with a strong legislative framework to help guide the management of treasured places across Canada, and it would ensure they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

I can personally speak to the operational and management challenges of overseeing contiguous national historic sites, such as Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse, which were designated under different federal acts. Both sites occasionally experience vandalism.

In the case of Fort Rodd Hill, Parks Canada’s law enforcement service could enforce the legislation, while at the adjacent Fisgard Lighthouse, the local police of jurisdiction needed to be called. Imagine the challenges and frustrations I and my colleagues experienced while awaiting the arrival of the local police to deal with pot diggers who were ruining ancient indigenous resources.

These local law enforcement agencies were often dealing with other municipal policing priorities. This left me, as a manager, knowing that I was entrusted by Canadians to ensure the protection of these resources, but powerless and without the tools to offer these protections. These types of legal and administrative roadblocks would be addressed through Bill C-23.

I offer that Bill C-23 would not address the issues faced by national historic sites not owned by the federal government, but this legislation would be an important step and a significant step forward in ensuring that federally owned national historic sites are protected. This would be an important first step to ensure that Canada could meet its international obligations to safeguard our heritage.

Future work must consider whether the current national cost-share program is the primary level of support for privately owned and federally designated sites and if this enough. However, that is a debate for another day. Together, we can give our past a future and ensure the stewardship of historic places in Canada, inclusively, transparently and sustainably. I urge all members to join me today in supporting this bill.

• (1025)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his speech and for all of his work for our beautiful parklands.

Bill C-23 has many things I agree with, but I am concerned about one part of it and that is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a point of order. It seems there is an issue with translation.

The hon. member for Joliette.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, with all due respect to my esteemed colleague, the interpretation service is unable to translate her words because of a poor audio signal.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will check on that.

It appears to be working now. The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

[English]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that Bill C-23 has many good parts, but subclause 43(3) would allow the unlawful search and seizure of people's property without a warrant while they were in parks. That is contrary to section 8 of the charter.

I ask the member if the government would be willing to take that part out of the bill since it is in violation of people's charter rights?

Mr. John Aldag: Madam Speaker, the important part of this legislation is getting it before the House and having debates, and hearing questions and concerns, such as the issue raised by the member. We need to get it to committee so that these types of questions can be studied and perhaps amendments can be made. We want to have good, solid legislation that would offer the protections that are needed to look after federally designated and federally owned national historic sites.

Of course, we want the legislation to be compliant with the charter. That is what this process is about: to make sure that flags are identified and any conflicts are resolved. We look forward to having that discussion at the committee stage.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He shared some essential history that must never be forgotten. He also said that there are several levels of government involved. On that we agree. We think there is one level too many, but that is not the point I am here to make.

It is nice that the bill enables the government to honour its commitments under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. According to the member, it is more robust than what was in place before. The idea is to create a public register, provide clear directives for making changes and consult experts, but what we want to know is whether Bill C-23 is robust enough to ensure that developers cannot circumvent the law to cut down trees and demolish historic buildings and historic sites.

[English]

Mr. John Aldag: Madam Speaker, there are a couple of pieces to that very important question that I would like to discuss.

One of them is that this would give protections, once and for all, to federally owned national historic sites. Things like viewscapes are part of the essence of a historic place. Those would be protected and there would be consequences that could be enforced that, in many cases now, do not exist.

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For the types of damage and destruction that were referenced by the member, there are no penalties right now, or there are penalties that are difficult to enforce for those types of actions. That is where this legislation is so important.

For non-federally owned sites, there are still no protections. That is something that will need to be looked at in the future so that many of the third party owned national historic sites will eventually get support. However, for now, the focus is on federally owned national historic sites.

● (1030)

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the member's history and appreciate all the work he has put into this and where he is coming from.

It is a very important bill, and we should, at its core, recognize the indigenous history of Canada, which has been completely absent from most of our commemorations. To protect historic sites, monuments, places or whatever one wants to call them, we need funding. In 2018, the Auditor General found that there was not adequate funding.

That happened in my riding. The Miners' Union Hall in Rossland, which is the only site in my riding that is a national historic site, could not get federal funding to maintain its roof.

Mr. John Aldag: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the work that he has done in this realm.

As I noted, this legislation deals very much with federally owned national historic sites at this stage, and the government has invested significantly in helping Parks Canada and other federal departments and agencies to improve not only the quality but also the reporting, understanding the condition of these heritage assets.

For the privately owned sites, as the member referenced, there is a program called the national cost-sharing program, which Parks Canada administers on behalf of the federal government, that does cost-sharing for these privately owned, third party owned national historic sites.

The government, for a couple of years, topped up the amount that was available. It has gone back to a more historic reference level. I would love to see money go toward that program to help very important assets, such as was mentioned in the member's riding, to be there for the long term.

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Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me thank the hon. member for his years of service serving in parks across the country and his passion for this topic. I know there are beautiful national parks from coast to coast to coast, and I wonder if the hon. member could comment on whether those sites could be used for reconciliation education to educate the general population about that important issue, the path we are on and, hopefully, connect with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, which is in Winnipeg.

I know he served in at least one Manitoba park. Could he comment on that?

Mr. John Aldag: Madam Speaker, I would like to note that the member's wife and I worked together for many years in Parks Canada, and we share a passion for the work the organization does.

Historic places have a huge opportunity to play a significant role in reconciliation. We have many designations, such as fur trade forts and military forts that, in many cases, do not recognize the indigenous relationships that existed over time. The changes I mentioned, such as bringing in indigenous representatives, first nations, Inuit and Métis, to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, would help reflect on the commemorations and how they can help further advance reconciliation. Also, having those voices represented would help in new designations. This is a very exciting piece of legislation that would go much further in reconciliation than we have seen in the past from this program.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague said that this bill is based on, or at least substantially informed by, call to action 79 in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, which, among other things, calls for action to incorporate indigenous history into Canada's heritage and history. I know my hon. colleague is very familiar with Fort Langley, which is in my community.

I wonder if the hon. member could comment on what significant difference this bill might make in the programs the public would see at Fort Langley.

• (1035)

Mr. John Aldag: Madam Speaker, we both share a passion for Fort Langley National Historic Site. Interestingly, the designation that was done at that location goes back to 1923 and does not reference the indigenous peoples with whom Fort Langley did business as a Hudson's Bay site. We know the Kwantlen First Nation lives across the river and played an integral role. There are many descendants who are part of the community, so by having indigenous representatives become part of the board and review these former designations, this would be a way of updating some of these very colonial kinds of designations that happened almost a century ago. It would be a great way of respecting and honouring our Kwantlen neighbours, friends, family and others who have had interactions over time, over many generations, with national historic sites across Canada.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague's work on this and his long-standing work in this area. He talked about the national cost-sharing program for historic places. It is my understanding that, for

2023-24, the Liberal government has only budgeted \$2 million to this program, yet the environment committee, back in 2017, recommended \$10 million. McLean Mill is in Port Alberni, which is in my riding, and it is cash poor. It is relying on the City of Port Alberni's taxpayer base to fund that really important historic site.

Can my colleague speak about increased funding to support sites like the McLean Mill?

Mr. John Aldag: Madam Speaker, McLean Mill is a fabulous national historic site. I have had the chance to visit it. It, like many third party-owned sites, as was mentioned, qualifies for the cost-share program. When we studied the program back when I was on the environment and sustainable development committee, we did see there was a greater need for federal support. As part of my budget submission for this year, I am going to be asking for increased funding to the national cost-share program, but right now it is about getting money into the federally owned sites to ensure those, as a starting point, are well looked after and protected for the future generations to come.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to be able to enter into debate and discussion regarding the important matters facing Canadians and to participate in the debate on Bill C-23, the historic places of Canada act.

Many Canadians would consider our national parks and our national historic sites to be truly jewels of our country. When we speak to folks from around the world, often when they are asked what comes to mind when they think of Canada, there are many things, from freedom to our history. However, certainly associated in those first few remarks, I have so often heard the conversation go to things like our national parks, some of our national historic sites and even the green roofs of our Parliament buildings, although they are not necessarily so green, given that they were replaced more recently and the copper housing has not quite gotten there yet.

So often, it is about the history, the places, the events, the locations, the buildings and the monuments, whether that be a monument that has been built to remember something or one of those more intangible monuments, which I will get into closer to the end of my speech. There are many examples that exist across my constituency of those monuments that speak to our nation's history.

As we enter into the specifics of what Bill C-23 is about, it updates and modifies the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada to ensure that something very important happens. That is to fulfill call to action 79 in the truth and reconciliation report, to include indigenous representation in the national historic sites conversation, not just the board itself, but more importantly the entire conversation surrounding what this means.

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We have heard references to this already this morning and, I am sure, we will over the course of the debate. I am hopeful, as this bill works its way through Parliament, that there is going to be a whole host of conversations that include the broad width of what Canadian history is. That includes the good, the bad and the ugly, to ensure that we have those honest conversations.

It is not about erasing history. I want to make that very clear. It is not about erasing parts of our past. It is not even about tearing down statues. It is about ensuring that we have a holistic and realistic conversation about what our history is.

We see numerous examples of where we have things in our country's past, both post-Confederation and pre-Confederation, where there is a lot that we can be very proud of as Canadians. Then there are things that we should pause and reflect on, serious mistakes that have been made. My hope is, as we talk about the conversation around national monuments, around historic places and the designations, specifically when it comes to those owned by the federal government, as is set out in the bill, that we can have that realistic and holistic conversation about what that looks like.

When it gets into some of the specifics of what this bill is about, I would emphasize that we have to get it right. One of the concerns, certainly, that I have highlighted before in this place, and one that I suspect will be expanded on in further debate, is that this bill would give expansive powers to the executive branch of government, specifically the minister. I hope members will forgive me for being a little hesitant to grant powers, and wide-reaching and expansive powers, to the minister, in this case the Minister of Environment, who has not necessarily demonstrated that he can be trusted to ensure that those powers will be respect over the course of his mandate.

The reason I bring this up, as it is very important and I hope the members opposite will note this importance, is that we live in a democracy. The reality of a democracy is that, when a bill is passed, it not only applies to the current government, but it also applies to how future governments operate.

● (1040)

My encouragement to the members opposite would be, as we look through some of the dynamics associated with the quite broad powers that are not clearly defined in this bill, and as we look to amendments to the bill at committee, to make sure we tighten those up and we get it right. We need to do what is required so that we get the reconciliation question right. We need to ensure that, when it comes to the powers, if any, granted to the executive branch of government, there are the appropriate limitations on that power.

I will pose a question somewhat rhetorically at this point, although I am sure it will be asked more specifically as the debate goes on. I hope it is not a long time until there is a Conservative government that sits on the government side of this place. My encouragement to Liberal members would be make sure that, when they grant far-reaching powers to a minister of the Crown without appropriate safeguards and checks on that power, to acknowledge that one day they will not be in power. One day there will be a minister in power whom they may have ideological, political and other disagreements with.

As we look at the powers we are granting to a minister of the Crown, the executive branch of government, we need to ensure that we get it right and that there are appropriate safeguards. As was brought up in a question earlier, we need to look at the fact that there are broad-sweeping powers in terms of search, seizure and sale. This is specifically limited to, as outlined in the bill currently, the areas that are owned by the federal government in terms of national parks and historic places. However, it gets very grey as we have hundreds of thousands of Canadians who live in national parks over the breadth of our country.

Further, there is the possibility that, without our getting those definitions and frameworks absolutely correct, we could see these powers expanded. The last thing we want to do in this place is to erode the rights and freedoms of Canadians. Unfortunately, I do not have a lot of trust that the government will ensure those powers are only exercised in a manner that respects Canadians.

I would like to highlight something when it comes to enforcement. Enforcement, of course, is the other side of powers being given. There has to be an enforcement mechanism. Specifically, we are seeing, in this bill, that park wardens and the associated administration structures within parks, like game wardens, local police or whomever, could have significant authority to enforce aspects of this act.

I would specifically note one element that is somewhat problematic. I bring this up because the minister has shown an ideologically driven force to reshape the economy of Canada. The last thing I would want in a bill related to an important issue, like reconciliation, would be for Canada's national parks and historic sites to all of a sudden become a pawn to the whims of an activist who holds an office.

The reason I bring that up is that the minister made it very clear in his political life, before and after being elected, that he is very intent on reshaping a significant aspect of Canada's economy, which is specifically shutting down oil and gas. This bill has specific mechanisms that would give the minister wide-sweeping powers related to navigable waters and to the ability for mooring to take place.

I would urge caution, and I think I have made it very clear that I do not have a lot of trust in the Minister of Environment and Climate Change. However, I would encourage members opposite to look in the mirror and ask whether they would trust a government with a different political persuasion with those powers.

● (1045)

I believe that would provide the context required to ensure that we narrow the scope and get the definitions right to ensure that when this bill comes out of committee, hopefully the appropriate context would be given when any new powers are offered. The Conservatives will certainly be hard at work being collaborative in every way possible to get those definitions and guardrails right.

As we debate the context surrounding this, I could not help but think, as I was planning my speech, that there are a few important aspects that I would like to bring closer to home, if the Speaker will indulge me.

Government Orders

It has been interesting. I would suggest that we do not always do a great job of teaching Canadian history and the full breadth of what that history is. I am most of the way through a book called "The Cowboy Cavalry: The Story of the Rocky Mountain Rangers". Colter Wall is the son of a friend of mine, a friend who, I will note, recently had his portrait hung up in the Saskatchewan legislature. He is former premier Brad Wall, a great Canadian patriot and leader in the province of Saskatchewan. His son, Colter Wall, is a country and western singer who published a song a couple of years ago about the Rocky Mountain Rangers.

As westerns have re-emerged in popularity in Hollywood, it is incredible, as we look through much of our nation's history, specifically that of the Prairies, that we have so much rich history. Not all of it is positive, but there are so many stories about the lives of people. I think of John Ware, the Black cowboy. I ask members to imagine the context of a Black cowboy 140 years ago in the Prairies, when he would have been likely one of the few people of colour in those communities. There are the stories, and in some cases the legends, and there have been some incredible legends about the story of John Ware in our western heritage.

I think about the Neutral Hills, which are just north in my own constituency. In fact, I can see it from my deck, and they have significant indigenous history. This is neither a federally owned historic site, nor a national park, and it is something that most folks in this place have probably never even heard of. However, according to legend, Neutral Hills is a place where many indigenous tribes, when they were warring about different hunting grounds and whatnot, listened to the great spirit Manitou, and from the infinite wisdom they heard, they acknowledged that there needed to be a place of peace, so about six or eight miles north of where I live there is what is referred to as the Neutral Hills. It is a beautiful Prairie landscape where we can still find teepee rooms and burial sites. If we look hard enough we can find arrowheads and other pieces of our indigenous history there, but that is the richness that exists.

If we drive across the Prairies and take some back roads we will see cairns that mark some indigenous settlements past of our nation's history. In many cases, we cannot even find any further details on the Internet, other than that brass plaque and concrete cairn.

I think of the legend of Blood Indian Creek. When the band of the Saulteaux first nation had come west from the Lake of the Woods in about 1840, and there was a raiding party of Blackfeet. Some wars and battles followed, and they came to what is now a municipal park, Blood Indian Park.

Some significant history and some indigenous history and wars that played a significant role in forming our nation's history are significantly impacted.

• (1050)

We can think about some of the settlers and explorers that we often hear about. For example, there is Anthony Henday. We have so much of that rich history, with many elements of what that looks like and how formative it was. Now, I am speaking from the expertise of a westerner, and my colleague from the Liberal Party who spoke earlier referenced his expertise in the Lower Mainland.

I have visited the Fort Langley National Historic Site and saw some of the incredible history that is remembered there, and there are other places in the country as well. There are highways now named after Anthony Henday, but few Canadians know about the expedition that took place and the stories associated with his role in the Hudson Bay Company.

There was the Palliser expedition, and I have mentioned that I live in the north part of Palliser's triangle. There was an expedition to see, as the buffalo population declined on the plains, that it was prepared for settlement. There is a complicated history associated with that, and we see the impacts of aspects of that history there today.

I would further acknowledge the Viking rib stones, which has a sign on the side of the highway that most people in my constituency drive by, probably not paying too much attention. Interestingly, it has become an important local place for the advancement of reconciliation.

Also, the Royal Alberta Museum worked very hard to bring back the Iron Creek meteorite. It is a meteorite made of iron that sits on top of a hill, which has historical and spiritual significance for local indigenous peoples. It is called "Manitou Asinîy".

I also represent the Drumheller Valley, and we have a national historic site there in the Atlas Coal Mine, as well as other indigenous history. I have spoken with those who have had tremendous success in highlighting some of those things, many of which are not places on a map necessarily. They are not defined as something that would be as well known as a fort location or a national park. However, there are significant historic places and events that have shaped our nation's history.

If I were to canvas this place on Drumheller, they would think of the Royal Tyrrell Museum, Joseph Burr Tyrrell's namesake, as well as the discovery of many dinosaurs. However, although Drumheller is often associated with ancient and prehistoric history, it is also full of indigenous history. For example, many folks who have driven on the highway through central Alberta would likely have stopped to see the hoodoos, and there is indigenous significance associated with them.

To conclude, we have to get these things right with Bill C-23, which is the reason I highlighted some of the local, historically significant things I am proud to represent. I would also mention Dry Island Buffalo Jump Provincial Park as another example of some of that rich indigenous history. The conversation around history is so very important, which is why I implore every member of the House to get it right. The legislation before us could not only have an impact on historic sites in this country and the ability for reconciliation to go forward, but also set a precedent in the possibility of wide-sweeping powers.

I encourage all members of this place work diligently to make sure that we strike the right balance, pursue that path of reconciliation, and have the honest conversations about Canadian history that are so very essential to ensure that we do not forget about the past and the lessons that were learned and that we can continue building a country we can be proud of.

• (1055)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to say my colleague's speech was well documented and well delivered. I appreciated many of things that were in it. He stayed away from the partisanship that he shows once in a while, except that he did make two personal attacks on the minister, but I will put that aside.

Could the member explain that, when we make legislation, we are making legislation that is best for Canadians and not really evaluating what the next government that takes power will do with it or not?

When we take decisions on this side of the House, we take those decisions because we feel it is the right thing to do for all Canadians. Would the member not agree that this is the real measuring stick? It is not to decide if the next party will do something else with it.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, the lack of trust I have with the current Minister of Environment has nothing to do with personal attacks, but rather from a very clear look at his very public record. I did endeavour to keep this as non-partisan as possible.

I appreciate the point that it is important that we do what is right for Canadians. My encouragement is related to not just looking at how the current government would administer things. It is also an important check on something as powerful as giving a minister of the crown decision-making capacity without the appropriate guardrails or limitations to ensure it is done properly.

In doing what is best for Canadians, we have to get that balance right. My encouragement would be that we look at it from the perspective of not only those who are in the government benches but also those in the opposition benches, who offer a very important perspective, to make sure that we do get that balance right.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

100TH HATCHDAY CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Halifax, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize a Halifax celebrity's milestone hatchday this past August. This year, Halifax's favourite tortoise, Gus, turned 100 years old.

In 1942, Gus was bought for \$5 from a Florida pet store and brought to the museum of natural history in Halifax, which he has called home for the past 80 years. Gus can often be seen bringing delight to the museum's many visitors while wandering the galleries or outside in the museum's backyard. He enjoys munching on blueberries, bananas and lettuce. Now, in 2022, Gus is believed to be the oldest gopher tortoise on record, reaching this centennial milestone while other gopher tortoises typically live to just 40 to 80 years of age.

I believe the love and affection he has received from generations of Haligonians and the outstanding team at the museum of natural

Statements by Members

history has something to do with his slow and steady longevity. Happy 100th birthday to Gus. I hope he has a "shell" of a time.

* * *

MERRITT RCMP DETACHMENT

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, on this day I would sincerely like to thank the members of the Merritt RCMP detachment. The last 12 months have been very challenging for the community of Merritt. Flooding led to evacuations, and evacuations sadly attracted crime, such as looting and vandalism. This all significantly adds to the workload of every officer in this community, not to mention officers and their own families also being impacted on a personal level.

More recently, over the past few weeks, there have also been several other serious and alarming events. Over this time frame there have been crimes of serious concern that have included multiple shooting incidents, a kidnapping, a wanted suspect at large and, late last week, a stolen vehicle that resulted in a police chase with an armed suspect. Throughout all of this, the dedicated members of this small detachment have gone above and beyond to keep their community of Merritt safe.

I ask all hon. members to please join me in thanking them for their dedication and service to their community, and to thank all the RCMP who are doing the same thing, each and every day, for Canadians.

* * *

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise to commend the incredible initiative of my Kanata—Carleton youth council, an inspiring group of 20 high school students who work to make a positive difference in our community. To commemorate the ongoing 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence, these students are stepping up and taking action. Together, the youth council members are raising donations of toys, hygiene products, kitchen items and more, all of which will be donated to families fleeing domestic violence through our riding's local community support centre. These items will make a real difference in the lives of families who are starting over.

My thanks to the Kanata—Carleton youth council for taking action, with a special thanks to Jacqueline, Dhanya, Kosar and Amelia for leading this initiative among their peers.

*Statements by Members***HOUSING**

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to start by thanking all those helping with the warming centres across my riding. It is cold and snowy, and people need help. Housing is a human right, and Canada needs to start acting like it is. On November 25, a vital conversation on housing security was hosted by the Campbell River Community Foundation. I want to thank the co-sponsors: the Campbell River and district homelessness coalition, a coalition that brings stakeholders together to address homelessness; the City of Campbell River; Leith Wheeler Investment Counsel; Strathcona Regional District, BC Housing and CMHC.

People participated from many parts of my riding, and they all agreed that housing is a crisis everywhere. From Cortes to Port Hardy, to Gold River to Campbell River, to Powell River, every corner of our region is struggling. A clear challenge I heard was that small communities find the application processes leave them out, although their needs are so high.

Our innovative communities are doing so much, but Canada must finally step up to support housing in rural and remote communities. I am asking it to do so now.

* * *

MICHELLE POTERI

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my deepest condolences to Stuart Poteri and his family following the passing of his loving wife Michelle. Michelle was diagnosed with cancer last year and fought courageously each and every day with a smile. Her strength and perseverance, despite the difficult battle, inspired all those who knew her.

Last summer, I presented the Poteris with my Platinum Jubilee Community Hero Award in recognition of their decades of service to the much-loved Centennial Arena in Fairview. Since 2011, the Poteris ran the rink as a team with warmth, love and joy. Whenever anything needed to be done, Michelle lent a hand without hesitation. In fact, the arena was where they met in 1980 and eventually married in 1983.

This year, the Fairview family tree lighting will be held in Michelle's memory next weekend. It is a touching tribute to her memory and deep love. My sincere condolences to Stuart, his family and all those who loved Michelle.

* * *

● (1105)

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Christmas season is upon us, but for some the prospects are not so merry. The impacts of inflation are affecting the ability of many Canadians to make ends meet, and it is not just about putting gifts under the tree; a record number of Canadians are having to make the choice between heating and eating.

In the midst of these challenges, local organizations that are there to help are also feeling the squeeze, from record usage as well as

from many not being able to afford to be as generous this year as in years past. If folks have the ability to donate resources to a food bank or another local charity, I encourage them to please do so. There are a number of them across east-central Alberta, as well as thousands of great organizations across Canada, and even some very fitting ones here in our nation's capital.

When we give, we get much more in return. The story of the birth of Christ and the message of Christmas is one of giving, and I encourage everyone who can to make sure they give back. No one in a country as blessed and as prosperous as Canada should go hungry at Christmas.

* * *

LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me to stand in the House today and pay special recognition to my long-time friend and supporter, Sam Primucci. While many Canadians know and love Sam for his successful business skills in the food industry and his Pizza Nova chain, I know him for his warm and giving spirit to others. For this reason he was granted a leadership and community service award at the recent Pentola d'Oro gala in Toronto, hosted by the Italian Chamber of Commerce.

I want to offer Sam and his wife Gemma my sincerest congratulations and thank him for his excellent work, not only in Humber River—Black Creek, but in all of Canada.

* * *

CANADA CHILD DENTAL BENEFIT

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, oral health is absolutely essential. Tooth decay is the most common, yet preventable, childhood chronic disease, and it is one of the number one reasons kids miss school.

Fully one-third of Canadians are unable to visit the dentist, because it is expensive and they do not have insurance, so we introduced the interim Canada child dental benefit, and 500,000 children under 12 can now access the Canada dental benefit, ensuring that their smiles will get the care they need and deserve.

I have heard from a number of families in my riding who do not have insurance and are not eligible for provincial programs. Those kids will be able to get their teeth checked now, and that is so important. Families with kids under 12 who are uninsured for dental coverage and have an adjusted net annual income of under \$90,000 can head to Canada.ca/dental for more information and to apply for the Canada dental benefit. Families can receive up to \$650 this year and next year per kid under 12.

Huge thanks go out to dentists, dental hygienists and other dental health practitioners for helping to keep Canadian kids' smiles healthy and happy.

* * *

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, commercial fishers feel their livelihoods are threatened by the Liberal government. More and more fisheries are being subjected to the precautionary principle because of the lack of science, or science that has not kept up with the changing ecosystem. This has resulted in fisheries either being shut down or operating with quotas that do not reflect the abundance, as is the case with northern cod.

Last spring the minister stood in this House and told us that new vessels promised under the national shipbuilding strategy would be ready to complete cod surveys this fall. This is not the case. This aspect of scientific data will be missing for the third consecutive year and will not be available to be incorporated into this year's stock assessments.

As this year's northern cod stock assessments begin, I urge the minister to give more weight to the incredible catch rates experienced by fish harvesters, and to increase next year's quota accordingly. It is time for the government to respect what harvesters experience on the water and recognize them as an important part of the ocean ecosystem and the blue economy.

* * *

ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN TREATY

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, tomorrow we will mark an important milestone, with the 25th anniversary of the signing of the mine ban treaty, or, as we all know it, the Ottawa Convention.

In October 1996, then Canadian foreign minister, the indomitable Lloyd Axworthy, boldly challenged the international community to follow through with a global ban on landmines. The following year, on December 3, 1997, 122 countries signed this landmark agreement in Ottawa.

Since that historic event, Canada has become a recognized global leader in helping countries rid themselves of landmines, but the job is not done. Nearly 60 countries remain afflicted by these horrific weapons, which continue to maim and kill civilians, disproportionately affecting vulnerable communities, women and girls.

As we mark this milestone for the Ottawa Convention, let us celebrate the achievements made thus far and recommit ourselves to working toward a world free of landmines and other unexploded ordnance.

* * *

● (1110)

COST OF LIVING

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, everything feels broken in Canada because of the Liberals. The inflation and affordability crisis is causing stress to Canadian fami-

Statements by Members

lies, who, for the first time in their lives, are having to make difficult decisions as their household incomes are being eaten up by the cost of everything going up.

The cost of groceries is up, along with gas, home heating, housing, interest rates and food bank usage; they are all up. When we add the tripling of the carbon tax and other planned tax increases taking effect in January and April 2023, things are about to get worse.

It is no wonder Canadian families and businesses are at a breaking point, and one-time bribe payments by the Liberals will not solve what is quickly becoming a bigger crisis than it already is. The people I represent in Barrie—Innisfil and people across Canada are spending an extra \$3,500 a year because of the self-inflicted Liberal inflation.

How did we, Canada, as a G7 country, get to a point where seniors, young people, families and businesses have been lied to and let down, with many losing their hopes, their dreams, their confidence and their dignity?

* * *

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, let me tell you about a new series called “for my eyes only”, about a Prime Minister who refuses to act when a foreign country tries to influence elections in Canada.

Here is a summary. In the first episode, a newspaper reveals serious allegations that China's communist regime funded a clandestine network of 11 candidates in the 2019 election. The Prime Minister denies everything.

In the second episode, we learn that spies had infiltrated members' offices. The Prime Minister claims he was never informed of the illegal funding of election candidates.

In the third episode, the RCMP confirms that it is investigating multiple cases of foreign interference in the democratic process in Canada. The Prime Minister continues to look the other way and pretends that nothing happened.

In the fourth episode, in a dramatic turn of events, the national security agency tells a parliamentary committee that it had prepared not one, but several briefings for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister insists that the information is for his eyes only and that Canadians do not need to know. This series will be continued in the next oral question period.

Will the Prime Minister finally come clean to Canadians?

*Statements by Members***GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.): Madam Speaker, gender-based violence is one of the most widespread human rights violations of our time. When we look closely, we realize that this type of violence occurs all around us. We see it on television, in music and even in certain interactions among friends.

Gender-based violence is any violence, such as sexual assault, committed against an individual because of their gender. We are all responsible for helping to stop this type of violence.

Therefore, during the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence campaign, I am inviting all Canadians to take this violence seriously, to learn to recognize it and to understand that people must have healthy and respectful relationships with one another, because everyone has the right to live their lives without violence.

* * *

[English]

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, Saturday, December 3 is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a day to mobilize support for their dignity, rights and well-being, and to promote an understanding of disability issues, and mobilize we must on Bill C-22.

In the 30 years since this day was proclaimed, the disability community have had to do much heavy lifting for their basic human rights. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have not done enough to remove discriminatory barriers, allowing Canadians with disabilities to fall into poverty.

Canada aspires to be a world leader in the eradication of poverty, and the Canada disability benefit is our chance to make that a reality for persons with disabilities. This is an historic opportunity for the opposition parties to hold the government to account by amending and enacting Canada's first federal law to legislate people out of poverty with Bill C-22.

* * *

● (1115)

[Translation]

TOUR DE L'ABITIBI

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Tour de l'Abitibi, which goes back more than 50 years, has officially been inducted into the Cycling Canada Hall of Fame.

It is the only competition in the Union Cycliste Internationale's Junior Nations Cup circuit to be presented in the Americas. It is the only one of the eight competitions to be hosted outside of Europe. It is a recognized and coveted event around the world. At the same time, Le Tour de la relève welcomes young Quebec cyclists.

In all, 150 cyclists from 20 or so teams around the world come together to participate in the Tour de l'Abitibi in the hope of com-

pleting the seven stages in seven days. That is nearly 700 kilometres by bike, an unforgettable experience.

Mélanie Rocher, former colleague at the Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue and current president of the Tour wisely said that the Tour de l'Abitibi helps shape cyclists and volunteers, and it forges regional vitality and pride.

Congratulations to the organizers and volunteers of the event. I wish the Tour de l'Abitibi another 50 years.

* * *

[English]

ADDICTION

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, in December 2016, the Liberal government made amendments to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. Six years later, it is clear that there is a devastating addiction crisis in our country and it is getting worse. Safe supply has not worked.

The Liberals' failed policies are worsening the situation. They need to bring forward a comprehensive recovery-oriented plan to tackle Canada's addiction crisis and give people control of their lives again.

We need to change to a recovery-oriented approach. This means prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery. In Alberta, by getting people into recovery, overdose deaths in the province have decreased by half. We need to meet people where they are at but not leave them there.

The Conservatives believe that given the opportunity and appropriate supports, Canadians suffering from addiction have the ability to recover.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Our government is proud to support this year's theme: "Transformative solutions for inclusive development: the role of innovation in fuelling an accessible and equitable world".

Since 2015, we have taken bold action to advance the rights of persons with disabilities. We recently launched Canada's first-ever disability inclusion action plan to remove barriers that persons with disabilities face and to build a more inclusive Canada. Also, with Bill C-22, the Canada disability benefit, we have the potential to lift hundreds of thousands of working-age persons with disabilities out of poverty.

In the spirit of “nothing without us”, we will continue working with the disability community on the design and delivery of these programs.

I encourage every member of the House to spend December 3 in celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

FINANCE

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Governor of the Bank of Canada has confirmed that if the Liberal deficit has been lower, inflation would have been lower today. The enormous deficit is going to cost each and every Canadian an extra \$3,500, meaning less money for food, less money for gas and less money to heat their homes.

When will the Liberals understand that their failed policies and enormous deficits are causing continuous pain on Canadians?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have said it before and I will say it again: We have the lowest deficit and the lowest debt among all countries in the G7.

However, of course, these are challenging times. We see that global inflation and global economic instability are affecting Canadians. That is why we have put forward a solid and responsible plan to help them.

This morning, as I do every morning and as members of the government do all of the time, I checked the numbers. The new labour force survey came out. Over 50,000 full-time jobs were created in November alone in this country, and wages have continued—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals blame everyone else for their own inflationary problem. Even possible future Liberal leadership candidate Mark Carney said that the problem was domestically created.

The member is proud that her government's spending sent 1.5 million Canadians to a food bank in a single month and that one in five Canadians have to skip lunch. How many more families have to go to food banks? How many more families have to skip meals before the Liberals finally get a grip, get their spending under control and axe their carbon tax?

• (1120)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to correct the record. It is obvious to all Canadians that the world is going through a period of huge instability due to the war commenced by Russia and due to a global pandemic that we have just come out of. However, we are there for Canadians and continue to support them. We do not understand why the Conservatives are not. They voted against lowering taxes on middle-

Oral Questions

class Canadians on two separate occasions. It is this Liberal government that is there for Canadians, and Canadians know that.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, again, it is clear from the member's answer that the government does not understand the pain it is causing Canadians.

Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada said that the inflation in Canada today is a homegrown problem. That means it is a Liberal-created issue. The government spent \$110 billion before the pandemic started. It spent half a trillion dollars during the pandemic, 40% of which had nothing to do with COVID measures.

The government's reckless spending is costing Canadians more and more. There is less food, less gas and fewer groceries for Canadians. When will it stop?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we on this side of the House, and I dare say most parliamentarians, understand how tough these times are for Canadians.

That is the reason why most parliamentarians have supported our great government programs, such as the Canada child benefit, the Canada dental benefit and the Canada workers benefit. They are there to help Canadians in these tough times. Unfortunately, the official opposition has chosen to vote, at every opportunity, against these important programs that come to the aid of Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, what is true is that, despite all of the Liberal government's announcements, we are getting more and more calls from people who are struggling to make ends meet. Most of them are middle-class workers or those working hard to join it. The announcements do nothing for them because they earn too much money.

They have not in any way been spared from inflation, the increased cost of living and skyrocketing interest rates. Will the Liberals finally understand that the best way to help everyone is to cancel the tax increase?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for years, our government has been concerned about the plight of Canadians, workers and families. That is why we created the Canada child benefit. That is why we have the Canada workers benefit, which will really help those who are working hard and just need a bit of a hand up.

Oral Questions

One thing is certain. In Canada, we now have a program to help people with child care, and the Conservatives voted against it. We cut costs in half—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. deputy House leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, inflation in Canada is close to 7%, the average credit card balance is around \$2,000, and credit card interest rates are 21%. Add that to the cost of heat, gas, food and rent, and the middle class is reeling.

What is the Liberal solution? Raise taxes on paycheques and triple the carbon tax.

For the sake of the middle class and those who can no longer afford to be middle class, will the Liberals scrap the tax hike?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am always amazed to see members from Quebec rise in the House when they know very well that the price on pollution does not apply to Quebec.

We have put forward a solid, responsible plan to help Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet, unlike the Conservatives, who have no plan.

Their plan is to abandon our fight against the climate crisis and go after seniors' pensions.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, according to Statistics Canada, the use of French in the workplace is declining in Quebec. One in five Quebecers cannot work in French; also, 32% of Montrealers and 35% of Gatineau residents work primarily in English.

We will not stand for the federal government, despite being fully aware of these numbers, enacting Bill C-13 to protect English in the workplace by allowing federally regulated companies to keep ignoring the Charter of the French Language.

French is in decline and English is on the rise. How can the minister deny that we are witnessing the anglicization of Quebec?

• (1125)

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, Quebec and the government share the same goal. We both want to do everything we can to protect and promote French everywhere in Canada, including in Quebec.

That is why we introduced an ambitious bill, one with teeth, that will change things and enable employees and clients of federally regulated private businesses to work in French and get service in French.

I hope this bill will pass quickly.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, Statistics Canada also revealed that one of the three sectors where French in the workplace is declining the most is the finance and insurance sector. That means banks, which are under federal jurisdiction.

Let me repeat that. Banks, which are under federal jurisdiction, are among the main architects of the decline of the French language. Bill C-13 allows them to continue to circumvent the Charter of the French Language. Bill C-13 does not protect French in Quebec; it protects the banks, which want to operate in English.

What is the minister's mandate? Is it to protect the banks or to protect the French language?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, we recognize that French is in decline in Canada. That is exactly what the census data published this week confirm.

We are the first government to recognize the decline of French, and that is why we have introduced an ambitious bill that will change things.

We want to ensure that, in federally regulated private businesses, employees and clients will be able to choose to work in French not only in Quebec, but also in regions with a strong francophone presence.

I hope the opposition parties will work with us to get this bill passed, because it will really improve the lives of all Canadians.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I seem to be hearing a number of voices in addition to the minister's.

I would ask all members to respect the fact that it is not their turn to speak. When someone has the floor, everyone else should keep quiet.

[English]

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

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HEALTH

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, the situation in our ERs is a disaster. People cannot get treatment or care when they need it. In my riding, the ERs at the hospitals in Port Hardy and Port McNeill have been forced to close regularly. Yesterday, a person even collapsed at the Port Hardy ER. They had gone for help and found it closed.

For years, the Liberals have underfunded health care and Canadians are now not able to even access it. When will the government act on the health care staffing crisis in rural communities and increase the Canada health transfer?

Oral Questions

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the concern from my colleague opposite.

This is a really urgent time, and urgent actions are required to address the current human resources and workforce crisis in health care. That is why we have taken significant actions by establishing a Coalition for Action for Health Workers to inform immediate and long-term solutions and address significant health workforce challenges. We have also introduced measures to facilitate the entry of foreign national physicians as permanent residents and announced a chief nursing officer to provide strategic advice from a nursing perspective to Health Canada on priority policy and program areas.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, living with a disability should not mean living in poverty, yet this is the reality for close to a million Canadians. More persons with disabilities are now contemplating medical assistance in dying, not because they want to die but because they cannot afford to live. The government was clear that people will not get the Canada disability benefit for at least another year.

What is the minister's plan to help people with disabilities get by as they wait for the Canada disability benefit?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we must address the long-standing financial insecurity that is the lived reality of far too many working-age Canadians with disabilities.

Bill C-22 would help us do just that by creating the groundbreaking Canada disability benefit. The CDB has the potential to lift hundreds of thousands of Canadians with disabilities out of poverty. The CDB would be a supplement to existing benefits like the guaranteed income supplement, and it would be paid to people who need it most. Bill C-22 passed second reading with 328 votes to zero and is being studied at committee.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians are being crushed by just how expensive life has become under the Liberal government. Groceries hit a 40-year high, which drove nearly 1.5 million Canadians to food banks. The cost of home heating has skyrocketed to the point where Canadians have to choose between heating and eating. The price of diesel in the Maritimes spiked to over \$3 per litre. Now the Liberals are going to continue to raise their tax on everything.

Will the Liberal government stop forcing its failed carbon tax on Canadians?

● (1130)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we put forward a responsible plan that will meet the needs

of the vulnerable Canadians in this country, as well as ensure that we continue to be fiscally responsible.

On the other side of this House, we have the Conservatives and the Conservative leader who are proposing no economic plan for our country. In fact, the only economic advice the Conservatives have proposed comes from the Conservative leader telling Canadians that they can opt-out of inflation by buying cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency has since crashed.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, that word salad will not fill the bowls of Canadians. In fact, many Canadians cannot afford to fill their bowls with salad because the price of lettuce, under the Liberals, has tripled. They are punishing people for the crime of trying to feed their families, trying to drive to work and trying to just get by.

What are Liberals going to do? They are going to triple down by tripling their failed carbon tax. They are completely out of touch with everyday Canadians. Do they want some economic advice? Do they want to know what a plan looks like? Stop raising taxes on Canadians.

Will they cancel their failed carbon tax?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as the hon. member knows, as the price on pollution increases, so does the climate action rebate. It makes eight out of 10 families better off, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

What does not make families better off is investing in cryptocurrency. I do not know if the hon. member has been reading headlines lately, but many Canadians have lost their shirts, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition still has not apologized in the House.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, after seven years of the government's agenda of high debt, high tax and high spending, the result is 40-year high Liberal-made inflation. The result is people barely affording basic necessities. The result is organizations like the Salvation Army saying that it has a 30% increase in families with children in need coming for its services.

Will the Liberal government stop forcing its failed carbon tax on Canadians?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I spent a lot of time in opposition when Stephen Harper's government, quite frankly, never raised the spectre or issue of those who were the most vulnerable. This was the government that set targets on poverty—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I am sure that the hon. members would want to hear the answer whether they are in agreement with it or not. I think that they owe the respect to at least hear the answer so that another question can be posed.

The hon. government House leader can start from the top.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, we know that times are difficult across the world. It does not matter to Canadians who are trying to pay their bills that we have one of the lowest rates of inflation anywhere in the world. It is lower than the G7 average, lower than the EU, lower than the U.S. and lower than the U.K. It does not matter, and they are absolutely right.

However, what does matter is what we do in the face of those global headwinds. Do we expand anxiety and fear as the opposition is trying to do, or do we put real, tangible solutions that actually help people with the problems they are facing? I would submit that we need to do the second and not the first.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, even the Governor of the Bank of Canada said that inflation was homegrown because of the Liberals. A constituent of mine let me know that he sent some Christmas baking to a relative in Penticton, which is only 45 minutes from Kelowna. It cost him \$75. The fuel surcharge fee on his bill was 40%, and this is before the tripling of the Liberals' carbon tax. So much for the annual Christmas tradition of sending baking to those they love.

Will the Liberal government stop forcing its failed carbon tax on Canadians?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member from B.C. never talks about the costs of climate change and never talks about the rebate. I would remind her that 600 people died under the heat dome in British Columbia. They were subjected to the atmospheric river, which cost the B.C. economy \$9 billion. We have sent \$5 billion to help that good province rebuild. The hon. member should get serious about climate change. It is costing our citizens plenty.

• (1135)

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, despite being absolutely useless, the government insists on tripling the carbon tax. When taxes go up, the money in bank accounts of Canadians actually goes down. It is basic math and logic. Welcome, folks.

In order to try to make ends meet, moms are actually watering down baby formula, seniors are turning their thermostats down to 17°C and Canadian families are accessing food banks like they have never done before. Canadians are struggling.

When will the Liberals show some compassion and axe the tax?

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about another group of families, whom I have been invited to go to cook for and serve Christmas dinner to next weekend. They are the over 125 people who lost their homes due to hurricane Fiona. They have no homes. They are living with family and friends and in temporary housing as we rebuild.

It is our government that is helping them now. It is our government that has a plan to fight climate change. If we go to visit my riding, they are the first to stand up and say, please, address the impacts of climate change. We have to act, and we have to act now.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, here is the problem with that. Since the Liberals took power and imposed the carbon tax, emissions have actually gone up, not down. I do not know how those constituents are being helped by this, aside from paying a whole lot of money to get a whole lot of nothing.

A tax is not the answer. Canadians are the answer. They are the innovators. They are the problem-solvers. They are the solution makers. They are the ones who will get us out of this Liberal-made mess. Canadians are the ones we believe in.

Finally, when will you scrap your failed Liberal experiment, and give Canadians back control of their lives?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows that she is to direct all questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the government.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I hate to break it to the hon. member, but emissions are going down and we are on track to meet our carbon emissions targets, but let us talk about the Conservative record for just a little bit. For 10 long years, they did absolutely nothing about climate change. They blew up the Kyoto accord and blew up our emissions target. They cut \$350 million from the climate change budget. They are not serious about climate change—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members again. This has happened during questions and during answers. I would ask members to please hold their thoughts when somebody else has the floor.

The hon. member for Repentigny.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, five days from the start of COP15, we would like to hear good news about biodiversity, but the good news is coming from the fossil fuel industry.

On Tuesday, Alberta's gas industry boasted about record production in November, 509 million cubic metres per day, and it is of course celebrating a 300% increase in profits.

At the same time, on Tuesday, with respect to biodiversity, the federal government reported that 20% of wildlife in Canada is threatened with extinction.

Should the gas industry be making a 300% increase in profits when 20% of species are at risk?

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are working very hard with industry to get those emissions down. As the hon. member knows, we are capping emissions from the oil and gas sector, we are eliminating fossil fuel subsidies and we are inviting the world to COP15 in Montréal next week.

We also have very aggressive targets for biodiversity preservation because we know species are becoming extinct at a rapid rate globally and here in Canada. That is why we committed to 25% of our land and waters being preserved by 2025 and 30% of our wildlife by 2030.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the report on wildlife identifies 2,253 species at risk, including the right whale. The government lacks ambition. What is the federal government doing to help the right whale five days away from the start of COP15 on biodiversity? It is approving exploratory drilling without an environmental assessment in the right whale's habitat off the coast of Newfoundland while it is inviting the entire world to COP15 on biodiversity at the same time that its report shows that biodiversity is plummeting.

Why is the federal government actively putting biodiversity at risk with more oil and gas exploration?

• (1140)

[English]

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I share the member's concern about the North Atlantic right whale, which is an endangered species. Our government is taking decisive and necessary steps to protect them. We have implemented Canada's dynamic closure system to protect whales when they are sighted. We remove ghost gear to reduce entanglements. We are innovating on whale-safe gear to further protect these whales. We are aware of their situation, and I am working hard to make sure we are protecting them.

Oral Questions

FIREARMS

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, the 2022 hunting season is drawing to a close, and hunters are celebrating a successful harvest of deer, moose and other game. However, here in Ottawa, the Liberals have set their sights on a very different target. With no warning and no consultation, the Liberals have announced their plan to ban hunting rifles and shotguns. The hunters have become the hunted.

Why does the Liberal government always punish law-abiding hunters and sport shooters, while giving bail and house arrest to violent, repeat offenders?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in fact, my colleague from the Conservative Party is wrong. We are not targeting hunters. I met members of the hunting community this morning to assure them that what we are going after are the AR-15 style firearms, which have been used in far too many mass casualties across the country. More than that, we have a plan to tackle illegal smuggling at the border by investing—

An hon. member: You're a liar.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I heard that, and I would ask the hon. member for Lethbridge, after questions and comments, to apologize for her statement. She knows that is not acceptable in the House, and I hope she takes it seriously.

The hon. Minister of Public Safety.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Madam Speaker, I am going to set the remark aside, and I hope my colleague will apologize for it. It has no place in this chamber. We are trying to have a responsible debate about how to keep Canadians safe.

We will continue to go after AR-15 style guns, which have no place in our communities. We will continue to invest in stopping the illegal smuggling of guns at our borders. Those are initiatives that the Conservatives have voted against and they should reverse their position.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I was hearing more voices than the minister's voice. I would say to members, again, whether they appreciate the answer or not, they are here to listen to the answer. They can follow up with a subsequent question.

The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will not take any lessons on firearms from a minister who visited a gun range and was too afraid to even touch a gun. The Liberals cannot tell the difference between a machine gun and a BB gun. While the Liberals plan to waste billions of dollars going after 100-year-old hunting rifles, smugglers continue to ship handguns by the thousands over our borders and they are being used on our streets.

Why are the Liberals so off target on tackling the real sources of violent crime?

Oral Questions

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is very regrettable that today, Conservatives are resorting to personal attacks on me and on members of our side, in the government, who represent hunters.

More to the point, I have met with families who have lost loved ones to gun violence, and I do not know how we look any of them in the eye and not do the smart and sensible things we are doing right now, which is to get AR-15 style guns out of our communities, to stop illegal smuggling at our borders and to stop gun crime from occurring at every instance.

The Conservatives have filibustered and have gone with falsehoods when they should be supporting these initiatives.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, last week, the Liberal government tabled an amendment to Bill C-21 that would prohibit hundreds of thousands of hunting rifles. This government wants to turn law-abiding hunters and farmers who use rifles as tools to feed their families and protect their livestock into criminals overnight.

Meanwhile, since the Prime Minister has taken office, violent crime has risen by 32% and gang-related homicides have increased by 92%.

When will the government focus on the illegal guns flooding our streets and the criminals who use them, and stop targeting law-abiding hunters and farmers?

• (1145)

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have been a hunter and fisher all my life. I have great memories of hunting with my dad and I wish he were here now, because he would support me 100%.

My friends and I have looked at the amendments to Bill C-21. We agree. Every time a firearm kills an innocent person, that hurts a law-abiding gun owner. My friends support Bill C-21. We all have to do our part to get assault-style weapons off this planet.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, let us talk about some facts. Just yesterday in the public safety committee, the Liberal government's own firearms expert who helped write Bill C-21 admitted on record that hunting rifles would be banned if this law is enacted.

Will the Liberals admit they have made a mistake, admit these amendments are affecting law-abiding hunters and farmers, and cancel Bill C-21?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in fact the expert my colleague is referring to refuted many of the misnomers and the inaccuracies the Conservatives continue to perpetuate.

More to the point, we have a plan to eradicate gun violence once and for all. That includes investments at our borders to support CBSA. The Conservatives voted against.

That includes addressing gun crime at its root causes. We invested \$250 million. The Conservatives voted against.

It also includes common-sense laws like Bill C-21, so that we can get those guns that have no place in our communities off our streets once and for all.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we need to keep our communities safe from handgun violence, and the government promised to do that. However, at the 11th hour, the government slipped an amendment into Bill C-21 that is not about dealing with handguns.

Instead, the government is now targeting rifles and shotguns with detachable clips. This is a huge overreach that would impact rural, northern and indigenous people, and the government needs to fix this.

Will the Attorney General ensure that this legislation on handguns is not going to target legitimate hunters and rural people?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can assure my colleague and the NDP, and, in fact, all parliamentarians who want to advance a responsible debate about this, that we are not going to target those guns which are used conventionally for hunting.

We are targeting those guns like AR-15 style firearms, which have caused too many casualties right across the country.

I know that my colleague and I, and others who are contributing to a responsible debate about this, will get there.

What is important is that we keep our streets safe from gun violence and that is exactly what we are going to do.

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THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, again, I am warning the government of huge risks from unregulated shipbreaking. An oil spill was discovered on the shoreline of a shipbreaking facility in Union Bay on Vancouver Island. This facility has been operating despite legal challenges and objections from local governments and first nations.

Baynes Sound is critical to our local economy and ecosystems. It is home to over 50% of B.C. shellfish and is important for herring spawning.

The government's oceans protection plan is nowhere to be found.

Will the government finally act by creating by robust federal ship recycling regulations?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his environmental advocacy. We know that oil spills are a very serious thing in ocean environments. We have the oceans protection plan, over a billion dollars, as the hon. member will know.

I would like to take this issue up with him off-line and see what we can do about his particular situation.

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PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the prosperity of our communities is reliant on the social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities. It is essential that Canadians with disabilities are empowered to live a meaningful, dignified and quality life. Organizations in Richmond Hill such as L'Arche Daybreak, OpenMind Alliance Academy and My MS Family of York Region have dedicated themselves to the well-being and inclusion of persons with disabilities and serve as an admirable example of how people of different intellectual disabilities can live and learn together.

As tomorrow marks the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion update the House on how our government is working to build a more inclusive and accessible Canada for everyone?

• (1150)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Richmond Hill for his tireless work on behalf of all persons with disabilities and all constituents.

In October we launched the first-ever disability inclusion action plan, a road map for our country to remove barriers by focusing on financial security, employment, accessible and inclusive communities and a modern approach to disability. With Bill C-22, we have the framework legislation in place to create the groundbreaking Canada disability benefit.

Tomorrow, today and every day, let us celebrate the accomplishments of persons with disabilities as we work together to build a more inclusive and more accessible Canada.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister has repeatedly cited national security as a pretext to avoid answering basic questions about Beijing's election interference. This is exactly the opposite of the advice he received from CSIS, which said that the government's policy in combatting foreign interference should be grounded in transparency and sunlight and that foreign interference should be exposed to the public.

Why does the Prime Minister refuse to follow the advice of CSIS?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the importance of our national security and protecting our democracies should be something every single Canadian takes seriously.

While the Conservatives continue to play politics with our national security, serious governments like ours take national security seriously. All of the information that Conservatives want would be available. All we are asking is that it be treated in a way that protects our national security and ensures that our adversaries do not get access to the very information they would try to use to undermine our democracy.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister very conveniently and very specifically claims he was not briefed about candidates receiving money from China, except that is not what is at issue. What is at issue is a vast campaign of election interference by Beijing involving 11 candidates.

Was the Prime Minister briefed about that, yes or no?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I said, the protection of our democracy is paramount, but with that, protecting our democracy also means respecting it.

Yesterday, the member opposite, when I rose in this place, continually screamed for me to sit down, yet he did not have that same emotional outburst when the Minister of Public Safety was answering that question. I have some advice for the members opposite. If they support the protection of democracy—

Mr. Michael Cooper: I don't need any advice from you, Jennifer. Just answer the question.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: —they might want to start by respecting the women who have been democratically elected in this place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The response from the member for St. Albert—Edmonton while the parliamentary secretary was speaking is also not acceptable. She was answering the question and she does not need to be told that she needs to sit down.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will correct the last point, but what was happening is unacceptable.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Wow.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Lethbridge is out of order.

The hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Oral Questions

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, like a game of dodge ball, the Prime Minister has become very deft at the five Ds of question period: dodge, deny, deflect, deceive and drivel. The problem is that when it comes to China's interference in our Canadian elections, it is not a game, because it is serious business. It has been widely reported that the Prime Minister received specific credible information on election interference in Canada, and he has done nothing about it.

Let us try again. Has the Prime Minister received any briefings or memos, verbal or written, specific to foreign interference in Canadian elections by the Chinese Communist government, yes or no?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I assure my colleague that we take all allegations of foreign interference very seriously. That is why we struck independent non-partisan professional panels to look at these allegations, which subsequently confirmed the results of the elections in 2019 and 2021 were both free and fair. More importantly, we are going to continue to do everything to protect our democratic institutions, including our elections, so that Canadians can have their voices represented in this chamber, including my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary for intergovernmental affairs, who does stellar work for her riding and on this issue.

• (1155)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, the best way to protect democracy is to follow the guidelines of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS. I have in my hands several briefings for the Prime Minister from CSIS that say, "Canada could make good use of an open and transparent policy that would draw attention to the fact that [foreign interference] must be made public".

The question is simple: Why is the Prime Minister afraid of following his national security agency's guidelines and telling Canadians the truth? There is nothing partisan about this. It comes from CSIS.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very proud of the work that the government has accomplished under the leadership of the Prime Minister. We have augmented the values of transparency with the creation of the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency and the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians. These are policy choices the Conservatives never made that reflect our dedication to finding ways to protect our democratic institutions in a transparent fashion.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, a new record has been set at Roxham Road, where 3,901 people crossed into Canada in October. All of those people could be entering Canada with dignity at the border crossings if Canada would suspend the safe third country agreement, but the federal government's inaction forces them to cross at Roxham Road, where they are welcomed by the RCMP. In fact, in commit-

tee, RCMP Superintendent Martin Roach said that there are 120 officers to patrol the Quebec border but that 90% of them are stuck managing the situation at Roxham Road.

Does the minister not think that it would be much more useful for those officers to be fighting gun trafficking rather than managing the situation at Roxham Road?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me be very clear. Closing Roxham Road or suspending the safe third country agreement will not solve the main problem. As the member opposite knows, Canada shares the longest demilitarized border in the world. Roxham Road enables public servants to collect ID from asylum seekers and prevent dangerous crossings. What we need to do is modernize the agreement. That is what we are doing.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Liberals have been saying that for four years now, but 90% of the RCMP is stuck at Roxham Road. In theory, this should be bad news for the human smugglers who abuse refugee claimants, but no, the RCMP has not been able to lay a single charge, not one. Why not? Because the smugglers are committing their crimes in the United States, and the Americans are not co-operating. The minister keeps saying that he has been negotiating with the Americans for four years, yet for four years there has been nothing on the table. Not only has the agreement not been suspended, there is not even any police co-operation.

When is the minister going to show some backbone, stand up and be taken seriously by the Americans?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite needs to understand that the migrant crisis is a challenge not only in Canada, but also around the world. That is why we have to work with the international community to find long-term solutions. That is why we have to uphold our international obligations with respect to refugees. We on this side of the House will continue to work with all our partners instead of trying to pick fights.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, Edmonton Manning residents are asking why everything seems to be broken in Canada. They say government mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic has fuelled record inflation. It gave \$54 million for the useless ArriveCan app, \$237 million to a former Liberal MP for ventilators that sit in a warehouse collecting dust and a billion dollars in wage subsidy cheques to corporations that pay out corporate dividends.

When will the Liberal government end its useless spending, which is increasing inflation and which costs every Canadian \$3,500 a year?

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing that is very useful to families in Alberta is our child care agreement with the province. This agreement will save Alberta families over \$5,610 right away. When the program grows, they will save an average of \$8,600 per child.

That is real money and real support to help Albertans put food on the table.

* * *

● (1200)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, people certainly will need help putting food on the table, because food bank use continues to climb. However, the Liberals do not seem to care too much about that.

The food banks in Beauce can barely keep up with the growing demand. Of the 12,500 requests for food assistance processed every month through their network of organizations, one-third are for children.

The government is completely out of touch. Its plan for the environment does nothing but increase taxes.

When will the NDP-Liberal coalition get its hands out of Canadians' pockets and cancel the tax hikes?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague began his question by talking about the growing number of Canadians going to food banks, but oddly enough, he ended with the carbon tax and our price on pollution.

Yes, we are here to help Canadians make ends meet. Less than 10 days ago, we invested an additional \$400 million to help Canada's non-profit organizations.

The policies we have put in place have helped lift 450,000 children out of poverty.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, when the Liberal government was first elected, the Prime Minister declared, "Canada is back." Unfortunately, it did not say what it was bringing back, namely deficit spending, inflation, economic slowdown and government boondoggles, such as the \$54-million arrive scam app, a \$237-million patronage contract for ventilators and the half-billion dollar WE scandal.

When will the government stop its inflationary spending and start putting the economy back on the road to recovery?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we said not only that we were back but that we were going to have Canadians' backs.

Oral Questions

In seven years of this government, we have introduced programs that have made a huge difference to Canadians, such as the Canada child benefit, which has been able to cut down child poverty in this country. More than 425,000 children today are not in the situation of poverty. We can talk about the Canada workers benefit or the Canada dental benefit. With those things, we really have Canadians' backs.

Do members know who do not have Canadians' backs? It is the official opposition, which voted against each one of these great programs for Canadians.

* * *

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we all have a role to play in preventing gender-based violence. Many men and boys are aware of gender inequities. It is crucial to start discussions at a young age to encourage them to act now to develop healthy masculinities.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth speak about what our government is doing to support the allyship of men and boys in addressing gender-based violence?

Ms. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for many men, the awareness of gender-based violence hits close to home when they have a daughter or when they reflect on the women in their lives, but women and girls cannot wait that long.

This week, as part of the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, our government provided roughly \$600,000 to White Ribbon. With this support, White Ribbon can continue calling men and boys into the conversation and find ways to address the problematic social norms and attitudes that are harmful to so many. Only together can we address gender-based violence.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, residents of Saskatoon are suffering because of the carbon tax. It makes the cost of everything increase. Fuel and home heating are more expensive, and so is food. Some 20,000 people are using the Saskatoon food bank each month, and 40% of them are children.

This tax plan does nothing for the environment. Instead, it is ripping a hole in the bank accounts of Canadians.

Will the Liberal government show some compassion and stop forcing its failed carbon tax on Canadians?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not sure the hon. member heard the good news, but this spring, as of April 1, a family of four will get up to about \$1,500 in Saskatchewan and \$1,000 in my home province of Manitoba. They are going to receive these cheques every three months. This is going to help with cash flow. It is going to help with affordability.

The other side has no plan for affordability, no plan for the economy and no plan to fight climate change.

* * *

● (1205)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, in Calgary, families are waiting up to 112 days to access shelter and support services. According to the Discovery House, “It used to be that people would stay for six or seven months on average. We’ve seen that increase to 10 or 11 months, or even over a year sometimes. That’s because of the affordability crisis.”

With higher rates of violence and increased costs of living, families are vulnerable. Will the Liberal government end inflationary policies that are punishing Canadians and help those who are trying to escape family violence?

Ms. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we realize and know on this side of the House that it is a difficult time for families. That is why, most recently, we launched the national action plan to end gender-based violence. This is a joint federal-provincial-territorial agreement moving forward to ensure that we are there for women and gender-diverse people as they are seeking help and getting out of abusive situations.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, a year ago, the advisory panel on systemic discrimination in the military recommended excluding clergy of the three Abrahamic religions from being chaplains. It said:

Defence...cannot consider itself supportive of inclusivity when it employs as chaplains members of organizations whose values are not consistent with National Defence's ethics....

For example, some churches [exclude] women from their priesthoods...[and] certain faiths have strict tenets requiring conversion....

This recommendation is anti-Muslim, anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish. Has the government definitively rejected it?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for raising the issue of chaplaincy in the national defence forces.

It is absolutely important to do spiritual care that is sensitive and culturally aware and that engages all people from different faith communities. This government is committed to doing that.

We will take his question under advisement and get back to him.

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, young people are the leaders of today and tomorrow. They are change makers who are helping to build a future with clean air and water, affordable housing and economic opportunities for everyone. I know that no matter where they are from, young people keep our country strong and support diversity and inclusion. They make Canada a better place.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship update the House on how our government is mobilizing youth to help rebuild our economy?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question.

Let us be clear, Canada benefits when diverse, engaged and independent young people are able to come from abroad to gain enriching work and life experience in this country.

Yesterday, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced a 20% increase in the number of people who can apply to the international experience Canada program for 2023. This increase means that close to 90,000 candidates will be able to work and travel in Canada, including francophone youth. This will help employers fill labour gaps, including for seasonal work opportunities in Canada's tourism industry. We know that when we invest in youth, we invest—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, the recent wild species report found that one in five species in Canada is disappearing. That is more than 2,000 of Canada's species at risk of extinction or extirpation. This loss is a huge threat to our environment, our ecosystems and our food supply.

The Liberals have made almost no progress on their promises to protect 30% of our natural lands by 2030. Will the government introduce a biodiversity accountability bill to make sure we reach those critical targets?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his advocacy on this front. He is absolutely right. We tabled the wild species report the other day and we are losing some of our species at a very rapid rate. That is why we are gathering in Montreal at the UN biodiversity convention.

We have stepped up to make aggressive targets: 25% of our land and waters by 2025 and 30% by 2030. We are focused like a laser beam on this. We look forward to working with the hon. member to realize those goals.

* * *

● (1210)

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Madam Speaker, Danielle Dubois is an entrepreneur in my riding who owns a company called Zenit Nutrition, which produces healthy energy bars made exclusively from local, Canadian ingredients.

The problem is that because of the way this product is classified, she has to charge GST on these bars, unlike other, less nutritious imported products that are made with industrial ingredients. Just think, she is being penalized for encouraging our Canadian producers and using healthy ingredients.

Can the minister tell us whether she plans to review this more than 30-year-old legislation so that our local foods, which are healthier, are not penalized and taxed?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let me begin by thanking my colleague from Richmond—Arthabaska for his hard work. I also want to commend the entrepreneur for promoting local, Canadian products.

Our government has always supported small businesses. In our last budget, we once again lowered taxes for small and medium-sized businesses to 9%. That is one of the lowest tax rates in the world.

For this question in particular, I would be pleased to talk directly to my colleague, and I invite the businesswoman to take part in the consultations—

* * *

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That concludes question period.

I did indicate that I would be asking the hon. member for Lethbridge for an apology to the Minister of Public Safety for her comment in the House.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier today, I called the Minister of Public Safety a liar. I should

not have done that. Instead, I should have said that he misled the House. I apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do not believe that is an acceptable apology at this point. The hon. member is trying to justify what she said, and I would ask the hon. member if she would like to try it one more time, given the unparliamentary language used in the House.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, I apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London has a point of order.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know that in today's debate, of course, we got very uptight on certain issues, but I find it very rich when we have a member talking about the rights of women who then turns to me and tells me to zip it.

I would like to ask for an apology from the member for Ajax. If they are actually going to talk about treating people with dignity and respect, then that goes for Conservative women as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. government House leader is rising on that same point of order.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased and proud to represent the riding of Ajax, and I do not think I am who the member was referring to.

However, this is an opportunity to reflect on—

An hon. member: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am listening to one point of order. If the hon. member wants to go back to the other point of order, I will go back, but I am not going to interrupt the hon. member during his point of order.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, we had an opportunity at the House leaders meeting to talk about the manner in which we address each other. We have had good discussions and agreed to stop yelling and to follow the Standing Orders—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, that was my understanding, but I am hearing the other side saying no, they do think it is acceptable—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the hon. House leader to speak to his point of order and ignore anything coming from the other side because this should not be about debate. If there are other points of order, I will address them.

The hon. House leader.

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, specifically on this point, after hearing the members yelling “no”, I realize that I have to go back to the House leaders to have a conversation about what I thought we had agreed to.

What I thought we had agreed to was that, when a member is speaking, the practice of screaming or yelling at them when they are attempting to speak is not becoming of this place. It is against the Standing Orders, and it needs to stop. I will take it back to the House leaders, and I hope that we will have a productive discussion in that regard.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, people are yelling even as I am speaking here, so clearly we have more work to do.

• (1215)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On the same point of order, the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London has the floor.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I was absolutely wrong, although the member for Ajax did apologize for something he had no idea what he was supposed to be apologizing for. This was regarding the member for Pickering—Uxbridge, who stood and talked about the way women were treated in the House, yet did the exact same thing to her own female colleague, so I do find it very rich.

I would ask that the member for Pickering—Uxbridge recognize that all women in Parliament, regardless of political party, matter. All women matter, not just those from the Liberal Party.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Would the hon. member for Pickering—Uxbridge like to comment?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. That is not what happened. The members opposite were screaming, as they are screaming at me now, when I simply raised the point that yesterday, when I stood in this place, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton was screaming for me to sit down, and they were trying to deny that it happened.

There are lots of witnesses on this side, and the member has to account for her denial of a member on her side telling another woman to sit down.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind all members that there are things being said on both sides. I would ask members to please respect the rules of the House and to respect each other, whether one is asking the question, waiting for an answer or delivering the answer.

All in all, there have been words said on both sides, and I would ask members to please refrain from that.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but I was watching that member. It was eye-to-eye contact. I would like an apology from that member because that member knows it was directed at me. That member looked directly at me and said it to me,

and the House was quiet at the time. It was not during that, and I would like to share that with you, Madam Speaker. I wish that she would reconsider her actions and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I will have to review Hansard to see exactly what was said. As far as looks in the House, it is something that Hansard will not show. I would again ask members to be respectful of each other in the House.

I also want to add that I owe an apology to the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton for the comments that I made about him today. He did not ask the hon. member to sit down, but he did call her by name.

I want to again reinforce the fact that we need to be respectful of each other here in the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table, in both official languages, the report on COVID-19 rapid test procurement and distribution.

* * *

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, entitled “Supplementary Estimates (B), 2022-23.”

* * *

PETITIONS

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, I proudly stand today to present a petition on behalf of the amazing people of Calgary Forest Lawn, particularly those who live in the Mayland Heights community, who are calling on the government to stand with them, along with myself, in asking that the alternate departure heading trial route not be made permanent.

The air traffic using YYC Calgary airport's alternative departure heading trial route very significantly from the required heading. Air traffic is often too low and loud, and passes directly overhead the residents. A large portion of Mayland Heights residents do not fall within the government's AVPA NEF contours. East Mayland Heights residents are not constructed per Canada building code requirements for NEF.

Many senior residents were not aware of nor able to voice concerns via Nav Canada's online consultations, and many questions were asked at the consultation, yet no public reply has come from Nav Canada or YYC on them. Petitioners call on the government to stand with the residents of Calgary Forest Lawn to not have the new temporary route become permanent.

* * *

● (1220)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 874, 875, 877 and 880.

[Text]

Question No. 874—**Ms. Leah Gazan:**

With regard to the commitment in the Liberal Party's 2021 election platform to no longer provide charitable status to anti-abortion organizations, such as crisis pregnancy centres: (a) what consultation processes has the government established to define an anti-abortion organization; (b) what stakeholders and interested parties have government representatives met with since September 21, 2021; and (c) on what dates were the meetings in (b) held?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Income Tax Act does not define the concept of charity but relies on the common law definition. Under the common law, charitable purposes fall under one of four categories: relief of poverty, advancement of education, advancement of religion, and other purposes beneficial to the community in a way the courts have determined to be charitable, for example, the protection of the environment or the promotion of health.

Canadian tax incentives for charitable donations are considered to be amongst the most generous in the world. Given this generosity and other tax privileges provided to charities, organizations that choose to register as charities are required to follow a particular set of rules set out in the Income Tax Act. These rules are primarily designed to ensure that donated funds are used for charitable purposes, protecting public trust in the charitable sector as a whole.

All registered charities are required to ensure that the information that they provide is accurate and evidence-based, and are prohibited from disseminating information that is false or misleading.

Our government remains committed to no longer provide charity status to anti-abortion organizations that provide dishonest counselling to women about their rights and about the options available to them at all stages of a pregnancy.

Question No. 875—**Ms. Leah Gazan:**

With regard to the charitable status of anti-abortion organizations in Canada, broken down by province or territory and fiscal year, since 2015-16: (a) how does the government define what an anti-abortion organization is; and (b) how many or-

Routine Proceedings

ganizations have received or maintained charitable status while meeting the definition in (a)?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the question, as the federal regulator of registered charities, the CRA is responsible for making sure charities comply with the requirements of the Income Tax Act and common law. While the CRA is responsible for administering policy once implemented, it is not the CRA's role to develop tax policy. As such, while the CRA is prepared to administer any new rules that are implemented and to provide relevant guidance to the charitable sector, the CRA is currently unable to respond in the manner requested.

Question No. 877—**Mr. Colin Carrie:**

With regard to Health Canada's approval of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines, broken down by each vaccine: (a) which pharmacokinetic studies were considered as part of the approval process, and what were the results of each study; (b) if there were no pharmacokinetic studies available for review, why did Health Canada not require such studies; (c) were genotoxicity studies reviewed in the approval process, and, if not, why not; (d) if the answer to (c) is affirmative, what are the details, including who conducted the studies and what were the findings; (e) were carcinogenicity studies reviewed in the approval process, and, if not, why not; (f) if the answer to (e) is affirmative, what are the details, including who conducted the studies and what were the findings; (g) what are the details of all safety, toxicology, developmental, and reproductive studies which were conducted on humans prior to the vaccine being approved, including, for each, (i) who conducted the study, (ii) the methodology, (iii) the findings; (h) were the vaccines tested in regards to transmission, and, if so, what were the results; and (i) for each study in (a) through (h) what is the website location where the raw data and findings can be viewed by the public?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Health Canada has authorized several COVID-19 vaccines for use in Canada. Each of these underwent a careful scientific review and met our standards for safety, efficacy and quality. Information about all of the authorized vaccines including the regulatory decision summary can be found on the COVID-19 vaccines and treatments portal: <https://bit.ly/3EH07IB>. Users must click on the individual vaccine names and then the "all resources" tab.

For each of the vaccines that have been authorized, you can access detailed information such as the product monograph, which is the prescribing information for both consumers and healthcare professionals, or manufacturer insert; the summary basis of decision, which provides a detailed overview of the data considered by Health Canada; and the terms and conditions placed on the authorizations, which are the requirements for further data submission that manufacturers are required to meet

Routine Proceedings

Note that information in the portal is being updated regularly. Users can also find all the clinical study reports related to the approval of Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty vaccine on Health Canada's public release of clinical information website: <https://bit.ly/3GFvDHE>. Specific details related to various aspects of the review, including the summaries of the clinical efficacy and safety, can be found there.

As the federal regulator, Health Canada requires that clinical trial results be generated from properly designed protocols so that safety and efficacy of vaccines can be well demonstrated. Health Canada also requires manufacturing data demonstrating consistency and quality in the production of the vaccine. These requirements are informed by science and are aligned with international standards, including the World Health Organization, or WHO, guidelines.

With regard to Health Canada's approval of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines and part (a) of the question, Health Canada followed the internationally accepted guidelines from the WHO for vaccine evaluation stating that the "Pharmacokinetic studies (e.g. determining serum or tissue concentrations of vaccine components) are normally not needed".

Pfizer conducted non-clinical pharmacokinetic studies that evaluated the biodistribution as well as the metabolism and excretion of the BNT162b2 (V9) LNP formulation. Results of the biodistribution study in mice demonstrated positive biodistribution data. Metabolism studies demonstrated slow metabolism by hydrolysis and also showed formulations to be excreted.

With regard to part (b) of the question, clinical pharmacokinetic studies were not required for this vaccine evaluation. For vaccines, only dose-immunogenicity studies are performed. This is because vaccines are meant to directly induce immunogenicity by locally recruiting immunocytes that will carry on with the pursuing immunogenic processes. Thus, the clinical outcome from vaccines is determined mainly by an immunological response phase.

With regard to part (c), the product monograph notes that genotoxicity studies were not considered relevant to this type of vaccine. Genotoxicity studies are normally not required based on section 4.2.3 of the WHO guideline:

Part (d) of the question is not applicable.

With regard to part (e), the product monograph notes that carcinogenicity studies were not considered relevant to this type of vaccine. Carcinogenicity studies are normally not required based on section 4.2.3 of the WHO guideline.

Part (f) of the question is not applicable.

With regard to part (g), toxicology, developmental and reproductive studies were conducted on animals prior to the clinical studies. No safety concerns were identified from the non-clinical toxicology, developmental and reproductive studies. As per these findings, there were no recommendations for further toxicology, developmental or reproductive studies to be conducted on humans.

Furthermore, the vaccine safety component was further studied in human clinical trials. The human clinical trials indicated that the vaccine was well tolerated by participants and there were no findings of important safety concerns.

The product monograph indicates that non-clinical data revealed no special hazard for humans based on conventional studies of repeat dose toxicity.

With regard to part (h) of the question, the clinical trials for Pfizer vaccines were not designed to test transmission. The vaccine effectiveness for prevention of COVID-19 was tested and demonstrated in clinical studies. It is important to note that the clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccines were designed to measure vaccine safety as well as efficacy against the prevention of severe illness, rather than transmission, which involves becoming infected and then passing the virus on to another person. Although not a part of the clinical trial process, evidence with respect to effectiveness against transmission was established by a number of peer-reviewed studies from domestic and international sources, such as the U.K. and Israel, along with other sources as noted. Further, the public health and published post-authorization real-world data have demonstrated the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines in reducing the transmission of SARS-CoV-2. For example, Public Health Ontario published a literature review including both Canadian and worldwide data showing that COVID-19 vaccines can reduce transmission by 50% to 90% to other individuals, including transmission within households and long-term care homes.

Question No. 880—**Mr. Stephen Ellis:**

With regard to Health Canada and psychedelic drugs: (a) how many people have been authorized by Health Canada to prescribe psychedelic drugs, broken down by province or territory, and by type of drugs authorized (LSD, psilocybin, etc.); and (b) what is the breakdown of (a) by profession of authorized person (researcher, psychiatrist, etc.), and by reason for authorization?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, under the Food and Drugs Act, Health Canada authorizes the sale of drugs by manufacturers, not the prescribing of drugs. Once a drug has been authorized by Health Canada, provinces and territories make decisions about who can prescribe the drug in that jurisdiction. At this time, ketamine is the only psychedelic drug that has been authorized by Health Canada to be marketed in Canada.

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[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 876, 878, 879 and 881 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

Government Orders

[Text]

Question No. 876—**Mrs. Anna Roberts:**

With regard to government statistics on court-imposed sentences for those convicted of crimes which carry a maximum possible sentence of 10 years or more, broken down by type of crime or criminal code violation, and by year in which the sentence was given, since January 1, 2016: (a) how many people were convicted; (b) what is the breakdown by length of sentence, including those sentenced to (i) no incarceration period, (ii) less than a year, (iii) one to two years, (iv) two to five years, (v) five to 10 years, (vi) over 10 years but less than the maximum possible sentence, (vii) over 10 years, but less than the maximum sentence, (viii) the maximum sentence; and (c) if the government breaks its statistics down using a time period other than that listed in (b), what is the breakdown by each of those time periods?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 878—**Mr. John Barlow:**

With regard to the trip by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food and her entourage to participate in the G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting, held in Indonesia in September 2022: (a) what was the size of the Canadian delegation; (b) who were the members of the delegation; (c) what was the total travel and hospitality expenditures related to the trip; (d) what is the breakdown of (c) by amounts spent on (i) airfare, (ii) accommodation, (iii) meals and per diems, (iv) hospitality, (v) other expenditures, including land transfers; and (e) what was the minister's itinerary on the trip?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 879—**Mr. Ben Lobb:**

With regard to the development of applications for smartphones by the government or for the government, since January 1, 2017: (a) what amount has been spent developing applications; (b) what is the list of applications developed; and (c) for each application developed, what are the details, including (i) the amount spent on development, (ii) the date of launch, (iii) the current usage rates, (iv) the monthly download statistics, (v) the list of operating systems for which the application is available, (vi) whether the application is for public or internal usage?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 881—**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to the ArriveCAN application: (a) what are the details of all contracts the government awarded in relation to the development or operation of ArriveCAN, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) vendor, (iii) amount, (iv) description of goods and services provided; (b) for each contract in (a), was it sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process; (c) for each contract awarded through a competitive bidding process, how many qualifying bids were received; (d) for each sole-sourced contract, why was it sole-sourced and who made the final decision about which vendor would receive the contract; (e) what measures, if any, were in place to ensure that the government was being charged a fair market value; and (f) does the government plan on recovering any of the amounts that it paid which were higher than fair market value in relation to any of the ArriveCAN contracts, and, if so, what are the details, including which contracts and what amounts it expects to recover?

(Return tabled)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[English]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

HISTORIC PLACES OF CANADA ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-23, An Act respecting places, persons and events of national historic significance or national interest, archaeological resources and cultural and natural heritage, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's intervention on Bill C-23 today. I have been to his area, to Camrose, having grown up in the Prairies and having family there. I heard about his passion for the area of Neutral Hills, which I actually have never visited, and he spoke about the first nations teepee rings, arrowheads and other cultural objects there. He also expressed concerns about the provisions for law enforcement within Bill C-23 and the enforcement capabilities covered.

If the Neutral Hills or areas like it were a national historic sites, would we not want to have appropriate designation for the protections of the objects within it? Would the member be willing to support the much needed measures in Bill C-23 for law enforcement to help protect the treasures found within federally owned national historic sites, protections that currently do not exist?

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I spoke at length to this in my speech, including with many references to the historic sites and monuments across my constituency, but I think the key here is that we need to make sure we get it right. Neutral Hills is a great example. There is agriculture ongoing in that place that actually has a significant connection to the land. In fact, there are some ranches that were established shortly after the disappearance of the buffalo from the plains. As well, there is responsible resource development.

With the mechanisms regarding enforcement and the ability for extraordinary powers to be vested in the hands of the Minister of Environment, we have to be able to do it right, because the last thing I think that member and I would want is for the heavy hand of government to displace anything economically or prohibit the collaborative work that needs to be done to ensure the preservation of historic sites, whether that work is done at different levels of government. I did not have the chance to get into the specifics of all the collaboration needed between different levels of government here, but we have to make sure we get it right.

I am concerned about wide sweeping powers being vested in the hands of a minister of the Crown without there being appropriate guardrails in place, and I hope the construction of those guardrails would be something the member would support.

● (1225)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Battle River—Crowfoot for his speech.

Government Orders

I want to come back to the issue of the additional powers over contraventions, limits on the right of passage, searches and seizures that the member talked about. I have a two-part question.

First, I want to confirm that he does not necessarily want to do away with the part of Bill C-23 that makes it possible to take such actions, but rather just set parameters on them. If so, can he give me an example of an amendment he would like to see in committee that would set parameters on the minister's sweeping powers?

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, after looking through the bill, I think one of the very clear examples of an appropriate path forward for amendments would be to ensure that there are clear guardrails set. This would ensure that, when it comes to enforcement, there would be appropriate enforcement, which would also be guided by the dynamics that exist within a particular region, working with other levels of government and ensuring that we do not have the ability for activism that may have a negative impact on the local communities. They often rely on the lands, monuments and institutions associated with national historic sites, which is why we have to get it right.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, seeking truth is an essential component in ensuring justice for indigenous communities that have suffered because of the Indian residential schools. I would like to hear from my colleague his thoughts on ways he believes the knowledge of elders and the knowledge keepers could be used to conserve indigenous history across the country.

Also, maybe he could speak about the important roles of elders, survivors and their families and how they can be incorporated into the Historic Sites and Monuments Board to ensure that the genocide at Indian residential schools is never forgotten.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I did not have a chance, because of course there is so much that could be discussed on this topic, but when I worked for former Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall and the Saskatchewan Party government, one of the things I had the opportunity to do was work with the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport to see the cemetery that was associated with the former site of the Regina Indian Industrial School designated.

I spoke about it before in this place, but that very powerful process was certainly impactful for me. The preservation of the history of that particular site, and I know there are many others across Canada, ensures we have those real conversations. It also ensures that we use, as in that case, the provincial historic sites registry to keep that history preserved, which ensures those stories are kept alive, so we can have those conversations today and they can be remembered in the future.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in his speech on the national historic sites and monuments act, my colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot made mention of the importance of teaching and celebrating our Canadian history, not burying it or cancelling the less than savoury characters in our history.

I think of John A. Macdonald, a very flawed individual, but a man who had a great vision for a Canada coast to coast, and I won-

der if my colleague could comment on the importance of teaching Canadian history from a balanced perspective.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker, we need to have a realistic and holistic conversation about our nation's history. I referenced a number of historical places and monuments across my constituency and a few events, including the story I referenced briefly of the Rocky Mountain Rangers in the book I am currently reading, *The Cowboy Cavalry: The Story of the Rocky Mountain Rangers*.

We have an example here of where the history of Canada is complex. There are the good, the bad and the ugly, as they say. We have to have real conversations about our past. We cannot erase part of it, because that does not help us to learn from those past mistakes. It does no justice to the indigenous peoples who have suffered abuses under our system, and no justice to those, for example Ukrainians, who faced internment during world wars.

We have to have a real and honest conversation about Canadian history, and that does not have anything to do with tearing down statues and covering up plaques. To truly acknowledge our history, we have to be taught the whole story. I find it very, very concerning that there are left-leaning activists across our country who, instead of having that holistic and realistic conversation about the history of our country, would rather cover it up and focus on a narrow view of activism as opposed to seeing that the whole perspective is taught.

It is absolutely essential, and I hope that when it comes to conversations around Bill C-23 and the whole spectre of what are national historic sites, we truly are able to have that full conversation that is absolutely necessary.

• (1230)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would ask for the consent of the House to share my time with the member for Drummond.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Does the hon. member have the consent of the House to split her time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois will support this bill, which is clearly an opportunity for the government to kick-start its intentions of reconciliation with first nations and to implement some of the specific recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Bill C-23 creates three new positions on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada for first nations, Métis and Inuit representatives, thus improving the integration of indigenous history, heritage values and memory practices into Canada's history and national heritage.

Bill C-23 is also in keeping with Canada's desire to honour its international commitments under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 15.1 of that declaration guarantees indigenous peoples "the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information". It also honours article 15.2.

The Bloc Québécois has been an early supporter of this UN declaration in terms of providing information and education on first nations traditions and cultures. As a strong advocate of a nation-to-nation relationship between Quebec, Ottawa and the indigenous nations, we are also working with them to strengthen and guarantee their inherent rights. We will continue our work to ensure that the federal government fully implements the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in areas of federal responsibility. Giving indigenous peoples an additional voice in the reconciliation process is fully consistent with our party's position.

Three main values guided the framework of Bill C-23: inclusivity, sustainability and transparency. The board will now have one representative from each of the following: first nations, Inuit and Métis. Indigenous knowledge will now be a source of information to guide the board in its recommendations, along with community, scientific and academic knowledge. The inclusiveness of this proposal can only be commended.

The principle of sustainability comes across in the protection and conservation of historic places, including the "mandatory heritage evaluation of buildings that are 50 years of age and administered by federal authorities" and "improved access to information about historic places through a public register that supports decision-making and public interest". That is set out in the bill.

There are deemed persons of historic significance and deemed historic events, as well as deemed historic places and classified buildings. Bill C-23 would amend a number of acts, including the Parks Canada Agency Act as follows:

Paragraphs (l) and (m) of the fourth paragraph of the preamble...are replaced by the following:

(l) to maintain ecological integrity as a prerequisite to the use of national parks,

Obviously that is very important to us.

(l.1) to maintain commemorative integrity and heritage value as a prerequisite to the use of historic places...

I will give a very concrete example of the use of an historic place: the Ottawa Hospital's future Civic Campus, which is very near here. There was no shortage of contradictions, when it comes to talking about protecting historic heritage sites with great historic and ecological value that are unquestionably very important to thousands of Ottawans and certainly to indigenous groups in the region.

Let me ask a question: Is there a real protection mechanism for places and sites designated as "heritage" or any other combination of related words, such as "deemed", "historic" or "of historic significance"?

Ottawa needs a hospital. There are criteria for choosing an optimal site that respects multiple factors, and the National Capital

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Commission is seized with proposing federal sites from the catalogue of sites under its management—

• (1235)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Order. The member for Saint-Jean on a point of order.

Ms. Christine Normandin: Mr. Speaker, it is about respect in the House. I can hear someone talking on the phone right now in the government lobby, and it is rather distracting. It makes it hard to follow my colleague's speech. I simply want to raise this so we can continue in an orderly and disciplined manner.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): I thank the hon. member for Saint-Jean for this important point of order. I believe they got the message because the noise seems to have stopped.

The hon. member for Repentigny may continue her speech.

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I was just talking about the National Capital Commission, or NCC. It spent six months working with the current hospital and stakeholders to develop a set of criteria. They evaluated 12 sites and came up with a 53-acre site that included surplus federal buildings at Tunney's Pasture.

The City of Ottawa appeared ready to accept this proposal, but instead it did a 180, without an environmental, transportation and health impact study. The City of Ottawa prefers the Central Experimental Farm site, from which it has already appropriated 40 acres, and the pristine nature of the 13 acres appropriated from the beautiful Queen Juliana Park, a memorial site honouring the more than 7,000 Canadian soldiers who lost their lives on the beaches of Normandy during the Second World War.

The sudden change of site to the Central Experimental Farm meant that building lots worth \$3 billion to \$4 billion became available on the site offered by the NCC. The rush of developers and the property taxes promised to the city immediately jump to mind.

More than 10,000 people signed a petition to demand the cancellation of construction permits for the hospital and obtain a response from the City of Ottawa, but to no avail. No forest should be cut down to make room for a hospital. Urban green space is essential for people's health and well-being.

The NCC rejected the Central Experimental Farm as a site for a new hospital in its 2016 report that was more than 240 pages long. The following year it asked that the farm be left intact. The 2016 report said, and I quote, "there are multiple heritage considerations, including intrusion into the present boundary of the CEF National Historic Site and proximity to the Rideau Canal UNESCO World Heritage Site and several Federal Heritage Buildings."

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The hospital apparently claimed needing 28 acres of land and more than 3,500 parking spots, which would require 500 trees to be felled on the Sir John Carling site. In an open letter to the NCC two Ottawa experts said, “Hundreds of trees will need to be cut down. Yes, we counted but we stopped at 500!”

During the consultations in 2016 for construction of the new hospital, Parks Canada pointed out that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board had designated the farm as a national historic site and emphasized its place in the cultural landscape. The agency also indicated that this heritage designation is comprehensive and universal. It applies not only to the heritage buildings, but also to the more utilitarian buildings that support them, the ornamental gardens and other landscaped grounds, and the outdoor research fields.

The NCC looked into its crystal ball and planned ahead until 2067. It had this to say in a 2017 report: “In 2067, the national institutions will...represent Canada and Canadians to the world, and contribute significantly to the identity, pride and signature of the Capital.... The Central Experimental Farm, established in 1886, is a unique working farm in the heart of an urban region. The Experimental Farm is open to the public throughout the year, along with the adjacent 26-hectare Arboretum.”

Here is another quote: “This central asset of the Capital's urban green space network contributes to biodiversity and reinforces the link from the Rideau Canal to the Ottawa River ecosystems.”

I have not even touched on the symbolism of Queen Juliana Park, or what the site means to the Anishinabe and Algonquin indigenous people who celebrate many festive activities central to their identity. How is that for reconciliation? Did the sponsor of Bill C-23 know that communities had asked to be heard by federal authorities on this bill but were never properly received?

The Central Experimental Farm was designated as a historic site in 1998, but that designation is meaningless because the government decided to pass the property on to the Ottawa Civic Hospital when it could have shown some integrity and acted in a manner consistent with its own narrative and regulations. Perhaps the government is proposing a weaker, more malleable law with provisions that can be secretly revoked in accordance with the political demands of provincial or municipal governments by using empty words and concepts.

How did we get to this point? How is it possible that Canadian Heritage, a proper department responsible for protecting national historic sites, ignored the NCC's recommendation to build the new campus at Tunney's Pasture?

● (1240)

That recommendation was based on public consultation and multiple studies. There is no need to ask me whether I support Canadian heritage, because that is not what I am talking about.

Here is an example that illustrates the following. It is all well and good for the government to sing the praises of its plan to save biodiversity and green spaces with the much-talked-about goal of protecting 30% by 2030. It is all well and good for government members to talk about reconciliation, sometimes even with a tear in their eye and to introduce bills that are supposed to protect, strengthen,

support, integrate, repair and consolidate. However, as we can see from the examples of the Central Experimental Farm and Queen Juliana Park, Canadian Heritage is pandering on this issue.

This shows that we must always ask *cui bono*, or who stands to gain? We are witnessing some fine art, the art of subterfuge and deception.

[English]

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hear the passion in my colleague's intervention. I have had the chance to visit many historic sites within the province of Quebec, and I heard her say that the Bloc will be supporting this legislation, which would give us much-needed protections.

I really would like to commend the member for using the Central Experimental Farm as an example. There has been huge controversy over this and huge impacts related to a national historic site. I would like the member's further thoughts on the mechanisms within Bill C-23 that would help prevent those types of scenarios in the future, to make sure that we do not lose the commemorative integrity of national historic sites, not only in Ottawa or Quebec, but in places across Canada. If the member could expand on how Bill C-23 would help with that, I would greatly appreciate it.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I asked him a question this morning after his speech and I will pick up where we left off. Yes, there has been progress. There is going to be a public registry, there are going to be clear guidelines for changes, experts will be consulted and there will even be possible fines.

However, when we read Bill C-23, we wonder if it is enough. When a developer arrives with money, with the possibility of paying millions of dollars in property taxes, what will be left of this? The NCC ended up folding and fell for the madness of the Central Experimental Farm situation. Will Bill C-23 be strong enough? That is the question we have, but the Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of this bill.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am going to ask the member about the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's report in 2017, which clearly outlines a framework for implementing the importance of recognizing indigenous heritage. I wonder if the member agrees that more needs to be done to ensure that indigenous heritage is also protected in this bill.

● (1245)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

When indigenous heritage started to be recognized, that was an important step. It is super important to conserve indigenous heritage and conserve all heritage. In his speech this morning, the member said that history should never be forgotten. We subscribe to that philosophy. Whether for indigenous peoples or for others, history must never be forgotten and we must protect heritage.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows the Bloc Québécois is proud that its purpose here is not to oppose, but to propose. I would like my colleague to comment on proposals she would like to see the committee debate when it studies this bill if passed at second reading.

Once this bill passes second reading, what would she like the committee to debate? Are there any amendments or improvements that come to mind?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

Yes, we do have some suggestions. This is good because I am a member of the committee that will be studying the bill. What we really want to see is some assurance that the integrity of historic sites will be preserved as much as possible. That is what matters. We have to make sure nobody can give in to developers.

This might be an opportunity to create an urban park. Recently, the committee heard that Parks Canada would like to create urban parks. Why not? We want to make absolutely sure that developers cannot take over bits and pieces of sites. Right now, proponents are coming forward, and the rules are inconsistent. As things stand, these people can chip away at everything. We want to make sure everything is watertight so that can no longer happen either on land or at sea.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by saying what an honour it is to speak after my colleague from Repentigny, who shines every time she speaks. She humbles us. She makes us realize how much more work we have to do and that there is still a long way to go. I congratulate her on her speech and thank her for sharing her time with me.

I want to say that it is also a privilege for me to deliver my first speech before you, Mr. Speaker, distinguished among the distinguished.

I am also pleased to speak to Bill C-23, which touches on a subject that interests me greatly and that concerns me. It deals with heritage, heritage protection and heritage preservation. First and foremost, and we will come back to this because it is perhaps a little lacking, it talks about the recognition of heritage.

Bill C-23, an act respecting places, persons and events of national historic significance or national interest, archaeological resources and cultural and natural heritage, encompasses many things.

Real concerns pertaining to this issue of preserving cultural heritage are emerging and drawing attention around the world. Earlier this fall, in late September, I had the opportunity to take part in Mondiacult, UNESCO's major conference on culture. I took the opportunity to invite the Minister of Canadian Heritage and some other colleagues—or maybe it was the other way around, I do not remember exactly who invited whom. In any case, Mondiacult was a

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fantastic conference, bringing together 150 countries that unanimously signed a declaration. One of the things the declaration said was that the text adopted by the states defines a set of cultural rights that should be taken into account in public policies—and this is very important—ranging from the social and economic rights of artists, to artistic freedom, to the right of indigenous communities to safeguard and transmit their ancestral knowledge, and to the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage.

My colleague from Repentigny, whose praises I sang earlier, said herself that recognizing indigenous heritage is a first step. I am quite happy to see that Bill C-23 takes that step. I hope that this step will lead to others, because we still have a long way to go.

I must also recognize the work done leading up to Mondiacult, this huge UNESCO conference I was talking about. There were months of preparation by the officials of all these countries, organizations and stakeholders from different sectors related to culture. A lot of preparation was done and it was clearly a great success because the declaration was adopted unanimously in the end. A few months later, we have before us this bill, which includes themes that were highlighted at this major Mondiacult conference. We can say for once that the government is walking the talk. I want to recognize that.

Clearly, UNESCO's commitment was motivated by the urgency to protect vulnerable heritage. There was an awakening as a result of the many conflicts around the world over the past few years, and also terrorism, as well as wars like the one we are seeing with Russian aggression in Ukraine. There was a realization that special attention must be paid to certain heritage treasures that have become extremely vulnerable as a result of these conflicts.

I am talking about conflicts, but we can also talk about climate change, another topic that is very important to my colleague from Repentigny. Many of these historic sites that are global heritage treasures are at serious risk because of climate change. There has been a heightened awareness of this over the past few years. People have realized that if we do not take action, if we do not do anything about this, we are going to lose them when they could have been saved if we had done more sooner.

Obviously, this realization uncovered a host of factors that reveal that our cultural and heritage properties are in jeopardy. One of these factors is trafficking. There is an appetite for smugglers, for dishonest people. What is more, there is a clientele for this, which is rather sad. Just recently, nine artefacts from Petra, Jordan, were recovered. Some of them were from the neolithic era. These are priceless items.

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• (1250)

One would think that smugglers went to Jordan to steal those artifacts and then sold them to collectors of illicit, illegal and rare objects. One would also think that such things really only happen in a few banana republics or in some kind of dictatorship, but that is not at all the case. These artifacts were found in the United States.

That is something that caught the attention of stakeholders at the conference and study days that took place in Mexico. The question was asked what could be done, as a country, to combat this problem, and the desire to do so was there. Once again, I think that Bill C-23 is a small step toward finding a solution to protect our heritage properties and historic treasures.

Bill C-23 meets the expectations of indigenous nations as formulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It proposes a new Historic Sites and Monuments Act, 1985. I like that. It also proposes to restructure the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada by clarifying powers that are still symbolic and clarifying the ability to legislate on offences committed in various national parks. I also think that is a good step forward.

It will come as no surprise to anyone that Quebec is ahead of the curve when it comes to heritage protection. Indeed, in Quebec, heritage buildings are protected by the cultural property act and are listed in the Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec. Municipalities play a role in protecting heritage as well. This means that Quebec has given itself the means to protect heritage properties and monuments, not just to designate them as such.

Meanwhile, in Ottawa, they receive a designation, they are recognized, they receive some protection from a few rules, but it seems to me that we could put a little more teeth into how we take action.

Things are not perfect in Quebec. That is why I say that we must not let our guard down. Often, people still have to be militant and protest against the possible demolition of an old heritage house because, even though it may be magnificent, the owners do not have the means or the resources to maintain it.

I will make another aside. Members may call me “Mr. Aside” if they want, because that seems to be a habit with me.

I remember some extremely interesting conversations I had with Robert Julien, the mayor of Saint-Guillaume in the riding of Drummond. He cares deeply about preserving Quebec's villages. I know this happens across Canada, but, in Quebec, there is a distinct identity associated with villages. It is all about the old houses, the streets, the way these villages are built. Mr. Julien says that protecting a building is all well and good, but that we also have to protect the integrity of these villages because they tell the story of our past.

This is not something we do naturally. We are not in the habit. It is not in our nature to communicate, to bear witness, to share knowledge of our history and our heritage and to pass it on to future generations. It is something we have to learn to do, and we are, gradually. We designate commemorative days, days set aside for remembering this, that or the other thing. We remember that we have to remember, so we do, and then we move on. Those days need to mean something. We have to find other ways to convey that aware-

ness of our heritage, of our historic places and monuments. That happens through education, through teaching, through sharing our history. We have to get our children interested and we have to get future generations interested in the importance of preserving these remnants of our past.

Let me share a short anecdote. I went to summer camp when I was young. At the camp, there was a Native American totem pole. The totem pole had obviously been carved into by young campers over the years. The camp got a new director who was outraged by this, and rightly so. Instead of lecturing the kids, instead of punishing them and trying to protect the totem pole, he brought in an elder from an indigenous community. He was from a Huron-Wendat nation, I remember. He came and told the kids at the camp about the significance of first nations history and the ways first nations shared their history. The totem pole, which is actually a tradition that comes more from nations in western Canada, is one such way. I looked into it again a few years ago and spoke with the camp director. He told me that from then on, every year, he invited an elder from a first nation—it was the same one for several years—to come and speak to the kids. The totem pole has never been vandalized since.

• (1255)

It is by communicating, educating and teaching that we will one day have heritage assets that will have the respect and reverence they deserve.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague from Drummond for his very interesting speech.

I would like him to tell us about the financial aspect of protecting different sites. It is one thing to designate them, but they must then be looked after, maintained, improved and preserved, and the problem is that, often, there is not enough money for that.

Would my colleague like to take a closer look at this issue when the bill is studied in committee after second reading stage?

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saint-Jean for her brilliant question, once again.

I think we must give ourselves the means to match our ambitions. If we decide that it is important to preserve heritage assets and places, we must provide the means to do so properly. How will this be done? Will this require a better education program, as I was proposing?

I am not necessarily speaking about teaching in schools, but that would be a great place to start. We will definitely need to inject money into these programs to ensure that our efforts to preserve and protect these sites continue to improve.

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[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recognize this legislation as something that means a great deal to Canadians, because we value our heritage. When we think of historical markers, we reflect on our heritage. There is so much we need to appreciate. Even though this legislation might not address all aspects of our national symbols and sites, it is a very strong, positive step forward.

Can my colleague provide his thoughts on how important it is to have a rich understanding of our heritage?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Winnipeg North for his question. I think he should remember today as the day when I agreed with him almost all across the board.

Yes, it is a good step forward. Yes, it is an important bill for heritage preservation. Yes, we have some absolutely fantastic sites in Quebec and Canada. There are many places, monuments and buildings that are worthy of our attention and worth taking care of and protecting in any way possible. It is a good step forward.

Is there work that needs to be done to improve this bill? Yes, of course. I think there is room for improvement in every bill. When the bill is examined in committee, we will have the opportunity to discuss it with various stakeholders and experts. I think that we have something worthwhile and important here, and we will be ready and willing to make it even better, if that is possible.

● (1300)

[English]

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech on the management of historic sites in Canada. We have a federal government that is having a lot of trouble these days just providing basic services to its citizens. Immigration and passports are a couple of examples, as is control of our border with the United States.

What would my colleague think about a new bureaucracy being created to manage historic sites? Would there be benefits to it?

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, it is always too far for people who are going nowhere. That is a well-known fact.

Yes, there are many shortcomings that the Conservatives and the Bloc try to point out. Just look at passport management, border management, immigration management. It is an utter failure.

Does that mean that we should do nothing for other things that are just as important in the long term for our history?

I think that the creation of an organization that will ensure the protection of our monuments, places, sites and historical heritage deserves our attention, despite the problems that currently exist in the system.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I realize that the member did not speak much to indigenous issues, but I will ask this question quickly.

Can the member speak to his party's experience with first nations, Inuit and Métis communities and the ongoing efforts or struggles they have with preserving and protecting indigenous heritage?

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): The hon. member for Drummond has 20 seconds for a brief response.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I have 20 seconds to answer a question that I would like to spend 20 minutes on, but I will try to be quick.

I would say this to my hon. colleague: I think it is time for this government and all governments to withdraw from issues that pertain only to indigenous nations. Indigenous nations should be given the means to preserve their heritage, which is very important.

I always hesitate to enter into this debate because I think that we have no business doing this. The first peoples, the first nations, should be given the authority, the responsibility and the resources they need to protect their heritage.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will receive unanimous consent for me to split my time this afternoon.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House to split his time?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Nunavut.

I am happy to rise today to speak to Bill C-23, the historic places of Canada act, which will modernize the Historic Sites and Monuments Act. In short, this new act will update the protection and conservation framework for historic places and give indigenous people a role in determining those places.

Canadians value our heritage places and the role they play in our collective history and culture, but for most of Canadian history, the history of indigenous peoples has almost been entirely absent from our historic sites and monuments. This bill takes a first step to include indigenous peoples in the designation and development of those sites.

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While the member for Nunavut will expand more fully on this issue, I would like to bring up two examples of important indigenous sites from my riding that illustrate this.

There are two provincial parks in the South Okanagan that are popular camping spots but also happen to be important cultural sites for the Syilx people.

Unlike most non-indigenous historic sites, these sites do not have a building to mark them but have been important gathering places for millennia.

One is swiws Provincial Park. It is a beautiful narrow peninsula that almost cuts the Osoyoos Lake in two. The nsylxcən name means a shallow place where one can cross the lake on foot or by horse.

The name swiws was altered by the first settler justice of the peace, Judge Haynes, to Osoyoos, and that has become the name of the local town and of the lake.

Legend has it that Judge Haynes added the “o” in front of the name because of his Irish heritage.

Ironically, the long peninsula took on the name Haynes Point and then became Haynes Point Provincial Park. In 2015, the name of the park was changed to swiws Provincial Park, and the park is now managed and operated by the Osoyoos Indian Band.

A similar situation is found a little further north, at Okanagan Falls. This site, at a rocky rapids where the Okanagan River flows out of Skaha Lake, has been a sacred gathering site for the Syilx people for thousands of years, as it was a place where sockeye and chinook salmon were caught as they swam upstream to spawn.

Like swiws Park, which I mentioned previously, this became a provincial park, called Okanagan Falls Provincial Park, but in 2015 it too was renamed, and it has since been managed by the Osoyoos Indian Band as well. It is now known by the nsylxcən name s̓x̓w̓nitk̓w Provincial Park, and that name means “little falls”. That signifies a connection to Kettle Falls, in Washington state, on the Kettle River.

The nsylxcən name for Kettle Falls is s̓x̓w̓nitk̓w, which means “big falls”. These two falls were two of the most important fishing sites for the Okanagan Nation's traditional territory.

Kettle Falls was flooded by the Grand Coulee Dam almost a century ago, and while that was done in the United States, it reflects the complete disregard for sites that were critically important to indigenous people in the settler development of North America.

The campsite at s̓x̓w̓nitk̓w Provincial Park is closed annually on the third weekend of September for the Okanagan Nation Alliance's Salmon Feast. The event raises awareness of Okanagan history and culture, as well as the Okanagan Nation's effort to revitalize and restore sockeye salmon numbers in the Okanagan River.

Everyone is welcome to attend the celebration, and I heartily recommend it. It is a wonderful celebration.

There is one official national historic site in my riding, and that is the Rossland Miners' Union Hall. This building was opened in 1898 at the height of the mining boom in West Kootenay. Local

miners had created the first Canadian local of the Western Federation of Miners in 1895, and each donated a day's pay to create the hall.

That local went on to advance many of the first labour laws in British Columbia and Canada, laws that brought in the five-day workweek, the eight-hour workday and laws enforcing safe workplaces and the first workers' compensation act.

Continued unrest in the mining camps after the hall was built resulted in the Canadian government's sending Roger Clute, a prominent Toronto lawyer, to Rossland in 1899. He reported back that compulsory arbitration would be less effective than conciliatory measures and, after another trip to Rossland, his reports led to the federal Conciliation Act of 1900, which helped create the Department of Labour and the Canadian system of industrial relations.

● (1305)

Rossland helped build our system of labour relations across the country, and the miners' hall was at the centre of that activity. It is even rumoured that Joe Hill, the legendary labour activist from the United States, lived in the attic of the hall while hiding out from American authorities, so the Rossland Union Miners' Hall can be truly held up as one of the most important historic sites in Canada, and it still plays an important role in the community life of Rossland and the surrounding areas.

It fell into disuse after the mines closed in the late 1920s, and it needed a lot of renovations to bring it back to light. More recent renovations began in 2015, and initial attempts to find federal funding to aid in that were unsuccessful, though I am happy to report that the most recent renovations received funding from all levels of government. In 2020, the Rossland miners' hall was designated a national historic site, and I was very happy to be there for that ceremony.

I wanted to tell the story of the miners' hall to make it clear that these historic sites need ongoing maintenance and renovations, and the sites that are not owned by the federal government, like the miners' hall, need this just as much as those that are.

In 2017, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development recommended that the annual federal cost-sharing funding for historic sites be increased to a minimum of \$10 million annually, but only \$2 million is available for the next cycle. In 2018, the Auditor General reported that no resources are allocated to new national historic sites, and that these precious resources are literally falling apart. We need to do better to maintain the heritage that Canadians cherish.

I would like to finish with one more example of an historic place in Canada that as yet has no federal designation or protection, and that is the SS *Sicamous* in Penticton. The SS *Sicamous* is a historic paddlewheeler steamship that plied Okanagan Lake in the early 1900s, providing a vital link up and down the valley before roads were built. It is permanently docked at Penticton, along with the stern saloon of the SS *Okanagan*, an earlier vessel that actually brought my grandparents down the lake when they immigrated from England to Canada in 1910. This marine history park has also added the SS *Naramata*, an old steam tug, and another historic CPR diesel tug that pushed train barges on Okanagan Lake early in my lifetime.

These historic ships are a big part of the historic heritage of our country and deserve national designation. Like the situation with the Rossland miners' hall, maintenance and renovation of these ships is very expensive. There is a large, very talented and enthusiastic group of volunteers who work on them every day, but they need the funding for materials to help with their work.

This bill is long overdue, and the NDP will be supporting it, but we need to do more to ensure that indigenous voices and indigenous sites take their rightful place in our national historic places. We need to ensure that adequate funding is available to save these precious places for the future generations of Canada.

• (1310)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, understanding and appreciating Canada's rich and diverse heritage is so very important, and that is what this bill is all about. I appreciate the fact that the member talked about the significance of indigenous people and paid respect in terms of recognizing the need for name changes. I suspect that same principle could be applied in many different municipalities, urban areas and so forth.

One of the things I would not want to overlook is that there have been other significant historic moments, the *Komagata Maru*, for example, where a boatful of people who were predominantly Punjabi or from a South Asian community was rejected and sent away, and the outcome and impact that had on society. Not everything is something that was of great benefit, but we need to understand and appreciate our heritage.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on how important it is for us to have a true reflection of our history that we can recognize through things like reconciliation and historic monuments.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, I would agree that we need to not only celebrate the parts of our history that make us proud, but also remember and learn from the parts of our history that we are not so proud of, that we may be ashamed of, so, yes, we have to remember incidents like that of the *Komagata Maru* and other incidents from our history, and we should perhaps have historic sites or plaques that teach us about those places and events.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Government Orders

We just heard him say that we need to remember the darker moments in our history. Sometimes, there is some degree of politicization involved when we want to protect something. We were talking about workers' rights in the case of the Rossland Miner's Union Hall. It took time for funding to be granted to protect and promote it.

In the future, should we not find a way, if not in this bill then in another, to ensure that there is no politicization of the historic sites we want to protect, so that all sites are protected, not just certain ones depending on which party is in government?

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Mr. Speaker, again, I would agree with the member for Saint-Jean that we have to remember these incidents and events in our history.

The Miners' Union Hall represents the growth of labour relations in a Canada that was a very dark place in the 1800s, when those miners first came to Rossland. They made it a better place. That history must and should be known and celebrated. Whether things will change in the future around that or any of these other places and events, these historic sites and places should be marked and maintained so that we can learn about them.

In the future, I do not know how any of these might be politicized. We see some of that happening now, especially with statues and things like that. However, we must know and remember our history, so that we are not doomed to repeat it.

• (1315)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, Chief Ken Watts waamiis from Tseshaht First Nation, one of the Nuuchah-nulth nations, has been advocating for funding directly to first nations, to enable their museums to repatriate artifacts and honour their culture. There is lore and there are stories and oral histories in those intellectual artifacts.

Could the member speak about how important it is to get those resources to those nations as part of reconciliation?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I totally agree. The Osoyoos Indian Band, which I mentioned, are a prime example of that. They have built the Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre, which does exactly that. I am very proud of that centre being in my riding.

Government Orders

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I rise today with fond memories, having attended Ataguttaaluk High School in Igloodik in my riding. I send out a special thanks to the Igloodik District Education Authority, Igloodik elders, Nunavut Research Institute, the late Graham Rowley, Susan Rowley, Carolyn MacDonald and John MacDonald. These amazing groups and individuals delivered an archaeology credit course that contributed to my high school diploma. I share my speech today, realizing how investments for youth can have lasting impacts. *Qujalivakka*. I am so grateful to them.

Bill C-23, an act respecting places, persons and events of national historic significance or national interest, archaeological resources and cultural and natural heritage is of particular importance to indigenous peoples in Canada.

I am glad to see, in Bill C-23, that roles are provided for indigenous peoples in determining historic places. It is great to see that the bill responds to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's call to action 79. Specifically, the bill would add three members to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, from first nations, Métis and Inuit groups. In addition, it would compel Parks Canada to incorporate indigenous knowledge into the designation and commemoration of historic sites.

Unfortunately, what the bill would do is not enough. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action set a framework, and this framework should have been used in ensuring a better legislation.

The TRC call to action 79 specifically reads:

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal organizations, and the arts community, to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration. This would include, but not be limited to:

- i. Amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act to include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis representation on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and its Secretariat.
- ii. Revising the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.
- iii. Developing and implementing a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canada's history.

In 2017, the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation raised concerns about the state of conservation of the 17 remaining residential schools and said it was urgent for the government to respond to call to action 79. It is unclear to me what has happened since 2017, and whether this bill addresses those concerns.

The Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's 2017 report entitled "Preserving Canada's Heritage: The Foundation For Tomorrow" provided clear recommendations, which I will speak to in more detail later.

During its study, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development learned that Canada is the only G7 country that has not passed legislation to protect historic places and archaeological resources under its jurisdiction. Unfortunately, alongside many other recommendations not implemented by this government and previous governments, this is not a new recommendation. In 2003, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada also recom-

mended that the federal government strengthen the legal framework built for heritage in Canada.

• (1320)

The committee I mentioned earlier examined the issue of preserving indigenous heritage places. Unsurprisingly, the committee found that indigenous peoples define their heritage in a more holistic manner than the western model. As a result, solutions currently used to protect heritage places must be adapted in order to preserve indigenous heritage places.

The committee amplified the need to implement TRC calls to action 72 to 75, which create the process to commemorate the indigenous children who never returned to their families. Canada's heritage includes genocide of indigenous peoples. As such, incorporating these calls to action is just as important as implementing call to action number 79. Indigenous peoples should be able to protect their own heritage. Indigenous-led heritage would involve coordination among communities, elders and knowledge keepers.

I will conclude by entering into the record recommendation 17 from the committee's report.

Recommendation 17 of the report also recommended that:

The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada revise the policies, criteria, and practices of the National Program of Historical Commemoration to integrate Indigenous history, heritage values, and memory practices into Canada's national heritage and history.

Parks Canada develop and implement a national heritage plan and strategy for commemorating and, where appropriate, conserving residential school sites, the history and legacy of residential schools, and the contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canada's history.

The federal government, in collaboration with Residential School Survivors, commission and install a publicly accessible, highly visible, Residential Schools National Monument in the city of Ottawa to honour Survivors and all the children who were lost to their families and communities.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the important aspects that maybe has not been noted strongly enough is that within this legislation there would be a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action, and the member is so correct in terms of the general assessment in regard to the importance of reconciliation. It is important to recognize that this legislation could go a long way, in terms of ensuring there is a great deal of truth that needs to be said. Protecting and encouraging that particular industry would be healthy for all of us.

I am wondering if she could just provide her thoughts in regard to that educational component.

• (1325)

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqagtittiji*, I do recognize that TRC call to action 79 would be implemented, but there are also calls to action 72 to 75, which would not be implemented. Given Canada's heritage of genocide against indigenous peoples and trying to hide for years that indigenous children were buried and have grave sites next to residential schools, this needs to be part of that education. It would help to make sure more Canadians understand why it is so important for reconciliation to happen in this time.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Nunavut for her speech.

I hope she will forgive me if I misunderstood something. My question has to do with a point she mentioned that I thought was a somewhat intangible piece of first nations heritage. One of the things she mentioned was genocide, which she seemed to want to add to the current bill. However, as I understand it, the bill is more about physical sites that are owned by Parks Canada and other organizations.

I would like to know if I understood her correctly. Does the member want to broaden the scope of the current bill to cover a more intangible form of heritage? Should that be addressed in a different bill? I would like to hear her comments on this possible distinction, and I would like to know whether I have understood the essence of what she is saying.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqagtittiji*, as mentioned in the committee's report in 2017, indigenous peoples do have a different way of interpreting heritage, and it is not just about physical locations or monuments. It is one thing to ensure that indigenous people are added to the membership of boards. There will need to be more to make sure that indigenous heritage is actually incorporated in all of Canada's heritage.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, going back to some of the recommendations by the fine member of Parliament for Nunavut, and certainly brought up by the Bloc, we have different understandings of what a monument is. One of the improvements that can be made to the bill is ensuring it reflects greater diversity in our understandings, even of what "physical" is: inanimate and animate objects.

Can my hon. colleague please respond to that recommendation?

Ms. Lori Idlout: *Uqagtittiji*, that is a huge question. I remember being taught by Professor John Borrows, who is an amazing legal scholar. I hope the people in Parliament look up John Borrows and the great work he does. He talks about indigenous laws and how animate and inanimate laws are also monuments. Stuff like that should be incorporated into this kind of legislation.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what a great way this is to wind down government business at the end of the week.

Once again, we have before us legislation of a substantial nature, which says a lot about how important our heritage is as a nation. We have an infrastructure in that regard from coast to coast to

Private Members' Business

coast, and it is important that we recognize our history. Whether they are parks, monuments or whatever they may be, they speak a great deal not only for our current generation but for future generations.

I will wait for the next time the bill is called to conclude my remarks.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC) moved that Bill S-224, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague across the way. This bill is indeed a great way to end the week. Today I rise to speak to Bill S-224, a non-partisan bill that passed unanimously in the Senate on October 6.

I thank Senator Salma Ataullahjan for her collaborative effort and success in getting this bill through the Senate.

I thank the member for St. Albert for speaking today, for his support and for seconding this bill, as well as the member for Peace River—Westlock for his unending commitment to ending human trafficking. God bless him.

I want to thank an amazing community of supporters, victims, moms and dads, survivors and workers, including Lynda Harlos, Jocelyn Siciliano, Jasmine DeFina, Vanessa Falcon, Kim Miller-Sands, Lillian Fisher, Donald Igbokwe, the Durham Regional Police Service human trafficking unit, and Ms. Holly Wood who is here today.

These individuals and many more like them have been infected by a seemingly contagious affliction, which is a desire to do good and to make a difference in the lives of those most vulnerable victims in our communities. These people are heroes, and they are saving lives every single day with the work that they do.

This indeed is a rare opportunity and a rare occasion. When an MP has the opportunity to bring both Houses together for a common cause, it is truly an honour. The bill is a seemingly small bill. It is less than one page. It represents a small change, but a small change that will make a big difference in the lives of so many vulnerable people, people denied justice and people denied their human dignity.

Private Members' Business

This modern-day slavery initiative was brought to my attention by Darla, a survivor, friend and one of my constituents. As a father, her story motivated me to look for real solutions to this problem. At its heart, Bill S-224 aims to align the Canadian Criminal Code's definition of trafficking in persons with that of the 2000 Palermo protocol. Importantly, this would remove the unfair burden placed on exploited individuals who, under current Canadian law, must prove that there was an element of fear in their abuse in order to obtain a conviction in court.

I want members to pause and to think about this for a moment. A crime is committed. There is no debate whether the acts have occurred, yet under current Canadian law the victim is required to prove fear in order for a conviction to occur.

To emphasize the absurdity of this situation, let us apply this requirement to another crime. Imagine that someone I know comes up and stabs me in the back. In politics that term is used rather loosely, but indeed this crime does occur in reality. How would I prove fear in that situation? Would the offender be convicted if there was absolute proof of the crime, but fear could not be proven? I have to ask. Why do we treat this particular crime of human trafficking so differently?

Indeed, members, as I look around the House, we can agree that something needs to change. This is not justice. Human trafficking is a scourge, mostly on vulnerable young people and their families across our entire country, in my area and in yours. I am hopeful that my colleagues, regardless of their political stripe, will approach this effort on a non-partisan basis and help me secure this long-overdue change to Canada's Criminal Code.

Human trafficking does not discriminate against rich or poor and no matter one's background. My goal is simple. It is to ensure that our country and our local communities are safer for our most vulnerable young people. Who could be against that?

• (1335)

These victims often think their abusers are their friends and that their abusers care for them and love them. Those of us not involved in human trafficking can see that this is not the case. We see the coercion. We see the manipulation. We see the lies. We owe these victims a chance for truth, a chance for justice.

Often when these cases are brought to court, the Crown's case depends on the victim's testimony. It may be the only evidence against the trafficker. Without the victim's testimony, there is no case. In Canada, sometimes it takes years for these cases to come to court. There the victims can be victimized again and again.

We all remember that sad case in Alberta, when a federal judge actually asked a victim in a sexual assault trial, "Why couldn't you just keep your knees together?" I ask members if this is the justice system that Canadians want. I suggest that whether or not the crime of human trafficking has occurred should only be defined by the perpetrator's actions rather than the victim's experience.

Victims should not be revictimized by the system. We owe it to victims to make this small change that will make such a huge difference. By amending the Criminal Code to reflect the international definition of "trafficking in persons", as outlined in the Palermo

protocol, we will enable the Crown to efficiently convict traffickers.

I want to talk a bit about timelines. The Palermo protocol was adopted in November 2000, 22 years ago, at the 55th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. It had 117 signatories, and guess what. That included Canada. Human trafficking is defined as "the act of recruiting, transporting, harbouring and receiving a person by means of coercion, abuse of power or deception for the purpose of exploitation." There is nothing controversial about this.

More than 22 years have passed, yet this small but important change is still not reflected in Canada's Criminal Code. Let us not continue to make this another example of Canada's promises that never see concrete action. This bill is about protecting vulnerable Canadians from predators who exploit their victims for personal gain, and sadly, that gain is becoming greater and much more lucrative.

I will give some statistics. Human trafficking generates more than \$32 billion annually and abuses over 40 million victims each year. The number of victims worldwide is greater than the entire population of Canada, and believe me, these numbers are under-reported.

Unfortunately, human trafficking is seen as a low-risk criminal activity here in Canada with a very high reward. According to Statistics Canada, less than 8% of perpetrators charged with human trafficking have ever been prosecuted. Let us think about that and also consider that very few perpetrators are even charged with this crime. Therefore, the number of those ultimately held to account for this modern-day slavery is dismally low and, I would say, embarrassing. We as a country can do better and we as a country need to do better.

• (1340)

I stand here today for Darla from Oshawa and countless other human trafficking survivors. I stand here today for their families and family members such as Lynda, who is an Oshawa mom of a human trafficking survivor. I stand here today for our youth and the most vulnerable Canadians. I invite all members to stand with me. I hope every member in the House supports this initiative.

I stand here for those who are being exploited tonight, right now, in plain sight, and some right outside my office doors in downtown Oshawa. This does not end at my doorstep. Each member of the House of Commons can be sure that this is happening outside each of their doorsteps as well.

Private Members' Business

My colleague from Peace River—Westlock has a statistic that puts things into perspective. I remember the first time I heard this, and I could not believe it. He said that the crime of human trafficking is happening today within 10 blocks or 10 minutes from one's home.

Human trafficking is on the rise, and it relies on abuse, coercion and manipulation. As I have said, victims of human trafficking are often convinced that their traffickers are their friends or boyfriends. Traffickers have made promises of clothes, money, work, drugs, education and even protection.

Many victims truly and naively believe that their trafficker has their best interests at heart. We know that is not true. Traffickers prey on the most vulnerable for a reason, as they can resort to violence and threats to make their victims do what they are told.

Traffickers seek out young people dealing with substance abuse, traumas, addictions, abuse or homelessness. Women and girls, indigenous children, new immigrants, persons living with disabilities, LGBTQ2+ individuals and migrant workers are among the most at-risk groups.

How can we continue to put so much responsibility on these victims who have endured such unimaginable atrocities? It is time for us to take action to lift the yolk of responsibility and pain, and give victims a chance of escaping their abuser.

Senator Ataullahjan said:

Most survivors do not identify as victims as a result of manipulation and gaslighting. They can believe their trafficker cares for them. We owe them the necessary help and care. Instead, they must prove that they fear for their life on the stand, often only a few metres from their trafficker. Victims are usually the only evidence against traffickers. Without their testimony, the Crown has no case. Testimony shows that the fear-based model is the biggest issue when dealing with convictions and that the experience is more traumatizing than being forced to work in the sex trade. They must relive their nightmare during that preliminary and then at the trial.

During cross-examination, it is common for the defence lawyer to twist their words and call them a liar.

If we do not take our responsibility seriously, our duty to amend the Criminal Code, then these cases depend upon the victim's ability to perform on the witness stand. Remember, this is the same victim who we just described as being vulnerable to gaslighting and manipulation.

Some of these victims do not have the strength to fight our current system. They do not have the strength to stand up against slick lawyers and a system stacked against them. This is not justice, and it usually results in charges being dropped. We need to give victims every tool possible to allow the return of their dignity and their humanity.

The goal of Bill S-224 is to implement a simple amendment to the Criminal Code, a very small modification, that would make a huge difference in the ability of the Crown to prosecute human traffickers. There should be no more settling for a dismal 8% prosecution rate. The time to do better is now, today, while this historic opportunity presents itself.

To Darla, the moms and dads, and everyone involved in ending human trafficking, this small change can happen. The time to end 22 years of inaction is now. The opportunity will not be lost.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, back in 2019, and I will reference this in my comments, there was a commitment in terms of a Canadian national strategy to combat human trafficking.

One of the things that I think we really need to highlight during this debate is the importance of education and public awareness. For me, I really believe that the fight needs to occur not only in our legislatures, whether they are provincial or national, here in Ottawa, but also in our community streets. The member made reference to how close in proximity people who are being exploited are to where we live.

I really do believe that the issue of public awareness and education is critical in terms of being able to continue to fight this particular issue. I would be interested in his comments on that.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right. We have to put resources into education.

It has been 22 years. We signed the Palermo protocol 22 years ago. This is a non-controversial bill. It is one page. I gave an example of how absurd it was that they have to prove fear. How does one do that? How does one prove fear if someone is trafficking them? It is a sad situation. We could remedy that.

I am asking every single one of my colleagues to please take a look at it, listen to their hearts and make this small change, because it will make a big difference. There is an 8% prosecution rate. That is embarrassing. We need to do better.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Oshawa for his speech, which was both well thought out and heartfelt.

He said that one of the problems with human trafficking is that the victims do not always see themselves as victims. He said that, if we get rid of the requirement to prove fear, we may have reason to hope that this bill might lead to more convictions for this crime. As he said, if victims do not identify as victims, they may not choose to complain, so charges may never be laid.

As the parliamentary secretary said, in addition to the bill, does more need to be done to raise awareness so that victims realize they are victims?

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, I cannot argue with what my colleague has just said, because she is correct.

Private Members' Business

When we think about the psychological manipulation that these human traffickers force on their victims, there really is a unique situation here. These guys seem to be experts. Unfortunately, the way our system is set up, there are only so many tools in the tool box.

Again, that example I used about getting stabbed in the back, I thought it would get a bit of a chuckle here. I saw some smiles. If someone does not even see somebody stabbing them in the back, how are they ever going to prove fear. In that situation, if the crime has been committed and there is proof, the person goes to jail. There is no requirement to prove fear. There is intimidation. Some of these victims are ready to go into court, but then they see their trafficker in front of them and they cannot go through with it.

We need to do better.

• (1350)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke about how sex trafficking impacts everyone. I agree with him.

Here is the thing. We know, through research, that it predominantly impacts indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people, something that former prime minister Stephen Harper, when we tried to get a national inquiry, said was not on his radar. I want my hon. colleague to acknowledge that there is a genocide that is happening and that it is targeting indigenous women and girls and two-spirit people in this country.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, my colleague is correct about the targeting of indigenous women and children. When we look at human rights and this issue, when I first came here, I did not realize how much of a big problem it was. I certainly did not think it was happening in my community. I have learned. Once we start seeing it, we cannot unsee it. I do hope that member will be supportive of this bill, because this is a change that would make a difference for everyone who is trafficked.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and speak to this very important issue of human trafficking.

As I pointed out in the question I asked the member, it is an issue that I believe is about governments at different levels. Even when I speak of these different levels, I know this is also a worldwide problem. It is a serious issue, and there are international organizations out there trying to raise awareness of it.

That is why I thought it was very encouraging when the government, back in 2019, which was pre-pandemic, came out with Canada's national strategy to combat human trafficking. It recognized that both domestic and international human trafficking takes place virtually every day and takes place in many different ways.

We had the opportunity to try to get a good understanding of the victims of this abuse, and it is very much racialized worldwide, especially here in Canada. There is a need to take action where we can. That is why we often hear members, whether it is cabinet ministers or members in general, talk about gender violence. I really believe that if we are ever going to turn the corner in trying to resolve the issue of human trafficking and exploitation, it has to incorporate some form of education and public awareness.

The member stated that this is taking place in our communities. I do not necessarily know the stats or the numbers, but I take at face value what the member said. It is a very powerful statement that it is in our communities from coast to coast to coast, and the majority of people do not necessarily see it. They might be driving by it and not even be aware of it. It could be a neighbour who is being exploited and people are not aware of it.

This is why I believe there has to be a holistic approach with different levels of government coming together, much like when I advocated on the issue of racism. We also have to factor in the educational component, such as programming in public schools, work environments and so forth.

Sadly, there is a demand for the types of services that human trafficking attempts to meet, and it is at a great cost. It is not just criminals that we typically think of who are exploiting children.

I had an interesting discussion a couple of years back with some advocates. They were talking about third world countries where young children were being tapped into the Internet to perform all sorts of acts. The people who were causing them to do that in this situation were actually parents, the people a child should trust the most, a mom or dad. The reason they provided, which is no justification, was poverty, and money flowed in as a result of exploiting their own children.

• (1355)

Organized crime, a billion-dollar industry, is driven by bringing people into communities. Bringing people into communities from other areas is worldwide. Even here in Canada we will see exploitation taking place. I reflect on one incident a number of years ago when I was talking about ways in which someone could actually immigrate to Canada. One gentleman said to me that he trusted an immigration agent who said that the hospitality industry in Canada was welcoming and that his daughter would be able to go to Canada and get a good job. After the young lady arrived in Canada, she was brought to a place where there were expectations on her to strip and possibly provide additional services. That was not the type of hospitality this family was thinking. Fortunately the young lady was able to get out of that situation.

I make reference to organized crime. There are different types of individuals who will seek the exploitation of humans for services in what are called sweat shops or for sexual services. In both areas, one needs to give attention. I would argue that those areas of a sexual nature demand all of us to do whatever we can.

I appreciate the fact that the Senate has already reviewed this legislation and it was ultimately brought through the House. We look forward to the ongoing debate on the issue.

Private Members' Business

I do not know the details. The member made reference to a treaty that was signed some 20 years ago. I am not familiar with the treaty. We have had at least a couple of governments since, and I notice this is a private member's bill being brought forward. I do not know all the arguments for or against, but I would like to think that, on the principles of human trafficking, there is not one member of the House of Commons or anyone in an elected office at any level here in Canada who would support any form whatsoever of human trafficking.

Just the other day, I made reference to Hollywood and how Hollywood gives a good visual in terms of Internet cyber-attacks. It could be the same principle here. We often hear about and see televised in movies and TV programs the types of exploitation that are taking place. Suffice it to say that even in this era in society, in 2022, there is still slavery, there is still human trafficking and there are people who are being exploited. The sad thing is that we are often talking about children as young as six, and probably even younger, to 18 years old. These are the types of victims whom we need to advocate for to ensure we are taking the actions that are important.

Whether it is of a physical nature when walking on streets or being in clubs or it is on our computers through the Internet, all of this abuse is absolutely unacceptable and we need to focus our attention on getting the abusers in this exploitation. That is something I like to believe every member of the House believes in.

• (1400)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, today we are discussing Bill S-224, a Senate bill that seeks to amend the Criminal Code and the section dealing with trafficking in persons.

Either this was pre-arranged, which I doubt, or it is an odd coincidence, but today is December 2, which is the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, and it is also the day we are dedicating to discussing human trafficking.

The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery stems from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms".

The day we are marking today is about eradicating all contemporary forms of slavery. As my colleague from Shefford pointed out in her member's statement on Wednesday, slavery is not just something that belongs in the history books. It still exists today, but now it comes in more insidious forms.

The International Labour Organization says that approximately 40 million people are still trapped in modern forms of slavery, such as debt bondage, serfdom, forced labour, child labour and servitude, trafficking in persons and in human organs, which unfortunately continues to take place around the world, sexual slavery, the use of child soldiers in armed conflicts, the sale of children, forced marriage, the sale of women and the exploitation of prostitution.

As I mentioned, there are still many types of slavery. When we talk about trafficking in persons, we are actually talking about mod-

ern forms of slavery that are still taking place. Slavery has changed over the years, so the provisions of the law that address it must also change and evolve.

My colleague from Oshawa mentioned that, in 2002, Canada ratified the Palermo protocol, which supplements the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and seeks to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Article 3 of this convention gives an explicit definition of trafficking in persons. It states:

"Trafficking in persons" shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

The Palermo protocol covers a lot of ground. In subparagraph 3(b), it says, and this is important:

The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

It states specifically that the way the victim felt during the commission of an act related to trafficking in persons shall not be taken into account.

The Criminal Code, which includes the offence of trafficking in persons, was amended in 2005. It was in 2005 that a section was added to the Criminal Code to deal with trafficking in persons, following the ratification of the Palermo protocol, and that is precisely what we are debating today. Subsection 279.04(1) of the Criminal Code states, and I quote:

For the purposes of sections 279.01 to 279.03, a person exploits another person if they cause them to provide, or offer to provide, labour or a service by engaging in conduct that, in all the circumstances, could reasonably be expected to cause the other person to believe that their safety or the safety of a person known to them would be threatened if they failed to provide, or offer to provide, the labour or service.

That is precisely the crux of the problem. Whereas the Criminal Code offences that we are used to dealing with require the *actus reus*, which is the commission of the criminal act, and the *mens rea*, which is the guilty intention behind the act, this section adds a third element for the court to analyze, specifically the state of mind of the victim of the offence.

• (1405)

That is what this new clause would correct. It provides that, for sections 279.01 to 279.03, "a person exploits another person if they engage in conduct that...causes the other person to provide or offer to provide labour or a service" and adds the following: "involves, in relation to any person, the use or threatened use of force or another form of coercion, the use of deception or fraud, the abuse of a position of trust, power or authority, or any other similar act". It completely abandons the concept of fear for a person's safety.

The section we are currently looking at goes back to 2005. Although changes were made to this section of the Criminal Code in 2012 and 2015, it was never changed to line up with other Criminal Code offences, which have only two constituent elements, the *actus reus* and *mens rea*.

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This is a departure from what is generally accepted in criminal law and other forms of law that flow from common law, namely, the thin skull rule. This requires that the victim's situation be taken into account in cases where it is to the victim's advantage and to the accused's disadvantage. That is the principle behind the thin skull rule. It is a rule of tort that a person should be compensated even if the harm they suffer is unusually severe. For example, if you hit someone with a thin skull and they die as a result, you cannot use the fact that they had an abnormally thin skull, more so than average, as a reason to avoid liability.

When a person's constitution is taken into consideration, it should be to the benefit of that person and not that of the person who committed the offence. The proposed amendment to section 279 may be more in line with what is generally offered in the rules of common law. What is more, it is something that is already enshrined in other areas of our domestic law, namely, when it comes to refugee protection. The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act was also created as a result of the ratification of the Palermo Protocol.

It has already been mentioned that there is a human trafficking offence set out in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act or IRPA, but that act does not require evidence of a victim's fear for their safety. I would like to read subsection 118(1) of the act. It says, and I quote, "No person shall knowingly organize the coming into Canada of one or more persons by means of abduction, fraud, deception or use or threat of force or coercion."

Once again, all we need to look at here is the commission of the act, not the way it is perceived. The member for Oshawa spoke very eloquently about that. He mentioned that, often, the victims do not even see themselves as victims.

That is the problem because, in order to prove that the crime was committed, the victims need to see themselves as victims and realize that they felt scared, which may not necessarily be the case. Victims may not feel afraid when they are in the situation because they have become so accustomed to it or they may experience post-traumatic stress only after the fact. They may be in protection mode and not feel afraid. In some cases, the victims do feel afraid, but they are unable to prove it in court. This bill eliminates the additional constraint that was imposed on victims to prove that the offence of human trafficking was committed.

It removes the burden that was needlessly placed on the wrong person by focusing on what was done rather than considering how it is perceived by the victim. We hope that this amendment will be quickly adopted at second reading when the House votes and that the bill is referred to a committee, where I hope that it will be quickly analyzed and voted on. I also hope that this will finally become part of our domestic legislation and that it will continue to be aligned with the principle of victim protection regardless of whether they consider themselves to be victims.

• (1410)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, as I rise to speak to Bill S-224, an act to amend the Criminal Code, trafficking in persons, Winnipeg has once again received horrific news of the murder of indigenous women in our community: They

are Morgan Harris, 39; Mercedes Myran, 26; Rebecca Contois, 24; and one woman yet to be identified. These are three additional charges for Jeremy Skibicki, who now seems to be the latest serial killer of indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people in our community.

I would like to offer my love, support and deepest sympathies to the latest families and communities that have been affected by the ongoing genocide against indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people. Something that has been acknowledged particularly is that my city of Winnipeg is ground zero for the crisis of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls.

Their lives were precious. They were loved. They were mothers. They were sisters. They were aunties. They were daughters. I do not know how many times I have risen in the House to speak about the dire urgency of the crisis we face as targets. In this country, our lives seem to be of no consequence, either our life or loss of life. In this country, which espouses to be a beacon for human rights, those human rights have been deprived from indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people since the first contact when exploitation started.

As we debate today in the House a bill to strengthen protections for women around sex trafficking, protections for all women, we must acknowledge, when we talk about human trafficking in Canada, that certain groups are disproportionately impacted.

The Canadian Women's Foundation notes that 51% of trafficked girls were or had been part of the child welfare system, something that has been called the new residential school because there are more kids in the child welfare system now than there were at the height of residential schools. These are indigenous girls, young people and two-spirit people. It also notes that 50% of trafficked girls and 51% of trafficked women are indigenous. Over half of individuals who are trafficked, 51%, are indigenous women because there is an ongoing genocide, something we are reeling with again in my beautiful community of Winnipeg.

• (1415)

There is an ongoing genocide of missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, and human trafficking is just one part of this ongoing genocide. Let us not forget what we have recently found out regarding the second serial killer in recent history to target our women, because there is a normalized violence and genocide occurring in this country with piecemeal approaches by government. That sends a very clear message to indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, including the zero budgetary allocation in the 2022 budget, that this is not of top urgency and priority.

I know we are here to debate the current bill, but I would be remiss at this very critical time if I did not take the opportunity to call on all members of the House to stand in solidarity together against human trafficking or the murder and genocide of indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people in this country. This is a human rights crisis. This is a life-and-death crisis. We must stand together in non-partisanship, to work together to ensure that indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people in this country can finally be safe. If we fail to do so once again as we debate this bill, the latest murders in my community, and I want to let members know that it is a beautiful community of wonderful people, as a result of an individual who targeted indigenous women, this genocide, will continue if we do not stand in non-partisanship.

I am calling for urgent help. I am calling for resources. I am calling on the government to come to my community and meet with the families of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and come up with an urgent response. I am calling on all members of the House to not politicize this genocide and to just provide the resources and support needed to end this crisis of violence. Every day that this is politicized, every day that we wait, we lose another life.

I had the privilege of speaking with one of the family members of one of the late women who was identified in the latest crisis. Families deserve justice. The women's spirits deserve justice. Our communities deserve justice. We have a right to be safe. We have a right to be respected. We have a right to be honoured. That needs to happen today.

• (1420)

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of Bill S-224, legislation that will strengthen the human trafficking laws under the Criminal Code.

Under the Criminal Code, in order to successfully convict someone of human trafficking, two elements must be satisfied. The first is that the perpetrator recruited, transported or harboured the victim. The second is that it was done for the purpose of exploitation. This bill relates to the second element, which is that of exploitation.

More specifically, it redefines exploitation by removing the requirement that the Crown establish that the victim reasonably believed their safety to be threatened by the perpetrator. This is a welcomed change in the law that removes a barrier to successfully prosecuting and convicting human traffickers.

Moreover, it brings the Criminal Code definition of exploitation under our human trafficking laws in line with the international defi-

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inition, which is the anti-human trafficking UN protocol, namely the Palermo protocol, which Canada ratified in 2002.

Before I elaborate on the merits of this bill, I want to take this opportunity to commend the member for Oshawa for his leadership in championing this important and needed legislation. The member has been a tireless advocate for the rights of victims.

I would also like to recognize my Conservative colleague, Senator Salma Ataullahjan, for introducing and successfully shepherding this bill through the Senate with unanimous support. That unanimity, I believe, speaks to the merit of this legislation.

Human trafficking is a heinous crime. It is a gross human rights violation. It is a form of modern slavery. Human trafficking is also a complex and multi-dimensional crime involving a range of criminal activities, from sexual exploitation to forced labour and debt bondage.

Human traffickers exploit some of the most vulnerable persons in Canadian society, 95% of whom are women and more than 70% of whom are under the age of 25. Indeed, it is estimated that a quarter of human trafficking victims are children.

Human traffickers profit through the brutalization of their victims by taking away their freedom and personal autonomy and stripping them of their human dignity. Human trafficking is truly a horrific crime, and it is one that is unfortunately growing in Canada.

Although it is not known how widespread human trafficking is, having regard for the fact that this is a crime that is committed in the shadows of Canadian society, police data indicates that human trafficking cases have increased elevenfold between 2010 and 2016.

Despite the fact that it is widely understood to be a widespread problem, very few human trafficking cases are successfully prosecuted under the human trafficking provisions of the Criminal Code.

• (1425)

I sat on the justice committee in 2018 when we undertook a study across Canada on human trafficking. We travelled from Halifax to Vancouver. One of the things we consistently heard was the difficulty, in practice, of using the human trafficking provisions to convict and put away those who commit this horrendous crime. Indeed, often prosecutors end up prosecuting the case under offences such as procuring and material benefit, which are lesser offences under the Criminal Code. The reason being is that these cases are very difficult to prove, and this is made all the more difficult by the need for the Crown to establish that the victim reasonably expected their safety to be threatened.

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This is made more difficult for several reasons. First, there is more likely a need to bring in the victim and call them as a witness at the trial. Many times, human trafficking survivors, for understandable reasons, are reluctant to testify, given the trauma that they have endured, and given the fact that they do not want to relive the horrors they have been subjected to by their perpetrator under the pressures of cross-examination.

Moreover, it puts attention where it should not be, and that is on the state of mind of the victim rather than the actions of the perpetrator. From a practical standpoint in a trial context, that is made all the more problematic given the circumstances in which human trafficking survivors find themselves in, which is brutalized, having endured enormous trauma, sometimes with impediments to their memory. They may have mental health issues they are suffering from as a result of these crimes committed upon them.

This is why, under the Palermo protocol, the focus is not on the state of mind of the victim but on the actions of the perpetrator. That is what this bill would do. It would bring our Criminal Code in line with the Palermo protocol in this important regard.

I would also note that, in requiring that that fear be established, that the victim reasonably feared for their safety, it results in an overly narrow definition of exploitation. When someone is particularly vulnerable, threats of force or violence may not be necessary to control that person. There could be circumstances where, by every other measure, the victim is being trafficked, but it is impossi-

ble to obtain a conviction because it is not possible to meet the objective standard that they feared for their safety.

For all of these reasons, this bill is needed. It is, as the member for Oshawa, noted in his thoughtful speech, a relatively minor change to the Criminal Code, but one that would have a real impact in seeing that survivors of human trafficking receive the justice they have been denied, and it would give law enforcement and prosecutors the ability to use the Criminal Code human trafficking provisions to successfully prosecute and convict human traffickers as human traffickers.

I urge the speedy and unanimous passage of this important bill.

● (1430)

[*Translation*]

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

[*English*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1). I wish members a great weekend.

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)

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