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Thursday, December 2, 2021

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 2, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1) I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association. The first concerns its participation at the third part of the 2021 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held by video conference from June 21 to June 24. The second concerns its participation at the fourth part of the 2021 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held by video conference from June 24 to June 28.

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PETITIONS

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition signed by members of my constituency. Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms every individual is equal before and under the law, and has the right to equal protections and benefits from the law without discrimination. The purpose of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act is to enhance financial accountability and transparency for first nations people. The people who have signed this petition are concerned about the use of the funds by their bands and are asking the government to enforce the First Nations Financial Transparency Act.

TRAVEL ADVISERS

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table e-petition 3643 on behalf of over 2,500 signatures and 12,000 independent travel advisers across Canada. These advisers in Canada have been working without income for 19 months due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The Liberal Party promised financial aid for these advisers, but sadly there was zero mention of it in the throne speech and they are not included in the provisions of Bill C-2.

The petitioners call upon the government to provide sector-specific funding for independent travel advisers in the form of bridge financing until May 2022 at the very minimum until they are able to see a recovery in their business, and ensure that independent travel advisers are included in the class of eligible applicants for the tourism and hospitality recovery program announced by the government on October 21.

• (1005)

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table this petition on behalf of residents from Errington, Hilliers, Parksville and Qualicum Beach in my riding who are calling for support for volunteer firefighters, who account for 83% of Canada's total firefighting essential first responders. In addition, they cite that approximately 8,000 essential search and rescue volunteers respond to thousands of incidents every year, including the floods in my riding recently. They cite that the tax code of Canada currently allows volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers to claim a \$3,000 tax credit if they provided 200 hours of volunteer services in a calendar year. That works out to a mere \$450 per year that we allow these essential volunteers to keep of their own income, which is about \$2.25 an hour. If they volunteer for more than 200 hours, which many do, this tax credit becomes even less. The petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to increase this tax exemption from \$3,000 to \$10,000 to help our essential volunteer firefighters and search and rescue people across the country.

ADVERTISING

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, this petition is of a really critical issue and one that has come before the House before. It is about the rights and respect for our children, and to protect children.

The petitioners point out that a child's brain is not fully developed and is particularly susceptible to advertisements that are targeting children, whether that advertisement is to increase a culture of materialistic wants that parents may not be able to fulfill, creating a sense of dissatisfaction, encouraging children to want things that their parents might prefer they did not have, whether it is sugary drinks or junk food.

Therefore, the petitioners call on the government to protect children, families and communities by banning advertising that is specifically geared to children.

*The Address***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[Translation]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY CAUCUS

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to subsection 49.8(5) of the Parliament of Canada Act, I rise to discharge my obligations as chair of the Conservative caucus and to inform you of the recorded votes of the first Conservative caucus meeting.

[English]

Whether sections 49.2 and 49.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act are to apply in respect of the caucus, the caucus voted yes. Whether section 49.4 is to apply in respect of the caucus, the caucus voted yes. Whether sections 49.5(1) to 49.5(3) are to apply in respect of the caucus, the caucus voted yes. Whether section 49.5(4) and section 49.6 are to apply in respect of the caucus, the caucus voted yes.

[Translation]

I believe this fulfills my obligation as national caucus chair for the recognized Conservative Party in the House to inform you of the recorded votes under subsection 49.8(5) of the Parliament of Canada Act.

• (1010)

[English]

I trust that the other recognized parties will follow suit and their caucus chairs will similarly inform the Speaker of their vote results in the House.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[English]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed from December 1 consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session and of the amendment.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time this morning with my hon. colleague from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

It is an absolute honour and privilege to rise and reply to the Speech from the Throne. I listened very carefully to the speech and identified two concerning issues that I heard repeatedly while knocking on thousands of doors during the past election campaign, namely the escalation of crime, particularly gun offences, and the failure of the Liberal government to prioritize a meaningful relationship with our indigenous neighbours.

The safety and security of Canadians must be the top priority for the government. As a former Crown attorney, I am deeply concerned about the escalation of crime in Canada and particularly in my riding of Brantford—Brant. Unfortunately this topic was completely neglected in the throne speech, despite many details published by the Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety statistics.

The report shows that in 2020, Canadian police services reported over 2.2 million Criminal Code and other federal statute violations of which 743 were homicides, which is 56 more than the previous year. Let me repeat that number: 743 people killed in Canada last year and yet there is no plan to reduce the escalation of crime in the throne speech. Canadians deserve better. My riding deserves better. People want to feel safe and protected in their home and communities. The Liberal government must stop playing politics and pushing its ideological agenda. It must fight crime and finally end these horrible trends in Canada.

The fact that crime was not addressed in the Speech from the Throne did not surprise me. If we reflect on the Liberal government's track record on this issue, we would see that there is nothing new here. In 2019, the Liberal government, while having a majority in the House of Commons, put into effect Bill C-75, the criminal justice bill. Liberals were claiming that the bill was designed to reduce sentences for milder offences, but the reality was that it implemented softer sentences for serious violent crimes including participation in an activity of a terrorist group, abducting a child and participation in activities of criminal organizations, just to name a few.

In 2020, the same Liberal government tabled a bill colloquially known as the “no more jail time for criminals” bill, which proposed to reduce jail time for dangerous offenders. If implemented, it would have allowed individuals found guilty of horrific crimes like sexual assault, arson and kidnapping to serve their sentence under house arrest instead of real jail.

It would also remove mandatory jail time for anyone who commits robbery with a firearm, trafficking in crystal meth and criminals who smuggle firearms across the Canada-U.S. border. When talking about the smuggling of firearms across the border, it is very concerning during the last session when the Liberal MPs, with the support of their loyal and faithful NDP friends, voted down the Conservative bill that had been designed to address the prevalence of smuggled weapons and the rise in gun crime.

The “soft on crime” agenda is simply irresponsible and dangerous. The Liberal government must do better to ensure the safety and security for everyone wherever they live in Canada.

For six years, in throne speech after throne speech, we heard the same rhetoric: the government is going to get handguns and assault weapons off the streets; we have to focus on reducing gun violence, we have seen the devastating effects of gun violence; too many lives lost; too many families shattered; time to show courage and strengthen gun control; the government will invest to help cities fight gang-related violence. Now, in 2021, our throne speech makes one opening statement: The Liberal government will ensure that it will take steps to allow our communities to be safe.

• (1015)

During the election campaign, the Prime Minister promised to give \$1 billion to provinces and territories that want to ban handguns, but the reality is this would not lower gun violence, as almost 80% of the guns used to commit crimes in Toronto, for example, are illegal handguns originating in the United States. As quoted in the press recently, “Since criminals aren’t deterred by the Criminal Code, it’s a given they won’t be deterred by any provincial legislation or municipal bylaws.”

The Prime Minister and his government know this. The 2018 paper by Public Safety Canada “Reducing Violent Crime: A Dialogue on Handguns and Assault Weapons” reports that the vast majority of owners of handguns and other firearms in Canada lawfully abide by requirements; that most gun crimes are not committed with legally owned firearms; that any ban of handguns or assault weapons would primarily affect legal firearms owners; that jurisdictions differ in their approaches to controlling handguns and assault weapons; and the data do not conclusively demonstrate that these handgun or assault weapon bans have led to any reductions in gun violence.

The former minister of public safety and former Toronto police chief told *The Globe and Mail* in 2019 that banning handguns would not work because most illegal guns are smuggled into Canada from the United States. The former minister was quoted as saying:

I believe that would be potentially a very expensive proposition but just as importantly, it would not...be perhaps the most effective measure in restricting the access that criminals would have to such weapons, because we’d still have a problem with them being smuggled across the border.

The Prime Minister is now poised to reintroduce legislation that died on the Order Paper when the election was called last August to remove minimum sentences for many gun-related offences, including robbery with a firearm, discharging a firearm with intent, reckless discharge of a firearm and possession of a prohibited or restricted firearm with ammunition. This is another example of the government’s soft-on-crime agenda that will not reduce gun crime.

The Prime Minister and his government are completely tone deaf on what it takes to keep our community safe. It is time to target the real source of the problem. It is time to take bold and decisive action to strengthen our borders, provide the maximum support to our Canadian border agents and work in partnership with the U.S. authorities to stem the tide of illegally smuggled firearms.

On September 30, I proudly attended the ceremony on Parliament Hill and stood shoulder to shoulder with indigenous and non-indigenous Canadians, reflecting and honouring the victims and survivors of the residential school system. The good people of

The Address

Brantford—Brant sent me to Ottawa for this purpose. I am honoured to represent my riding, which includes the largest first nations reserve in Canada. On the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, I did not take a personal day and spend it on a beach.

This year’s throne speech was delivered by the Her Excellency the Right Hon. Mary Simon, the first indigenous person ever to hold the position of the Governor General of Canada. As Canadians, we are very proud of this historic moment. This past summer, the collective consciousness of all Canadians was shocked and saddened with the discovery of unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools. It is our collective responsibility to accept the truth and reflect on the failed and tragic policies of our previous leaders.

Six years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission presented its final report. It presented 94 calls to action to help redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation. Under the watchful eye of the Prime Minister, the Liberal government has failed to implement the vast majority of them. According to a 2020 status update on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action conducted by the Yellowhead Institute, only eight actions had been implemented. At this rate, it would take until at least 2062 to complete all 94 calls.

• (1020)

I am honoured to represent my riding, which includes the largest first nations reserve. Throughout my entire life, and especially during the campaign, I have had many opportunities to discuss the myriad of issues that people on reserves are facing every day. As their representative in Ottawa, I will fight tooth and nail for their interests. My—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for St. Catharines.

Mr. Chris Bittle (St. Catharines, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the hon. member talks about being tone deaf, as we are nearly on the eve of the anniversary of École Polytechnique, and he is talking about relegalizing military-style assault weapons.

I would like to focus on his one mention. He mentioned the statistic of 80% of illegal firearms being used, and if we were to accept his statistic, why is he willing to write off 20% of homicide victims? In his own statistic, there is an opportunity to have a significant dent in the homicide rate. Why does he not want to take that action, and why is he writing these victims off?

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, quite frankly, my friend opposite’s question was offensive, given my background prior to me being elected as a parliamentarian.

The Address

I enjoyed 18 years as a representative of Her Majesty prosecuting crime in Brantford—Brant. I take crime extremely seriously. I fought every day for victims to ensure that their rights were heard.

An hon. member: Then answer his question.

Mr. Larry Brock: It is very rich that my friend is now asking me to answer a question, but in any event, that quote was not my quote. That quote came from the Toronto Sun. It is an alarming figure. We have to take steps now. This is enough with the platitudes. He should come up with concrete action to deal with this issue.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind the member for St. Catharines that he had the opportunity to ask the question, and he should not be asking any questions or heckling while somebody is answering the question.

Continuing with questions and comments, we will now go to the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I found everything he said about reconciliation and the first nations very interesting. I think Canada still has a long way to go in that regard.

I was, however, a bit bothered by a comment that my colleague made. He said that the appointment of the new Governor General, Mary Simon, was a date to remember in Canadian history. That might be a good thing for reconciliation with indigenous peoples, but it is a big problem for francization in Canada and Quebec.

By appointing this woman who does not speak French to the position of Governor General, the government insulted eight million francophones across Canada. She really struggled with the French in the throne speech.

Would my colleague agree that a bill should be passed in the House to require Prime Minister Trudeau to appoint a Governor General who speaks both of Canada's official languages?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will remind the member that he must not name sitting members of the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant.

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, I think there is an obligation on every Canadian to learn both official languages. As a public official, I am taking great pride in learning the language. I am taking daily French lessons, and I hope that someday in the very near future I will be able to communicate in both official languages.

I applaud my friend's comments regarding the Governor General, and I think, as a general observation, every public official in Canada should take steps to learn both official languages.

• (1025)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I keep hearing the Conservatives talk about the runaway housing crisis. I could not agree more that this needs to be addressed.

However, the Liberal-Conservative coalition is protecting the big banks and standing together united in protection of the wealthy, do-

ing everything from protecting tax havens that need to be shut down to protecting CEO stock options. We never hear that coalition talk about the lack of solutions to tackle the housing issue. Maybe the member can actually talk about real solutions, such as non-market housing, instead of more incentives to prop up the wealthy.

The Conservative-Liberal coalition is ruining this country.

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, I guess the old adage about the pot calling the kettle black applies here. The member talks about a coalition between the Conservative Party and the Liberal government. Let us not forget what happened last week with the vote on virtual Parliament.

Leaving that aside, if my friend actually took the time and listened to the talking points of our leader, Erin O'Toole, which everyone of my colleagues, every single day of the election campaign—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member that he cannot use names of individuals who sit in this House. I mentioned it prior to this, and I would ask him not to do it.

The member for Brantford—Brant has two seconds to wrap up.

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, my point was that every single day of the election campaign, we talked about a very real, concrete plan to deal with this housing crisis. We talked about taking immediate steps to put shovels in the ground now, not years from now.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a true honour to stand here once again.

My thanks to the hon. member for Brantford—Brant who may have just had his first speech in the House of Commons. I think that all of us Parliamentarians do better when we have more Crown prosecutors in the House of Commons to teach us about our justice system.

It has been a really good, busy few weeks getting Parliament back and getting back to business. While I was encouraged to see an acknowledgement of the ongoing emergencies, to have the debate on British Columbia and to have it acknowledged in the Speech from the Throne, I will continue to push the government for concrete action on flood recovery and building infrastructure. My constituents and British Columbians are demanding that of all British Columbia MPs right now.

The Address

Government ministers have been responsive, and emergency personnel from the military have been essential, to disaster response efforts on the ground, including today. I commend their work and thank them for their attention, but when the rains let up and the flooding is managed, will the federal government still be there? Will the media still be paying attention in a few months' time? That is my greatest concern right now. I repeat that I am going to be resolute in my efforts to make sure that the upcoming federal budget responds to the Speech from the Throne, and that it addresses the critical challenges my province is facing right now.

I will ensure that the village of Lytton, which I represent and which was devastated by one of the most disastrous forest fires in our country's history, gets the type of federal support it needs moving forward.

The upcoming federal budget must contain a comprehensive suite of supports, and must revise policies for those who have lost their homes and do not have insurance, for impacted businesses that might not be able to secure loans, and for agricultural producers, especially the blueberry producers, dairy farmers and chicken farmers whose crops and livestock were devastated. We need updated flood mapping to account for future disasters and to adapt to climate change. Municipalities need money for dike upgrades and critical infrastructure, and there has to be provincially led construction of resilient infrastructure across the board to address the highways.

I have been walking around showing photos of Jackass Mountain summit and Highway 1 to many people in the House. The road is completely washed out. We have to build those roads back better.

Finally, we need to do more on emergency response policies and capacity for our indigenous brothers and sisters. Frankly, the way we handle disasters right now in British Columbia is not sufficient. We have to empower first nations leaders and emergency responders, and make sure they have the tools they need, especially in rural parts of my province, to do their jobs effectively and to help keep their people and their nations safe.

I just have a few more comments. The Speech from the Throne often gives members of Parliament a time to reflect on the election, on what people told them during the election and how they can respond to that in Parliament.

Before I go into some of the things I heard on doorsteps during the election campaign, I want to give a shout-out to a very close friend of mine. Ten years ago, he was my roommate, and we were sitting around the kitchen table in our apartment. We were staffers under the Stephen Harper government, and we were looking at the redistribution boundaries. They were creating a new riding in my home town. It was at that moment I decided that I was going to pursue a career in politics. Blair was there with me from day one. I do not think I could be here today without a friend like Blair, who has supported my family for so many years. When someone works in politics, having a staffer to confide in who knows your strengths and weaknesses is a blessing. I did not get a lot of sleep last night. Whenever that happens, I start to cry.

• (1030)

Blair is moving on. He has a wonderful woman in his life and is moving to the Prairies. He is going to be leaving my office at the end of the year. Blair will be sorely missed. He exemplifies public service and is an amazing dude. I thank him so much.

The Speech from the Throne talked about listening to diverse voices. Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is one of the most diverse places in all of Canada. I also think it is the number one riding in all of Canada, and I challenge anyone to have a debate with me on that anytime in the House of Commons. Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is 22,000 square kilometres of ruggedness. It spans from Matsqui and Abbotsford, British Columbia, up into the Bridge River Valley in the South Chilcotin Mountains. The only connecting feature of my riding is the Fraser River, which runs right through it from the north to the south. I am proud to live in a place where there is a rich indigenous culture and a rich immigrant culture. All of these people bring so much to the work that I do and so much to the communities that I represent. I am so proud and honoured to stand up for them every single day. It is a true honour.

During the election campaign everyone talked to me about one thing, and that was housing. In Abbotsford and Mission, not too many years ago a family perhaps working in the Gloucester Industrial Park in Langley, or working for a local small business, could afford a home. It was not too long ago that homes were selling in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 range in many of the communities I represent, but over the last seven or eight years, those prices have skyrocketed to levels that none of us could have ever imagined. The values of homes have doubled and tripled. Now we find ourselves in the situation where a good job is not good enough to have a secure place to live anymore. Many families appreciate the Canada child benefit, mine included, and the positive things it does such as helping to pay for day care and good food to put on the table. However, the Canada child benefit, or a small increase for seniors to old age security or the GIS, does not account for the significant and drastic increase we have seen related to the cost of housing.

The Address

The government talked about a housing accelerator in its budget. I do not know what a housing accelerator is. Frankly, it kind of reminds me of something the Liberals do not talk about anymore, and that is a supercluster related to an industrial area. They never mention superclusters, but a few years ago, every single day Minister Bains would talk about superclusters. We do not hear that anymore. What Canadians want from the government is a concrete plan to address housing supply. The reality is that we are not building enough. Where I live is a key place for immigrants to come to live. Immigrants do not have safe places to live anymore. The government needs to set targets, to be accountable to those targets and to help municipalities build the types of homes that people need to live their best lives. We are failing on that front.

During the election campaign, there were some good points in the Liberal platform and there were definitely some good points in the Conservative platform. However, people are acknowledging the issue now. There needs to be no more rhetoric, and we need to see action. We need to see the federal government working with municipalities to incentivize the construction of new homes. We need to see housing tied to infrastructure development so that when the new SkyTrain stations are built expanding out to Langley, or if hopefully one day we expand the West Coast Express in Mission, housing is a key component of how we look at infrastructure. If we do not start looking more comprehensively at some of these key challenges we are facing as a nation, we are not going to address the housing supply crisis.

I will say one more thing on housing, and that is regarding indigenous housing. My indigenous constituents want “for indigenous, by indigenous” housing. If there was one thing in the Speech from the Throne that I was very concerned about not seeing, it was that. Let us work toward reconciliation. It has been a tough year for British Columbia. It has been a tough year for Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc nation, which I represent. Let us work toward reconciliation and let us give indigenous children safe places to call home. There is so much more we can do on that front collectively in the House to address this scar on our nation.

● (1035)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon for his passion, hard work and dedication raising the issue of flooding and fires in British Columbia and climate change. He is doing terrific work. The constituents of Windsor—Tecumseh stand shoulder to shoulder with his constituents.

In June of this year, this government passed a budget that allocated \$63.8 million to Natural Resources Canada and ECCC to work with the provinces to complete flood mapping for higher-risk areas.

I am just wondering this. Does the hon. member have any regrets? His party and he himself voted against the budget, and this particular provision for flood mapping in higher-risk areas.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, yes, I did vote against the budget, and there is one big reason I voted against it. Just the other day, Bill Curry in *The Globe and Mail* said there was \$600 billion of money that has not been accounted for.

To function as a government, the government needs to be transparent and it is not, with more money spent ever than in the history

of Canada. I welcome that line item in the budget and want to see that work completed so the insurance companies, the home builders and the people who want to live their lives, the agricultural producers, actually see those maps. To this day, they have not seen them, but I hope they do soon.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about the Conservatives' amendment to the throne speech. Among other things, the amendment states that there is a national crisis that requires the government to respect provincial jurisdiction.

Yesterday, we voted on a Bloc Québécois amendment calling on the government to respect the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces and increase health transfers by 35%.

Why did my colleague's party vote against the Bloc Québécois's amendment?

[English]

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, that was a unanimous consent motion.

All I can say is that we talk a lot about Quebec jurisdiction. We also need to talk about British Columbia jurisdiction. British Columbia only has six senators. I do not think there is a Supreme Court judge from British Columbia right now.

The reality is that British Columbia needs a strong voice in Parliament right now. I am very pleased that in the last few weeks here I have been able to sit down with so many of my colleagues from all political parties representing British Columbia to work united and stand up for our province in a real, serious time of need. I am very pleased to be back in Parliament fighting for the flood infrastructure and for everything B.C. needs that is of national importance. I am talking about our ports, our roadways and our environment.

● (1040)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to give my condolences to all the families in Lytton, B.C. who have lost their homes as a result of the climate catastrophe.

Is the hon. member committed to ensuring, and pushing for the current government to meet, climate targets as a long-term way to mitigate the climate catastrophe currently raging in B.C.? That will continue unless we take bold action on the climate emergency.

The Address

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, it is incumbent upon the Government of Canada to meet the targets set by Stephen Harper a long time ago now and to see Canada move forward.

Related to climate change, what my constituents want to see, and what the village of Lytton wants to see right now, are concrete actions related to climate resiliency and adaptation in the reconstruction of their homes and of their communities.

It is incumbent upon us to work with everyone to make sure that when the next major disaster comes our communities are more prepared and more resilient.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

As I stand in the House of Commons as the newly elected member of Parliament for Calgary—Skyview—

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

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I am concerned about the allegations against the hon. member across the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not going to allow this to continue. We dealt with this yesterday.

I want to indicate that the hon. member is questioning another member's right to participate in debate. The member was duly elected and sworn in and has the same rights and privileges as other members.

Whether there is or is not an investigation into a member's conduct has no impact on their ability to participate in proceedings. I would ask members, while I am reading this statement, to please keep their comments to themselves.

As it is stated on page 254 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, "Even the laying of a criminal charge against a Member," which is not the situation being raised here, "has no effect on his or her eligibility to remain in office." I would also remind members that the conduct of a member can be brought before the House only by way of a specific charge contained in a substantive motion. Therefore, there will be no other points of order entertained on this particular matter.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, as I stand in the House of Commons as the newly elected member of Parliament for Calgary Skyview, I want to give my thanks, first, to all those in Calgary Skyview who voted in the 2021 federal election. Regardless of partisan differences, their participation in the democratic process matters deeply. I am honoured to have been elected to represent and serve every one of them in the 44th Parliament of Canada. I will strive to be the kind of representative they deserve: hard-working, accountable and always available.

I want to thank my wife Aman and my three daughters, Amita, Noor and Liv, for their incredible support through the election and in my transition from being a city councillor to a member of Parliament. They have stood by me, side by side, every step of the way and I am so grateful for their love and support.

I also want to thank the hundreds of volunteers who believed in me and contributed their time and abilities to my campaign, helping us to one of the most decisive election results in the country. Finally, I want to thank the former member of Parliament for Calgary Skyview, Jagdeep Sahota, for her service to the residents of Calgary Skyview.

Throughout my time as a city councillor for Ward 5 and recently as a federal candidate, I often spoke about how governments can make life better for Calgarians.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1045)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I want to remind members that heckling is not allowed. Having conversations from one side of the House to the other is not acceptable while someone has the floor. I want to ask members in the House to be very respectful of those who have the floor.

The hon. member for Calgary Skyview.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, we have seen some very challenging times in Alberta over the last number of years, and in my riding in particular. The economic downturn, a massive hail-storm in 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic have had profound impacts on those who call Calgary's northeast home. No matter the challenge, we have come together time and time again to fight for what matters: safe neighbourhoods, healthy families, well-paying jobs and a bright future for our children.

I am proud to be part of a government that has put forward bold solutions to the difficult problems facing our city while always focusing on a fair recovery for all. I especially want to acknowledge that the Province of Alberta has received the largest dollar amount in per-capita transfers from the federal government to assist us with pandemic relief and economic recovery. This federal government had our backs when we needed it most. More than ever, Canadians appreciate the value of a strong national government that shows leadership in the face of adversity.

The riding I represent is one of the most ethnoculturally diverse in Canada, with people from all around the world who have come to Canada to build better lives for their families. Sadly, all levels of government have not always fulfilled all of their commitments to invest in new Canadians and to adequately respond to racism and discrimination.

When I was elected city councillor, I committed to being a strong voice for my constituents by immediately addressing long-standing inequities. In my new role as a member of Parliament, I will continue to embrace my duty to carry on much of this work by investing in people and infrastructure. Our government must help transform Calgary's economy while supporting workers, always making sure that nobody is left behind. I am grateful that our government has committed to continuing its important work in combatting inequities, systemic racism and discrimination.

The Address

Working Calgarians were instrumental in getting us through the pandemic. Calgary Skyview is home to thousands of essential workers: health care workers, public transit workers, truck drivers and taxi drivers, people working in grocery stores and food preparation, utility workers and tradespeople. These workers did not have the luxury of working from home and were directly exposed to the virus throughout the pandemic.

It is easy to thank them, but we must do much more to show our gratitude. Leaders need to show leadership, and those of us with the privilege of sitting in the House need to work even harder, whether we are here in person or working in our constituencies. This federal government has walked the talk by providing key benefits to those who lost their jobs and by procuring vaccines for all Canadians.

I have encouraged all Calgarians to get vaccinated and to follow public health guidelines. I will continue to advocate for public health as vaccines become available for our children. Working Calgarians, particularly visible minorities, were often criticized for the high infection rates, even when they were sacrificing their personal health by ensuring the safety of others, volunteering and sharing, and keeping the economy moving by ensuring the flow of goods. Today, upper northeast Calgary has one of the highest rates of vaccination in Canada, at 99.3%. All of those over the age of 12 have had at least one shot. It very likely has a higher percentage vaccinated than my colleagues in the Conservative caucus across the aisle.

• (1050)

Ultimately, I know that my constituents will answer the bell when times get tough. As a government, we must remain by their side in support, and embrace their trust by working as hard as they do.

The cost of living has become one of the most critical concerns facing Canadian families, and the situation is no different in Calgary Skyview. This government has done great work in tackling the affordability crisis. One example of this is the rapid housing initiative. In Calgary Skyview, across the street from the Akram Jomaa Islamic Centre, the rapid housing initiative is supporting a seniors housing facility with the conversion of a former hotel into a much-needed seniors facility. Local non-profits, such as the Dashmesh Culture Centre, have also shown tremendous leadership through collaboration with government to build the first women's transitional housing project in northeast Calgary. Projects like these save lives and give those in need a chance to get back on their feet and live safe and dignified lives.

There is much more work to be done, and our government is ready to get to work on several meaningful initiatives, such as the multi-generational home renovation tax credit. This would impact thousands of families living in northeast Calgary by helping them add a second unit to their home.

I recently had the privilege of joining the Prime Minister and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development for an important announcement in Edmonton. Our federal government came to an agreement with the Province of Alberta on affordable child care, which follows through on our election commitment to make life better not only for families but for all Canadians. Thousands of working families in Calgary Skyview will benefit from our govern-

ment's commitment to making life more affordable through \$10-a-day child care.

We cannot talk about how to build resilient and inclusive communities without talking about how we move around them. I have been a long-time advocate for robust and affordable public transit. People living in my riding are the highest users of public transit in Calgary, and this federal government has consistently supported increased investments and access. Whether it is the Blue Line or Green Line, we will stand and support public transit in Calgary—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have been trying to give the hon. member a signal to let him know that his time was running out. Maybe he could add to his speech during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot, whom I will advise to be very careful.

• (1055)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to enter the debate to ask some very important questions about the content of the Speech from the Throne.

My constituents have made it very clear over the last couple of weeks since the Speech from the Throne that two areas are lacking. One is a plan to combat the corruption and lack of ethics in possibly the most corrupt Canadian government in Canadian history. Two is the fact that the government is putting forward a “light on crime” agenda that is letting criminals out on our streets, which is having a serious impact, especially in the rural communities I represent. This is why it is so relevant.

Between rural crime, light on crime and the lack of ethics, I would ask the member to address what is seriously lacking in the government's throne speech.

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, I worked very closely on many crime initiatives in Calgary as a city councillor, as a member of the police commission and as the chair of the public safety task force. I can tell the member that our government supported working collaboratively through the public safety task force to bring forward meaningful consultation and funding to support municipalities in crime prevention initiatives, including on guns and gangs.

Our government has a commitment to making lives better and safer for all Canadians, unlike the Conservatives, who want to bring assault rifles back to the streets of Canada.

The Address

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, as everyone knows, before I was elected, I worked at a paper mill in Alma. I would like to send out greetings to my colleagues at the Resolute Forest Products plant.

I also want to thank my colleague from Calgary Skyview. I gather that, thanks to him, a lot more paper brochures were produced during the campaign by both Liberals and Conservatives. I really appreciate him doing that. Thanks to him, more political material was printed.

Getting back to the throne speech—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to interrupt the member to point out that his comments seem to be veering toward something I have already made a statement about.

I therefore expect the member to ensure that his question is related to the subject at hand.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I understand. I just wanted to congratulate my colleague on his fine work.

Let us come back to the Speech from the Throne. There is no mention of human rights in the speech, even though the Liberals keep telling us that they are the champions of international human rights.

I saw that a motion was rejected by the Liberals on Tuesday. They were unable to get it passed, even though the majority of the Liberal caucus was in favour of the motion.

When the Prime Minister came to power in 2015 he said he was going to change Canada's international reputation. Personally, all I have seen is someone get dressed up in costume in India. Is that the real answer?

[*English*]

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the first statement by the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean regarding support for factory workers was a question or comment.

Our government supported workers throughout the pandemic, through the CERB and small business supports, to ensure all Canadians across Canada who could not work had those supports to safely stay home to protect themselves and their families.

Regarding your question with respect to human rights, Canada has shown strong leadership internationally on many human rights initiatives. We look forward to doing more work on human rights across the globe.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member that he is to address his questions and comments through the chair. He may want to use the words “he” or “she” as opposed to “you”.

A brief question, the hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the government recognizes there is a great need in terms of health emergencies. Right now, we have an overdose crisis in my riding of Vancouver East. More people are dying from overdoses than they are dying from the pandemic.

Will the member work with the NDP and support our call to decriminalize and ensure that there is a safe supply so we can save lives?

• (1100)

Mr. George Chahal: Madam Speaker, all our municipalities across Canada are faced with health emergencies in their cities. In Calgary, for instance, we have had a tremendous number of challenges in our downtown core with many of our most vulnerable, especially during this pandemic. We have great local organizations such as the Bear Clan Patrol that have stepped up to support community members in need.

I look forward to working across the aisle with all parties in a collaborative manner to ensure we bring innovative solutions forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing I have noticed, and we saw it very recently, is that the Conservative Party wants to continue its personal attack on members of the House of Commons. Virtually from day one, and we can go back to 2015 or to the days when the leader of the Liberal Party was the leader of the third party in this chamber, the Conservative Party's agenda—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. It is very difficult to hear what the member is saying when members on this side of the House are yelling. I would say that it is more than heckling. Neither are acceptable when someone has the floor. I would ask members who have questions and comments to jot them down if they think they might forget them and they will have an opportunity to ask them after the member's speech.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suggest that my Conservative friends pay a bit more attention to the policies that the government puts forward and less attention on the personal attacks, as we have seen on the Prime Minister and other members.

At the end of the day, no matter what the Conservative Party determines is its priorities, our priorities will continue to be Canadians from coast to coast to coast and delivering good, sound public policy that is going to make a real difference.

I want to talk about some of the things from the last election, some of the commitments I made to being an advocate in the House of Commons, ensuring that the government continued to move forward on issues that really matter.

I have talked about the Canada child care program in the past and the millions of dollars, close to \$10 million or maybe even a bit more than that today, that go to support children in Winnipeg North every month, and how important it is that the government continue to support that program. From a historical perspective, no government in the history of Canada has supported children in the same way that this government has in the last six years. We have lifted thousands of children out of poverty, and that includes hundreds in Winnipeg North.

The Address

The Conservatives will have their own agenda, but I and other Liberal members of Parliament will continue to advocate for the best interests of children. That is one of the reasons why we are very proud of the fact that we are moving forward on \$10-a-day child care.

Does the Conservative Party not realize that we all benefit by that program? It would enable more people to be engaged in the workforce. The more people who are engaged in the workforce, the better it is for our GDP. One only need look at the wonderful province of Quebec, and many of my Quebec colleagues talk about the child care program and the positive impact it has had in Quebec. I am sure Ontario will come onside at some point, but all of Canada will benefit from the \$10-a-day child care program. That is caring and listening to our constituents. It is advocating for programs that are going to make a difference.

Another program—

Mr. James Bezan: It'll take you 20 years to get there.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: The member says—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. Members need to restrain themselves a bit for the respect of not only the individual who has the floor right now but also for this place. Again, if members have questions and comments, please reserve them for when it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

• (1105)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the problem is that I am very much limited on the time I can speak on all these wonderful initiatives, so I would appreciate it if the members on the other side would be more quiet.

Another area in which this government has done exceptionally well is supporting our seniors. Again, from day one, we increased substantially the guaranteed income supplement. The GIS is there to support the poorest seniors in Canada. We gave substantial increases, approximately \$900 annually, to the poorest seniors, again, lifting literally thousands of seniors out of poverty in all regions of our country. That happened even pre-pandemic.

During the pandemic, we gave direct payments to seniors, with an additional payment for those on the lowest income. We made an election platform commitment to increase payments to those seniors age 75 and over because of the limitations in terms of abilities and additional costs that they had to incur. It was 10%, which was unheard of. These are the types of commitments this government has made to our seniors from day one and we still continue to make them today.

Listening to our constituents and advocating for programs really make a difference. That is what Liberal members of Parliament are doing. I would encourage my Conservative friends to get on board with some of these programs as opposed to suggesting, as they did in the last election, that our proposed child care program was not a good thing, that they would take it away.

Now we have the new horizons program. The government has enhanced the funding for this program and continues to promote it, because it is to the benefit of seniors throughout the country. I

would suggest that all members of Parliament look at that program and promote it in their communities. The program has tangible results for seniors in all our constituencies.

Much like our support programs for seniors, such as new horizons, we also have programs for young people. Let us look at the youth summer program. Over the last five or six years, we have more than doubled of the program. Thousands and thousands of youth are getting employment, often their first opportunity for employment, because of this program. It is making a real difference in all our communities. Much like the new horizons program, which as members of Parliament we all get to contribute to the success of that program in our constituencies, members need to look at this program and promote it among their constituents.

When I was first elected as a parliamentarian in 1988, one of the primary issues was health care. Health care is not just provincial jurisdiction. I know this will upset the separatists from the Bloc, but Canadians love and cherish our health care system. During the pandemic, we learned a little more about areas that needed more attention.

I am thinking about national long-term health care. We need to have better long-term care for our seniors. This government is committed to delivering that. Every Liberal member of Parliament understands it and advocates for that in his or her constituency, and nationwide. We understand the importance of medication. Since day one, we have invested literally hundreds of millions to keep prescribed medicine prices as low as possible for Canadians.

• (1110)

In our throne speech in September 2019, we indicated that willing provinces should come and talk to us about the national pharmacare, because the only way we can have a national pharmacare program is if we have support from the provinces, and that is something we want to see.

For the first time, we have a Prime Minister who understands the issue of mental health, and we have now incorporated that into national policy. That is something I believe all members of the House should get behind, because it is definitely something all Canadians want. They want government to play a stronger role on the issue of mental health, and we are seeing a commitment to that.

I have to provide comment on reconciliation. This is something opposition members like to criticize. I can tell members that 80% of the 94 calls to action are being acted on in one way or another, with many of them having been passed. Whether it is regarding language, child care or a statutory holiday, this government takes the calls to action very seriously, and we are acting on them.

I look forward to any questions that might come.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, while I deeply respect my colleague's passion, saying something louder does not make it true.

The Address

While I appreciate that he is talking about child care and all of these things, I am curious to know why it is so much worse, if you are doing so many things. I have heard from your colleagues, saying that the cost of living is the worst, that we have never had a mental health crisis so bad and that things have never been worse, yet you are telling us that you are doing the best job possible.

Why is it so bad, if you are doing such a great job?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not telling the hon. member anything, and I would just ask her to address the questions through the chair. She may want to use “he” or “she” as opposed to “you”.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in terms of the manner in which I present myself, it is something I have developed in the last number of years of being an advocate, and the member can turn down the volume if she so chooses. At the end of the day I am very passionate about these issues, because I believe they are in the best interests of Canadians and the constituents I represent, and I believe a part of being an advocate is making sure I am being heard.

I applaud the member for recognizing that the issues I have talked about are important. She is conceding that, and that is one of the reasons I would recommend that, as opposed to listening to nothing but the Conservative spin, she start looking at some of the things that are actually being done—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Go ask your constituents.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: —because on a lot of the issues she raised, she would see that there have been actions: literally hundreds of millions of dollars in commitments, and negotiations and discussions with the different stakeholders, in particular our provinces, territories and indigenous communities.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that she had a chance to ask her question. She should take the opportunity to listen to the answer.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like the hon. member for Winnipeg North to elaborate on how we can grow the economy. As everyone knows, we are currently battling inflation. There are two solutions right now, specifically, child care and affordable housing. What is the government doing? It seems to be dragging its feet.

What do you plan to do to help this situation, to help families buy their first home? Will you, the government, finally do something to fight inflation?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member and everyone in the House that members must address their remarks to the Chair, not directly to other members.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, one of the greatest things we can do as a government, in terms of fighting inflation, is to create an environment that employs more people. The more people who are employed, the more contributions are going to be made to Canada's GDP, and that is one of the ways we can fight inflation.

I would ask members to take into consideration that inflation, much like the pandemic, is not something that is unique to Canada. This is something that is taking place around the world, and because Canada took the initiatives it did, such as the wage subsidy program and the CERB program, supporting millions of Canadians and thousands of businesses, we are in a better position to ensure that Canada is in a great position to recover and get back. In fact, we have gotten back more jobs than we had prepandemic. That is the way we are going to be able to overcome, going forward.

● (1115)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for pointing out something that is very important, which is that health care in this country is shared jurisdiction. The federal government has a role to play. The existence of the Canada Health Act is proof positive of that, where we set conditions for the provinces to get money. There are five conditions in the Canada Health Act that provinces must meet in order to receive that money. I would point out that the words “health care” do not exist in the Constitution. All that is there is that the provinces are given the power to establish and maintain hospitals, so it is important to point that out.

There is no mention of pharmacare in this throne speech. The price of drugs has not gone down since the government came to power in 2015. Why should Canadians take any comfort from the member's comment that they may have relief in terms of universal pharmacare?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I believe the possibility of national pharmacare is still there. We saw it in the previous throne speech, in which the federal government indicated it is looking for willing partners at the provincial level.

The member knows well that the only way we can be successful at getting a first-class pharmacare system is by having the provinces onside. We will continue, I suspect, to look for willing provinces on that point.

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to stand in this historic House today amongst colleagues from across this vast nation as the representative of Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame and shadow minister for ACOA.

I thank the great people of my riding for selecting me and putting their trust in me to represent them in the 44th Parliament. At this time, I would also like to thank those who volunteered their time and supported me on my campaign. Without them, I would not be here today.

The Address

As well, I send my condolences to the Starkes family on the passing of their mom and grandmother, Ruby Starkes, who is being laid to rest today at 2 p.m. in Baie Verte, Newfoundland and Labrador. The Starkes were a great support to me throughout my life and have been great mentors.

Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame is a large riding that makes up 40% of the island portion of Newfoundland and Labrador. I come from a tiny fishing village called Wild Cove, in the very northwest corner of the riding, in White Bay. I was involved in the fishing industry from a young age and eventually ran our family fishing enterprise for nine years. For the last 17 years, I have owned and operated several restaurants. At times, I have had up to 60 employees.

Coming from an entrepreneurial background, I know what it is like to hold my head in my hands, and what it is like to make a payroll. The feeling of walking into my restaurants in late March 2020 and not knowing if they would ever reopen due to the unknowns of the pandemic will never be lost on me, nor will being at sea, caught in a hurricane and having the responsibility of my crew and the vessel on my shoulders. Now, a different responsibility rests on my shoulders, and it is a very heavy weight.

Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, in fact, the entire province of Newfoundland and Labrador, faces an uncertain future. Our main economic drivers are related to natural resources, but the Speech from the Throne neglects the support needed for our natural resource industries.

The current Liberal government has relentlessly worked to dismantle our offshore oil and gas industry with ballooning red tape, which has destroyed investor appetite. We have lost 5,500 jobs as our oil industry has been scaled back. However, Norway is rapidly expanding its offshore oil industry after incentivizing companies early in the pandemic, which lured investment from our offshore to theirs.

The rhetoric that the government sells the people of my province is that there is no future in oil and gas and that these jobs are being phased out, yet countries like Brazil, Trinidad and Guyana ramped up their drilling and exploration programs. Why is this government spreading false information, and why is it forcing the men and women in the oil and gas industry to leave their families to go to the shores of far-off countries in order to find employment? These are people like Luke Jarvis of Harbour Breton, who was one of the 5,500 who lost their jobs in our offshore oil industry. He now has to leave his family and commute to Brazil to work in its oil industry.

The attack on Newfoundland and Labrador does not stop with the oil and gas industry. The fishery also has been thrown into peril as a result of six years of Liberal government mismanagement. Fishers in my riding are fearful of plans to increase marine-protected areas from 14% of Canada's oceans to 30% by 2030. These marine-protected areas are arbitrarily chosen, with very little industry consultation, as if done with a paintbrush. In most cases, fishers are barred from accessing prime historical fishing grounds and not even allowed to use low-impact fishing gear, like hook and line. Fishers need to fish where the fish are and not where they are told to fish.

DFO science is another bone of contention within the fishing industry. This year, fishers like Brad Rideout in Robert's Arm were dealt a blow when the mackerel quota was cut in half. American science suggested we could sustainably harvest 10,000 tonnes, but our scientists set it at 4,000 tonnes. As waters warm, species like mackerel migrate further north. Therefore, science needs to adapt and relocate where they survey species. Fishers in my riding have observed mackerel in quantities never seen in their lifetime, and their frustration mounts with the way quotas are being set.

● (1120)

Not all species are as lucky as mackerel to migrate south before seals invade from the north. Since the eighties, the seal population has grown from two million to at least ten million. Scientists estimate that harp seals alone, with a population of 7.6 million, consume anywhere from four to eight kilos of fish per day. That means harp seals consume our entire provincial landed tonnage of fish in three to six days.

In 3PS, a region that has communities like Harbour Breton and Hermitage, grey seals have had a population explosion. Historically, there were approximately 100,000 in that herd. Now the number sits at five times that amount. Fishers there now watch seals even consume lobster. It was no coincidence that this year, sport salmon fishing was stopped in this region and the cod quota was cut in half within the two-week period. Fishers in 3PS are fearful that the minister of fisheries will place cod on her moratorium once again in 2022.

The fishing industry is crying out for a solution to the overpredation caused by seals. By bringing the seal populations back to historical levels, our \$2-billion fishing industry could grow to a \$6-billion or \$8-billion industry. If we do not act now, our fishery is doomed by this ecological disaster. The possibilities for expansion in our oil and gas and fishing industries are endless. We just need the political appetite to make it happen.

Speaking of appetite, the Speech from the Throne did nothing to address food security in our province. Make no mistake, food security cannot be overlooked. In Newfoundland and Labrador, we only produce 15% of what we consume. The ongoing pandemic and the recent devastation caused by the flooding on the west coast of the island, which cut off supplies coming in from the mainland, shone a spotlight on this very issue. Typically, we have enough food on the island to last for just three days.

No matter how much food we have, one group in our province is really feeling the pinch. Seniors make up more of our population than anywhere else in Canada. I receive emails on a daily basis from seniors who have to choose between heating their homes, buying medication, or putting food on the table. The short-sightedness of the government resulted in giving to seniors in one hand and taking it away from the other. Seniors are especially affected by increasing inflation. Our country's national inflation rate of 4.7% is the highest it has been since 2003. Many feel that this figure is closer to 15% in my province.

The ever-increasing carbon tax applied throughout the logistics chain has compounded the effects of inflation in rural Newfoundland and Labrador, where a rebate cheque is never seen. This is a disgraceful attack on the people of Newfoundland and Labrador by a government that is constantly virtue signalling with no regard for the human cost. We have to consider the human cost and the impact of the decisions made in this sacred place. That seems to be lost on the party opposite. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians find themselves struggling to make ends meet. Action needs to be taken.

Let us review: the government has attacked my province's key industries of offshore oil and gas and fishing, has made life increasingly more expensive for seniors and has no regard for inflation. Is it any wonder that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feel abandoned by the government?

The government claims that no one is left behind. I can tell members of this House that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador feel left behind. They have elected me to be a voice that is free to speak on issues that have only been spoken of from a radical Liberal environmentalist narrative for the last six years. I am free to say what my six colleagues opposite want to say; what they cannot say. I will be a voice for Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame and all of Newfoundland and Labrador.

• (1125)

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member on his election victory and his inaugural comments in the House. They were very well done. I have had occasion to spend some time with him outside this House. As he points out, he is from a small town but he clearly has a large personality and will contribute greatly to this House. In fact, during some of our discussions, I thought we saw eye to eye on a number of things and sort of envisioned a world where we could work together and perhaps someday sit in the same caucus, but about a minute and a half into his speech I got over that. Clearly, his surroundings over there have gotten to him, although the caucus was here.

My question—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, my question arises from the first minute and a half of the member's speech when he was talking about his personal experience running a restaurant business and how much he appreciated the ability to carry on.

Can we work together and will he support Bill C-2?

The Address

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the kind comments of the member opposite. When it comes to Bill C-2, we have a lot of discussion that needs to take place in this House. We need to know if that bill fits what is needed in my industry and in all of the hospitality and tourism industry in Canada. I have many friends from coast to coast who call me, email me and text me on a daily basis and say, "Cliff, we need help. Speak up for us."

I am here to advocate within my caucus and to work with members opposite. I will do my very best to make sure that the right thing is done with Bill C-2.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned the fossil fuel industry in his speech.

It was not the Bloc Québécois but rather the OECD who said the following regarding the climate crisis: "The longer governments wait, the greater the risks of an abrupt transition in which energy prices are higher and more volatile."

I really wonder why the official opposition party sees only one form of energy, that which comes from fossil sources and will destroy the environment, our health, our youth and our planet. Why can they not see that there are other forms of energy that are renewable and do not cause all this damage?

[*English*]

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, I think a lot about fossil fuels and I think about China producing 28% of the world's emissions and producing 4.5 million gigawatts of electricity by coal. China is a country that is about the same size as Canada. China produces 28% of the world's emissions and Canada produces 2% of the world's emissions. If we want to virtue signal, that is fine. We all understand that, but we need to address the problem where it is and that is with the big emitters, not Canada.

• (1130)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I give my colleague my sympathies for the loss that he described early in his speech.

I also come from a province where oil and gas is, of course, very important to our economy. We are seeing very little investment in the oil and gas sector because we have not shown, in Canada, that we are doing what we can to take carbon out of the barrel.

Does the member see a way that we could use our oil and gas subsidies in this country to invest in our sectors so that they could be removing the carbon from the barrel? Is there a way we could use those subsidies to invest in renewable energies and make the sector more attractive to international investors, but also make sure that the people in Alberta and across Canada are able to keep working?

The Address

Mr. Clifford Small: Madam Speaker, if there is one barrel of oil produced in this world, it should be Canadian oil. We have ethical, low-carbon oil and we need to support our own people right here. Europe is sourcing ethical oil. Newfoundland and Labrador has the lowest-carbon oil in the world and it needs to be supported.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand today to represent the people of the Bay of Quinte. I am extremely proud to have been elected the first Conservative member for my riding. I want to thank all the volunteers who worked hard putting their time into the election, especially my campaign manager Susan Smith. We know how much work it is, especially to manage me.

As many members of the House know, it is also a family affair. My mother Heather was one of the greatest volunteers. She is an Atlantic Canadian. She was born in Fredericton and grew up in Prince Edward Island. It is no surprise that door knocking is just easy for Maritimers. My kids were all involved as well. Jack is eight, Patrick is seven and Zoey is four. My biggest thanks go to my wife Allyson. Most of us know that the biggest sacrifice in this job is our families and especially our partners. I am not sure if this was meant to scare us, but our first training in this work was a work-life balance seminar, where I was told that 75% of MPs end up getting divorced. That is a big number. I moved right next to my father-in-law in Ottawa, which he has said is a blessing and a curse, so time will tell. It is a big sacrifice to have us away from our families. My biggest thanks and love go to my wife Allyson, who is home with my children right now sacrificing her time for us so that we can make this region and country a better place.

My wife and her family are from Thunder Bay, or T-Bay as they affectionately call it. Thunder Bay residents are extremely strong people. I went there once in the winter and can say that they are so tough because it is so cold in January. My wife lives by the motto "always choose love". In 2015, we lost our son Teddy at birth to a congenital heart defect. Every year there are thousands of Canadians who experience the terror of infant loss or miscarriage. Allyson was instrumental in our region for being a voice to women who experience loss. She wrote a blog called alwayschooselove.net and she continues to be a tireless advocate for women. She is a light for so many, and I love her dearly.

I would also be amiss to not talk about my grandfather and father, who were both political candidates provincially, in 1975 and 2003 respectively, for the provincial Conservative Party and who did not get to represent their constituents. This proves that the third time is the charm. My grandmother Audrey said that she was happy to be alive to see a Williams elected to the House. Both have immensely contributed to our region. My grandfather Don Williams was an entrepreneur. He operated Stirling Motors from 1956 for 20 years and then successfully started Williams Hotels, which he still runs today. He raised awareness for organ donation in Canada, having received one of the first heart transplants in the first decade, in 1991. As well, he supported Camp Quin-Mo-Lac and many local charities. He would always tell people to sign their donor cards. My grandfather taught me tenacity.

My father John Williams became the mayor of Quinte West for eight years and then was the honorary colonel of CFB 8 Wing in Trenton. My father passed away in 2020, but would have loved to

have been here. He lived by the motto "get 'er done". My father, alongside long-time Liberal MPP Hugh O'Neil, created the Afghanistan memorial in Bain Park in Quinte West, having attended every repatriation ceremony during the Afghanistan war, and was instrumental in the creation of the Highway of Heroes on Highway 401 to commemorate those men and women of our military.

As an MP, I look forward to the challenge of representing my constituents in this House and feel very privileged to be here in this place.

Never before have we had the challenges we face in this country. We all know that we live in the best country on the planet. Our standard of living, history, culture and freedoms are among the most revered in the world. However, we have some persistent problems facing Canadians right now. Inflation is the highest in 20 years. I have had calls from seniors this week who cannot decide whether to pay for groceries or rent. We consistently hear that employment is back to pre-COVID levels, yet we have heard of well over a million job vacancies in this country. I can say we have 2,500 skilled jobs we cannot fill in the Bay of Quinte today. We have had restaurants shut down for up to two weeks.

• (1135)

Housing is a disaster right now, with prices doubling in the past year. Prince Edward County, in my region, had one of the highest jumps in housing costs in the last year, at 170%, with the average price last month at \$1.2 million. How could anyone who is 25 or 30 years old afford a house at \$1.2 million?

What are the solutions? I am a Conservative because I believe that Conservatives believe in the dignity of us as Canadians to be individuals, and that as Canadian individuals we have the right to be free, live free and pursue that which motivates us the most, not because man or government says it is the right thing to do, but because it is our God-given natural right. I also believe that to fix our inflation on housing and other things caused by the overprinting of our money, we need to be producing more of the things money buys. That means homes. It means freeing up home builders to build the things that Canadians need. It means unleashing Canadian innovation and making things in Canada.

The Address

I come from rural Canada. If we are to fix the persistent problems facing Canadians and build the next decade into a time when Canada can lead the world, then we need to focus on urban and rural Canada producing more of the things that money buys. To fix our inflation nation, we need to become an innovation nation to produce more wealth. That means allowing individuals to pursue what motivates them and ensuring that the government assists individuals to make, grow, dream and do things in Canada so that individuals making things in a free and enterprise-motivated economy will create wealth and jobs, reversing inflation and ensuring Canada does not see any more decline.

This is not just in urban Canada, where there are 94 cities with over 100,000 people, but in rural Canada, where there are over 3,700 municipalities. The key to Canada's growth is not just in urban Canada, but in rural Canada. An innovation nation includes all 3,700 municipalities, its regions and its more than 600 first nations, Métis and Inuit reserves.

In 2018, I was part of Canada's first Canadian Rural Innovation Summit in Belleville, at which we hosted the thinkers, dreamers and doers to talk about empowering Canada's rural regions, accelerating businesses and growing our Canadian innovation share. We have an alarming rural out-migration number. Eighty per cent of our youth in rural areas end up leaving the rural areas to go to urban centres because that is where the jobs are. I lost many of my friends growing up, as they left for bigger city centres. We need youth in our regions and in our rural regions. Some say youth are the voice of tomorrow. I believe that youth in this country are the voice of today. How can we truly listen to our children if they continue to leave the place we call home? How can they stay in the place we want them to call home when they cannot afford the home?

We need a great rebuild of what will make Canada thrive: its rural regions. These are regions like the Bay of Quinte that have so much potential. It is potential I know how to unlock and potential we saw in 2018 when we hosted Canada's first Canadian Rural Innovation Summit. We need to start demanding the best from Canada and that specifically means the best from rural Canada.

Right now we are not seeing entrepreneurs create the greatest wealth they can in Canada across all regions, rural and urban. We need to strengthen the innovation in this country and protect Canadian ideas and enterprise. Our intellectual property, the measure of intellectual ideas that translate into wealth in this country, is massively underperforming that of other nations. In 2019, prior to COVID-19, Canada produced \$39 billion in IP. That is not bad, but compare that with the Americans, who produced \$6.6 trillion of IP, or 169 times that of Canada, when they only have 10 times the population.

We are not protecting the stuff that creates the stuff that creates wealth and kills inflation: homes; technology; our natural resources, including our softwood lumber industry; and new world-leading clean energy, including our clean, ethical oil and natural gas and advanced manufacturing. Ontario made a great announcement this morning that a new modular nuclear power unit is being developed in the province. It is going to create a large amount of GDP for the province and Canada. Innovation means improving what we are doing in the world and here in Canada, and we can do so much more.

Members cannot see it but I am wearing red socks. I wear red socks because red represents the colour of our flag and the sacrifice that has been made by our soldiers to ensure that this is a free, democratic country, and because I believe that just like yesterday when the House came together on Bill C-4, the House can and will come together more often in Canada. Our people depend on it.

God bless Canada. Merry Christmas and happy holidays.

● (1140)

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, being the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, I want to sincerely congratulate the member for Bay of Quinte for his election. He must be a good guy, given he is married to someone from Thunder Bay. I am sure that when his kids started playing hockey it came natural to them.

I was interested in the member's comments about businesses in his riding not being able to find employees. As he may know, we have the same problem in Thunder Bay, and I think this is a common problem across Canada. However, we are bringing in 400,000 immigrants this year. Maybe that is not enough. What is his and his party's stance on immigration levels?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, to the hon. member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, I even learned how to play boot hockey, which apparently is something they play there. I love Thunder Bay; it is great. However, I love it in July more than in January.

We are absolutely for more immigration. In our platform during the campaign, we talked about skilled immigration and ensuring we have the labour needed to help our companies grow. Our country will not grow if our companies are not growing and if we are not providing jobs to Canadians and those who are entering this country to ensure we are growing it.

We talk about GDP for this nation. Fifty per cent of our GDP is from natural resources, so we need to make sure we have employees who allow those industries to thrive. As I said, for rural innovation, we need workers to grow companies. It is as simple as that. Growing companies creates more wealth, it contributes to our GDP and it will help solve the inflation crisis we have.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was bothered by something in my colleague's speech, in which he admits that rents in his riding have doubled and people are having a hard time finding housing. That is a widespread problem throughout Quebec and Canada.

The Address

Then again, my colleague believes that the solution is to build more houses. However, we do not need houses. At present, 500,000 households in Quebec have an urgent need for housing because they spend 30% or more of their income on housing or because their home is often unhealthy, too large or too small. That is the current problem.

Building more houses is not in itself a bad idea. In the last Parliament, we worked on improving certain Liberal programs that were inadequate. However, there is still more to do. For example, there is a first-time homebuyer program that, while not a bad program, is too restrictive and has seen no uptake from buyers.

What is missing is the massive investment required to house the poor, the most vulnerable, women who are victims of domestic violence, people with mental health and addiction problems and those who are homeless. The Bloc Québécois is proposing that the government immediately invest 1% of its budget to house people. There are 40,000 households—

• (1145)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I remind him that he had the floor for a question and not a speech.

The hon. member for Bay of Quinte.

[*English*]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I agree with part of what my hon. colleague said. We have massive social problems. We have problems with rent and housing. However, the solution is not more money. That is what is causing the biggest problem right now, which is inflation. People cannot afford anything.

The answer is supply. We need to be supplying more homes and, yes, we need to look at working across party lines to ensure that how we create housing is not just a federal government issue. It is going to mean working with our provinces, including Quebec, and with our municipalities to ensure that we allow our builders to build homes.

The member also mentioned mental health, addictions and poverty. Right now they are all caused and exacerbated by rising costs, which are caused by—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I need to allow for a brief question. I am sorry. I want to remind members to keep their questions within a minute for the first two and then 30 seconds after that.

I would ask the member for Courtenay—Alberni to be very brief with his question so we can get a brief answer and move to the next speaker.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I first want to congratulate my colleague, and I want to thank him for talking about the cost of public service on our families. I really appreciate that.

He talked about wealth leaving rural Canada. Too often, wealth starts in rural Canada and leaves rural Canada. He talked about housing. In the early 1990s, 10% of our housing was non-market

housing. Now it is less than 4%. In Europe it is 30%. Non-market housing is the solution.

The Liberal-Conservative coalition and free-market solutions are not going to solve the housing problem. They are leaving a legacy of thousands and thousands of people homeless in my riding and across the country—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I would ask members to be mindful of time.

The hon. member for Bay of Quinte can give a brief response.

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I am not going to repeat what I have already said on cash, its infusion and what the costs are, but this morning there was an article that said Ottawa has yet to account for \$600 billion of its spending from last year, and now the government wants to spend more of it.

We know why these prices have gone up. We know why everything is exacerbated. We need to get those numbers and we need to get them right away in order to fix everything else.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with my hon. colleague from Missis-sauga—Erin Mills.

It is an absolute privilege to be back here in the House to bring the voice, perspective and views of the good people of Kings—Hants. Of course, this is the second time I have had the privilege of being elected as the member of Parliament for Kings—Hants, and although it is not my first time speaking in the 44th Parliament, I want to take the opportunity to thank the residents of Kings—Hants for placing their confidence in me to be their voice and their member of Parliament.

All members of the House will certainly appreciate that when we get into public life, there has to be people in our corner. First and foremost is our family, so I would like to take the opportunity to thank my fiancée Kimberly. She is my rock. There are challenges when we need to be in Ottawa and are having busy nights on the road meeting constituents, so I thank her. To my mom, my grandmothers and my entire family, I have the best support system one could ask for. I could not be here without them.

I also thank my campaign manager, Kristina Shannon. She and I went to high school together. She has had work experience with Premier McNeil in Nova Scotia. Dale Palmeter, before her, worked on my campaign in 2019. Without them, I would not be the member of Parliament standing here in the House.

I also want to thank all the volunteers, and not only those on my team, whom of course I am very thankful for. Democracy relies upon volunteers getting behind candidates of all stripes to contribute to something bigger than themselves. To the volunteers for the candidates in Kings—Hants and indeed across the country, I give my thanks for their work and commitment to democracy.

The Address

I want to quickly describe Kings—Hants to my colleagues and to Canadians who might be watching. It is largely a rural riding. The area of Kings—Hants, and East Hants particularly, includes communities that I would describe as suburban. They are about 40 minutes outside of Halifax. There are some large rural townships, but also areas that are extremely rural, where there could be a kilometre between houses.

I call it a mini Canada. There are three indigenous communities: Sipekne'katik, Annapolis Valley First Nation and Glooscap First Nation. We are home to the highest tides in the world. We have a burgeoning wine sector too, so to members of Parliament and Canadians who enjoy a nice glass of wine, please consider supporting the Nova Scotia wine industry. It is very robust.

We are also what I would call the agriculture heartland of Atlantic Canada. We have the most supply-managed farms east of Quebec, a number of horticulture-based businesses and are known for the Annapolis Valley apple. Of course, we have Acadia University, which has drawn significant alumni and people from across the world and indeed across the country. There is also the Michelin plant in the Annapolis Valley and of course Halifax Stanfield, which is just outside the perimeter of Kings—Hants but is indeed a major employer in the area. Finally, we are the birthplace of hockey, in Windsor, Nova Scotia.

The Speech from the Throne is a document that, as my colleagues would know, is very broad in nature. It puts out the principles the government hopes to achieve in the days ahead. I want to take some time to highlight things I heard on doorsteps and that I hope parliamentarians in the House will work collaboratively to help advance in the days ahead.

First and foremost is labour and immigration. Our government was there throughout the pandemic to make sure there were supports in place for small businesses and individuals. The fact that 101% of the jobs we lost during the pandemic have been returned is a marquee element that shows we have been successful in that domain, and especially successful given the pandemic and the challenges of immigration over the past two years.

As we have heard in the House, across the country labour is a major issue, and I know the government will be focused on this in the days ahead. One area of particular interest to me is the seasonal agricultural worker program. Over 1,500 people from countries such as Jamaica and Mexico come to the Annapolis Valley, and particularly to Kings—Hants, to support the agriculture sector every day.

In our platform, there was a commitment to an express entry program and the ability to reduce administrative red tape. This will not only help the employees coming from their countries of origin, but also help the employers in the farming community. As a member of Parliament, I will be working closely with the government to help implement this in the days ahead.

• (1150)

Let us talk about housing. We know that housing is a major challenge in urban communities, but indeed it is in rural as well. One of the silver linings of the pandemic is that, during the height of it, many individuals, who are working-class professionals, who have

families, chose to move from urban locations to rural parts of our country. That is extremely beneficial for the long-term demographic outlook of rural communities across Canada, but it has put a pressure on our housing supply.

I will give one example. I remember in the 2019 election, I was on the Hants shore. It is an area that largely has an older demographic. There were a number of houses that were for sale, and they had been for sale for quite some time. There is no real estate available on the Hants shore right now, and housing prices are up 40%.

I know our government will be working hard on this issue, but I do want to highlight that this is not just a Government of Canada issue. This is going to require all three levels of government between the federal, provincial and municipal leaders. We know that indigenous communities have to be part of that conversation, the private sector and indeed non-profits in terms of the work that we have to do.

Let us talk about climate change. I just mentioned that Kings—Hants is home to the highest tides in the world. What a constant, everyday reminder of the important work that needs to be done. Over the past two elections this has been a predominant theme. I have heard from my constituents the need for the government to do more and to move hard in that direction.

On the heels of COP26, we know that there has to be more work to be done to be able to protect 1.5°C of global warming. The forest fires in western Canada combined with the flooding that we have seen in British Columbia, but not just British Columbia, as they are also in my province of Nova Scotia and indeed in Newfoundland and Labrador, I think is a reminder for all Canadians, indeed all parliamentarians, that we need to be collectively working in this regard.

Our government has promised and has mentioned in the Speech from the Throne caps on the oil and gas production and the emissions associated with such, the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies and the development of EV vehicles. These are going to be crucial in the days ahead for us to be able to meet our target.

As a member of Parliament, what I intend to focus on is the way we can work with the agriculture community to help reduce their emissions. Farmers are doing incredible work, but at the same time, we need to be able to do more. That is where I will put my focus. I also think we need to be mindful of how we can draw private sector investment in and how the government can make that happen because government investment in subsidy can only go so far.

I mentioned I have three indigenous communities. We just had the Speech from the Throne delivered from the first indigenous Governor General in Canada's history. I want to particularly focus on indigenous housing, infrastructure and investment in social programming. I look forward to building relationships with chiefs and council that are there and to be able to move that forward.

The Address

In my view as a parliamentarian, the two biggest challenges we will all face in the 44th Parliament, those that will be on the heels as we work our way out of this pandemic, will be twofold: One, growing our economy to make sure that the expenses we took on during the pandemic are sustainable when coupled with the investments the government is planning in the days ahead; and two, addressing climate change and reducing emissions. Both of those require real attention to investments on how to grow the economy.

I want to mention agriculture. As I said, it is the backbone of the economy in Kings—Hants, and I would argue it is the backbone of the economy in Canada. One in eight jobs in Canada are tied to the agriculture sector. It is a \$130-billion industry. We have tremendous opportunity to be able to expand that to not only feed Canada but the world. I look at things like the Barton Report and the ways that government can move ahead.

That is where I will be putting my attention. I am pleased to see that there was a commitment around business risk management. To help drive the wine industry in Canada, we have put \$101 million in that. That will matter in Kings—Hants and supply managed farms. We were there for farmers at the height of the negotiations of the new CUSMA. We will be there to make sure that they are protected in the days ahead.

Two quick points I would say before I finish are, first, the importance of child care, and what that is going to mean to the people in Kings—Hants, and indeed to people across the country, to get parents back to work and help make sure that it is affordable. Finally, we need to work on ways that we can increase interprovincial trade and reduce barriers in light of global protectionism.

• (1155)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, in my colleague's riding, much like mine, agriculture is the main driver of the economy. Over the last 20 years, farmers have been making changes to their farming practices to make farming more sustainable. In fact, in a worldwide index, Canada has the most sustainable farming in the world.

Prior to the election, the government said it was going to have a 30% emissions reduction on fertilizer, but it has not said anything about how it is going to do that. Farmers in my riding are extremely concerned about this because, without the use of fertilizer, the amount of crops they can grow will go down, our exports will go down and food insecurity will become a problem. Also, as we pursue biofuels as the next wave, we will need more canola to meet that demand, but we are going to see less canola grown because of a 30% emissions reduction in fertilizer.

I wonder if the member has any information he would like to share with the House about how this might be accomplished by the government, so we can get some certainty for our producers.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member and I share an understanding of the importance of the agricultural sector to the entire country.

On the question on fertilizer reduction, I have had conversations with Fertilizer Canada about ways we could move that forward. We know that the work being done by Environment and Climate

Change Canada right now, as it relates to carbon offsets, is going to be an important part of that.

We have to work as a government to bridge that gap between recognizing the work farmers are already doing, while at the same time, asking them to be a part of the solution and do even more. I certainly want to highlight that there was \$130 million in the last budget for this, whether it was in business risk management, being there for our dairy farmers or some of the initiatives around climate and agriculture.

Those are all important measures, and I look forward to working with the member to advance them in the days ahead.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, our colleague spoke about how important it is to reduce greenhouse gases and about what his government has done.

I genuinely wonder if he has read the report from the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development. This report was damning for his government, especially when it comes to the emissions reduction fund, which goes entirely to the oil and gas industry. The Liberal government is trying to convince us that we will be able to increase production if we reduce emissions from the oil and gas sector.

I have seen this kind of cynical behaviour before, back in the 1990s, when cigarette companies were claiming that there was a light cigarette that was healthy.

I wonder if this is something the average Liberal can understand: Focusing on oil is not the way to combat climate change.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

• (1200)

[*English*]

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, Canada is the fourth-largest producer of oil and gas in the world. Although the Bloc member, whose goal is to create sovereignty for Quebec in this country, may not recognize its importance, oil and gas are 25% of Canada's exports.

Our government is focused on ways we could reduce emissions associated with production in the oil and gas sector. We do not have the ability to control production elements. That is a provincial domain. He should respect that as a member of the Bloc. They certainly call for it a lot in the House.

The Address

We are focused on reducing emissions, and we recognize that a transition will happen, but it is not going to happen overnight. We are committed to Canadians workers and to being able to move both climate and our economy forward together.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke a little about small businesses.

The heart of Winnipeg Centre is absolutely made up of small businesses, and they are barely making ends meet because they did what needed to be done to keep our communities safe.

Currently, the CEBA loan repayment is set to be due December 2022. We are still in a pandemic. This will gut businesses. Is my hon. colleague open to expanding the repayment date for the CEBA loans until at least 2024?

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, the member hit has it right on the head. Our government was there throughout the pandemic and continues to be there with the introduction of Bill C-2, which would support the hardest-hit businesses across the country.

We did put the program in place to end on December 31, 2022. The fact of the matter is, that is something we could look at. Our fiscal framework will be challenged because we have just gone through the pandemic. We do have to focus on supporting small businesses, but I will leave that for the Minister of Finance to ultimately make her decision.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During his intervention today, the member for Kings—Hants said that the birthplace of hockey was in Nova Scotia. I would direct him to a CBC article from January 6, 2016, which disputes that. It states the birthplace is actually Kingston, Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. Nor do I agree with the statement of the member.

Mr. Kody Blois: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. While I certainly respect the point of order just raised by the member for Kingston and the Islands, I would have to fundamentally disagree. I would point him to the historians who have seen that it was based in Nova Scotia.

He and I can take this outside the House. I certainly appreciate his raising it for the Hansard.

The Deputy Speaker: While I appreciate the points of order, they are not points of order. They are debate.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to rise in the House today to speak in response to the Speech from the Throne.

Last week our government outlined a comprehensive plan to move our country forward and finish the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last 20 months, our federal government has remained focused on doing whatever it takes to support Canadians. In an unprecedented crisis, we took unprecedented action, and through our federal programs, we have kept food on the table for nearly nine million Canadians through CERB and the CRB, helped more than 700,000 small businesses stay afloat and protected over 3.9 million Canadian jobs.

There are local businesses in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills that had a very successful Black Friday weekend, only because they had our support to survive. Now, as we move forward, we must focus on economic recovery. That means focusing on jobs, affordability, taking stronger action against climate change, moving forward toward a path of reconciliation and ensuring everyone has access to health care. Last week's Speech from the Throne highlighted just that.

It is no secret that housing prices have risen drastically across the country over the years, and we are feeling the impact in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills. Since I was first elected in 2015, hundred of constituents in Erin Mills have written to me to share their concerns about the rising cost of living, and our efforts for Canada's economic recovery must continue to focus on affordability.

From day one, our government has made housing a clear priority. We launched Canada's first national housing strategy and invested more than \$72 billion over 10 years, starting in 2017, to ensure Canadians have a safe and affordable place to call home. To date, our housing strategy has supported the creation of over 100,000 new units and repaired over 300,000 more.

As we continue to address supply issues, our government has helped put home ownership back in reach for Canadians with a more flexible first-time home buyer incentive, a new rent-to-own program and a reduction in closing costs for first-time buyers. In the term ahead, I look forward to working with our new Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion to push ahead on the home buyers' bill of rights, which would help ensure that the process of purchasing and selling one's home is fair and transparent. We are taking action because each and every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home.

As I was knocking on doors over this summer, I met Janet. She is a nurse and a working mother in my riding with two young children. While she has worked on the front lines of this pandemic, she has relied on child care programs to ensure that her children are taken care of. Between the long hours at work and the costs of these services, she has been struggling to get by. For parents like Janet, our government's plan to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system is a game changer. We have backed this plan with \$30 billion and earned acclaim from stakeholders across Canada.

The Address

Our government has always prioritized investing in early learning and child care because it is the right and smart thing to do, not only for parents, but also for our economy. We have signed agreements with Quebec, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, Yukon, Nova Scotia, British Columbia and, most recently, Alberta. For parents in these jurisdictions, it means that their child care fees will be cut in half by the end of the coming year and reduced to just \$10 a day by 2026.

Suffice to say, we in Erin Mills are all waiting for Ontario and other remaining provinces to come to the table. Our government will remain focused on making life better and more affordable for all Canadians.

This summer we were shocked, horrified and heartbroken by the discovery of unmarked graves and burial sites located near former residential schools. These graves, and countless more waiting to be found, confirm the stories that survivors have been telling for generations. As Canadians, we still have a lot to learn about this untold part of our country and a lot of work ahead of us. To move forward on the path of reconciliation, we need to ensure that the truths and history of these tragedies are never forgotten.

• (1205)

Our government is committed to continuing to support indigenous peoples in these communities by investing in a distinction-based mental health and wellness strategy, accelerating work on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQ people, and appointing a special interlocutor to advance justice for those impacted by residential schools. We must push forward to complete the remaining Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action under federal responsibility, and continue pushing the other named parties and levels of government to do their part.

I would like to turn my attention to the climate crisis. On that, our government's position has never wavered. Climate change is real, and it is among the greatest challenges of our generation and future generations. That is why we are taking action by increasing the price on pollution and putting more money into the pockets of Canadians. We are investing in public transit, developing alternative energies such as hydrogen, and making zero-emission vehicles more affordable and accessible for everyone. Building something new takes time, and it takes investment. Canadians want us to make the investments today to build a cleaner economy, and that is what we are doing to reach that goal of a clean energy grid from coast to coast, and net zero by 2050.

Residents in Erin Mills are done debating the legitimacy of the climate crisis and so am I. Canadians want all parties, at all levels of government including provinces and municipalities, to get on board and take this seriously. If we work together and continue to push our ambitions higher, we can make Canada the proof that a clean future is possible. Our children are watching.

Earlier this month, I heard from Ms. Chen's grade 10 class at Meadowvale Secondary School, asking our government to take action on mental health. I could not agree more. At the onset of the pandemic, we created the Wellness Together portal to provide free, confidential support to Canadians of all ages. Within the first two weeks that portal had received over 1.2 million calls. That tells us we need to continue to make mental health more accessible for all.

We have invested \$100 million to support mental health projects across Canada, and over the next five years we intend to invest \$4.5 billion to expand access to mental health services. To oversee these investments, our Prime Minister has appointed the first-ever federal Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. This is the same person who not long ago helped build the Public Health Agency of Canada. For our youth, seniors, frontline workers, BIPOC communities and Canadians of all walks of life, we must ensure that mental health supports are ready and available when they need them.

I have only scratched the surface of what our plan will deliver for Canadians. When I look to the future, we are building a cleaner, more affordable and more resilient Canada for everyone. I am optimistic. I am optimistic because, yesterday, we saw what the House is capable of when we put partisanship aside for the sake of Canadians. If we can move forward in that spirit of unity and co-operation, we can get this done.

It is an honour to be back in this chamber representing my wonderful riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills, and I look forward to working on this progressive agenda with members across the chamber to ensure we move forward together toward a better and more prosperous Canada for everyone. It all starts with this throne speech.

• (1210)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one issue that is very important to the people of the riding of Kenora and right across northern Ontario, and that I do not believe was mentioned once in the throne speech, is access to affordable, reliable, high-speed Internet. We know that this is no longer a luxury. It is essential, especially as more Canadians attend school or work or even access government services from home. In the last campaign, our party put forward a comprehensive plan to connect all households in Canada by 2025 to high-speed Internet.

Is the member able to commit, on behalf of her government, to meeting that deadline?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with the member opposite on his call to action on connectivity across the country.

I had the privilege to travel to Newfoundland and Labrador earlier this year and really got to see first-hand the issues rural communities face with respect to connectivity. This government has made significant investments in ensuring that Canada is connected. We saw just how important that connection was as we moved to a more virtual workspace.

I know that the party opposite may have plans and may have promises, but the government has been delivering on this issue for the past number of years.

The Address

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague opposite's speech. However, when we heard the Speech from the Throne, we were concerned about how the government wanted to address the issues that we had with health care during the pandemic. It is once again forcing its way into a Quebec jurisdiction. However, all the provinces and Quebec have been asking for a very long time for health transfers to be increased to around 35% of costs. We in the Bloc Québécois have proposed to the government that a major health care summit be held.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

• (1215)

[English]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, over the past 20 months, we saw just how critical investments in health care really are. We have to work together with provinces and territories to ensure that Canadians have access to that health care. In our campaign, we made the commitment that we would continue to invest in health care, not only creating new hospital beds but also ensuring that we fill the labour shortage and hire more doctors and health care professionals. We look forward to working with the member opposite to ensure that this is implemented.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on being in the chair.

My colleague talked about reconciliation. She is well aware of the shootings of Chantel Moore, who died last year on a wellness check; Julian Jones, who was shot in Opištaht earlier this year; and another woman in Hitacu. These are three people from the Tla-o-qui-aht nation in my riding.

The Speech from the Throne says:

The Government will also continue to reform the criminal justice system and policing.

It has not even started, so I do not know where the “continue” comes from.

It has been very clear. The report, “Systemic Racism in Policing in Canada”, was done at the public safety committee. None of those recommendations has been put into place, and I am hoping my colleague will champion bringing that report back and actually implementing the calls to action.

The Tla-o-qui-aht need answers, and the mothers of those victims need answers. People need change. They do not trust the police anymore where I live. They need accountability, they need reform, and they need oversight and transparency. The recommendations from the report are critical to earn the trust of indigenous people in this country, and to save lives and prevent further unnecessary deaths.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I have been on the justice committee for the past six years, and we have done significant work on access to justice. We know that there is institutionalized racism. That is exactly why we introduced Bill C-3: to ensure that judges had that training. It is why we continue to make those investments within the police force and within our justice system to ensure that

access is there. The work is being done. The damage was done over 150 years, and we need to make sure that we take it seriously and continue to chip away and push that needle further towards progress.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we continue debate, I would note that we know members are very passionate about the questions they are asking and the answers they are giving, but if they go on too long, the problem is that other members do not have the opportunity to ask questions. Let us try to keep our comments and questions as short as possible so that we can get as many members in as we possibly can.

Continuing debate, the hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by expressing my deep gratitude to my community of Edmonton Mill Woods for their continued trust in me to represent them here in the House of Commons. It is a privilege and a great honour to stand here on behalf of such an amazing and diverse community. They have shown incredible resilience during times of uncertainty and many challenges.

I also want to thank my family for their unconditional support, and to personally thank my amazing campaign team and the dedicated group of volunteers who worked tirelessly during the last election campaign. I thank them for all of their outstanding efforts.

I do not know if you, Mr. Speaker, have ever been to Edmonton Mill Woods, but if you went you would find a diverse community in every sense. It is an economically diverse group of mostly middle-class, hard-working Canadians. There are young families and seniors, and Mill Woods is really known for its cultural and faith diversity. That makes it the great place that it is.

I am proud that I grew up in Mill Woods, and proud that the son of an immigrant cab driver can have a seat here in the House of Commons. My father is the hardest-working person I know. He is out there driving a cab right now because he just does not want to sit at home. I believe that says a lot about the people of Edmonton Mill Woods, and it says a great deal about this amazing country we live in and the opportunities that it provides.

Nav Bhatia, the superfan and now Canadian icon, says that Canada is heaven on earth. I agree with him. In Mill Woods, we have tremendously generous organizations that have stepped up to help each other in the past couple of years.

These include organizations such as the Edmonton Care Closet, which provides food and clothing based out of Calvary Community Church, and our Rotary Club of Edmonton Southeast. Fulton Meadows Community League provides food for the food bank and a clothing drive, Millhurst Community League created a coats for kids campaign, Leefield Community League provided Thanksgiving turkey dinner for hundreds of people, and Youth Rise provides great support for youth in our community.

The Address

United Aid and Sikh Youth Edmonton recently teamed up with the All India Super Market and New Way Trucking to donate and send food free of cost to B.C., to help people during these devastating floods.

Sangat Youth YEG has been doing a great job. Hope City Church has been providing support in our community. Our local mosque, Markaz-Ul-Islam mosque, has also been helping. Ah-madiyya Jama'at Edmonton, the Hindu temple Bhartiya Cultural Society, Philippine Business Society of Alberta-Edmonton and Guru Nanak's Free Kitchen are all organizations in our community that have been helping their neighbours. There are many more that I could list. My heartfelt thanks and gratitude go to them and to their supporters for all of their great work.

The reason they have had to step up and help their neighbours now more than before is because from coast to coast life is getting more expensive for Canadians. We see it everywhere we go: at the gas pumps, in the grocery stores and even when we try to buy Christmas gifts. Conservatives have repeatedly warned the government that its reckless spending would cost Canadian families. For more than a year, we warned that this flood of money would fuel inflation. Now, we are watching the consequences of the Prime Minister's reimagined economy in real time.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister's political priorities announced in the Speech from the Throne do nothing for middle-class working Canadians. The cost-of-living crisis that we are in right now is pricing families out of homes and driving up the costs of essential goods. It is clear that families in Alberta are not a priority for the current government. Instead of presenting an economic plan for families, seniors and small businesses that have been left behind by the government, the government's approach means more of the same: More deficits leading to higher taxes. One thing is clear. Middle-class Canadians cannot afford more of the current Liberal government's reckless spending.

● (1220)

Being a middle-class Canadian no longer means living comfortably. Being a middle-class Canadian in Alberta, especially an energy worker, comes with an even greater set of challenges.

The Prime Minister has waged a war on our energy sector. At a time when the world is facing an energy crisis and the President of the United States is calling on OPEC and other energy producers to increase the production of oil and gas to lower soaring energy prices, the Prime Minister and his new environment minister want to deny our energy sector the opportunity to supply the world with ethical, lower-emission Canadian energy at a time when it is desperately needed.

Through the Speech from the Throne, the Prime Minister continues to attack our energy workers. The only time he mentions Alberta energy is when he talks about putting a cap on the work they do. He makes no mention of the world-class, ethically sourced energy that is using world-leading technology to reduce its environmental footprint.

The demand for energy is not going away soon. What the Prime Minister does not understand is that our made-in-Canada energy will be replaced by unethically produced energy. His attack on our

energy sector is not out of concern for the environment, but, instead, it is about furthering his own Liberal agenda.

The Liberal government's short-sighted plan to limit made-in-Canada energy will only embolden foreign oil-producing dictatorships. Its plan will drive up the prices of oil and gas and make it more expensive for Canadian families to drive to work and heat their homes.

The Conservatives know that it is possible to work with our energy sector, lower emissions and provide jobs and opportunity in Canada. We should be proud to supply the world with sustainable and ethical energy to developing countries, which want to source their energy from a country like Canada where our environmental and labour standards are world class.

On top of inflation and the rising costs of food and gas, we are also in the midst of one of the worst housing crises the country has ever seen. The dream of home ownership is being pushed impossibly out of reach for first-time homebuyers. Home prices in Canada have shot up over 20% since 2020. We need to reduce inflation and increase supply, increasing housing availability. One of the ways we would do that through the Conservative plan would be to release at least 15% of federal surplus land holdings to allow for more housing. The rise in cost of affordable housing is a serious issue that requires a serious plan, which has not been provided by the government.

Earlier I spoke about a number of the great organizations that were helping their fellow Canadians in Edmonton Mill Woods, and I know there are organizations like that right across the country. Many of these organizations are faith-based and cultural-based organizations and many of them may not have the same values as the Liberals do. However, that is just part of our diversity in Canada.

In 2017, the Liberal government required organizations to sign a values test to receive funding to hire summer students. Because of this values test, many worthy organizations were excluded from the program just because their values did not line up with the Liberal Party. Thankfully, the federal government changed course after considerable outcry from across the country.

Now I am hearing considerable concern from many people in my community about a Liberal campaign promise to take tax-exemption status away from organizations that do not align with Liberal values. Once again, the Liberals love diversity as long as we all agree with them. I hope the Liberals will listen to all voices across Canada and represent them all.

The Address

Another issue is the rise in gun crime. This has been an issue in many major cities, including Edmonton, and we have to have serious solutions to this. Instead, the government relentlessly continues to go after law-abiding gun owners, hunters, farmers and sport shooters. It is simple. Every time the government spends \$1 taking firearms away from a law-abiding Canadian, it is \$1 not going to fight the core issue of firearm crime in Canada, which is illegally smuggled guns.

Canadians across the country elected the Conservatives to hold the Liberal government to account, and we are doing just that.

• (1225)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continually hear this narrative from the Conservative Party that we need to drill more oil, yet the world is moving in the direction of electrification. More electric cars are being sold than ever before. We see initiatives in place to limit and phase out fossil fuel-burning vehicles by the middle of 2035.

Why is the Conservative Party so focused on talking about extracting more oil when it has an opportunity to push the agenda forward on bringing these new developing jobs right to Alberta?

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, we support Canada's energy sector because we support science. Canada's energy sector has reduced its environmental footprint. It is using world-leading technology. It is ethically produced energy right here in Canada, supporting Canadian jobs and families, such as the families in my riding of Edmonton Mill Woods. If we can take that technology and export it around the world, we would actually bring global emissions down, because countries would be producing at the same high standards we do.

The Liberal government should be promoting our industry and the way we do things in the Alberta energy sector, and sell that as its environmental plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I wondered for a few seconds if my colleague was joking and being ironic when he said that the government had declared war on the energy sector.

If it has, then it is certainly a gentle war, one that would no doubt leave the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development flabbergasted. In 2018, 2019 and 2020, the government invested \$14 billion annually in the oil and gas industry. I would like to remind my colleague that it also purchased a pipeline.

If the government is looking to wage war on a natural resource sector, I encourage it to declare war on the softwood lumber sector. If that is what qualifies as waging war on a sector, then I am all for it, anytime.

• (1230)

[English]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, if the member would like to see proof of the Liberal government's war on Alberta's energy sector, all he needs to do is come to my riding. People had good well-paying jobs in the energy sector and were able to provide for their families and put their children through university. They no longer have a job and are now struggling to provide for their families.

The war on the energy sector is real and it is having a real effect on Canadian families.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is classic for the Conservatives. They do not care if it is true as long as they repeat it often enough.

I keep hearing about foreign oil against ethical oil, when almost zero oil is coming from overseas into Canada. That is a fact. The issue of the International Energy Agency saying that Canadian high-carbon oil is affecting the market is a reality.

I did not hear the member talk about hydrogen in Alberta. I did not hear him talk about geothermal. I did not even hear him talk about how Jason Kenney was trying to blow the rooftops off the Rocky Mountains to get at coal. The reason Alberta is falling behind is because of the Conservative refusal to stand up for a new energy economy.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the oil that is coming from other parts of the world into Canada is in the same tankers that people protest against and try to stop.

The fact is that the government has hurt jobs and economic viability in Alberta. We need to champion that industry and all the Alberta energy sector. Yes, oil and gas is important to the energy and gas sector, but so are other sectors as well. When Alberta does well and the energy sector does well, we provide roads, bridges and schools right across the country.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, for my friend from Edmonton Mill Woods, the problem is that the discussion is taking place in the wrong frame. Had he given that speech 20 or 30 years ago, I could have agreed with him, that reducing our footprint mattered. What matters now is that we are living within a carbon budget that is shrinking so fast that the chances of our children living to our age in a habitable climate, one they can live in, is rapidly disappearing, and we have to go off all fossil fuels as quickly as possible. In that scenario, there are no ethical fossil fuels; there are only threats to the survival of our children. Also, our workers want to move to renewable energy.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Green Party and the Liberals do not understand that we can do both. We can reduce our emissions, we can provide for our future and we can use those resources to help to diversify our economy and produce new greener technologies. We can use the energy sector to be the guiding path into the future.

The Address

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise for my first speech in the 44th Parliament. I want to thank the constituents of Foothills for once again placing their confidence and trust in me to be their voice in Ottawa as their member of Parliament.

I also want to take a moment to thank my campaign team, Bryan Walton and the team he put together. We had an amazing crew door knocking and putting up signs in a large rural riding, which is always a challenge.

Most important, I want to thank my wife Louise, and my kids Graeden, Kinley and McKenna. This has been a trying time to be an elected official. I think all of us in the House understand what this past two years has been like. Often we take that home to our loved ones. My wife Louise has been a counsellor, a confidant and my best friend. I want to take a moment to thank her for her love and support through all that it is to be a politician. I certainly could not do it without her.

It is very good to be back in Ottawa. I am sure I was getting on her nerves being home as much as I was over the last two years.

Canadian who listened to the throne speech, who were looking for inspiration and a clear strategy for economic recovery were probably very disappointed. What they heard were more platitudes, more word salad and empty promises. Whether it is balanced budgets, clean drinking water for first nations, affordable housing, rural Internet or even transparency and openness, these promises by the Liberal government have been broken again and again over the past six years.

What the Liberals have left us with are deficits, debt, crippling inflation, the housing bubble, higher cost of living, a labour crisis and an eroding relationship with some of our most trusted trading partners, including the United States. I do not think our relationship with our southern partners has been any worse in our history. There are real consequences to these mistakes.

The Liberal policies have put our finances on a very rocky footing. Clearly the Liberals have no concrete plans to solidify Canada's financial footing. Our foundation is rocking and there is no plan to fix it.

If there were a plan, the Liberals certainly would have talked about two of Canada's most critical industries, agriculture and energy. My colleague, the member for Edmonton Mill Woods, spoke eloquently of Canada's energy industry, so I want to focus on agriculture.

Agriculture employs 2.1 million Canadians. One in nine jobs in Canada are linked with agriculture and agribusiness. It has generated \$140 billion in GDP in Canada, about 7% of Canada's total GDP. One would think that would be a pretty important part of the Liberals' throne speech. How many times was agriculture mentioned in that speech? Not once.

When we have primary industry that Canada relies on, and it could be an integral part of our economic recovery post-pandemic, being completely ignored, that tells me clearly that the Liberals have no plan to get Canada's finances back on strong footing.

It actually goes the opposite way. Rather than embracing and ensuring that Canadian agriculture and agribusinesses have the resources they need to reach their full potential, the Liberals are going the other way. They are attacking one of our most important industries. Let me take a few moments to outline the ways.

The Liberal agriculture Minister recently said, "it's not like we can adopt a law for reducing the price of food." I have a message for the Liberal government. In fact, it can. It just has to get out of the way. Liberal policies are increasing the cost of everything, including food at the grocery store, the escalating carbon tax, the cap on fertilizer, trade failures, labour crisis. This is having an impact on farm families across the country, and it is increasing the cost of food that we put on our table.

Adding the carbon tax to the farm fuels and escalating that carbon tax to \$170 per tonne would devastate Canadian agriculture.

As an example, I had Michel and Jeannette from Ontario contact my office earlier this week. They provided my staff with a spreadsheet of the impact the escalating carbon tax would have on their operation. When it gets \$170 per tonne, they will be paying more for the carbon tax than what they actually pay for the natural gas they use to heat barns and dry grain, essential practices for modern agriculture. At \$170 per tonne, they will pay \$19,477 in carbon taxes and \$8,800 for natural gas. They will be losing money as a result of the Liberals' escalating carbon tax. There is no way they can operate.

● (1235)

Hessel Kielstra, in my riding, has Mountain View Poultry. His carbon tax right now is \$25,000 a month to heat his poultry barns. That is before it starts escalating to \$170 a tonne. If we cannot grow food, we cannot feed Canadians. If we cannot grow food, we cannot play our integral role in feeding the world. It is that simple. The Liberal policies are pricing Canadian agriculture out of business.

The Liberals have also announced recently, at COP in Scotland, that they are going to put a cap on emissions and fertilizer use. There are real consequences to this decision. They want to reduce it by 30%, a number that they just grabbed out of the sky. They did that with no consultation with agriculture, no consultation with stakeholders and no consultation with agribusiness. They just picked it out of the sky, and now it is up to Canadian agriculture to try to meet that standard. There are real consequences to that.

According to a study by MNP, the 30% reduction in fertilizer will cost our economy about \$48 billion by 2030. What does that have to do with each province? Let us go with canola and wheat. In Alberta, that is \$2.95 billion gone. In Saskatchewan, that is \$4.61 billion gone. In Manitoba, with corn, that is \$1.5 billion gone. That is funding, money and revenue that is gone out of local communities and rural businesses, affecting rural economic opportunities.

Those numbers do not include an escalating carbon tax. They do not include the Liberals' clean fuel standard, and they do not include lost global markets. Basically, what is happening is Canadian agriculture will be bankrupt under the Liberal policies. Can the Liberals make changes to reduce the price of food? They absolutely can, by backing off from their ideological policies, which are devastating one of our most important industries.

However, it continues to get worse, so they are going to be putting on these regulations, red tape and imaginary numbers that Canadian farmers are going to have to try to meet, which really have no basis in reality. It does not even take into consideration the incredible job that Canadian farmers have done to improve their carbon footprint. Our Canadian farmers and ranchers are at the front line of conservation. Let us talk about 4R, zero-till farming and precision agriculture. None of those things were taken into consideration when these numbers and policies were put forward. Our yields are much higher on much less, but this is going to put us back decades, and we are going to have to be growing more on more land.

We also have issues with trade and transport. We asked the Prime Minister this week about the crisis with shipping containers, and he said it is an issue about global supply chains. It is not about global supply chains. The Americans have figured it out. President Biden has put on penalties and a shipping czar, and they have resolved their problem. As a result of that, shipping lanes are being rerouted from Canada to the United States. Meanwhile, Canadian agricultural commodities and manufactured goods are stuck at the ports in Vancouver and Montreal. This is having a significant impact on our relationship with our most trusted trading partners. We are losing our reputation as a reliable partner, and as a result, those contracts are going to other countries.

We have seen what is happening with the United States, but I also want to go back to February 2018. The Prime Minister made this big announcement. He said we were having a huge breakthrough in resolving the fumigation issue with India. It is 2021; we still have that issue in place and we have lost our pea and pulse market to India. We have lost canola trade with China. All these things continue to add up and can lead to food insecurity and a labour crisis. Members can understand why Canadian farmers and ranchers feel they do not have a friend in the Liberal government.

The disappointing thing with this throne speech is that if the Liberals truly had a plan to rebuild Canada's economy coming out of the pandemic, they would have ensured that Canadian agriculture and energy were key players in that plan. However, they are missing. Obviously, they are not a priority for the Liberal government.

• (1240)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pre-election, I met with the Minister of Agriculture in the province of Manitoba. We talked about the floods, and both of us had the opportunity to visit a cattle farm. Post-election, the Minister of Agriculture was in Winnipeg again, and we were at Merit Foods, where we are expanding markets for a state-of-the-art company. The Minister of Agriculture continues work with the different provinces and other stakeholders to make sure we stay on top of that particular file.

The Address

My question is more in regard to this member, and other members now, who have talked about the price on pollution, or the carbon tax, as they refer to it. I am having a hard time understanding and following where the Conservative Party is on this issue. It was not that long ago that they were actually quite honest and said they were against the carbon tax. Then, just prior to the last election, their newly minted leader said they supported a price on pollution or a carbon tax.

I am hearing that the Conservatives now seem to be doing another flip-flop. Can they tell the House today what their position is on a carbon tax? Do they support it or do they not support it?

• (1245)

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, we support working with our stakeholders to ensure they have the resources they need and the policies in place that are going to ensure they can still be successful. Policies such as putting on a \$170 per tonne carbon tax, putting a 30% cap on fertilizer use, not addressing a storage container crisis and not addressing the relationships with our most trusted trading partners are devastating Canadian agriculture. That is not a path forward.

In contrast, Conservatives are ensuring that we work and meet with our stakeholders to let them know they have policies in place to be successful.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's speech was very important, because he spoke about agriculture, and therefore food. Everyone agrees that this is a necessity. However, is my colleague really focusing on the right problem?

The current situation in British Columbia is causing food supply and access problems in certain parts of the province, including shortages of certain staples such as milk, eggs and poultry. The supply chain will be disrupted for some time to come.

Climate change is also causing droughts in some areas, forcing entire herds to be abandoned because they cannot be fed. Why is my colleague unable to make the connection between climate change and the problems facing the agricultural sector?

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, there is no question our producers are front-of-the-line when it comes to conservation and environmental stewardship, and I understand the crisis and the devastation that has impacted the Fraser Valley in B.C. This is a critical breadbasket of our country, and it is going to take a long time to recover. It is going to take years to rebuild herds, poultry barns, equipment and all those types of things.

The Address

Yes, there is no question that this is going to impact our food supply, but that is why it is so important to have some resiliency throughout the supply chain across the country, whether it is rail lines, trade markets or other types of things. Yes, this is going to be an issue we are all going to have to try to resolve.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague will not be surprised by the question I am going to ask him today.

I agree with him that there needed to be much more focus on agriculture within the throne speech, and I was very disappointed we did not see that, but I have spoken to people in his riding who are very concerned about the attacks on water in the very drought-prone area that would be the result of coal mining in that area.

I just wonder if the member would be willing to work with me to push back against the attacks on our water, our wild spaces and our endangered species by coal mining in his riding.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it when the member for Edmonton Strathcona continues to campaign for a provincial MLA seat on an issue that is a provincial issue. We have spoken about this on several occasions. The Province of Alberta has been going through a very deep public consultation on this issue. The project she was talking about went through the proper joint review panel.

I will leave it up to the Province of Alberta to make the decision on land use in its province.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Milton.

[*Translation*]

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me an opportunity to speak on the throne speech.

[*English*]

I will start by thanking the residents of Ottawa Centre for giving me this incredible honour and opportunity to serve them in this House.

I welcome all the members to my riding of Ottawa Centre as well. We feel quite privileged, as we are often referred to as “riding number one” in Canada. This is where all our national institutions are located and where decisions are made for the well-being of our country. I am excited to see so many members make Ottawa Centre their second home while they are here serving their constituents.

Ottawa Centre has been my home for decades. It is where both of my children were born and where they go to school. My son, Rafi Naqvi, who is nine years old, and my daughter, Elliana Naqvi, who is five, will be excited to know that they were mentioned today in the House, as we talked about this a little yesterday.

[*Translation*]

My children, Rafi and Elliana, attend a local French public school.

[*English*]

They often now tell me that I have to work on my French and my French accent, and I continue to commit to that.

[*Translation*]

I pledge to continue learning French.

[*English*]

This is important to me as well.

I have had the great honour of serving the riding of Ottawa Centre as a member of the provincial Parliament for almost 11 years. As a result, I have built deep connections within the community. I know our neighbourhoods and I have community connections where we have worked together on issues that are important to our community, from protecting our waterways like the Ottawa River, the Rideau River or the Rideau Canal to making sure that our post-secondary institutions, like Carleton University, which is located in my riding, continue to thrive. We have helped countless individuals, whether they are new to Canada and new to the city of Ottawa or residents who have lived here for a very long period of time. Again, I want to say a big “thank you” to them, from Carleton Heights to downtown and from Old Ottawa East to Westboro, for putting their faith and trust in me to be their strong voice in this great House.

I would be remiss if I did not take some time to thank my parents, Anwar and Qaisar Naqvi. My family and I came to Canada almost 33 years ago. We moved to Niagara Falls, where we made our home and, like any newcomer family, we worked hard so my parents could ensure that all of us could have a better life. The circumstances under which my parents left were not ideal. Both my parents were involved in a pro-democracy movement in the country of my birth. In fact, my father led a pro-democracy march. For that he was arrested and tried in a military court and served nine months as a political prisoner. I was 10 years old. Members can imagine the profound impact of that experience on me to this day. I saw my father pursuing and standing up for democratic rights, and I saw my mother fight for his rights while he was imprisoned, while at the same time raising a family and running a law practice so that we were all taken care of. Members can imagine where my drive for public service comes from, and how indebted I feel to this great country of Canada, which has given us the opportunity to live in a free country and enabled me to devote my professional life to serving my community and my country.

I was often asked in the last federal election why I had decided to come back to public service and put my name forward to be the member of Parliament for Ottawa Centre. I thought quite deeply about this, and the answer was simple. We find ourselves living in a very pivotal moment. This pandemic has impacted all of us. It has really shone a light on the inequities that exist in our society, and this is our opportunity to rebuild Canada in the most inclusive way and make sure no one is left behind.

We often talk about building back better. Well, here is my take: We cannot build back better by building back the same.

• (1250)

There are issues I have identified that are important to me, such as making sure that we end chronic homelessness in our communities. I want to do that in my city of Ottawa. We must fight climate change so that our children have a better future. We must put an end to systemic racism and systemic barriers against indigenous people, Black people and people of colour. These are the kinds of things that I want to work with all members on and champion in this House. I was so excited and heartened to hear very precise language used in the Speech from the Throne on these three issues. I look forward to working with the government and each member of this House on these important issues, because that is how we are going to build a Canada for everyone.

As my time is winding down, I have a commitment that I want to make today in my inaugural speech. Please hold me to account if I do not live up to my commitment. I am 100% committed to serving my community and my country. I want to do that by working with every member of this House. We all have come here because we want to challenge the status quo. That is why we knocked on doors and asked for this mandate. We may have different ways of getting to that, but at the end of the day we all want to build a better country. I want to work with everyone, regardless of their political affiliation.

There is a Latin phrase that I am often reminded of, that is *audi alteram partem*, or “listen to the other side”. My commitment is that I will listen and I will pay attention. We may disagree, we may debate, as the case should be in a democratic society, but we shall work together.

I look forward to working hard on behalf of my community of Ottawa Centre. I thank them and my family for getting me here today.

[Translation]

It is an honour to serve the people of my riding.

• (1255)

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Liberals are all about the rapid housing initiative with a billion dollars in the first round. There were subscriptions of \$5 billion in applications, yet only 20% were funded.

One of the applications came from my riding in Port Alberni to buy the old Beaufort hotel, and it was supported by the Salvation Army, the Bread of Life, KUU-US Crisis Line, the Canadian Mental Health Association and Lookout. ESDC said that this was a great application supported by the city, our local MLA and the local Tseshah Nation. It was filling a gap that the province of B.C. identified for the hardest to house. The parole board even wrote a letter of support. It said it had no housing for inmates when they were released. In fact, 98% of those inmates were indigenous. As well, it was identified that two-thirds of the people in our local homeless count are indigenous.

They applied again. They were just told that they were denied. More people are going to be dying on the streets of this country. We

The Address

are spending over \$75 billion on buying fighter jets and we are putting \$1 billion toward homelessness. This is shameful.

My colleague made a commitment. Is the commitment there that he is going to help get this deal done, because we will lose this property and this opportunity by April 1. I hope he will live up to his words and his commitment.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I share the member's passion to fight homelessness. I am sure all of us in our respective communities have very important projects that could be supported, so that we can help those who are marginalized.

I am very excited that finally we have a federal government that has put forward a national housing strategy. I was a member of the provincial government at a time when the federal government was not there to address housing. There is a real opportunity for us to end chronic homelessness. It is right there, stated clearly in the Speech from the Throne. I look forward to working with the member opposite on that important issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his first speech. Despite the message his government is sending by appointing a Governor General who does not speak French, he made the effort to say a few words in French here in the House. I commend him for that. However, I do not entirely agree with him when he says that no one is being left behind by his government.

Take for example Pauline Gagnon, a woman in my riding. I am not sure how old she is exactly, but she is at least 75. She was appalled when she found out that the government had decided to send a \$500 cheque to all seniors 75 and older, a cheque that arrived on the very day the election was called. Seniors' purchasing power has gone down, and drugs, housing and groceries are expensive. Ms. Gagnon has never understood why the government created two classes of seniors.

Does my colleague agree that it is time to commit to increasing old age security for all seniors starting at 65, as the Bloc Québécois has been calling for?

[English]

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, yes, as an immigrant living in Ontario I had to first work on my English, but I am absolutely committed to learning French.

[Translation]

It is very important for me to learn and speak this language. I also work in French with my colleagues across the way.

[English]

Seniors were really impacted by this pandemic. We saw the unfortunate loss of life in long-term care homes, and that is unacceptable. We have to do some important work to make sure seniors continue to enjoy a great life in their golden years.

The Address

• (1300)

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to hear the hon. member actually talking about homelessness in his riding and addressing it. Instead of words, I want to know if he has any idea of what the timelines are on it. When will homelessness end in his riding?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, I wish it had ended yesterday, but we have a lot of work to do because we are trying to address a huge backlog that was left from some time ago when all three levels of governments did not work together to address this really important issue.

As I mentioned, I worked at the provincial level, and we were just working alone in Ontario with the municipality. The federal government was unfortunately, under his party, absent from that conversation. Finally we have a federal government with a national housing strategy, with a commitment to end chronic homelessness in this country, so there is great opportunity. Just in my riding, in the last six years 1,700 new units are being built. I want to double that in my riding and put an end to chronic homelessness.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as this is my first time to rise in this House in the 44th Parliament, it is my honour to congratulate you on your re-election to that Chair and to congratulate all of my colleagues from every party for their election and re-election. I am excited to work with everybody here in this House to build a better country.

I would also like to take a moment to thank the great people of Milton for entrusting me once again to be their voice here in Ottawa. I would not be here without their continued support, and I will spend every day on this job standing up for them and their priorities, making sure their insights and perspectives are heard in this House and that their needs are met.

I also would not be standing here without the incredible work of my campaign team, our amazing volunteers, my friends and my family. I want to give a shout-out to my mom Beata, my dad Joe, my brother Luke, my amazing girlfriend and best friend Emilie, as well as my dog Cairo, because he does a lot of hard work on the campaign as well.

[*Translation*]

It is the privilege of my life to be able to work here on behalf of my neighbours. They can count on me.

[*English*]

They have sent me here to focus on the issues that matter most to them. In my community, particularly for the youth of Milton, that means standing up for the environment. We need to fight climate change to ensure that the health and safety of our planet for ourselves and for future generations is upheld. The terrible flooding in B.C. and other extreme weather events have given us a sharp reminder about the urgent need to prioritize a green, clean and sustainable future for all of us. We may not get another chance to get this right.

We must also continue walking the path of truth and reconciliation with indigenous peoples. As my work on the indigenous and northern affairs committee in the previous Parliament emphasized for me, we must ensure that while we work to address the wrongs

of the past, we also must focus on building stronger, more collaborative bonds in the future.

Milton is one of the most diverse communities in Canada, but diversity is the fact and inclusion is the act that will ensure that no Canadian anywhere will be targeted by violence or hatred because of their race, religion, who they love or how they live. These are not small tasks. Achieving them will require a renewed focus, a strength of purpose and a spirit of collaboration. As yesterday's unanimous passing of Bill C-4 showed, we do have the capacity to come together and improve the lives of our neighbours and Canadians.

If this pandemic has taught us anything, it is that there is nothing in this world more valuable than our collective health and well-being. The good news is we have all the tools necessary to defeat this pandemic and build a healthier Canada for this and future generations. The best tool to fight this pandemic has been vaccines. I want to take a moment to thank Halton's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Hamidah Meghani and her team for helping to make Halton region one of the most vaccinated communities in Canada. Now that seniors over 70 and kids five to 11 are eligible, I encourage everyone to continue making appointments. I also want to thank everybody who worked at a clinic, volunteered at a clinic, shared a vaccine selfie or chatted with or encouraged a hesitant neighbour or family member to get the shot. It has been a team effort.

The reverberating impacts of COVID-19 have gone well beyond the disease itself. We have work to do on finding solutions for delayed procedures, ensuring there are more ways and more services available for the mental health impacts of these last two years. They have had a devastating impact on families, kids in particular, and, of course, we must continue to build a more resilient long-term care system in this country.

It will not surprise too many of my colleagues to know that I would like to talk a bit about the role that physical activity and recreation must play in our "build back better" strategy. Canada was experiencing a crisis of inactivity before this pandemic and COVID-19 has made it much worse. I want to highlight the call to action led by Participaction to tackle the inactivity crisis and add my name to the long list of supporters who champion solutions to this issue.

The solutions are not as simple as just telling everybody to go outside, ride their bike and go for a walk. While those things are helpful, important and the right thing to do, not everyone has the ability to make those decisions. Vulnerable and under-resourced Canadians lack the infrastructure, the time and the freedom to simply take an hour to get a workout in. Improved access to programs that teach physical literacy to kids and families is an essential aspect of the solution to this complex challenge. Physical literacy is defined as "the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that establishes purposeful physical pursuits as an integral part of our daily lifestyle." Moving our bodies is essential for our physical health, our mental health and the health of our communities and relationships.

The Address

I am on my soapbox and I could talk for hours about how sport, physical activity and recreation can build more resilient communities. It is time to move on to talk about the current challenges that this country is facing with respect to the economy. The challenges that our neighbours are facing with respect to unaffordability are both real and complex. The labour shortages and challenges with regard to supply chains and inflation are easily worth a 10-minute speech of their own, so I would like to narrow my focus to two campaign commitments that also represent tangible solutions: child care and affordable housing.

In the previous Parliament, I met with dozens of child care stakeholders to discuss building a \$10-a-day child care program to save Canadian families money and rebuild our economy in the most equitable way possible. That list included MCRC, the Milton Community Resource Centre. I want to acknowledge the hard work of Tina and Rebecca and their team at the MCRC for providing Milton families with care, resources, solutions and products that have contributed directly to the healthy development of kids and the ability for parents to go to work, earn a good income and pay their bills.

As an Ontario MP, I am also thrilled that the provincial government is in talks with our federal government to make \$10-a-day child care a reality for families in my riding and across the province.

Moving on to housing, it is a complex ecosystem, so I am going to narrow my focus once again on non-market solutions for the housing crisis.

I am a proud co-op kid. I lived at Chautauqua Co-op with my mom and brother throughout my childhood and even after university. My mom still resides at Chautauqua. She is a co-op builder who works at Briarview Co-op in Mississauga. I know I am biased, but nobody in Canada knows more about co-op housing, its past and its place in our potential future in Canada than my mom. The last time we built meaningful co-ops in this country was 1994, and that needs to change today. When Canadians are paying their rent, they should not be paying off somebody else's mortgage or contributing to huge profit margins and shareholder value.

• (1305)

[*Translation*]

Access to secure housing is a human right, and it should not be out of reach for anyone.

[*English*]

Co-ops create a pathway to home ownership for some by allowing young people, students, newcomers and families to live within their means, invest in their futures and, if they want, save up to buy a home one day. However, home ownership should not necessarily be the only ambition of the housing continuum. Secure housing should be, and those who want to live in non-profit housing for their entire lives should be able to. It allows for fuller participation in the economy. For my mom, it made sure that my brother and I had access to canoe clubs, guitar lessons, summer camp and everything we ever needed.

[*Translation*]

Social housing is not the only solution to this crisis, but it has to be part of our plan for the future.

[*English*]

Both of my parents are immigrants to this country. By increasing immigration levels and reducing wait times for new immigrants and citizens, while supporting family reunification and delivering a world-leading refugee resettlement program, we will continue supporting the growth and diversity of our nation. I met with members of Milton's Afghan community before the election and have done so since, and I am very confident that 40,000 Afghan refugees will feature prominently in the growth of our economy and future.

Milton is an environmentally forward-thinking community. We are a proud home to groups like Sustainable Milton, Halton Environmental Network and Fridays for Future Milton. Our local CA, Conservation Halton, provides our region with solutions for recreation, education and flood mitigation; support for species at risk; and so much more. It is also my best tree-planting partner, with over 50,000 trees planted locally last year.

I am confident in our ambitions to cap and cut oil and gas sector emissions while accelerating our path to a 100% net-zero electricity future. These are world-leading ambitions. I know that investments in public transit, electric vehicle infrastructure and subsidies will lead to greener communities and cleaner air.

I am also certain that our plan will create more good, green jobs, and that together we will build a more resilient, sustainable and competitive economy. By protecting more land, waterways and coastlines, and creating the Canada water agency, we will safeguard our most vital natural resource, clean fresh water, which will also protect our farmers. Milton has one of the best farmers' markets in the country, and we love to eat and shop local. We appreciate and rely heavily on our neighbours in agriculture, and they deserve to be acknowledged and supported in our transition to a greener future.

The Address

We know that climate change disproportionately impacts society's most vulnerable, and while we focus on the environment, our collective health and the resilience of our economy, we must also remain focused on ending violence and hate in our communities. I applaud this government for taking action on assault-style weapons and lifetime background checks, but we must go further. Handguns are so often used in gang and intimate partner violence. I join victims groups and the Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns in advocating for more comprehensive gun control measures.

At the core of violence is fear and hatred. We must continue to fight racism, homophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and other forms of hate by taking swift action on anti-hate legislation.

I represent one of the most diverse communities in the country. When the Afzal family was brutally murdered in London, Ontario, this past year, people in my riding were scared to go out for a walk at night. That is unacceptable. We have work to do, and I commit, on behalf of my friends and neighbours in Milton, to ensuring that Canada is safe, inclusive and compassionate. I would like to thank and acknowledge the hard work of Tabassum Wyne and the Muslim Advisory Council of Canada for their hard work on this.

• (1310)

[*Translation*]

We have to understand that teamwork is the only way to build a better future for Canada. Let us work together.

[*English*]

In closing, I will simply say that it is time for us to meet the moment, to make good on our promises to Canadians that we made at the doors and to take the incredible responsibility they have given us and turn it into positive, meaningful action that will lead to a brighter future for everyone.

I welcome questions from my colleagues.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, from 2014 to 2018, at the height of oil and gas production in Canada, we increased production by 38% but reduced emissions of flare gas by 22%. We are the only country to do that. If the world adopted the practices that we have here in Canada, emissions from the sector would drop worldwide by 22%.

The government is all about reducing emissions, so why are we not talking about the practices we have in Canada and taking that abroad to reduce emissions, if that is what the Liberals are so concerned about?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's question is a good one, and indeed we are here talking about innovative solutions for fighting climate change.

I am very heartened that in the past week in particular, in the face of the horrible disasters that have occurred in British Columbia, I have heard more about climate change from the Conservatives than I think any of us ever have. I applaud the member for standing up for the energy industry in his riding and across Western Canada, because it is important. A just transition is very important too.

I heat my home with natural gas. I drive a vehicle, albeit a hybrid. I recognize the importance and value of the energy sector in

Canada. I also recognize that as we move forward we should and will reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are currently seeing several crises in Canada. Not only is there the health crisis, the climate crisis, and, in Quebec, the language crisis, but there is also the housing crisis. My colleague spoke about that earlier.

In Montreal, for example, taking into account all of the federal programs to house the most vulnerable people in Canada, this creates housing that costs \$2,200. I have no idea who can afford to spend \$2,200 on housing.

That said, the government did one good thing in the last few years. It launched the rapid housing initiative, or RHI, a program to build social housing for the most vulnerable members of society.

It is a very good program, but the problem is that it is grossly underfunded. It was allocated \$1 billion, but it received \$4 billion worth of project applications. I know that Mr. Hussen, the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, wanted to put money back into the program.

If my colleague is interested in housing, will he commit to lobbying the Liberal caucus to ensure that the RHI is better funded in the future?

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind the member not to refer to ministers by name.

The hon. member for Milton.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I want him to know that I share his concerns about affordable housing in Canada.

[*English*]

I can assure the member that I have been pressuring our government to ensure we have co-op housing, non-profit housing and *logement social*, as another colleague from the Bloc corrected me earlier to inform me of the correct terminology used in Quebec. This is one of the reasons I got involved in politics.

As I said, I am a proud co-op kid, and I know that building endless single-family homes does not provide affordable housing for families. Co-op housing, non-profit housing, rent-to-own solutions and programs with rent geared to income will make sure that every Canadian can afford a safe and secure place to live.

The Address

• (1315)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on his maiden speech. He talked a lot about co-op housing and calls himself a co-op housing kid. I am delighted to hear that.

The situation with housing is this. The CMHC used to deliver co-op and social housing and was really good at it, but this was gutted because in 1993 the federal Liberal government cancelled the national affordable housing program. As a result, we have not built housing the way we used to. In fact, Canada lost more than half a million units of affordable housing that otherwise might have been built had the program not been cancelled.

Will the member advocate for the Liberal government to restore in the budget the necessary money and capacity for the CMHC to build the housing it used to, both in the co-op sector and in the affordable housing sector, with subsidies and supportive services?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Mr. Speaker, I wish I had the time to get into this for even longer, because it is a passion of mine. I followed very closely the Vote Housing campaign during the election, and I will do my best to fulfill its six campaign requests.

I will tell members a quick story, as the member's statement today focused on the federal government. In 1993, when I was 11 years old and living in co-op housing, my mom came home from work and had lost her job. That was because the Mike Harris government of the day cancelled all provincial programs. It meant she was no longer a co-op builder and had to find a new job. Since then, she has been working as a community coordinator in the non-profit housing industry and is still the biggest expert, so I would welcome another—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your new role in the House. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

As this is the very first opportunity I have had to rise in the House, I would like to start off with some quick words of thanks. It is an incredibly humbling and exciting honour to stand here, to sit here and to be a representative for my constituents here. From the bottom of my heart, I wish to express just how grateful I am that my constituents have renewed their support in me.

My favourite thing about running a campaign is the amazing volunteers who come alongside to support me. I am talking about those who give their time, talent and money to invest in my success. To them I also wish to extend a very sincere thanks.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.” Those are the words permanently etched into the stone over the west window of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. The words are strong and they are true. Humans have this incredible ability to dream, cast vision and inspire. They should have the ability to pursue those things. The throne speech is usually the vehicle used by the prime minister to communicate and provide hope and optimism for the Canadian people. Sadly, this was not the case this time.

I was anticipating a detailed plan in four specific key areas that I believe every single federal prime minister, regardless of political stripe, should be prioritizing if they wish to lead well. Here they are: one, keep the country united; two, ensure Canadians are kept safe and secure; three, facilitate an environment of economic prosperity; and four, advance Canada's place on the world stage. To the detriment of Canadians, however, all four of these points were largely ignored in the document that was read in what I would call a monotone manner by the Governor General. Perhaps she simply read it in that tone in order to match the lacklustre content that was within.

Before the budget was tabled, my constituents shared with me that they were hoping to see a real plan to reopen the economy and restore hope and confidence in our future as a great country. Those who are unemployed were hoping to see a plan that created new jobs and opportunities for wealth creation. Those in the oil and gas sector were hoping to see support for this world-class industry. Those in the agriculture sector were hoping to see a little something for them. A nod of appreciation would have gone a long way, but there was nothing. Local businesses that are on the verge of permanently closing their doors were hoping for a carefully thought-out plan, not for more handouts, to get back to normal. Sadly, they had no luck.

The government cannot replace a healthy economy. No matter how hard it tries, government spending will never outperform or do greater good—

• (1320)

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point or order from the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I apologize to my hon. friend from Lethbridge, but I think she may be—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Ms. Elizabeth May: Excuse me. I am being heckled while I try to read a standing order that she is violating.

Standing Order 18 says, “No member shall speak disrespectfully of the Sovereign, nor of any of the royal family, nor of the Governor General”. I think that is particularly the case when we have our first indigenous Governor General. I found the words offensive, but that does not really matter. It is a violation of Standing Order 18.

The Deputy Speaker: I will ask the member for Lethbridge to retract the comment and find a different line on it.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I apologize that the Prime Minister provided her with such a horrendous speech to read.

The Address

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, you have ruled that the comment the member made was out of order. The member should unreservedly apologize without trying to provide some kind of caveat. Her remarks were offensive to the Crown and the Crown's representative in this place. She needs to apologize for that.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Mr. Speaker, the point of order that was brought up by the member from the Green Party indicated there was an attack on the sovereign. There was no apology requested and she did not have to make an apology. She changed her statement, indicating that it had no reflection on the person making the speech. It was a reflection on the speech that was provided. The words the member said were about the speech, not the person who presented it.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. It is important that we recognize that you made a ruling. Your interpretation, after consulting with the Clerk, was that the member did in fact violate one of our Standing Orders, and it is fairly clear that what the member was reflecting on was the manner in which the Governor General delivered her speech.

Thousands of Canadians would disagree with, and be offended by, the member's remarks. We ask her to withdraw those remarks without any qualifications whatsoever, to apologize and then continue on. That would be my recommendation: that she listen to what the Speaker ruled. She was out of order.

The Deputy Speaker: I know we were going to make another attempt here to maybe retract those words and find a more appropriate version that was not taking an attack on, of course, our Sovereign's representative here in Canada, and to try to get on with the speech.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, my words were not an attack on the Sovereign. They were an attack on the tone that the speech was delivered in and its content, which was lacklustre in nature.

However, for the sake of the House and those across the floor who wish to control and manipulate in this place, I retract my words.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, you have ruled on this as the Chair who is presiding over this chamber right now. If the member is not going to accept your ruling, it is your duty to remove her from the chamber.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I accept that the member has retracted it. Let us just continue on so we can get to question period.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, sadly the throne speech was about further bloating the size of government, which means Canadians would now be required to spend more of their hard-earned money on tax hikes and inflation. Let us just explore that for one moment.

In the speech, it was said the Prime Minister wants to make life more affordable for all Canadians. In fact, he is doing the exact opposite, but members do not actually need me to tell them that. No one does, because if they have shopped at a local grocery store, eaten at a restaurant, paid a home heating bill or filled their gas tank

with fuel, they already know that life is getting more expensive. Why is that? The name of the bad news is inflation, and it is driven by terrible government policy.

Those who are hurt the most by the government's decision to spend money that it does not have are seniors on a fixed income, those who live with a disability and are on a small stipend, and those who live paycheque to paycheque and struggle to make ends meet.

Mr. Speaker, I am very distracted by the conversation that is taking place across the way. Perhaps that could be taken care of.

• (1325)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Just make sure that we keep calm in the chamber and maybe try to keep it quiet.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: In short, the government's policies are an attack on the most vulnerable. Food banks are finding it difficult to keep up with the level of need they are seeing, and one of the biggest changes over the last year has been the rise in the number of people who are employed full-time having to use food banks because they simply cannot pay their bills.

The Prime Minister says he does not think that much about monetary policy. That is obvious. He handed himself a blank cheque in the spring of 2020, and he has been printing and spending money ever since. The government has handed out exorbitant amounts of money in the name of emergency income, but the books show that the personal disposable income of Canadians has actually increased during the pandemic. Earned income has dropped significantly, but the enormous government handouts have more than covered the loss. As a result, tons of extra money are flooding the economy, but there is the same number of goods, if not less.

The outcome is higher prices, because an endless supply of printed money combined with limited goods actually drives up prices. The sad thing is that it is the wealthy who benefit when those prices rise, because it adds to their profits. Meanwhile, low wage earners must make their dollars stretch further to cover their necessities. All the while, the government is bloating in size not only by spending all this extra money, but by raking it back through taxation.

One dollar used to be worth one dollar. Today, one dollar is only worth 95 cents. If the government were to increase taxes by 5%, there would probably be massive outrage, but that is just it. That is exactly what the government did. It is called inflation tax. It simply comes with this name.

As the member for Carleton has pointed out, "countries that are not printing money to pay their bills have maintained a low cost of living and an affordable life for their citizens." Meanwhile, "Those countries that are flooding their economies with cheap cash are driving up the cost of living," and making it less affordable.

There is an inconvenient truth that seems to have been willfully ignored. Reining in fiscal spending would necessitate limited government. This, of course, is a horrible restraint for any political party that only attains or maintains power when people are reliant on the government for its programs and handouts.

The Address

The Liberals are actually choosing to be fiscally irresponsible for the sake of political advantage, and it is putting our economic future in great jeopardy. What is the solution? It is simply to stop printing money, rein things in and be fiscally responsible. That is what this country deserves.

“We, the people” is a powerful phrase. Is it not? When the people feel the freedom to live up to their potential all of society benefits, but in order for this to happen the government has to get out of the way.

Serving as a member of Parliament has afforded me the extraordinary opportunity to speak with many Canadians about the type of Canada they desire. I have heard countless stories from visionaries who want to build businesses, invent new technologies, help those who are suffering and improve our society in areas where we have fallen short. All of these conversations and general observations have given me a tremendous amount of hope for this nation's future. Unleashing the potential of the Canadian people is the key to our success.

Members can imagine what it would look like if the bridles of red tape and regulation were thrown off and entrepreneurs were given the freedom to take risks, to make investments, to prosper and to help others prosper. This is the type of Canada that we can create, not through government handouts and increased control, but by creating opportunity for each and every Canadian to invest their gifts, talents and abilities to prosper.

It is Canadians who are the problem solvers, the solution makers and the wealth creators, not the government. No matter the handouts it gives, we will not get ahead. A good leader puts people first. Sadly, that is not what the Prime Minister did in the throne speech. It is not what he has endeavoured to do on behalf of this great country, and for this reason, I cannot support the Speech from the Throne.

• (1330)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague once again demonstrated that she is a moderate parliamentarian, just as she did when she spoke about Quebec artists, but that is another matter.

We often hear the same mantra from the Conservatives: “We have a plan. We need a plan.” We do not know what that plan is, but they are constantly telling us about it. I would like to see that plan.

The amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition talks about respecting provincial jurisdiction. The leader of the official opposition said that was important, and he was very hard on the government. The only time he said something positive was when he commended the government for creating a department of mental health. Does that respect provincial jurisdictions? I wonder.

I would like my colleague, in her great wisdom, to tell us whether health falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces.

[*English*]

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to take any questions having to do with the matter we are speaking about,

which is the Speech from the Throne. I was just asked a question that does not pertain that, so I am going to pass.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked a lot about the government needing to get out of the way. When it comes to merchant fees, Canada's merchants pay some of the highest fees in the world. In the U.K. they pay 0.3%, in France 0.28% and in Australia 0.5%. In Canada, we have a rate of 1.4% on the interchange fees.

Liberals, in the last budget, said they were going to do something about that and cap merchant fees, yet we have not seen any action from the Liberal-Conservative coalition. They protect the big banks, protect the big credit card companies and the super wealthy.

Does my colleague agree there is a time for government intervention when it comes to small businesses being hosed by credit card companies and the big banks?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member may have hurt the feelings of the Liberals right there. He hurt their feelings and perhaps it requires an apology. I am not sure. I will let the Speaker rule on that.

At the end of the day, his question is whether the government should be more involved, and if the government should engage specifically with merchant fees, as he is highlighting.

Governments should have a very limited role in how we progress as a society and how we function as a nation. Its only role should be to make sure we are unified as a country, our borders are kept safe and secure, that we drive an environment of economic prosperity and that we further ourselves on the world stage. If it fits into one those four, let us do it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member started off by talking about Canadians' abilities to dream and pursue and chase after future technologies and opportunities, yet the Conservatives are stuck in this era of extracting oil. It is all they care about. It is what they talk about over and over.

If this is the case, why is it so hard for this member and the Conservative Party to recognize there is a future beyond oil and that we should be chasing, pursuing and going after that?

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member how he brushed his teeth this morning. At least I hope he did. I would ask the hon. member what his suit is made out of and whether that used petroleum at all. I would ask him if his tie has any petroleum, or his pin, his shirt, his shoes, his computer or perhaps his hair products. I would ask the member how he got here.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I walked.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: You walked all the way from your constituency? Do not lie. You are held accountable in this place.

The Address

I would ask the hon. member to tell me if we should just ixnay oil and gas. Does he want to sit naked in a forest somewhere? The vast majority of Canadians surely do not want to.

• (1335)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I rise in this place to deliver my maiden speech, like all members, I feel a great sense of responsibility, honour and commitment to the people of my community who have entrusted me with their voice.

Like all members, my ability to stand here is a result of a team effort of family, friends and volunteers who believe in all of us.

For me, it has been a long journey, starting with my service for eight years as a ministerial assistant in the Mulroney and Campbell governments. I learned so much from those whom I worked for, from MP Bill Attewell, to ministers of the Crown, the Hon. Barbara McDougall and the Hon. Peter McCreath. I must thank them for their mentorship and guidance.

I must also acknowledge my wife Wendy Waite whom I met when she was working for the Hon. Pat Carney and the Right Hon. Kim Campbell. Free trade brought us together, but I can tell members about that another time. She has supported my lifelong journey to this place like no other.

I acknowledge my parents Rosemarie Borgald Perkins and William Perkins, who instilled in me the belief of possibilities and the need for hard work to achieve those possibilities. My mother's family landed in Lunenburg 277 years ago, in 1753. I am the eighth generation in a row to live in my community.

Two other people I need to thank out of the hundreds of volunteers are my campaign anchors for seven years in South Shore—St. Margarets. Evelyn Snyder and Rick Muzyk have been with me on this journey since 2014. It started with my nomination campaign against Richard Clark. I could not stand in this place without their support and belief.

When I had the great privilege of joining members of all sides last Tuesday to march to the other place to listen to the Speech from the Throne, I had high expectations that issues that were of concern to my community would be addressed. While I stood behind our Speaker in the other place, I was sorely disappointed.

As I listened to the rehashed broken promises of the 2015 Liberal platform, it reminded me of one of the most famous quotes by the Right Hon. Kim Campbell when speaking of a political opponent. She said that style “without substance is a dangerous thing.” Style without substance appears to be the theme the PMO speech writers were thinking of when they wrote this document. I say this because the most important industry in my province and my riding is the fishery. There was no mention of the importance of the fishery in the throne speech. There was no mention of our forest products industry. There was no word said about tourism.

From Peggy's Cove to Chester, from Lunenburg to Liverpool, from New Ross to Mahone Bay, from Cape Sable Island to Shag Harbour, my community was looking for their concerns to be in the throne speech. My constituents were looking for a commitment from the government that we would all work toward more access to

the commercial fishery for first nations, a commitment that this access be granted on the same rules and enforcement measures to which all commercial fishermen were subject. We have seasons for a reason.

My community was looking for a commitment that any public policy on the moderate livelihood fishery be developed in compliance with the legal framework of the Supreme Court's Marshall decisions, not outside of them as has been done so far.

When I was speaking with lobster fishermen Vincent Boutillier, Sandie Stoddard and Bobby Hynes, they expressed little surprise that the fishery was not mentioned. They said that over the last six years they had come to expect nothing but more bureaucracy from the Liberal government and more initiatives aimed at making it more difficult to earn a living from the sea. They recognized that the attacks by the government on the fishery, whether through reduced quotas backed by questionable research, increased regulation and the threat of targeted marine protected areas aimed at shutting down the industry, were insidious ways the Liberals were using the smokescreen of conservation to reduce commercial fishing.

People who earn a living from the sea were looking for some recognition from the Liberals on the need for predation policy, an invasive species policy. There is an explosive growth of seals and sea lions, which is devastating our Atlantic and Pacific fish species. The government claims to care about the biodiversity of our oceans, but it has no policy and makes no effort to try to get our oceans back in balance.

• (1340)

The fishing communities were looking for some indication from the government that it acknowledged that it had made a huge mistake in the clawback from the fishermen who received the COVID-19 fish harvester benefit.

When launching this benefit during the COVID crisis, the government said, “Our fisheries operate under a unique structure and have faced distinct challenges throughout this pandemic.” The Liberals bragged about how hard they had worked to get it right, and now they have it wrong and are attacking the men and women at the back of the boat.

Let me explain. Almost all fishermen are paid a share of the profits from the catch, not a regular wage. Since the days of commercial whaling, this is how it has been. I know all members have likely read the book *Moby Dick*. In this classic, the narrator of the tale, Ishmael, explains the following. “I was already aware that in the whaling business they paid no wages; but all hands, including the captain, received certain shares—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I understand that it is hard to quote from things without using props. I would ask the member to give me a little warning.

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

The Address

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, this tradition made it into the application process for the government's fish harvester benefit as a recognition that the traditional wage earner COVID benefits did not work for fishermen. The application the government put forward stated five situations which qualified for benefits. It recognized the centuries of pay structure for fishermen. DFO's application stated one of the types of fishermen's pay that was eligible, "sharepersons...who are crew members who earn a share of the revenue", which is bang on. Therefore, why is the government taking it back from them? It is bait and switch, the Liberal approach to everything.

The federal government is demanding that 4,193 Canadian fishermen repay \$25.8 million in COVID-relief assistance. More than half the fishermen issued overpayment letters are in Nova Scotia.

Travis Nickerson of Clark's Harbour in my riding received an overpayment letter. Travis said that the situation was a mess. He said, "They gave me something when I really needed it, and now they want it back." Nickerson is paid a share of the catch. He saw his income drop in the first half of 2020 when COVID-19 crushed the demand for lobster worldwide.

The share-based earnings are evident, and there is record of employment, like all other fishermen. It is easy to see, yet the government seems to have its own departments fighting each other. It is time for the Minister of Fisheries to step up and do her job for all fishermen.

I will be relentless in speaking out for our fishermen, our forestry workers, our agriculture workers and our tourism businesses. All are being ignored and harmed by the government. When the chapter of the government is written in the history books, it will be a slim chapter of achievement. It will likely be titled with that great quote from Kim Campbell "Style without substance."

As my friend Peter MacKay once said, it will take more than fancy socks and curly locks to run a government that cares about the hard-working Canadians in our resource industry.

This war on the resource industries has to stop. It is time for the government to recognize that the social programs we love, the jobs in Toronto office towers and the competitive advantage we have as a country are all as a result of our resources. Destroying them puts all of what we cherish at risk.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, depending on the Conservative member of Parliament who is standing, we often get a different approach on the CERB benefits. Sometimes Conservatives will be critical of the government because of the benefits. Then other Conservatives will talk about how important those CERB benefits were.

What is the policy of the Conservative caucus with respect to Bill C-2, which continues to support workers and businesses in different situations? Does the member support the principle of Bill C-2? On that matter, would he also provide his thoughts on whether Revenue Canada should be collecting where mistakes are made?

• (1345)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, it is funny that a Liberal member would ask about consistency since the Liberals have promised

child care six elections in a row and we have not seen one day care space.

With regard to the CERB and the fish harvester benefit, the member probably does not know and understand, since he is from a non-fishing riding in Winnipeg North, although I am not sure, that 99% of fishermen are paid by a percentage of the catch, and they have been for hundreds of years. That is why they did not qualify for CERB. CERB was for wage earners who were paid a regular wage. Fishermen are paid like a commissioned sales worker when they are at the back of the boat.

A special program, which we supported, was designed. It was a properly designed program with a proper application. The problem is that it was designed by DFO, but Revenue Canada does not understand how fishermen are paid. It just looks at a T4, notes that they are employees in the box and it wants their money back. The two departments will not talk to each other. All they have to do is look at the record of employment, see the week-by-week earnings and they will have the solution, but that is too complicated for the Liberal government.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on his victory and welcome him to the House.

About a year ago, health experts around the world warned us that if we did not vaccinate the entire world, we risked the development of a mutated coronavirus that would then prove to be problematic and perhaps even vaccine resistant. Part of this was manifested in South Africa and India going to the WTO to request an exemption from intellectual property provisions to allow countries to produce the vaccine all over the world. I know the Liberal Party has opposed that measure at the WTO. I have not heard what the Conservative Party policy is on this.

Could my colleague tell us whether he supports the NDP in our call for the WTO waiver of the TRIPS regulations?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the Speech from the Throne talked about intellectual property rights, another failing by the Liberal government to not address the concerns of many of our people. Absolutely, it was a fantastic thing that the whole world was able to get together, including businesses, to quickly develop a vaccine so we could control the spread of COVID. That is thanks to all the work of these global companies that produced a vaccine in record time, for which we should all be thankful.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my hon. colleague on his election and thank him for his speech.

Our Conservative colleagues seem to have a problem with oil's place in the throne speech. A few minutes ago, the Conservative member for Lethbridge made a comment that puzzled me a little and left me feeling concerned about my future. She said that a future without oil would entail living naked in the forest.

The Address

Does my colleague think that an oil-free future means living naked in the forest? *[English]*

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I found that issue concerning, but also enlightening. Nobody wants to see the member for Kingston and the Islands living naked in a forest, including himself.

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Parkdale—High Park. I want to acknowledge that I am standing on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

[Translation]

Since this is the first real opportunity I have had to speak, I feel it is important to begin with some acknowledgements.

● (1350)

[English]

From the bottom of my heart, I thank the voters of Halifax West for putting their trust in me. They know I will work every day to make their lives better and leave a better Canada for our next generation.

I want to give a special thanks to my family, especially my mother Houda; my children, my son Antonios, who managed my election campaign; my daughters Stephanie, Monica and Marena; all my volunteers and friends who did so much to bring me here today; as well as my father Stephen, who is watching from above with a great smile and a tear in his eye. I am going to make him proud.

[Translation]

It is hard to find the words to describe how very proud I am to rise today for the first time as the member for Halifax West.

[English]

Today I am profoundly humbled to stand and address my colleagues in this chamber as the first female member of Parliament to represent my community in the House of Commons. Most members are familiar with my predecessor, the Hon. Geoff Regan, a former speaker of this House, and I hope to continue his strong record of collaboration and advocacy.

All my colleagues know the feeling I am experiencing. It is one of pride, enthusiasm and passion for one's community and country. We do not really know how to describe it, but we know this feeling is going to push us to do everything and anything we can to make a difference in the lives of the people who sent us here.

[Translation]

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to my new colleagues and talk about my riding.

[English]

My constituency of Halifax West is the most diverse and multicultural riding east of Montreal.

[Translation]

I would also like to share a few thoughts on the Speech from the Throne.

My name is Lena Metlege Diab. I am a proud Lebanese Nova Scotian, a mother of four children, a grandmother to four, a small business owner, a lawyer and a community volunteer. Though I am new to this chamber, I am not new to political life.

Prior to the election, I served two terms as a member of the legislative assembly of Nova Scotia, with you, Mr. Speaker, when you were in that chamber. I also served as the provincial cabinet minister responsible for justice, public safety, immigration and population growth, labour and advanced education, and Acadian affairs and francophonie. In 2013, I was appointed as the first female attorney general in Nova Scotia.

In my previous roles, I worked hard to push forward the cause of equity, address Nova Scotia's economic and demographic challenges, and support businesses and workers. That is why I was so encouraged by the themes and priorities laid out in this year's Speech from the Throne. What was clear to me was that the government gets the type of action this moment calls for. If ever there were a time when Canadians needed an active government, a government that takes the reins and charts the course, that time is now.

That is the vision I see in this year's Speech from the Throne, one that is bold, forward-looking and intentional. It is an acknowledgement that our biggest problems will not simply right themselves, including the climate emergency, the housing shortage, the inequities experienced by many of our community members, and the challenges of building back our workforce and our industries from a once-in-a-lifetime economic shock. We have to act intentionally, collaboratively and urgently on them all, and we have to back that up with real investment and meaningful policy change.

[Translation]

I will now come back to the incredible diversity in my riding. As I knocked on doors in Halifax West, I met people from around the globe. Many are not yet Canadian citizens, but their stories are touching and inspiring to me. I myself experienced life as an immigrant when I came to Canada at the age of 11. What struck me the most about these people was their great hope and immense pride in being here and soon joining our Canadian family and community.

[English]

I remember my days as a young girl at St. Agnes Junior High in Halifax, feeling brand new to my city. At the time, I was still working to learn English, and I did not truly understand what the other children were saying about me. I knew they looked at the way I looked, the way I wore my hair, and I could sense they saw me as different from them.

However, after eight years serving as Nova Scotia's immigration minister, I know that today the hearts of Nova Scotians are more open than ever before. This is why I am so encouraged by the Speech from the Throne's mentions of increasing immigration, reducing wait times for reunification and a continuing the commitment to resettle those displaced from their homes. My community is a daily reminder and living proof that our diversity is our strength.

[Translation]

I do not mean to imply that we have no challenges ahead, because that is far from the case.

• (1355)

[English]

There are many forms of hatred and discrimination in our communities, and truly addressing them requires continuous, vigilant action from all levels of government and collaboration from all members in the House. This is something I am committed to working on in my time here, and I see that too in the Speech from the Throne. We need active, renewed initiative when it comes to eliminating racism and bigotry from our communities. An essential part of my mission here is to do what I can to ensure my community and my country feel like home for every individual and family, no matter where they come from.

In Nova Scotia, we are now just counting the days before the mark of one million residents is passed. Having been on the front lines of that work, I could not be more proud. It is clear from the Speech from the Throne that this government understands how essential immigration is in strengthening our economy, our workforce, our communities and our public services in Nova Scotia and across the country.

[Translation]

At the same time, we must act purposefully to ensure that the economy we rebuild after this pandemic includes everyone. It is inconceivable to me that we would let the pandemic roll back the gains made by women and under-represented communities in the workforce.

[English]

I see the government's commitment in that in its establishing of an affordable national early child care system and its investing in the empowerment of Black, racialized and indigenous people.

I am encouraged by the priorities and the focus. I am encouraged because I came here to make a difference in the lives of Canadians, and I welcome the attention given to these pressing issues, which I heard about on the door steps.

[Translation]

I am ready for the work ahead, and I will do that work in my three languages. I feel it is important to bring my enduring love of the French language to the House every day I have the privilege of sitting here.

The Address

[English]

I also proudly address this House in the beautiful Arabic language, and I will do my very best to represent the many residents of Halifax West who speak it themselves.

[Member spoke in Arabic]

[English]

To conclude, let us all now get to work with renewed commitment to address the needs of Canadians and to make good on the promise of building back better.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House:

- (a) following Oral Questions later this day, the House shall proceed to a recorded division on the motion for second reading of Bill C-2, An Act to provide further support in response to COVID-19;
- (b) that the members to serve on the Standing Committee on Finance be appointed by the whip of each recognized party depositing with the Clerk of the House a list of his or her party's members no later than 24 hours after the adoption of this order, and that the Clerk of the House shall convene a meeting of the committee no later than Monday, December 6, 2021;
- (c) the Standing Committee on Finance shall be composed of six members of the Liberal Party, four members of the Conservative Party, one member of the Bloc Québécois and one member of the New Democratic Party;
- (d) if Bill C-2 is read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance be invited to appear as a witness for the committee during the consideration of the bill, and that she answer questions for not less than two hours after her opening statement;
- (e) the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs be appointed to prepare and report lists of members to compose the standing and standing joint committees of this House, and that the committee be composed of Bardish Chagger, Ryan Turnbull, Mark Gerretsen, Sherry Romanado, Ruby Sahota, Greg Fergus, Michael Barrett, Blain Calkins, Eric Duncan, Brad Vis, Alain Therrien and Rachel Blaney;
- (f) the Clerk of the House shall convene a meeting of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs tomorrow at 12:30 p.m.;
- (g) immediately upon the tabling of the report referred to in paragraph (e), it shall be concurred in;
- (h) the Clerk of the House shall convene organizational meetings of all the Standing Committees no later than Friday, December 17, 2021;
- (i) for the duration of the 44th Parliament:
 - (i) Standing Order 104(1) be amended by replacing the words "10 members", with the words "12 members",
 - (ii) Standing Order 104(2) be amended by replacing the words "10 members" with the following: "12 members, except for the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, which shall consist of 11 members",
 - (iii) Standing Order 106(4) be amended by adding, after the words "any four members of the said committee", the words "representing at least two different political parties",
 - (iv) Standing Orders 104(5), 104(6)(b), 114(2)(e) and 114(2)(f) be suspended,
 - (v) Standing Order 108(1)(c) be amended by adding, after the word "subcommittees", the words ", composed of members from all recognized parties,"; and

Statements by Members

(j) the Clerk of the House be authorized to make any required editorial and consequential alterations to the Standing Orders, including to the marginal notes.

• (1400)

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. government House leader moving the motion will please say nay. Hearing no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay. Hearing no dissenting voice, I declare the motion carried.

(Motion agreed to)

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*English*]

VOLUNTEERISM

Mr. Jaime Battiste (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start off by thanking the good people of Sydney—Victoria for re-electing me as their member of Parliament.

Cape Bretoners are known for their generosity and community spirit. Today, I would like to commend a remarkable young woman and Cape Breton's 2021 citizen of the year, Alyssa Rose.

Years ago, Alyssa was a patient at the IWK Health Centre, one of the most important specialized health centres for youth, women and families across the Maritimes. While there, she underwent an intense procedure to remove a brain tumour.

Alyssa was so moved by the work done by the doctors at the IWK that she was compelled to find some way to give back; over the last three years, Alyssa has raised over \$33,000 for the IWK Health Centre. Her sense of selflessness, charity and community service are exactly the qualities Cape Bretoners chose to honour when they voted her citizen of the year.

Congratulations to Alyssa.

* * *

• (1405)

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Earl Dreshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to return to this House as the member for Red Deer—Mountain View. I am so thankful to the family members, friends and volunteers who supported me. It is, of course, with much pride that I stand for all of my constituents in this chamber.

Our community held two incredible national events last month at Red Deer's Westener Park. Agri-trade is one of Canada's premier agricultural events. It features the very best in equipment, technology and services, and showcases true farmer ingenuity. We also hosted the 47th Canadian Finals Rodeo, which not only is a vital part of our western heritage but also highlights how sports and agriculture are key to our growing economy.

Agriculture is also the backbone of our nation's economy. Events such as these foster the grassroots relationship that connects us to the legacy of Alberta farmers, who put food on our tables and pre-

serve our environment. I am so proud to be part of a community that is a global leader in food safety and innovation.

* * *

TOTTEN MINE RESCUE

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently, in my riding of Sudbury, 39 miners were underground at Vale's Totten mine when an accident damaged the elevator.

[*Translation*]

The miners were working more than 1,200 metres underground. A plan was carried out to bring all the miners back to the surface.

[*English*]

The climb to safety took three days to complete, with all 39 miners brought to the surface without injury or harm. I want to recognize and thank everyone involved in rescuing the miners: 56 Vale mine rescue members, Vale, Vale CISM, United Steelworkers Local 6500, Ontario Mine Rescue, the Ontario Ministry of Labour, NEO-MO staff and Sudbury EMS.

[*Translation*]

I also want to recognize the 39 workers and their family members, who remained calm through a trying situation.

[*English*]

Nothing is more important than for all our workers to safely complete their work day and get home to their families.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MEDIA FOOD DRIVE

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as of today, the Media Food Drive, also known as the guignolée des médias, is under way across most of Quebec. The goal is to collect donations to help less fortunate individuals and families as the holidays draw near. Every year for the past 22 years, except last year, media organizations are out on the streets, creating a festive atmosphere, asking passersby for donations, and cultivating the generosity of Quebeckers who are more than willing to give money and non-perishable food items. Many merchants pitch in by collecting food donations. Cash donations can also be made at guignolée.ca.

Over 100 community organizations will then redistribute the proceeds of Quebecers' solidarity to individuals and families. This year, because of the pandemic, the cost of living and grocery bills have been going up faster than ever, and food insecurity affects thousands of people in Quebec.

The Bloc encourages Quebecers to give as much as they are able to so everyone can enjoy happy holiday celebrations.

* * *

CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it will surprise no one here to hear me thank the people of Châteauguay—Lacolle from the bottom of my heart for once again putting their trust in me, in our Liberal government and in our Prime Minister, the right hon. member for Papineau.

[English]

Yes, it will surprise no one here to know how proud I am to have been witness to how the checks and balances in our democratic system work. Yes, every vote counts.

[Translation]

Now that the election is over, I will repeat what I told my constituents. No matter their political stripe, I represent everyone in Châteauguay—Lacolle.

I hope that, with the support of colleagues on both sides of the House, our riding will soon be renamed Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville.

* * *

[English]

LOW-CARBON ENERGY INDUSTRY

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I want to highlight project clear horizon, a large-scale carbon capture, utilization and storage infrastructure project led by the City of Medicine Hat with strong corporate support from both Methanex and CF Industries. The scale of this project is expected to capture approximately three million tonnes of CO₂ annually, and includes the ability to produce hydrogen.

Project clear horizon is the largest single business retention and expansion opportunity in southeast Alberta. Methanex and CF Industries are two of the largest employers and taxpayers in the region, but escalating carbon prices will make current operations uneconomical. Carbon capture is a developing industry that requires substantial government support. Project clear horizon represents the future of Canada's low-carbon energy industry.

I call on the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to join me in advocating for the approval and full government support of this environmentally responsible project.

• (1410)

The Speaker: Order.

Statements by Members

I just want to remind hon. members that statements by members are being made. It is very important we all listen to them, so that we hear what is going on in individual ridings.

The hon. member for Cape Breton—Canso.

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AUS SOCCER CHAMPIONS

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, about a month ago I attended the AUS soccer championships, hosted here at Cape Breton University. Today it is with great pride that I rise in the House for the first time this session to congratulate the Cape Breton University men's soccer team on its fifth consecutive AUS championship, establishing a sporting dynasty in the Atlantic region.

It was two weeks ago that the team was here in Ottawa, where it played in the national semifinals and captured the bronze medal following a thrilling weekend on the pitch. After close to 18 months away from the game, this season was an impressive one for our Capers. It is thanks to their determination, commitment and passion for the sport that the Capers made students, staff, alumni and the community proud once again.

I look forward to following their action again next year, and I say, "Go Capers, go!"

* * *

VOLUNTEERISM

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize some amazing Queen's University students from my riding of Kingston and the Islands.

Last week, Queen's University's varsity leadership council ran a food drive to help support Martha's Table, a local non-profit that provides free nutritious meals and personal hygiene products to members of the Kingston community. This initiative was led by the council's co-presidents: Sydney Hutchinson, one of the women's water polo team members, and Colton Celetano of the men's lacrosse team.

In total, this involved 21 different varsity teams that put together 60 baskets of food and hygiene products. Each basket included 21 items and is enough for a family of four. I know that every day there are many Queen's students just like Sydney and Colton, who quietly go and serve our community to help make it an even better place. They do not do it for recognition or reward; they simply do it because it is the right thing to do and they want to help.

I thank Sydney, Colton and all the varsity athletes who participated, for stepping up for their community.

*Statements by Members***SIMCOE-GREY**

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the first time in the 44th Parliament.

I want to thank the good people of Simcoe—Grey for once again putting their trust in me to be their voice here in Ottawa. I also want to thank my wife, Colleen; my two daughters, Lexi and Sarah; my EDA; and the many volunteers who helped get me back to this special place.

In the last Parliament, my constituents talked to me a lot about the need for high-speed Internet, more support for seniors and more support for small businesses. These remain top priorities, but the issue I am hearing about more than ever now is the record levels of debt in Canada and the overall rise in the cost of living. My constituents are concerned about the price of groceries, the cost to heat their homes and affording their mortgages if interest rates were to rise in the present market.

The current government put us in this situation, and, like many Canadians, I want to see a real plan to get out: a Conservative plan.

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MARKHAM—UNIONVILLE

Mr. Paul Chiang (Markham—Unionville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand for the first time in this House and humbled to be the newly elected member of Parliament for Markham—Unionville.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my constituents for placing their trust and support in me. As a retired police officer, representing them is a privilege that I will not take lightly.

I would like to take this time to acknowledge and thank the people who stood by my side and helped me get to this position. My dedicated and hard-working campaign team had conversations on doorsteps that helped amplify the voices of Canadians and carry our movement forward.

My wife of 40 years, Monica, my three adult children and their spouses, and my six grandchildren have always remained by my side and supported me in all my endeavours. I cannot thank them enough and would not be where I am today without them.

Today I pledge to the people of Markham—Unionville that I will work tirelessly to represent everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or orientation. I will fight to make sure our communities are safe, healthy and inclusive for all Canadians.

Finally, I want to congratulate all re-elected and newly elected members to this House, and I hope to work with everyone in this House.

* * *

● (1415)

LOBSTER FISHING SEASON

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday morning, after two days of delay, fishermen in LFA 33 and 34 kicked off their lobster fishing season. For them, from genera-

tion to generation, being a fisherman is not just a job. It is a passion and a reason to live, and they are very proud of it.

Today it is with the same pride that I can express to them my deep admiration and respect for what they do, wish them an excellent season, and above all, ask them to stay safe on the water and keep in mind all the fishers we have unfortunately lost over the years.

I also want to take this opportunity on behalf of my family and staff to wish my constituents of West Nova, as well as my colleagues in this chamber, a very merry Christmas. May everyone's gatherings be joyful, and may they please remain cautious during their travels.

[Translation]

I wish my constituents in West Nova and my colleagues in the House a merry Christmas with their friends and family.

May everyone's holidays be joyful, healthy and, above all, safe, so we can get the new year started on the right foot.

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[English]

PORTAGE—LISGAR

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this 44th Parliament to thank the people of Portage—Lisgar for choosing me as their MP for the fifth time. I am so grateful for their trust.

It has been a difficult time for my riding. Some in the riding feared the vaccine and distrust government, but many more have confidence in their doctors' and experts' advice. This was a divisive issue during the election and still is.

That is why today I recommit in this House to do all I can, as their MP, to be a leader who brings people together, to listen, to be kind and respectful, and to exemplify the Christian values I was taught growing up in southern Manitoba.

People in my area, and Mennonites especially, are known for their generosity and love for their neighbour. These values have not changed. Although I do not have all the answers to these challenges, I do know this: No pandemic will stop the eternal legacy that the people of my region of southern Manitoba have been destined to fulfill. In the words of Paul, when all else fades, when all else fails, love never fails.

CONVERSION THERAPY

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP):

Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the historic event that took place in this chamber yesterday. As a two-spirit person and newly elected member of this House, seeing my colleagues put aside our partisan differences to pass this long-overdue ban on conversion therapy fills me with hope.

Kinanaskomtinawaw, members of this House. In particular, I would like to thank the Minister of Justice for tabling this landmark legislation, the member for Fundy Royal for his unanimous consent motion, and the NDP member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, whose years of tireless work made this bill possible.

Most importantly, I wish to thank the survivors from the 2SLGBTQI community, who never gave up the fight to ensure this harmful practice was banned. This is their victory.

Conversion therapy is wrong; it is harmful and it needs to be banned. I call on our colleagues in the Senate to now move just as quickly to pass Bill C-4 into law.

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today is the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. I want to take this opportunity to talk about the Uighurs, a people who are victims of slavery.

At least 500,000 Uighurs are being forced to work in cotton fields in China. No less than one in five articles of cotton clothing sold in the world is made in part by Uighur slave labour. Yes, I said one in five articles of clothing. Tragically, the Uighurs are being subjected to a genocide, and forced labour and slavery is just one horrific part of that.

Despite this, the Government of Canada is bowing to China. Yesterday, it refused to use the Olympic Games to put diplomatic pressure on China to authorize an investigation into the abuses inflicted on Uighurs.

Today, I am reaching out to my Liberal colleagues.

I know that they are aware of what is going on. I have spoken with them. I know there are many of them who would prefer us to stand up to China. I am calling on them to reflect, because today, on the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, their government is sitting on the wrong side of history.

* * *

● (1420)

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

Please allow me this delineation.

Oral Questions

I have heard it said that this crisis throughout our great nation is nothing more than just inflation.

I remember prorogation and attempts to hinder accountability beneath our station.

We should take it as humiliation to see Canada's economy suffer from such stagnation.

The people demand compensation from a government that does not show trepidation to bankrupt future generations.

Oh how we will come to see this reprobation and how it has been said without hesitation.

It could have been better had we shown conservation, instead of a continuation of the poor excuse of “it is just inflation.”

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[*Translation*]

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Mr. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the great William Faulkner wrote, “The past is never dead. It's not even past.” Unfortunately, we see that reflected in the scourge of slavery.

Today is the United Nations International Day for the Abolition of Slavery. Slavery still exists today. Its modern forms include sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced marriages and the recruitment of children in armed conflict.

Slavery was abolished in Canada in 1834, freeing indigenous and Black people from this most disgusting form of abuse. However, according to the latest estimates, more than 40 million people are still victims of modern slavery. Nearly three-quarters are women and girls, and more than one-quarter are children.

We, as Canadian parliamentarians, who are among the most privileged in the world, must speak out against modern slavery at every opportunity and use every tool at our disposal to act wisely. The world is watching, especially those under the yoke of slavery.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[*English*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, news is just leaking out about more massive spending plans from the Liberal government that just recently acknowledged its role in the inflation crisis. Reuters news is reporting the finance minister will only give limited information in her fiscal update. The government has already refused to account for \$600 billion of its spending and now it is planning to spend more without any accountability.

Why is the government covering up its out-of-control spending?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased to answer an economic question from the leader of the official opposition. It gives me the chance to congratulate him for agreeing last week with Stephen Poloz and the majority of serious economists that “inflation is a global phenomenon”.

Oral Questions

The member for Durham seems to now have lost his nerve, but I guess flip-flops from the Conservative leader are no surprise to Canadian voters or, indeed, to the Conservative caucus.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that comes as quite an ironic response from the only Canadian parliamentarian flagged by Twitter for misleading Canadians.

As the minister once said, better is always possible, so better is always possible for the Prime Minister. I have a simple question for her. Prices are going up across the board. She has the opportunity to ask the Bank of Canada to get inflation back down to 2%. Will she do it? Yes or no.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives seem not to understand a very basic economic distinction: the difference between monetary and fiscal policy. Monetary policy decisions about interest rates and the money supply are the province of the Bank of Canada. It is fiscal policy decisions about spending and taxation that are the job of the government.

I think Canadians would be right to ask themselves whether a party that does not even understand this basic distinction could ever be trusted in government.

• (1425)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am hoping one basic economic equation that the finance minister will inform her Prime Minister of after six years is that budgets clearly do not balance themselves, do they, finance minister?

New data in August from Statistics Canada said that we had 24% more business failures. Thousands of family-owned businesses are struggling. Inflation is hitting small business, too. On January 1, the minister is going to raise payroll taxes on those family-owned businesses.

How many more small businesses are going to have to close before the Liberal minister learns her basic economics?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 days we have heard a lot from the Conservatives about government spending, which they now deem to have been excessive, but just a few weeks ago, on the campaign trail, the Conservatives proposed government spending in this fiscal year that was higher than what we proposed. While we proposed a deficit of \$156.9 billion for 2021-22, the Conservatives proposed a \$168-billion deficit.

Therefore, could the party of flip-flops please tell Canadians what its position is today?

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation is creeping out everywhere in this country. In fact, a few years ago the Prime Minister said he would never run a deficit greater than \$10 billion. Inflation has led that commitment to be that he is never going to run a deficit greater than \$500 billion.

When will the finance minister and the government commit to Canadians, who are seeing the inflation crisis price them out of their own homes and neighbourhoods, to finally balance a budget?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, The Economist released its annual ranking of the most expensive cities to live in around the world this week. Here are the top 10: Tel Aviv, Paris, Singapore, Zurich, Hong Kong, New York, Geneva, Copenhagen, Los Angeles and Osaka. What do these 10 cities have in common? None of them are in Canada.

[Translation]

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question about Canada's big cities.

Inflation and the cost of living are not priorities for the Liberal government. During the election campaign, the Prime Minister even said, and I quote: "You'll forgive me if I don't think about monetary policy."

Canadians and Quebecers are tired of living paycheque to paycheque. When will this Prime Minister decide to truly help Canadians make ends meet?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, allow me to read the list of the 11 least affordable cities in the world according to The Economist: Oslo, Seoul, Tokyo, Vienna, Sydney, Melbourne, Helsinki, London, Dublin, Frankfurt and Shanghai.

What do those 11 cities have in common? None of them are in Canada.

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last February, when the Prime Minister met with Joe Biden for the first time to plan a common course of action, they must have spoken about 50 or so files.

However, they did not talk at all about softwood lumber. They obviously did not discuss getting rid of the tariffs, which is a priority, and they definitely did not talk about separate treatment for Quebec.

It was in May, when Washington decided to double the tariffs, that the Prime Minister woke up and remembered that there was a trade dispute.

It is always the same old story with this government. We are always waiting for something to be done. If we do not tell the Liberals what to do, when to do it and how to do it, they do nothing.

When will this government stand up for Quebec's forestry industry?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that I cannot win a war of words in French with my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois.

However, I hope that he understands that our government sincerely wants to work closely with him for Quebecers.

Softwood lumber is a very important file for me and for our government. We are working closely with the unions and the industry.

We will continue to defend the interests of Canada and Quebec, as we did in the case of aluminum.

• (1430)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec is the main target of the United States in this new chapter of the softwood lumber dispute.

Ottawa is not standing up to the Americans to defend our industry. Ottawa should have made the Americans understand that Quebec has a completely separate forestry regime that must be examined separately from that of the rest of Canada, since Quebec's regime complies with the North American trade regulations.

Today, the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development is in Washington to talk about softwood lumber. Will she demand separate treatment for Quebec?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very familiar with Quebec's softwood lumber industry. I know the union representatives and the industry leaders. All Quebecers and all Canadians should be proud of the softwood lumber industry in Canada and Quebec.

I promise all Canadians and all Quebecers that we will continue to work hard to defend this important industry.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are deeply worried about the omicron variant. They are worried about their families. They are worried about their communities. Canadians understand that it is important to take precautions for travel with appropriate safety measures, but these safety measures and precautions have to be clear and consistent. That has been the ongoing critique of the government: Canadians do not know what the rules are and when they are going to apply.

Will the Prime Minister deliver a clear plan of what the rules are so Canadians who are travelling know what to do?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we agree with the leader of the NDP and his party that the fight against COVID is the single most important health and economic policy in our country, and we sure agree that vaccination is an essential tool in that fight.

When it comes to the new measures that we are putting in place to deal with the omicron variant, I would really like to thank Canada's public health authorities for responding with such swift action. I want to say to all Canadians that this is a circuit breaker to give us time to be careful.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the omicron variant is a real source of concern. People are afraid for their families and communities, but they understand the need to have health restrictions in place to prevent the spread of this variant.

However, we need clear and consistent measures. This Liberal government continues to be criticized for its lack of clarity and consistency in health restrictions, particularly those related to travel.

Is the Prime Minister prepared to lay down a clear and consistent plan to help Canadians know what to do if they decide to travel?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the NDP leader for his question.

I agree with him that fighting COVID-19 remains the most important policy for the economy and, of course, for the health of Canadians.

I really want to thank all the officials at the Public Health Agency of Canada and our border services for responding so quickly to defend us all from the omicron variant.

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[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, fishermen saw their income drop drastically in 2020 due to COVID. Thousands of Canadian fishermen received special COVID benefits because they are paid a share of profits, not a weekly wage. This year the government flip-flopped and demanded money back for the benefits the government said they were entitled to.

Will fishermen who are paid a share of profits, not a wage, get the fish harvester benefit, yes or no?

• (1435)

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging the very important work that is done by fishers on all of our coasts in Canada, and how much their work means to their communities and to our government.

The fish harvester benefit was made available in two tranches. There were some estimates that had to be made regarding the wage reductions, which needed to be corrected when the actual numbers came in.

We will continue working with the fishers to make sure they are supported in every way possible.

Oral Questions

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister clearly does not understand that her government has sent out 5,000 clawback letters to fishermen.

Nova Scotia's winter lobster season started yesterday. Fishermen are in the frigid North Atlantic in the winter with the Atlantic Ocean crashing over them, risking their lives to catch the food we need. They should not be worried about paying back to the government the thousands of dollars in COVID benefits they were entitled to.

Will fishermen who are paid a share of profits, not a wage, be allowed to keep the fishermen's harvest benefit, yes or no?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is clearly the member opposite who does not understand the situation. When this benefit was first constructed, it was an estimate of the reduction in earnings the payments were based on. The following year, when those numbers were clear, it was then clear they were not eligible for that money. This is not a clawback; it was the arrangement. It was understood from the beginning that it would be based on the actual reduction and not the projected reduction.

I want to say that I support the fishers and their communities and we will continue working to do that.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last June, the government announced the Pacific salmon strategy initiative and talked about bold, transformative action. At the same time, the fisheries minister doubled down on the government's refusal to quickly mobilize proven actions needed to restore Pacific salmon. Five months have passed and the salmon populations are still in trouble.

Can the fisheries minister tell us what the five species of Pacific salmon are, and which are most at risk?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the protection of wild salmon populations is a priority for our government, especially because there are complex challenges facing the species. There are runs right across our coasts that are in trouble, including all of the major salmon species. These fish are very important to British Columbians, especially our indigenous communities that depend on them for food, cultural and ceremonial uses. We are putting \$647 million into a Pacific salmon—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Marshall decisions are the most important Supreme Court rulings regarding indigenous commercial fishing rights.

The former minister of fisheries admitted she had not read the decisions, and recently the new Minister of Fisheries said she was aware only of key elements.

This is the government's most important relationship with Canada's indigenous peoples. Has the Minister of Fisheries read the Marshall decisions in their entirety, yes or no?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I do understand is that the conservation, protection and restoration of abundance of

our stocks are of primordial importance to our communities, our fishers and Canadians at large. Everything we do at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans underpins that.

First nations have a Supreme Court-affirmed—

• (1440)

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. minister.

An hon. member: Tell her to answer the question.

The Speaker: I am having a hard time hearing the answer. I want her to start from the top so I can hear the whole thing, and maybe the sound will come down a bit.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Joyce Murray: Mr. Speaker, I would think that the Conservatives opposite would be interested in this answer, because it is important to all of us.

First nations have a Supreme Court-affirmed treaty right to fish, and our government has never stopped working to implement that right.

Everything we do at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans is underpinned by conservation, protection and restoration of habitats and stock abundance. It is a priority to work with indigenous communities. My first trip was out to meet—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, understanding the Marshall decisions should be the minister's top priority given that this is the government's most important relationship.

The minister needs to know that the 1999 fisheries committee report clearly stated that the court confirmed the department's sole authority to regulate the fisheries and did not confer any right to a separate commercial fishery.

Will the minister abide by that decision when implementing any future decision regarding commercial fisheries, yes or no?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The Supreme Court of Canada recognized the right of 35 first nations in Quebec's Gaspé region and Atlantic Canada to harvest for reasonable subsistence purposes. My department is working with communities to implement that right.

I have visited the Atlantic coast, and I have talked with Mi'kmaq indigenous fishery leaders. That was good, it was important, and I will keep doing more of the same.

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Fisheries and Oceans Canada's proposed marine protected area east of the Scotian shelf would spell the end of commercial fishing. This plan will put an end to the economic development of halibut, crab and lobster for both indigenous and non-indigenous fishers.

Will the minister stop hurting commercial and indigenous fishers, and will she stop hurting Atlantic Canada's economy?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I am pleased to have the opportunity to say once again that economies based on fishing and fisheries production are very important to me and to my department. I know that it is also important to those living on the coast and to all fishing communities.

I will work closely with the communities, individuals and organizations, including indigenous peoples, to manage in a way—

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I commend the government for wanting to participate in the summit on gun violence that the mayor of Montreal has convened for January 26. However, this should not stop the government from taking action in the meantime. It is a summit, not an excuse for buying time.

Quebec and Montreal have already asked the federal government to do more to combat gun trafficking. Today, it must tighten border controls. Today, this government must create the joint task force proposed by my Bloc Québécois colleague. It is the federal government's exclusive responsibility.

Will the minister take responsibility, yes or no?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

There have been too many tragedies involving gun violence. That is the problem we want to solve with our proposals and investments. We have already invested more than \$350 million in additional resources at the border. This week, more than 60 firearms were seized by a joint operation of the RCMP and the Sûreté du Québec. There is co-operation happening.

• (1445)

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to do everything he can to stem firearms trafficking, but that is simply not the case right now.

We are even hearing this from customs officers. The president of their union said, and I quote: “Whether it be our detector dogs, our intelligence officers, our methods for combatting concealed

Oral Questions

weapons and so on, all this expertise is not being used between border crossings.”

There are ways to address this; solutions do exist. Expertise could be solicited and better used. When will the minister do just that and tighten border controls?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure all members of the House that this government is taking concrete action and is always looking for concrete solutions. We have added resources at the border. We have banned assault weapons. We have proposed new partnerships with the Quebec government and municipalities, including Montreal, to ban handguns, with an investment of at least \$1 billion. We will continue on this path to address the issue.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, concrete proposals are exactly what we are offering the government, by calling for police forces to work together to fight gun trafficking.

However, the federal government is going in the opposite direction. Last year, the RCMP withdrew investigators from Quebec's national anti-organized crime squad. This summer, a retired police officer told La Presse that it is clear that the RCMP and the SQ are not talking as much today as they were a few years ago, adding that the forces still respect each other, but they do not talk to each other.

Why is the minister refusing to restore co-operation and create a joint task force?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what my colleague is proposing in the House is already being done. There are several joint forums with the U.S. and several others with the Government of Quebec. There is a great deal of co-operation going on between our police forces to stop firearms trafficking at the border. Are there other opportunities? The answer is yes, absolutely, and, as I said before, my door is always open to explore them.

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[English]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Russia has amassed an estimated 100,000 troops on the Ukraine border, and 32,000 in Russian-occupied Crimea. One-third of Russia's ground combat power is on the move. RT News reports that Russia is warning Ukraine that military action is highly possible.

Canada has a small training contingent in Ukraine of 200 troops. Last week, it was reported that the minister was considering additional troops and equipment. Today, CDS Eyre said no.

To the minister: What force options will be deployed to aid Ukraine, and who is in charge—

Oral Questions

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Defence.

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, let me say that Canada will continue to remain steadfast in our support of Ukraine, especially in the face of unwanted Russian aggression. In doing so, Canada will consistently support NATO, our multilateral partnerships and the international rules-based order. We will continue to work with our partners and allies to uphold peace, security and our multilateral partnerships that protect democracy and peace around the world.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United States is short on oil. President Biden has said he wants oil production increased. He has called on OPEC to pump more. He has released the petroleum reserve, and he has coordinated with other countries, but not Canada, to release their reserves. Last week, the most powerful senator in Washington, Democrat Joe Manchin, called on President Biden to approve Keystone XL.

Did the Prime Minister raise this issue with the President and with the congressional delegation he met with two weeks ago?

• (1450)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are seized with a number of the issues raised by my hon. colleague. We are working very hard to support the endeavours of the industry and of workers and communities across western Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador. We raise these issues at every possible opportunity.

I raised a number of concerns with respect to the sector, including Line 5, with my colleague Secretary Granholm when I met with her at COP26, and we will certainly continue to advocate on behalf of Canadian interests.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the government, our relationship with Washington has declined. Our closest trading partner and ally needs more oil. How did we get into the ridiculous situation where the President is pleading with OPEC to pump more oil, where the President has ordered 50 million barrels to be released from the strategic petroleum reserve, and where the President is coordinating with countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan and India to release more oil? How did the government let this happen?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is working very hard to ensure the economic prosperity of all regions of this country. That very much includes the oil and gas-producing regions within this country. There are many, many things that we have done to ensure we are supporting and actively promoting the interests of the oil and gas sector in this country, including building the Trans Mountain pipeline, defending Canada's interests concerning Line 5 and supporting the KXL project.

We will continue to advocate on behalf of Canadian interests, working toward a future that will be a prosperous one for every province and territory in this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development's report was clear. The federal government is going from one failure to the next. The Liberals will never meet their own climate target. That is pathetic and irresponsible.

A study shows that this government is investing four and a half times more in fossil fuels than in renewable energy. Either the Liberals just do not get it or they are choosing to support an outdated energy source while people suffer the consequences of the climate crisis.

Are the Liberals waiting for us to be under water before they stop subsidizing the oil industry?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015, our government has been making a sustained effort on a national scale to implement the necessary measures and to help Canada significantly reduce emissions so that all sectors and all regions of the country can participate and prosper.

We are taking meaningful climate action and developing climate solutions that will reduce pollution and create new jobs.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Joe Biden goes to COP26 promising a clean energy future backed with \$2 trillion in investments for “good-paying union jobs”. Meanwhile, our Prime Minister goes from what the environment commissioner says is “failure to failure” as emissions continue to rise.

Under his watch, Canada is at the bottom of the G20 for renewable investments, down there with, wait for it, Russia and Saudi Arabia. Where are the massive investments needed to ensure that energy workers and the families of this country are the leaders and not the losers of the coming transformation?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate my hon. colleague on his appointment as the critic for natural resources. I would say that no country in the G7 or the G20 has been as ambitious as this country with respect to climate action over the last six years. Certainly, that was acknowledged at COP26.

Where is the money? We have committed over \$100 billion with respect to climate action that will result not only in the reduction of emissions but also in economic activity that will drive jobs and growth in all regions of this country. That certainly includes the work we have done with respect to the just transition on coal phase-out.

Certainly, the government has—

The Speaker: The hon. member for London West.

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many families across Canada have been able to count on our government to support them, whether it is through introducing tax cuts for families, creating the Canada child benefit, or making life more affordable through the early learning and child care agreements.

Can the Minister of Finance tell the House when Canadians can expect a new fiscal and economic update?

• (1455)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the member to the House. Our government's focus is to finish the fight against COVID and to support our recovery from the COVID recession. We know it is important to Canadians that we are careful and transparent with our nation's finances. That is why I am pleased to announce that I will be giving an economic and fiscal update to Canadians on December 14.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada's most trusted partners, the U.S., the U.K., Australia and New Zealand, have all banned Huawei equipment from their 5G networks because of espionage and national security concerns, yet there is one country that stands alone in not having said no to Huawei. It is Canada.

For years the Prime Minister has promised a decision regarding Huawei, but as usual, he has failed to deliver. Why does he not take this seriously, and when will he finally say no to Huawei?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to first congratulate the member for his appointment as the official critic to industry.

There is a very important decision to be made for this country. There is no more important decision than when it comes to securing our network, not just for this generation but for future generations. When it comes to security, Canadians at home know that we will make no compromise. National security comes first. We will ensure that we make the very best decision, not only for this generation, but for future generations of Canadians.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's kind words, but he needs to pay attention to this file. It is time he banned Huawei. All of our allies have banned Huawei, yet Canada stands all alone in waffling on the issue. For over two years, the government has promised a decision, which is going to come in a couple of weeks. Meanwhile, our telecoms have spent billions of dollars on Huawei equipment.

When will the minister finally grow a spine and say no way to Huawei?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think I was very kind to the member, and I am very surprised by his words, but this is politics.

Oral Questions

Canadians at home know that on this side of the House we take national security very seriously. We will take the best decision for this generation and future generations when it comes to protecting our network.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Office has estimated that, if the Liberal government had acted on its promises, all boil water advisories would have ended in 2020. Indeed, the Prime Minister failed on his promise to end all advisories nine months ago. Worse, the Minister of Indigenous Services said yesterday that she refuses to set a deadline for ending the remaining 44 on-reserve boil advisories. In fact, she wants to hold more consultations.

If the minister could not drink water in her home, how much longer would she wait?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is without a doubt that everyone deserves clean drinking water, no matter where they live in this country. That is why we have invested billions of dollars in clean drinking water, in partnership with first nations communities across the country. We have also committed to 100% of operations and maintenance funding. We are working with the partners who are still experiencing clean drinking water advisories and we will get this done.

My deadline is as soon as possible.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these promises of funding mean nothing when a child cannot drink clean water. We all know that one cannot run a business, a farm, a school, a hospital, a community or even a household without clean water. Sadly, as of October 15, 44 long-term boil water advisories on reserve still exist. In fact, the PBO report highlights that proposed spending on water and waste-water maintenance and operations over the next five years suggest annual funding gaps of \$138 million.

Rather than misleading indigenous communities, when will the government finally get the job done?

Oral Questions

• (1500)

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the member knows this, but in November 2015, when we came into power, there were 105 long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on first nations across this country. We worked with communities, each with its own set of specific challenges. We allocated billions of dollars, and we have been able to lift the majority of those water advisories.

We will continue until we get the job done. That is a promise made. We will keep that promise.

* * *

[Translation]

SENIORS

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, everyone knows that low-income seniors have been the hardest hit during the pandemic, but today it is less the pandemic and more the government's inconsistency and lack of compassion that is hitting them the hardest.

Today, working seniors have to choose which drug to cut in order to be able to pay their bills at the end of the month, because the federal government cut their guaranteed income supplement. Some are having a hard time paying for their rent or their groceries. They are being penalized in their benefits calculation for receiving the CERB to which they were entitled.

When will the minister finally fix this situation?

[English]

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree just how challenging this pandemic has been on seniors. Every single step of the way, our government has been there to support seniors, especially those who are most vulnerable by strengthening their GIS.

We have also moved very quickly to provide immediate and direct financial supports to seniors this year. When it comes to CERB and GIS, we are aware of this issue. I want to assure the hon. member that we are working extremely hard on this to find the right solution to help those who are affected, and as always, we will be there for them.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the red flag was raised during the construction holiday.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said that his ministers were working on it, but seniors are waiting and the holiday season is fast approaching. The government is denying some of the least fortunate seniors several hundred dollars a month because of its own lack of judgment. While we in Quebec are starting to talk about generosity, Christmas drives and Christmas hampers, Ottawa is cutting working seniors' benefits.

Will the minister finally look at what is happening and ensure, as we are proposing, that for the purposes of calculating the GIS, the CERB will simply be considered working income?

[English]

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, strengthening income security for seniors has been a priority for our government, and that is why our government strengthened GIS for vulnerable seniors. We provided one-time payments during the pandemic to help seniors afford the things that they needed. We will be increasing support through OAS for those who are age 75 and above. We recognize that GIS adjustments have been hard on some seniors this year. I can assure the hon. member and all members in this House that we are working hard to find a solution to help those affected. As always, we will be here for them.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Department of Employment is seriously behind in processing labour market impact assessments.

Yes, it has hired more staff, but why has it not informed the Department of Immigration about these delays? There is a severe labour shortage, yet the Department of Immigration is sending out notices to workers telling them that they must leave Canada within 90 days because they have not received LMIA's on time.

What do these two ministers have to say? I am asking them here in the House, because neither of them has had the decency to reply to my emails.

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year we accepted a record number of foreign workers.

We set the most ambitious immigration target in our history. This year, we have already supported over 345,000 new permanent residents. Month after month, we are supporting a record number of immigrants, who are contributing to our community. We will continue to innovate and modernize our system, because we know that immigration is vital to our economic recovery.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the labour shortage in Brantford—Brant is devastating. Manufacturers, restaurants and many other businesses are not able to fill hundreds, if not thousands, of positions. As a result, fewer products and services are available to the constituents in my riding, and business owners are losing their income. Rather than addressing labour shortages and many other economic challenges, the Liberals decided to hold an election in the middle of a pandemic.

Why did the Prime Minister prioritize his political ambition over the interests of Canadian businesses?

• (1505)

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, because of the strength of our economy, some sectors are outpacing their ability to find workers. That is why we have made the largest investment in training for workers in Canadian history.

Moving forward, we absolutely have a plan to address these labour shortages by welcoming talented workers to Canada: \$10-a-day child care that will allow parents to return to work; support for training and youth programs; keeping experienced workers in the workforce; boosting the participation of diverse Canadians; and addressing the specific needs of evolving sectors. We are on it.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with rising inflation and supply chain issues, economic and financial recovery is the priority for the coming years. However, the Liberals created more uncertainty for Canadian agriculture when they announced a severe fertilizer reduction, despite farmers' proven track record of environmental leadership.

MNP estimates potential losses of \$48 billion, including \$4.6 billion in Saskatchewan. There will also be shortages of supply, processing and exports.

Why does the government insist on making food more expensive and limiting how much farmers can grow?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure members that we are working hard on supporting farmers on different fronts. We want to be there to help them be more resilient to face climate change. This is why we have invested almost half a billion dollars in measures to provide farmers with incentives and to make it more affordable for them to buy more energy-efficient equipment.

* * *

[Translation]

HOUSING

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, housing is a priority for many Quebecers, including my constituents in Hochelaga.

Would the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion tell the House what the government will be doing to make sure people in my riding and across Quebec can access safe, affordable housing?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hochelaga for her question.

I was in Quebec recently to talk to stakeholders about their housing needs. In May, I had the pleasure of joining my colleague to make an important announcement about \$100 million for more than 500 affordable housing units.

We will keep working to make sure every Canadian has an affordable place to call home.

Oral Questions

[English]

AVIATION INDUSTRY

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are changing the instrument approach procedures for many small aerodromes across the country, including the Ponoka airport in my riding. This change is purely bureaucratic to align with international standards that do not reflect the reality of how these facilities are used in Canada, but the impacts are very real.

In Central Alberta, it would double the number of days medical evacuation and transport aircraft cannot use these airfields. This is a disaster waiting to happen during a pandemic.

Why is the government risking the lives of Canadians with this make-work bureaucratic project?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my colleague, and all Canadians, that our government has been working collaboratively with stakeholders in the aviation sector. They stepped up during the pandemic. When we had an economic and public health crisis, workers in the aviation sector stepped up and ensured that supply chains were resilient.

We will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure the safety of all and the strength of our economic growth.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, uranium mining and nuclear energy will play an important role in any rational greenhouse gas reduction strategy.

A recent report by Clean Energy Canada suggests that Canada's nuclear output will need to increase drastically to reach this government's 2050 net-zero goal.

Will the Minister of Natural Resources inform the House if the Minister of Environment and Climate Change fully supports nuclear energy expansion or does the Minister of Environment continue to be a science denier?

• (1510)

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has very ambitious climate targets in one of the world's most detailed and concrete climate plans.

Oral Questions

In the transition to a low-carbon economy and to a net-zero future, we must consider all non-emitting technologies, including wind, solar, hydro and, yes, nuclear energy. Nuclear energy is already an important part of Canada's non-emitting energy mix and supports many Canadian jobs along the supply chain. Canada's nuclear industry is a leader in driving the development, for example, of small modular reactors.

Our government will continue to work with Ontario, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick and others in supporting the assessment and development of this technology.

* * *

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a former case manager came forward from Veterans Affairs two weeks ago, alleging the department “had overwhelming caseloads and a lack of support, and is a toxic work environment.” Last week, the union representing Veterans Affairs staff put out a statement saying that case managers were near a breaking point.

Was the minister aware of the problems within his own department? If he was not, why not? If he was, why did he not act?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I can assure my hon. colleague that our government places the highest priority on ensuring that veterans and their families receive the support and services they should. That is why we have hired over 450 case managers since we formed the government, and we intend, and will do more, to ensure the veterans in our country receive the remuneration they deserve.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, December 3 marks the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This year the theme is leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world. It is a time for everyone to focus on how the pandemic impacted persons with disabilities, while highlighting the progress of leadership and the participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable world.

Could the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion please inform the House about our government's efforts to create an inclusive and accessible nation?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member for Windsor—Tecumseh on his return to the House and for his unwavering support and advocacy for persons with disabilities.

No other government has done more for persons with disabilities, but we have much more work to do. In the spirit of “nothing without us”, we are building on the steps we have taken since 2015, including the historic Accessible Canada Act, our ongoing work to establish our first-ever disability inclusion action plan and the new Canada disability benefit.

I encourage all members to participate in discussions and learn more about the important contributions of persons with disabilities in all our communities, and not just on December 3 but every day.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday's PBO report on clean drinking water confirmed what first nations already knew: The Prime Minister does not care about their human rights.

It is unacceptable that three first nations in northern Manitoba have gone so long without clean drinking water: Mathias Colomb, 76 days; Shamattawa, 726 days; and Tataskweyak, 1,660 days. This is what failure from the Liberal government looks like.

How many more reports before the Prime Minister fixes what he promised to fix years ago?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her passion, because we share it. This is a top priority for our government, to end long-term drinking water advisories across the country. That is why we have invested billions of dollars. That is why we are working so closely with communities just like the ones she mentioned.

We will get this done together in partnership with first nations communities.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the situation is bad. Environmental racism is alive and well in Kanesatake.

[English]

On the Mohawk territories of Kanesatake, there is a toxic waste dump. It has been leaking harmful chemicals, and it also affects the wildlife and the fish. It is not as though the government has not said something about it. There was a directive delivered to the toxic waste facility, dated November 18, 2020, yet the toxic waste still flows.

Could the minister update us on what is being done to remove the toxic waste facility from Kanesatake?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands for her continued advocacy for the environment and for her constituents.

The protection and restoration of fish habitats and fish in our waters is a top priority for me as a minister. Disposing of waste in this manner is dangerous to people, to the environment and to our fish stocks, and it is unacceptable. It is one of the reasons our government modernized the Fisheries Act to protect and restore fish habitats, which a previous government had cut out. We will hold any individuals who violate this act to account.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1515)

[English]

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FURTHER SUPPORT IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

The House resumed from November 29 consideration of the motion that Bill C-2, An Act to provide further support in response to COVID-19, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

The Speaker: It being 3:15 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at the second reading stage of Bill C-2.

[Translation]

Call in the members.

• (1535)

[English]

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

(Division No. 5)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arseneault
Arya	Atwin
Badawey	Bains
Baker	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchette-Joncas
Blois	Boissonnault
Bradford	Brière
Brunelle-Duceppe	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal

Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gameau
Garon	Gaudreau
Gerretsen	Gould
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Ien	Jaczek
Jones	Jowhari
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauson	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	Mendès
Medicino	Miao
Michaud	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Perron
Petitpas Taylor	Plamondon
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Savard-Tremblay
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Spengemann	Ste-Marie
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thériault	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koevorden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
Virani	Vuong
Weiler	Wilkinson
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Government Orders

Business of the House

NAYS

Members

Aitchison	Albas
Allison	Angus
Arnold	Ashton
Bachrach	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barron
Benzen	Bergen
Berthold	Bezan
Blaney	Block
Boulerice	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Cannings
Caputo	Carrie
Chambers	Chong
Collins (Victoria)	Cooper
Dalton	Davidson
Davies	Deltell
d'Entremont	Dowdall
Dreeschen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferri
Findlay	Gallant
Gazan	Généreux
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Green
Hallan	Hughes
Idlout	Johns
Julian	Kelly
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Kwan
Lake	Lantsman
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Masse	Mathysen
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	McPherson
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Poillievre
Rayes	Redekopp
Reid	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shiplay	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zarrillo
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PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.[*Translation*]

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Finance.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[*English*]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 19 minutes.

We have a point of order by the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, during the vote, one member left the House after voting and did not take their vote away. I would ask you to remind the House that we are still practising the same rules and that if members are in the House to vote, they should stay until the vote is completed.

The Speaker: I want to remind members that when they are voting, they must remain in their seats until the vote count has been reported. I thank the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

* * *

[*Translation*]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always nice on Thursdays to take stock of the parliamentary work that has been done and what is coming up in the next few days.

The least that can be said is that we have shown beyond a shadow of a doubt that those of us on this side of the House are capable of working to expedite the parliamentary process in certain instances. We clearly demonstrated that yesterday.

I invite my government colleague to inform the House and all of Canada of the parliamentary work that lies ahead over the next few days.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I thank my hon. colleague across the way for his co-operation. He is right to say there is a good spirit of co-operation. I hope that continues.

This afternoon, the House will continue debate on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

[*English*]

Tomorrow, the House will begin debate at second reading stage of Bill C-3, which would amend the Criminal Code and the Canada Labour Code to provide workers in federally regulated sectors with 10 days of paid sick leave and make it an offence to intimidate or prevent patients from seeking care. We are going to be continuing this debate on Monday.

[Translation]

I would also like to inform the House that on Monday afternoon, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth will be making a ministerial statement in memory of the truly tragic events at École Polytechnique de Montréal.

[English]

Next Tuesday and Thursday shall be allotted days, and Wednesday and Friday will be days reserved for the address debate.

Finally, I would like to inform the House that the committee of the whole debates, pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), to consider supplementary estimates (B) shall take place on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ACCESS BY MEMBERS TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS PRECINCT— SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on November 23, 2021, by the member for Banff—Airdrie and the member for Salaberry—Suroît concerning the Board of Internal Economy's decision requiring vaccination against COVID-19 for members accessing the House of Commons precinct.

In his intervention, the member for Banff—Airdrie, citing references and precedents, alleged that the board neither has the statutory authority nor the delegated authority from the House to make the decision it made on October 19, 2021, requiring that members be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or provide a valid medical exemption coupled with negative test results to be able to access the precinct.

The government House leader stated that the board acted within its mandate as per section 52.3 of the Parliament of Canada Act with regard to action respecting all financial and administrative matters concerning the House, its premises, its services and members. He noted that the board's decision takes into account the collective interest and health of all members to permit the House to discharge its functions.

● (1540)

[Translation]

The member for Salaberry—Suroît also later rose on a similar matter, stating that the Conservative Party's refusal to disclose its members' vaccination status is in itself a violation of the House's privileges. She noted that the collective privileges of the House take precedence over those of individual members insofar as the health and safety of members is concerned.

The Chair wants to address this particular concern by assuring everyone in this House that all medical exemptions, whether for members or for staff, are reviewed by the health and safety personnel of the House administration. Anyone with a valid exemption must provide a recent negative COVID-19 test result in order to access the buildings in the precinct.

Speaker's Ruling

[English]

The question for the Chair to consider is whether the issue of the interplay between the board's decision and the privileges of the House deserves priority of consideration over all other business.

The Board of Internal Economy is the statutory governing body of the House of Commons. Its authority comes from the Parliament of Canada Act, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Standing Orders of the House. It is composed of members from all recognized parties and chaired by the Speaker. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the board has instituted various health and safety measures for the protection of everyone working in the precinct and to ensure the continued functioning of the House.

[Translation]

Among its privileges, rights and powers, the House has the right to regulate and administer its precinct, as well as the authority to maintain the attendance and service of its members. As stated in the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, at page 122, and I quote:

The privileges of the House of Commons include “such rights as are necessary for free action within its jurisdiction and the necessary authority to enforce these rights if challenged”. It is well established that, by extension, the House has complete and sole authority to regulate and administer its precinct, without outside interference, including controlling access to the buildings.

[English]

If limits are to be placed on members' access to the buildings, it would seem consistent with these principles that such limits be established by the House itself. However, it is important to consider the unique context in which the board's decision was made. During a time when Parliament was dissolved, the board was faced with a decision regarding mandatory vaccinations in order to access the precinct. It made a decision, after considering recommendations from various public health authorities to limit the spread of COVID-19 during the ongoing pandemic, to protect the health and safety of all those who work in these buildings. As the House had not yet been called into session, it was not in a position to pronounce itself on the matter.

● (1545)

[Translation]

The board's decision to restrict access to the precinct only to those who are fully vaccinated or who have a valid medical exemption, including members, has the effect of putting conditions on members' participation in the proceedings of the House. Since the question of privilege was raised, the House has adopted a motion that addresses this matter, meaning the House has explicitly endorsed the BOIE's decision and the conditions it imposes on members' participation in the proceedings. While the matter of mandatory vaccination for members has been settled, the Chair is satisfied that the interplay between the rights and privileges of the House and the jurisdiction of the board remains an issue, with the board appearing to have exceeded its authority in a way that conflicts with the privileges of the House.

*Privilege**[English]*

Accordingly, the Chair is prepared to rule that there is a prima facie question of privilege.

The Chair has read the motion suggested by the member for Banff—Airdrie in his written notice and, given the developments in this matter, does not believe that it falls within the limited scope of this type of motion. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 150, states, “The terms of the motion have generally provided that the matter be referred to committee for study”. The Chair has previously stated, in similar circumstances, in a decision from June 16, 2021, on page 8552 of the Debates, “given that the parameters for such motions are clear and that the practice is well established, the proposed motion should be a motion of censure or to refer the matter to the appropriate committee for study.”

The support and guidance of the Chair and the table officers are available to the member for Banff—Airdrie as he drafts his motion.

As a result, the Chair reserves his final ruling and will return to the House as soon as the member is ready to move the appropriate motion.

I want to thank hon. members for their attention.

ALLEGED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH AN ORDER OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am rising to respond to the question of privilege raised by my hon. colleague across the aisle, with respect to the order made by the House in the previous Parliament for a public release of documents from the Public Health Agency of Canada relating to the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg.

I will put aside the question of the appropriateness or the ability of an order made in one Parliament to bind a future Parliament. Rather, I will stick to the substance of the matter raised in the previous Parliament, and our government's desire to work collaboratively with opposition parties to find an appropriate mechanism to deal with the request for documents that contain information subject to national security confidentiality.

As we all know, in the 43rd Parliament all opposition parties pressed the government to publicly release documents that contained information subject to national security that would have been injurious to Canada's reputation with its international security partners. In the previous Parliament, members should know that the Public Health Agency worked diligently to try to comply with the order of the House. In undertaking this work, the agency attempted to balance the right of parliamentarians to have access to information and the duty of the government to protect such information from public disclosure.

[Translation]

Accordingly, the former minister of health referred the matter to the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, given the committee members' expertise on matters of national security.

The committee, made up of both House and Senate members, has a broad mandate and can review any activity carried out by a department that relates to national security or intelligence.

The government continues to believe that this is an appropriate mechanism for parliamentary review of documents, and the best way to ensure the protection of information subject to national security confidentiality.

Unfortunately, the opposition parties did not find this to be an acceptable approach.

● (1550)

[English]

If the matter is revived again in this new Parliament by way of a substantive motion, our government believes that with the co-operation of the other members a solution to this impasse can be found.

This spirit brings to mind Speaker Milliken's ruling of April 27, 2010, respecting the right to institute inquiries and to order the production of documents. I will quote from Speaker Milliken's ruling:

Certainly from the submissions I have heard, it is evident to the Chair that all members take seriously the sensitive nature of these documents and the need to protect the confidential information they contain. The Chair must conclude that it is within the powers of the House of Commons to ask for the documents sought in the December 10 order it adopted. Now it seems to me that the issue before us is this: Is it possible to put in place a mechanism by which these documents could be made available to the House without compromising the security and confidentiality of the information they contain? In other words, is it possible for the two sides, working together in the best interests of the Canadians they serve, to devise a means where both their concerns are met? Surely that is not too much to hope for.

Building on the approach taken by the House in 2010, our government believes there is good reason for hope of a resolution. I would like to walk members through a proposed vetting mechanism that would allow certain parliamentarians to see unredacted versions of the documents while ensuring the ongoing protection of sensitive information.

The proposed mechanism is based on the ad hoc committee of parliamentarians and the panel of arbiters used in 2010 for records related to the transfer of Afghan detainees from the Canadian Armed Forces to the Afghan authorities.

The proposed model balances two key principles: first, accountability to Parliament by maximizing disclosure and transparency to the greatest extent that is possible; and second, the protection of sensitive and confidential information from disclosure where it would be injurious to our nation. It reflects the government's understanding of the House of Commons' role in holding the government to account and its need for complete and accurate information in order to fulfill this role.

At the same time, it reflects the House of Commons' understanding of the government's responsibilities in matters of national security, national defence and international relations. It further reflects that information subject to solicitor-client privilege or cabinet confidences are classes of information that Parliament has long recognized are sensitive and may require protection from disclosure.

I would now like to walk members through the proposal detailing the composition of the committees, the panel of arbiters, appropriate security measures to safeguard the information and the methods for screening records.

Let me begin with the proposed composition of the committee and the panel of arbiters. The government and opposition parties would sign a memorandum of understanding to create the committee and select a panel of arbiters. The committee would be comprised of one member from each of the signatory parties and one alternate member from each party. The panel of arbiters could be comprised of three former senior judges who were agreed upon by the signatories.

Second, let me address the security measures to safeguard information. Members of the ad hoc committee would conduct their business within a secure government facility and be subject to appropriate security measures to safeguard sensitive and confidential information. This includes procedural, physical and technical security measures and the requirement that members of the committee would undergo the same security screening as members of the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians in order to obtain the appropriate security clearance. The work of the ad hoc committee and the panel of arbiters would be supported by security-cleared, non-partisan public servants.

MPs on the committee would be provided with both the redacted and non-redacted versions of the documents provided by the government. Where there is a disagreement concerning what information should be released publicly, the committee would refer the disputed information to the panel of arbiters. The panel of arbiters, agreed upon by all parties, would make a binding determination regarding how that information could be made available to members of Parliament and the public without compromising national security, national defence or international relations. This could occur by redaction, the writing of summaries, or the full or partial release of the material.

Finally, let me touch upon methods for the screening of records. The proposed model has a method for screening records containing information, the disclosure of which would be injurious to national security, national defence or international relations, otherwise collectively known as national security confidentialities.

• (1555)

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, as you can see, our government has taken seriously the need to provide a reasonable oversight mechanism for the review of documents containing confidential national security information, as stipulated in Speaker Milliken's April 2010 ruling.

Members will note the similarity to the approach taken in 2010, which was deemed by a majority of the recognized parties at the time to be both reasonable and an effective balance between the interests of parliamentarians in obtaining the information they need and ensuring that confidential national security information is treated with the discretion necessary to protect the interests of Canadians and our great country.

The Address

[*English*]

I was a critic at that time in 2010. I can say the system worked with great effectiveness at achieving that balance.

I look forward to fruitful deliberations with my colleagues on the opposition benches and, as Speaker Milliken stated, I believe that collaboration among all parties is truly not too much to hope for. I thank members of the House for their attention to this important matter and for their indulgence in responding to this question of privilege.

In closing, we believe this proposal constitutes a good-faith effort by the government to resolve this matter responsibly. It recognizes the role of the House of Commons to do its work, and it also respects the government's obligation to protect Canadians from the harm that could occur with the release of sensitive national security information. In the end, it is a responsibility that we each bear as a member of Parliament. We must do our jobs in this place, and we must fulfill our duties in a responsible manner to uphold the principles of national security designated to us to protect this great country.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I thank the hon. government House leader. The matter will be taken under consideration and we will return as quickly as possible.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

[*English*]

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session and of the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, within the throne speech there is so much to provide comment on. I personally have reflected a great deal on child care. What would my colleague say is one of the things that makes her look forward to the coming days, when we think of the throne speech? Is there something specific to her constituents?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, welcome to the chair. It is my first opportunity to speak and see you sitting there, so it is lovely to see you sitting there.

[*Translation*]

I thank my colleague.

[*English*]

When I was a minister and a member of the provincial Nova Scotia legislature, I was so proud when the Prime Minister and the current Minister of Immigration and some members of the legislature of Nova Scotia attended my riding to make the very important announcement on child care. It was at Mount Saint Vincent University. It was precedent-setting for the province, and indeed it will be for the country.

The Address

It is going to benefit my daughters who have children. As we all know, child care and the cost of living are very difficult, but I am very much looking forward to all the provinces in this country signing on.

• (1600)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to welcome the member opposite to the House.

In my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, we have a lot of seniors. Many of them are on OAS and GIS, and they have to take jobs on top of those to make ends meet. When the pandemic hit they received the CERB, and now their GIS is being taken away or reduced. I have been trying to have this issue addressed for about a year and a half. Between that and the increase to OAS only for seniors aged 75 and above, there are a lot of seniors who are going to be suffering.

I did not hear much in the throne speech that would address that. Could the member comment?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for welcoming me to the House. I am very pleased to be here and to be able to work collaboratively with the member and all her colleagues.

That is a very good question, and it is one I heard a lot at the doors when I campaigned in my riding. I have spoken to our colleagues on this side of the House about it, and it is a matter that the minister is very much aware of. It is a matter that I very much look forward to her department working on, and I have been assured that it is working on it.

I know that seniors received the rebate in the summer, and that was very welcome by most of them. As I said, I look forward to the minister and the department working on that as well.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask the member opposite a question. I appreciate her words and congratulate her on her electoral victory.

The member mentioned child care quite often in her speech, and in her questions and comments. Given that the federal government was running a significant deficit prior to the pandemic and Liberals are running a massive deficit now, how is child care being paid for? Is it going to be deficit-financed, to put on the backs of those children entering child care whenever this money starts flowing and whenever these child care spaces start being created?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to answer that question because our country and our families depend on these investments and this is one way to get more families, men and women back into the workforce. We all know we have labour shortages. We need to get people back to work and we all know child care is very expensive. It is an investment in our children, in my case in my grandchildren, and I very much look forward to that. This is an investment. That is one thing my father taught me as a small child. These are investments as opposed to expenses. This is how I view it.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, in response to the ruling from the Chair just a few moments ago, I do thank the Speaker for that ruling. I believe he certainly has es-

tablished that the principle that the Board of the Internal Economy does not have the independent authority to deny members access to the precinct. Therefore, I am satisfied with the ruling, and I think the fact that the precedent has been set is satisfactory. I do thank the Speaker for the ruling.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We find it a bit irregular that that is the answer to the ruling. We will take due note and will come back, if necessary.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

• (1605)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chance to speak for the first time in an intervention in this House of Commons in the 44th Parliament.

I am speaking from my riding in Parkdale—High Park, which is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinabeg, the Chipewewa, Haudenosaunee, the Huron Wendat and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit. Toronto is well known as the home of many diverse first nations, Inuit and Métis peoples today.

As I speak for the first time in this chamber on legislation in the 44th Parliament, I want to thank some important people who have brought me to this situation.

First and foremost is my family, my two sons, Zakir and Nitin, and my wife, Suchita, who, when she is not supporting me in these political endeavours, is actually keeping our country safe from COVID-19 as a member of the incredible team at the Public Health Agency of Canada that works on border health and quarantine controls. Thanks very much to Suchita for everything she is doing to keep our country safe.

I want to thank the countless volunteers who helped me get to where I am today.

I want to thank all of the family members and friends who came out to knock on doors, put up signs and do all of the work behind the scenes that made the campaign possible.

It is a humbling thing for a person to be asked by the members of their community to be their voice in Parliament and to have this honour bestowed upon me for the third straight occasion. It is a privilege and responsibility that I do not take lightly. My priorities in this Parliament remain those that my constituents speak to me about and those that I am passionate about. Those are climate action and housing affordability, subjects of key concern for the residents of Parkdale—High Park and things that I have my life work, which are promoting human rights abroad and domestically, and secondly, fighting discrimination and racism wherever they rear their ugly head.

The Address

In terms of the Speech from the Throne, what I would say is that in electing this government for the third straight occasion, I believe Canadians made clear their priorities for the 44th Parliament. That is, most fundamentally, to finish the fight against COVID-19 and to build back our economy in a way that is more inclusive than before we had ever heard of the term “coronavirus” or the term “COVID-19”.

Let me turn to health care first in terms of my intervention today, because we are now in the midst of yet another variant, omicron.

In terms of health care and COVID-19, I want to first of all start by echoing some of what we heard in the Speech from the Throne. My condolences to not only the family of the senator who passed because of COVID, Senator Forest-Niesing, but also to the families of 29,714 individuals who, as of early December of this year, have lost their lives due to COVID-19.

We have, by international accounts, one of the most successful vaccination campaigns in the world as of right now: 86% of all Canadians who are 12 and over are fully vaccinated. In my city of Toronto, it is 85% and that surpasses many other major cities such as London, England; New York City; Chicago; and Los Angeles. We will continue as a government to build off the fact that we have provided 60 million vaccination doses thus far, including boosters and first doses to young people.

In terms of young people, members heard me mention Zakir and Nitin. My boys are age 10 and 7, respectively. They got their first dose last Sunday at a walk-in clinic in Toronto, making me and their mom, Suchita, very proud of those two little guys. Instead of exhibiting vaccine hesitancy, they exhibited vaccine restlessness and fought with each other over who would get to go first.

My parents, both nearly 80, are being vaccinated for the third time this week. Now that I am of the tender age of 50, apparently in Ontario I will be eligible for my third dose because that is what is happening with boosters for those who are over 50. I am now part of that little group.

I think what is important is that we have a track record as a government of providing vaccines for free to all Canadians who want vaccines. I am proud of that record and our record of making vaccines mandatory for federal civil servants, federally regulated industries and interprovincial travel.

I am also very proud that one of the first acts that we have taken as the Liberal government was to table legislation, Bill C-3, which would create a new offence for those who intimidate health care workers or seek to prevent someone from accessing health care treatment. I am not just speaking about my wife here. I am speaking about thousands and thousands of other health care workers who have done so much to keep us safe from COVID-19 in these past 22 months. Those individuals deserve our praise and our gratitude, not our scorn or our abuse.

● (1610)

However, I know that ending this pandemic requires investing in our health care systems and dismantling barriers for vulnerable populations. I am thinking about Joyce Echaquan and the indigenous experience in health care in this country. It is also about clear-

ing the backlog of COVID-19 cases. It is about reducing delays, strengthening the protections in our long-term care homes and protecting seniors in care, improving access to mental health and addictions services and I am proud that we now have a minister devoted to just that, and preventing privatization from entering our health care systems.

Members heard me speak about climate as one of my priorities and one of the priorities of my constituents. Climate change was top of mind for voters in this fall's election, not just in my riding, but around the country. Obviously, our thoughts, prayers and hopes go out to all of our neighbours in British Columbia who are, in the span of several months, dealing with wildfires and now dealing with tragic mudslides. Tackling climate change is not a B.C. issue. It is a Canadian issue. It is a global issue. We were elected with a mandate to move on this and that is exactly what we are doing. We heard that outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

We are increasing the price on pollution and the climate rebate, which allows Canadians to make changes in their own personal lives. We are banning single-use plastics. We are making it impossible to buy a new car or light-duty truck that is not electric by 2035, and we are making that more possible by providing generous federal rebates for the purchase of such vehicles and by providing more vehicle charging infrastructure. We are putting a cap on oil and gas sector GHG emissions and moving the entire country to net-zero emissions by 2050 on legislated five-year increments. We are ending fossil fuel subsidies by 2023.

On the electricity grid, we are phasing out coal as a source of energy across the country by 2030. This is something that we, as Liberals, were successful in doing in Ontario over a decade ago by phasing out coal. How does this impact my constituents? In ridings like mine in Parkdale—High Park, we have increased bike shares and bike lanes. There are nine new bike shares to promote active transport. We have provided funding for green infrastructure to the High Park Zoo and the High Park Nature Centre to the tune of almost \$4 million for sustainable energy projects.

On housing, we are strengthening our economy by ensuring that housing is affordable. I heard repeatedly on the campaign trail from all sectors about supportive housing, rental housing and those who want to buy. We are delivering for communities like mine through things like the NHS, the national housing plan, subsidies for co-op renters in federal co-ops and \$1.2 billion put into TCHC to maintain, repair and renovate units. We have also implemented a rapid housing initiative and expanded it, which has delivered \$14 million to constituents in my riding to ensure that new housing is being built. This is critical to that inclusive recovery.

The Address

I also talked about human rights and fighting discrimination. I came to this place as a Constitution and human rights lawyer in 2015. The orientation that I have and commitment to protecting fundamental freedoms has not wavered. In these past six years, I have been very privileged to work on many aspects such as settling Syrian refugees, re-enacting a national anti-racism strategy, fighting Islamophobia, securing legal aid for refugee claimants and tabling legislation to combat online hate in the last Parliament.

This is important human rights work and it must continue. I pledge to my constituents to continue to be a strong voice for human rights for those in Eastern Europe who are facing aggression by Vladimir Putin and Russia, including Ukrainians and Poles. I also redoubled my commitment to my Tibetan constituents who seek nothing more than the basic permission to speak their language and practise Tibetan Buddhism from the Government of the People's Republic of China. The Middle Way approach, advocated by the Dalai Lama, can help secure this and I will continue to advocate for that approach.

Domestically, advocacy for human rights must include renewed commitment to reconciliation. I learned so much about where we are and how far we have to go when I was privileged to work on the Indigenous Languages Act in the 42nd Parliament. My constituents, like me, were horrified by the discoveries of the unmarked graves at residential school sites. I have committed to my constituents publicly and I will commit to them here today that my work on fighting discrimination will focus on fighting anti-indigenous discrimination. There is so much more work to be done in terms of boil water advisories and ending discrimination in the child welfare system.

Finally, I commit to the work that is needed to be done with the LGBTQ2 community. We had a historic day in Parliament yesterday with Bill C-4 receiving unanimous consent, but the work is not done until that bill passes through the Senate and becomes law through royal assent. Only then will the equality rights of LGBTQ2 Canadians and all Canadians be fully protected.

This is the work I am committed to in terms of climate action, housing action, fighting against inequality, and fighting against discrimination and for human rights, domestically and abroad. The Speech from the Throne outlines what we will be doing as a government and I am very proud to be partaking in that work.

• (1615)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know the member is very intelligent, as a lawyer, and he has been fighting for people's human rights. One of the charter rights of all Canadians is to freely enter and leave the country. Liberal policies are preventing almost three million Canadians who are not yet vaccinated from taking a plane or a train, and they cannot cross a land border. They are essentially trapped in the country.

Would he agree that that is a violation of their charter rights? What reasonable accommodations would the government be willing to put forward to address it?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for Sarnia—Lambton on her re-election to the chamber, and she raises an important point. Fundamental freedoms have been at issue, in terms of COVID and the response to the COVID pandemic, but

when we are talking about charter rights and mobility rights, it needs to be crystal clear that people have the right of entry and exit from the country, and the right to re-enter. Even the most recent restrictions we have put on people who have been travelling to places or countries that have an omicron epidemic in their localities do not restrict the return of Canadians into this country. That is the first point.

The second point is understanding that all charter rights are subject to what is called the saving clause, under section 1, where reasonable limitations can be put on charter rights if they are reasonably prescribed and deemed a reasonable limit that is commensurate with a free and democratic society. The pandemic we are living through is an emergency of a type not seen in 100 years. It has required extensive measures and sometimes extensive limitations in order to keep people safe. That is something I am sure the member for Sarnia—Lambton and I would agree on, and it is the fundamental—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments. The hon. member for Mirabel.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Parkdale—High Park from the bottom of my heart for his speech.

I can see that he is quite familiar with the health care system and its funding, as well as mental health.

I must make a confession today. The only time I read the Canadian Constitution was the French version, in which health is an exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces.

Could my colleague tell me what is written in the English version, please?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Mirabel for his question and welcome him to the House.

In fact, health care is a shared jurisdiction between the two levels of government. I could give a number of examples, the first being the Canada Health Act, which divides the health care powers and allocates some to the federal government.

[*English*]

I can also highlight the Tobacco Control Act, which allows the federal government to enact regulations that deal with health and has been upheld in litigation cases as properly falling under the federal health care jurisdiction.

Of course, we would also recognize the fact that the federal government, at the Canadian level, has jurisdiction over health care matters with respect to first nations populations.

Therefore, the member's categorization is unfortunately incorrect. The federal government does have shared jurisdiction over health.

The Address

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I noted with great interest that the member for Parkdale—High Park mentioned the fight against all the different kinds of hate we confront in our communities, especially Islamophobia. Being from London, Ontario, this is of great concern to me, and I was very pleased that the House unanimously adopted my motion to push for that summit on confronting and fighting against Islamophobia.

That summit, in fact, was held over the summer. However, I am very interested to hear from this member what his government plans to do going forward from the recommendations that came from all the incredible organizations across this country that contributed to that summit, as well as how quickly it will move on those summit recommendations.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I know the pain the member for London—Fanshawe is speaking of concerning the death of the Afzaal family, so tragically killed in a terrorist attack when a van ran onto the road and struck down the family. That is horror, that is terrorism and that needs to be combatted, and I thank her for moving that Islamophobia summit.

In terms of that work, our platform included two very specific commitments, which deal with how people are radicalized to that level of hatred that they can take people's lives. That was, firstly, a commitment to, within 100 days, rettable legislation that deals with combatting online hate, and secondly, a commitment to, within 100 days, regulate Internet giants that unfortunately do not just tolerate hate but sometimes propagate it.

● (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Shefford.

I would like to take a moment to thank the volunteers at the Centre d'entraide Saint-Colomban, the parish of Saint Francis of Assisi in Oka, and the Carrefour d'entraide Saint-Placide for organizing their charity drive. This was a tremendous act of selflessness, and I commend them.

In passing, I would also like to commend one of my constituents, Jasmine Bikarski-Lalande.

As a new member of Parliament, I was hoping to hear great things here, especially in the Speech from the Throne. To me, that speech was the ideal time for the government to set out its agenda and, without explaining each of its policies in detail, at least share its ambitions for the next four years. I say four years because I hope the Liberals realize that they cannot just call an election whenever they feel like it.

I had expectations when reading the Speech from the Throne, and this may have been the academic in me, but I was looking for footnotes because the speech was lacking in content, which bothered me. During the tough election campaign, I met with Mirabel residents who wanted to know why the election had been called and why they would have to go to the polling station in the middle of summer in the middle of a pandemic. These people, these families, these young people, including people from flood-stricken

Sainte-Marthe-sur-le-lac, also talked to me about the environment and climate change.

I was expecting to find answers in the throne speech. The Bloc Québécois has been sounding the alarm for years now, saying that the government, whether current or previous, is not doing anything. We are told that we have it all wrong, so we respond that the government is not meeting its targets, and then we are told again that we have it all wrong and that the government is taking action.

Did the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development have it all wrong when he indicated in the report he released a few days ago that the government had not delivered? Canada is the laughingstock of the G7. It cannot even meet its own targets and it is using 2005 as the baseline year instead of 1990 so that it can conceal 15 years of unchecked exploitation of dirty oil. That is unacceptable. The other self-respecting countries, including Quebec and the 27 EU countries, use 1990 as the baseline year.

Being open-minded, I was curious to see how the minister would explain these facts. The minister told us that it was because of the Harper era. He said this even though the environment commissioner's report covered all the years under the current government.

As I said, however, I keep an open mind, so I kept listening. The government told us that the Liberals were taking action, but that the Harper government had been so terrible that we were still suffering the consequences. I decided to do a bit of research to see what this government has done for the climate, and I will admit that it has taken action: it went out west to buy a pipeline that cost \$4.5 billion of taxpayers' money.

Not being very smart, I did not quite understand why the government did that. The explanation it gave was that the pipeline would be so profitable that the government could use the profits to fight climate change.

I am a good researcher, so I checked reports from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. I figured that the federal government must be making money on this, because every 15 minutes, the minister says that the government is taking action on climate change. However, the rate of return on the public money invested in the pipeline is 0.5%. In comparison, as the Conservatives keep saying, the inflation rate is 5%. As members can see, the environment is of virtually no importance to the government.

I wanted to make a joke. I wanted to calculate how many trees could be planted with the profits from this pipeline, but I realized that without Alberta's tax relief, the pipeline would be in the red. In order for my joke to work, I would have to go into the forest and tear down trees, which makes no sense.

● (1625)

I continued to think about this. I am a very calm and logical person. I told myself that there was surely something going on that I did not understand. There are so many intelligent people in this place who are helping to save the planet. It was at that point that I understood what comes next.

The Address

What comes next is that the pipeline has to be expanded. We did not figure it out, but Canada has to inject at least another \$12 billion of public money into the pipeline. If we expand the pipeline, pump out more oil and increase production, what will happen? There will be more money to combat climate change.

This is the kind of thing that makes Quebeckers and Canadians cynical. However, if Canadians and Quebeckers do not fully understand the message that the government is sending, the financial markets do.

What message is the government sending the financial markets? It is the following. If you are a foreign company that decides to set up shop in western Canada and you make a bad investment in a pipeline, which, besides being unprofitable is not supported by civil society, the Liberal Party will be there to help you. If the company fails or is no good, the Liberal Party will be there to help. That is what is known as *too big to fail*.

Let us not then be surprised when there are problems and a big part of the country is trapped in this industry.

The Bloc Québécois is a party that makes proposals. What this situation shows us is that we must address the issue of the money going out to those provinces and this industry. The facts show that over the past five years, our own banks have invested \$700 billion in this industry, money taken from savers, families, people who put money in the piggy bank.

We are therefore proposing a green finance platform. It is very simple: We believe that Canadian banks should be required to publicly declare how much they are investing in the oil and gas sector. It is a matter of transparency. They should have to disclose their investments. Nutritional information is disclosed, chemicals are disclosed, the content of feather pillows has to be disclosed, but when we deposit our money with a Canadian financial institution, we cannot find out if our money is brown or green. That is what we are asking for.

I know that the Conservatives will not like me. They believe in the free market, but as it happens, I am an economics professor. The first thing we teach CEGEP students is that a market economy only works when there is transparency, when people know where they are putting their money, when they know what they are doing. That is what we are asking for.

In conclusion, I just want to say one thing. We know the western provinces are victims. Jean Chrétien himself said that, if he had given as much money to Quebec as he did to Alberta, he would have won every seat in Quebec. I personally think Quebeckers have better judgment than that. Still, the message is there.

Western Canada's fossil fuel industry is essentially a state enterprise subsidized and supported by various levels of government. That is why we also want to propose green equalization, which is so important to us. This program, which will benefit provinces that do their utmost to reduce emissions, will take equalization and current oil subsidies into account.

We are reaching out and hoping for a little introspection on both sides of the House. I can guarantee that there are not a lot of fingerprints on the dictionary page with the word "introspection". If we

want to fix the problem, we have to admit there is a problem. We are a petrostate. Quebeckers are victims of the petrostate. Quebec's economy is a victim of the petrostate. We need to cap production and reduce it. We need to focus on the future. That is a fact.

• (1630)

[*English*]

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome the member across and congratulate him on his election.

As this is my first time to rise in the 44th Parliament, I would also like to take this time to thank everyone in Kitchener—Conestoga who put their trust in me and elected me to be their representative. I thank the volunteers and everyone who supported me, and most of all my family: my wife, Brenda; my son, Satchel; and my daughter, Brooklyn. I value their trust and will work tirelessly to support them.

The world I came from is the world of the arts, and one of the things I respect so much about my colleagues from the Bloc is their absolute support for the arts across Canada and Quebec.

I want to give the hon. member a chance to brag about some of the artists and groups from Mirabel who make him so proud to represent them in the House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I could answer him with the words of Gilles Vigneault:

One world ends, another begins
You can take back your romance
I think I finally understand
We are no longer from the same land

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, as a product of Quebec myself, that was beautiful.

I know, as we have stood in this House over the last several days, one of the things this member in particular has been talking about is the issue of guns and gangs, which is enveloping major cities across this country, including the city of Montreal.

The throne speech did not speak that much about the issue of guns and gangs, and I wonder if the member recognizes that. What are some of the solutions the member has for solving that problem?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for raising this issue.

The Address

We have been very clear about our proposal over the past several days. We are asking the minister to create a joint task force immediately, because it is within his authority to do so. The fact that we have to keep asking for this clearly shows that the federal government is not doing its job and that there is a lot more to do. For once we are talking about an issue that falls under Ottawa's jurisdiction, so the federal government needs to assume responsibility and do its job.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I hope my question will not be considered out of order, because it is not about the throne speech.

I know the riding of Mirabel includes Kanesatake. I raised my concerns during question period regarding the toxic waste that is in the riding on the Mohawk territories and in the community of Kanesatake. Does my colleague have anything to add to that?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, this is a very emotional issue for us, and I thank the former leader of the Green Party for raising it.

At this time, it is difficult to know how much of the area in question is polluted. We expect that the Quebec and federal governments will team up and look into this situation and that by working together, they will stop playing ping-pong on this issue.

This is a critical issue for our region, in Oka, Saint-Benoît, Saint-Placide, Saint-Joseph-du-Lac and Kanesatake, where the people are the first to suffer. This affects a large part of my riding, and I thank the hon. member for bringing it up in the House.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my learned colleague from Mirabel for his speech. I enjoy hearing him talk about green finance so much that I would like to hear more, in case he wants to tell us something else.

I am thinking in particular about the money that banks invest in oil and drilling. I thought that I heard somewhere that this money sits around for a long time and is not used for anything, when it could be put to use for something else. What does my colleague think?

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, we are interested in finance that generates long-term investments. Long-term growth is generated by investments that are sustainable. Likewise, long-term pollution is generated by sustained investments in the most polluting markets.

We want to increase the banks' transparency because we believe that consumers will respond in an informed way. We also believe that greater use should be made of taxation to ultimately incentivize financial institutions and investment funds to invest in the technologies of the future, as well as to reduce the risks that—

• (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The hon. member for Shefford.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my brilliant economist colleague from Mirabel is a hard act to follow. I do not know if I will be able to reach the bar he set, but I will give it a shot.

As I rise today for my first speech in this 44th Parliament, I am filled with immense gratitude. I would like to begin by thanking all of my volunteers, the members of my office team, my family, and my partner. I will stop here with the acknowledgements, not only because I am afraid that I will forget someone, but also because I want to save some time for my speech. However, before I begin, I do want to thank the voters of Shefford for placing their trust in me for a second term in these unusual times. This election was held in the middle of a pandemic, and now we can finally see what it was all for.

Here we have a new throne speech. My first impression is that this speech is full of things that interfere in areas under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, such as housing, police reform, mental health, natural resource management, violence prevention, and women's services. As well, it fails to mention major issues like health transfers, the energy transition, green finance, EI reform, agriculture, and, most importantly, seniors.

My colleagues will understand that, as the critic for the status of women, gender equality and seniors, my speech will focus on the following areas: seniors, health, women, and the economic recovery.

First, I noticed that seniors are completely left out of the Speech from the Throne, even though we have seen that they continue to suffer the effects of the pandemic. Their financial situation, which was already precarious long before the pandemic, has been exacerbated by the crisis, yet there is nothing for seniors aged 65 to 74, the ones the government always leaves behind.

The government could have taken advantage of the Speech from the Throne to right another wrong. I am referring to something that simply does not sit well with the seniors' groups I consulted, this idea of creating two classes of seniors: those 75 and up and those 74 and under. They should all be eligible for an OAS increase of \$110 per month starting at age 65, as the Bloc Qu b cois is proposing.

It gets worse. In its Speech from the Throne, the government said nothing at all about seniors. I may be repeating myself, but it could have also addressed the GIS clawback that seniors who received the CERB are facing.

As early as spring 2020, ACEF groups contacted the Minister of National Revenue to share their concerns on this issue, but they got no response.

In August 2021, I sent a letter to the former Minister of Seniors, and my colleague, the member for Joliette, sent a message to the Minister of Finance. The election campaign started, and nothing happened. We have since sent letters to the new Minister of Seniors and the Minister of Finance.

Let me stress that our solution is simple. Drastic times call for drastic measures. We want CERB, in this case, to be considered employment income, not an "other benefit". That is actually what it is.

The Address

Seniors who had to leave their jobs because of the pandemic were entitled to CERB. They should not have an average of \$400 clawed back from their cheques. They should all be entitled to a review of their file based on their actual income. The impact on their monthly income is huge. They have to decide which medications to buy, they cannot afford good food, and they could lose their housing. For some, this is taking a significant toll on their health.

If pandemic recovery is still a priority for this government, it should make massive investments in health care and help lift the most vulnerable seniors out of poverty. Instead of interfering in areas under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces, as it is attempting to do by setting standards for long-term care homes and mental health, it should focus on what it can and should do: respond to Quebec and the provinces' demand to raise federal health transfers from 22% to 35%. That means increasing transfers from \$42 billion to \$60 billion, a difference of \$28 billion per year.

The government has not made its intentions with respect to health transfers clear, but this is an absolutely vital issue, especially in light of events that have exposed what goes wrong when the system is chronically underfunded. Since the 1990s, neither the Conservatives nor the Liberals have invested enough. They have even cut their health transfers.

Quebec and Canadian provinces all agree that health transfers should be increased. The only ones objecting to fixing the chronic underfunding of health care systems are the Liberals, who were the only party that voted against a motion on this subject in the House of Commons that had the support of FTQ, CSN, CSQ and CSD leaders.

The third point I want to make is about gender-based violence, a topic that is particularly important to me as my party's status of women critic.

The national action plan to end gender-based violence is already in place, but a 10-year plan is far too long. The government needs to stop conducting studies and take action by sending the necessary money to Quebec.

• (1640)

The federal government may not know what to do, but Quebec does. The Bloc Québécois has always said that funds allocated to combat domestic violence should come from Canada health transfers.

Quebec is once again in a class of its own when it comes to family and social policy and the structure of its support network. Quebec has a single, cohesive, integrated network to provide health care services and social programs. The federal government's one-size-fits-all policies often overlap with existing Quebec programs, and it is harder for the Government of Quebec to implement its programs when it does not have full control.

This reality cannot be ignored and must be taken into account to ensure that any federal involvement is designed to be effective and to respect the ways in which Quebec is different.

The recognition of Quebec's special status needs to be an integral part of the process. Any federal involvement must be positive for Quebec and must support Quebec women and girls.

I could have spoken about many other issues, but that is what I hope will be brought forward in the next Parliament, only with a lot more teeth than what we read in this very meagre throne speech. On climate change, the government must not just say that Canada needs to put words into action and that time is of the essence. It must make far more commitments. For example, it must put a cap on oil and gas production, not increase it by focusing on fossil fuels. There is no such thing as clean oil or coal. The Liberals must stop their greenwashing.

The government has yet to table a plan with concrete measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reach the 2030 target. It must admit that the Trans Mountain expansion is pointless and cancel this project. The money saved must be used to fund the green transition and a green recovery, as was already proposed by the Bloc Québécois in the post-COVID-19 recovery plan it released when Parliament resumed in September 2020. It proposed creating real green financing by encouraging the banks to invest heavily in the green recovery, clean energy, green technologies and energy efficiency, which will provide real protection for our environment in the long term.

We also need to ensure that the economy grows with targeted and prudent spending support, including the extension of support measures, as well as targeted support for affected industries, such as culture and tourism. Both of those economic sectors are so important to Shefford.

We will keep a close eye on how Bill C-2 is implemented and propose improvements. We also need to combat inflation and address the very important issue of the labour shortage, for which the Bloc Québécois made seven very worthwhile proposals during the last campaign.

We also need to work on family reunification and on a refugee resettlement program, and, really, the issue of immigration in general, since it remains so problematic and takes up so much of my office staff's time. We also need to work on the issue of social housing and homelessness.

In closing, I would point out that getting out of this crisis calls for a clear plan, and we saw no such thing in the throne speech.

To bring this full circle, let us look at seniors again. One way to protect people from the effects of inflation is to ensure decent purchasing power, especially for seniors. That is why people must be outraged.

As the great Quebec humorist Yvon Deschamps once said, one is always better off being rich and healthy than sick and poor. That was true in the 1960s and it is unfortunately still true in 2021 for far too many disadvantaged seniors.

We should be appalled by the disregard being shown to those who built Quebec and Canada. We must do something about it.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, where I could agree with the member is that there are a couple of issues, both health care and environment, which are very important issues to Canadians. Where I tend to disagree with the member is on the issue of a plan.

The Address

Just because an opposition member says there is no plan, does not mean there is not a plan. Actually, it is quite the opposite. There is a detailed plan. All one needs to do is read it or listen to members from the Liberal caucus who are standing up and speaking. There is a plan and it is tangible. Even during the election, independent sources made it very clear that the Liberal Party had the best plan when it came to the environment.

Would the member not agree that Canadians in all regions, including the province of Quebec, recognize that the national government needs to play a stronger role in long-term care facilities and mental health, both of which are very important issues for my constituents and, I would argue, for her constituents too? Does she not agree that the federal government does have a role to play, given that constituents of both our ridings want to see that?

• (1645)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, the less said about studies showing who had the best plan for the environment, the better. We heard all sorts of things. In the last Parliament, we saw that when the time comes to give a bill some teeth and ensure that the objectives are not just fine words, it is important to include specific targets in a bill in order to hold the minister accountable. We were not able to do that. The Liberals opposed it in the last Parliament.

The government continues to make massive investments in oil and the coal industry. We saw what happened in Glasgow. Clearly, with regard to the environment, the Liberals will have to try a little harder to walk the talk.

As for mental health, the federal government is meddling in Quebec's jurisdiction. I am tired of the federal government's paternalistic attitude, its lecturing and its attempts to interfere in health care, which is our jurisdiction. Why does it not transfer health care to us? Believe me, Quebec will be able to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is wonderful to see you back in the chair. It is also wonderful to ask a question of my colleague, who I have worked very closely with when it comes to women's issues.

Throughout this pandemic, we have seen an increase in the number of deaths and in domestic violence cases, which have gone up rampantly. We have seen huge changes in these numbers.

I wonder if the member could share with me some of her solutions to this. As we know, there has been nothing and we continue to see a rise in this. What are some of the things the government can do to ensure the safety of women?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, what we saw most often during the pandemic was women trapped 24 hours a day with their abuser, women who had trouble breaking out of that cycle of violence. As I mentioned in my speech, 10-year action plans take

too long, because the time to act is now. We have had 18 femicides in Quebec this year, and that is far too many.

The money could go through Quebec, which already has an all-party committee in place and an action plan to fight violence against women, but implementing it will obviously depend on the transfers Quebec receives. Ottawa therefore needs to transfer funds to Quebec.

The same thing goes for housing, because the other problem is that we have to find somewhere for these women to stay. Right now, there is a freeze on funding transfers for women's shelters, so these women are having trouble finding a place to live. That is why I mentioned in my speech how important it is that we take action and transfer money for more housing so that Quebec can implement its action plan to fight violence against women.

Ottawa will soon be introducing legislation related to the Department of Justice that will require careful consideration by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I know that my colleague and I will meet again on that committee, and I look forward to working with her.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my dear colleague from Shefford. I want to ask her a question because she talked about the Trans Mountain pipeline. I am all for getting rid of that pipeline. We cannot meet the Paris targets if we increase oil sands production. However, many members seem to be misunderstanding something.

[*English*]

I will say this in English because I want it to be really clear. There are two pipelines. There is the old one, which is leaky and was bought in the 1960s. It was, until the floods, bringing crude oil from Alberta to a refinery in Burnaby. That one I do not think anyone had any trouble with. It had been running for a long time, it was just old, and we spent way too much money for it.

The one everyone wants stopped is the expansion that would carry a different product for purposes of export in tankers. It is diluted bitumen, which is a product that is inherently of low value, does not have markets, is impossible to clean up should it spill and massively—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I really apologize, but I have to give the member the opportunity for a very short answer.

The hon. member for Shefford has 10 seconds remaining.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, in my lifetime, I have fought against the idea of transporting more oil in pipelines. When it comes to pipelines leaking, it is not a matter of “if”, but “when”. That sums up the entire problem with respect to the environment. That is why we need to stop investing in any new pipelines and embark on an energy transition.

The Address

• (1650)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Health; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Housing; the hon. member for North Island—Powell River, Seniors.

[English]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to speak this afternoon from the unceded lands of the Algonquin people. I want to acknowledge that I represent Scarborough—Rouge Park, the lands of many indigenous nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit.

I want to first thank the people of Scarborough—Rouge Park for their incredible support. I was able to secure over 63% of votes in the last election, and it is my third time representing the great people of Scarborough—Rouge Park.

Of course, I could not have done this without the incredible volunteers. I had over 600 volunteers who worked day and night. We knocked on over 115,000 doors. They inspired me greatly, the young men and women who came out day and night. I had to set a very high bar for the type of campaign I ran. It was a very positive campaign. It was not about taking down the opposition; it was about presenting a very positive vision of Canada. I was very proud to do that throughout the campaign.

I want to take the time to acknowledge those who were part of my core team, including Shauna, David, Waleed, Gavin, Piyush, Ella, Anojini and Asma, who worked diligently to get the results we got; my election day chair Gowthaman; and campaign managers Joshua and Dorine. They were incredible in their efforts. I also want to thank the donors, those who cooked, those who put up signs, those who scrutineered, those who did everything possible to make this election a success, including the very responsible staff at Elections Canada.

Endeavours such as politics involve the entire family and I would be remiss if I do not acknowledge the steadfast support of my loving wife Harini and my children Sahanah and Bairavi, who, as every election comes and goes, seem to be getting older and wiser, I might add, but who continue to guide me in all the things I do, including my mother, who has always been my rock and my strength.

I want to congratulate all my colleagues who have been elected for the first time and re-elected, and their families for their sacrifices.

I will now reply to the Speech from the Throne and I will be splitting my time with my dear friend from Oakville North—Burlington.

The primary focus of our government over the past two years has been to end the fight on COVID. This is a very important fight that has taken many Canadian lives, but we know we are at the forefront in leading this fight, including the procurement of vaccines and ensuring that those in Canada are vaccinated. Of those eligible, 82.3% have had their first dose and 79.6% have their second, which is an

incredible feat for any country. We are also on the cusp of administering the third dose to Canadians.

This fight has always been taken by frontline and essential workers, many from very marginalized communities. I want to thank them and acknowledge their incredible efforts over the past two years. In my community, the Scarborough Health Network, the TAIBU Community Health Centre, the City of Toronto, led by Dr. Eileen de Villa, and others have been instrumental in this fight. I would be remiss if I did not thank and acknowledge them and their families for their service.

Some of the things that have been highlighted over the last two years include mental health. We have lost many people due to mental health over the past few years, but particularly during COVID. I had a very dear friend who took his life, and I know many others are struggling. The Speech from the Throne directly responds to the issues of mental health and addiction.

Long-term care homes have been a significant challenge. In my riding, in one particular institution, over 53 people died, including one personal support worker. The Speech from the Throne responds to that.

Just last week, I had the privilege of visiting the Tony Stacey Centre. It was initially built as a veterans home for seniors. I was able to meet with the chair and some of the staff. There are long-term care homes across the country that are in a similar state of disrepair, but because of the hard work of their management, staff and universal care, they have been able to pull through with minimal loss of life. It is really a sad reflection of the state of our long-term care homes. This is an area where the federal government has a very important role to play, one that is outlined in the Speech from the Throne.

• (1655)

I want to talk about the resilience of our economy. There are a number of things we need to do, but, first and foremost, it is heartening to see that we have been able to recover 100% of the jobs we lost during the pandemic. Our GDP is close to prepandemic levels. By all accounts, our economy is starting to throttle in full force.

However, there are very important lessons we need to learn from the pandemic, including the need for child care. In our case, we proposed \$10-a-day child care. I believe eight provinces have now signed on, with the exception of Ontario and New Brunswick. It is a very important initiative and so fundamental for families.

When our kids were young, we had such difficult choices to make, balancing work and other things in life, including, and most important at that time, child care. This will transform families. It will transform the ability of women to be in the workforce in full form. I am very excited about this. I hope the Province of Ontario will soon sign onto \$10-a-day child care.

The Address

We have heard about housing affordability and the cost of living. With the measures we are introducing here, including child care and incentives for first-time homebuyers as well as rent-to-own programs, we know they will support families in Scarborough—Rouge Park and everyone in Canada.

The need for bold climate action is so prevalent, as we see floods on both our east and west coasts, as well as very erratic temperatures across the world. We know that some countries may not even exist in a decade or two. As a result, the need to accelerate the fight on climate change is so important.

Locally, I want to highlight a couple of things that are happening in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge Park. Earlier this year, the federal government committed to investing \$2.26 billion toward the Scarborough subway extension. It is the single-largest investment by any federal government in Scarborough and is a very important tool in the fight against climate change. As well, there is a need for the extension of the Scarborough LRT East to Malvern. The City of Toronto has put in \$1.3 billion and I am hopeful that the federal government, through permanent public transit funding, will be able to put its share into this.

The second part of our action on climate change is the Rouge National Urban Park, which is the model for the rest of Canada. I know we will build on that as we build national parks in other urban centres, including Windsor, Saskatoon and places like Halifax.

I would like to acknowledge and reflect on the recent findings in Kamloops and the other children's graves found around the country. It is heartbreaking and it requires a collective effort on the part of all of us, not only to double down on the 94 calls to action but to also ensure that we have truth, accountability and justice. We need to move forward on this to ensure that the survivors who need closure will be able to get it through interlocutory and any other supports that can be provided by the federal government.

There is a lot more in the Speech from the Throne, but I commit to continue to collaborate with my colleagues across the aisle. I want to ensure that, like the historical vote we had yesterday, we are able to work together to better the lives of Canadians, to ensure that justice exists for the survivors of residential schools and to ensure we move toward a path of reconciliation.

● (1700)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the words of the member opposite, as well as his work in the previous Parliament on the indigenous and northern affairs committee.

My friend across the way talked about child care in his speech, and I am going to ask him the same question I asked his colleague a few moments ago. The government was running substantial deficits prior to the pandemic, and it ramped up the spending after the pandemic hit. It was, in fact, printing money, and inflation is on the rise. The solution from the Prime Minister seems to be to solve inflation by coming up with yet another government program.

We know that nothing is really working on that side of the House. Indigenous communities are still waiting for boil water advisories to clear. Veterans are still waiting in line, and we have a

housing crisis. I do not think it is smart to put yet another program in place when we cannot even figure out the ones we have.

Does the member think it is fair to have the kids of today actually paying for their own child care, even if they do not know it yet?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I always enjoy working with my colleague. He was a very constructive member of the committee.

However, I have to disagree with him. Child care is so fundamental to families in Canada. When I was knocking on doors, I spoke with many families about the need for affordable child care. Ontario is a rare exception in that it has not signed on. I am very hopeful that it will sign on. It will be transformational, and it will ensure that more people are in the workforce, particularly women.

This is an important step. We have learned an important lesson through the pandemic, and it is high time we implement this. We are long overdue for a national child care program. The \$10-a-day program would serve that purpose. I look forward to working with my friend opposite on other initiatives that the government brings forward.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I have a question for him about immigration.

Quebec is experiencing a serious labour shortage, and immigration seems to be one of the solutions. However, we know that the Department of Immigration is one of the most dysfunctional departments in the federal government. I do not think that it is right to have staffers in our members' offices spending half of their day dealing with immigration cases that are gathering dust on someone's desk. I get the impression that the Department of Immigration does not have enough resources or people working to deal with the growing backlog.

What solutions does my colleague have in mind? Should we immediately inject more resources into the Department of Immigration? Should we transfer some of these responsibilities to Quebec so that at least everything will be in the same place and there will be less buck-passing between the two levels of government? What does he believe are the solutions?

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, immigration is so important. I know we are committed to bringing in 40,000 Afghan refugees. We will ensure that immigration is fair.

The Address

Going forward, we have so many great programs, including a program we introduced recently, which has 250 spaces per year for human rights defenders. It is a very unique program, and Canada has signed on to it. I am hopeful that with the immigration challenges we have, we will be able to get through the pandemic and be able to ensure that processing is fair, adequate and speedy.

I am absolutely certain we will get to that point very shortly.

• (1705)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for rising. In the past session, he was a bulwark of the party's truth and reconciliation process, through which the government is engaging in the atrocities that have been uncovered in our residential schools across the country.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has denounced the doctrine of discovery. Four of the commission's calls to action, calls to action 45, 46, 47 and 49, urge the government to publicly disavow the racist and white supremacist notion of the doctrine of discovery. The Supreme Court of Canada has repeatedly stated that the heart of reconciliation is to reconcile the pre-existing rights of indigenous peoples with the assertion of Crown sovereignty. The phrase "assertion of Crown sovereignty" is a Canadian euphemism for the doctrine of discovery.

The Mohawk Institute Residential School, which is near my riding, is beginning its painful process of recovering bodies. As we know, close to 7,000 children have been recovered across the country so far. Given its correlation with the deaths of over 7,000 indigenous children, would the hon. member repudiate the doctrine of discovery?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge Park has five seconds to respond.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, yes.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ACCESS BY MEMBERS TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS PRECINCT—
SPEAKER'S RULING

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Earlier today, the Speaker found a prima facie question of privilege in relation to the decision of the Board of Internal Economy to require vaccination against COVID-19 for members accessing the House of Commons precinct. However, the Speaker signalled that he would reserve his final ruling until such time as the member for Banff—Airdrie could move an appropriate motion. Since the member for Banff—Airdrie has since indicated that he is satisfied with the Speaker's finding and no motion was subsequently moved, the Chair considers the matter to be closed.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE ON ADDRESS IN REPLY

The House resumed consideration of the motion for an address to Her Excellency the Governor General in reply to her speech at the opening of the session, and of the amendment.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking today from the unceded territory of the Algonquin people.

I will begin by thanking the people of Oakville North—Burlington for the confidence they have placed in me by electing me for the third time to this place. Our riding was created in 2015, and it has been my greatest honour to be its first and only member of Parliament.

I also want to thank my incredible team of volunteers and donors, without whom I would not be here, and my staff, who I would argue, are the best on the Hill. I thank them very much.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family, who have been beside me every step of the way. My son, Fraser, knocked on doors when he was nine years old when we were trying to save a local pool from being closed, and now in this past election, more than 20 years later, he brought his son, my grandson, Cameron, out to campaign with his nanny.

I was motivated to enter politics to make my community better. I continue to be motivated by the desire to leave the world better than I found it. Our government's throne speech lays out a number of priorities that will do just that.

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our time. As a climate leader, Canada has put in place measures to reduce pollution and achieve a net-zero economy by 2050. To create a more resilient economy, create jobs and grow the middle class, Canada must take strong and bold climate action. That is why we are moving forward to cap and cut oil and gas sector emissions, invest in public transit and mandate the sale of zero-emission vehicles.

The federal government has already worked in partnership with Oakville Transit and Burlington Transit to deliver over \$60 million in federal funding over the past five years to modernize and electrify our public transit fleets. It has also worked with the Ford Motor Company of Canada by investing \$295 million to make its Oakville plant the hub for electric vehicle manufacturing in Canada.

Since elected, I have advocated for a strategy to get more people active, encouraging them to use their feet and their bikes to get around. I am thrilled that our first-ever active transportation strategy was announced this summer, with \$400 million in funding over five years. I look forward to working with Oakville and Burlington to help them access this funding to better connect our communities and expand our already beautiful trails system.

Together, we need to go further and move faster on climate action, not just to protect our environment, but to grow our economy in a way that leaves no worker behind.

The Address

Building a better future starts with getting the pandemic under control and finishing the job on vaccines. It is because of the efforts of all Canadians that more than 86% of us over 12 years old are fully vaccinated, and children between the age of five and 11, like Roisin and Tiernan O'Meara, are getting the vaccine.

Halton Region has done outstanding work distributing vaccines in our community. The leadership of our medical officer of health, Dr. Meghani, has been exceptional, and I want to thank her and her colleagues for their work to keep our community safe.

To build a healthy future, however, we must do more than get needles in arms. We must strengthen our health care system and public health support for all Canadians, especially for seniors, veterans, persons living with disabilities, vulnerable members of our communities and those who have faced discrimination by the very system that is meant to heal. There is much work to be done on mental health and addictions treatment, on improving long-term care and accessibility, and integrated data collection to inform future decisions and get the best public health results possible.

Over the last year and a half, I have heard from businesses and individuals who have told me that they do not know how they would have survived without supports from our government. I have heard repeatedly about the labour shortage in Canada. Each of us in this place can be leaders in our communities by talking to business and our chambers of commerce about the untapped potential of people living with disabilities. Twenty-five per cent of Canadians are living with a disability, and about 70% of those are unemployed or underemployed. What an opportunity for employers to bring on someone in a wheelchair to their law firm or an individual with an intellectual disability to their assembly line or child care centre.

• (1710)

We are moving forward on safe, affordable, inclusive child care for all, with nine provinces and territories already signed on. When my son was born, I had four months maternity leave, which was the law at the time. When it came time to return to work, the cost of infant care was more than we could afford. I almost did not return, but thanks to an incredible boss who doubled my salary, gave me an extra month at home and promised that I could take whatever time I needed for my son, I did return.

My life would be very different if it were not for Ken Field, and I know my experience was the exception not the rule. Women should never have to decide between having a child and their career. Our plan for \$10-a-day child care, which we still need Ontario to sign on to, will not only be good for children and families, but will grow the economy by billions of dollars when women are able to fully participate.

Canadians were horrified by the discovery of unmarked graves and burial sites located near former residential schools. As a country and a government, we must continue to tell the truths of these tragedies so we can right past wrongs and move forward in the spirit of reconciliation for everyone.

I have heard about home ownership for young people repeatedly, and that is why we are going to be putting home ownership within reach for first-time homebuyers with a first-time homebuyer incentive, a new rent-to-own program, and by reducing closing costs.

Indigenous women are the fastest-growing prison population in Canada, and have been for some time. Most of these women are in prison because of poverty, trauma, mental illness, addiction or gender-based violence. Recently I visited Grand Valley Institution for Women and spoke to some of the women there. Sadly, because so many indigenous women are entering the criminal justice system, we have run out of room for them at institutions near their communities, and they have been transferred out of their home communities. Sixty-five indigenous women are now held at Grand Valley, while a few years ago it was just 13.

We must implement changes to mandatory minimum sentences and other reforms to the criminal justice system, including restorative justice, to stem the tide that is disproportionately sentencing indigenous women to federal prison. It has been said that when they sentence a woman to prison, they also sentence the child. While the mother-child initiative at Grand Valley is outstanding, too many of the children of these moms are in foster care. We must do better.

During the election campaign, I was once again targeted by the gun lobby. I have been a vocal advocate for enhancing public safety through gun control, from extended background checks in Bill C-71 to banning military-style assault rifles. Over 80% of Canadians support these measures, but the Conservative Party and Canada's gun lobby do not. From depicting me in demeaning and misogynistic cartoons, to distributing flyers door to door in my riding, the gun lobby and the Conservative Party are becoming more and more intertwined and more and more out of touch with the concerns of Canadians. I know my constituents overwhelmingly support our efforts on gun control, and I am looking forward to continuing to work with our government on the issue.

I heard repeatedly at the doors that Canadians want us to work together in Parliament. They appreciated the early pandemic response when we all worked together. It is my sincerest hope that we can set aside partisanship when we are in this place, as we did yesterday in passing Bill C-4 to end conversion therapy. When we disagree, which we will, let us disagree agreeably. Canadians expect no less.

The Address

• (1715)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I note that the member mentioned the first-time homebuyers incentive, and I have been a long-time critic of the program. It has only helped 9,100 Canadians actually purchase a home because the government has changed the criteria. As of this throne speech, this will be the third set of criteria since September 2019. If we just look at the number of homes sold last year in 2020, which was a pandemic year, over 550,000 homes changed hands, from a willing buyer to a willing purchaser, which is 1.6% of people.

Will the government just admit, and will the member agree with me, that the program is a failure, and that it is time to abandon it to do something else like adopt the Conservative plan for housing?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the hon. member's question, I disagree with him wholeheartedly.

We are increasing the first-time homebuyers' incentive. As someone who has a son who was just very recently a first-time homebuyer, and he has many friends who have been first-time homebuyers, I know that they appreciate the support we have given, but we need to do more.

There is not only one solution to the housing crisis for young people, and that is why we have put forward a suite of programs that will help people, as opposed to the Conservative program, which, in my opinion, would not have supported young people to get into a new home.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. I really enjoyed working with her on the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. I hope she will serve on it again in this Parliament.

She talked about gun control. In the previous Parliament, we did not have the time to study Bill C-21, which nobody liked anyway, not firearms owners and not those who want to see assault weapons and all other firearms banned, because it did not make the buyback of military-style assault weapons mandatory.

The Liberals have promised to make the buyback mandatory, which is a very good thing. However, the problem with the May 2020 list of banned firearms is that similar firearms or variations on them, like the SKS, are still available on the market.

Why not try to include a definition of a military-style assault weapon in the Criminal Code? That way, we would know what type of firearms to ban, instead of making a list of banned firearms and leaving similar firearms on the market.

What does my colleague think of that?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to work with the hon. member, and I know we share many of the same values and same desire when it comes to gun control and keeping the public safe.

We have not introduced new legislation. In whatever capacity I end up with in committees, I would be happy to work with her and

open to listening to suggestions she may have in terms of ensuring we are being most effective when it comes to banning military-style assault rifles.

I look forward to working with her, and it is quite important that we move forward on the mandatory buyback. There is someone in my own riding who has said he has two AR-15s that we will have to rip from his cold, dead hands. I would sleep much better at night knowing those weapons were not in his hands.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her advocacy for child care and prison reform. I share those passions.

However, in her speech, the member used the words “as a climate leader” when referring to Canada and to the government. While the government continues to talk about how its plan gets an A, its record gets an F. Its own environment commissioner described Canada's action as going from failure to failure. We have missed every single climate target we have set.

These are not the acts of a government that is serious about the climate crisis. I am curious how this member can stand behind her government when it continues to fail to tackle the climate crisis.

• (1720)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, I have the utmost respect for the member across the way. I watched her speech last week and was so impressed with her advocacy.

I am very proud of our government's actions on climate change. We put a price on pollution. We had to fight my home province of Ontario all the way to the Supreme Court on that. We have ensured we are taking action on climate change because we know how important it is for Canadians, for our health and for our economy.

It is the biggest crisis we are facing right now, and I am proud of the actions we have taken.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I understand some of the concerns raised when talking about firearms, but there are also concerns about the fact that many of the crimes we are seeing in the downtown Toronto area, not far from the member's constituency, are using firearms coming from the United States. They are coming through CBSA. There is an absolutely horrific thing happening there.

We can talk about what we see, but we know the majority of these crimes are being done with illegal firearms. Can the member tell me how the government is going to deal with that? In the last Parliament, the government was going to reduce minimum mandatory sentences for these people and firearms.

What is the government going to do when it comes to criminals and firearms?

The Address

Ms. Pam Damoff: Madam Speaker, 75% of people who die by a firearm die by suicide, so dealing with firearms is not a one-approach system. We reinvested \$500 million into border services, which were cut by the previous Conservative government. We are taking a multipronged approach to firearms, which is what we need to do.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today. I will be sharing my time with the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington. We are very excited to be here in the House.

If you will indulge me for a couple of minutes, there are a couple of people I need to thank, but first let me recognize that the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington is the cousin of the mayor of the town of Innisfil, one of the towns I represent. Mayor Lynn Dollin will, I think, be watching tonight.

There are so many people to thank. This is the first time I have been able to rise, in debate, in the House of Commons in the 44th Parliament. This is the third time the people of Barrie—Innisfil have sent me here to be their representative. I am very humbled by this. Since 2006, I have served publicly, first as a city councillor for nine years in the city of Barrie, and now for six years as the member of Parliament for Barrie—Innisfil. I am very, very honoured and humbled to be that member.

No one can do this without a team, a big team of not just campaign volunteers, but also friends and families. I would like to acknowledge a few of them right now, if I can, such as Rob Decker, who was my campaign manager, who worked with a group of people that really organized terrifically during the campaign. Then there were Robin McClennan and some of my “big sign guys”, as I call them: Al, Richard, John, Kevin, Barry and, of course, my dad, who has been here since the start of my being here politically. There were numerous “little sign people”. There has not been an election that I have been involved with since 2015 where I have had more signs placed. There were more requests coming in and it was just awfully difficult to keep up with them.

Of course, it has been a hell of a 20 months, frankly. My constituency staff have been there consistently on the front lines, dealing with issues related to the pandemic. I really want to acknowledge them: Susan, Sara, Brandon and Jennifer, and former staff Rhea, Andrea and Chelsea, and of course my family. There is no way any of us could have placed ourselves in this symbol of democracy to work on behalf of the people we represent, not just within our ridings but across this country, if not for the strong support of family. I thank my mom Doreen, my dad Jean-Guy, my sister Cathy, my sister Linda and, of course, my family: my wife Leanne and my four kids. They have been there since the beginning, not just of my previous career as a firefighter but also of my current career as the member of Parliament for Barrie—Innisfil. I cannot do this without them, particularly my wife, Leanne.

Oftentimes, when we run locally within our ridings, we fail to recognize those people who run against us, but I want to recognize them: Lisa-Marie Wilson, who ran for the Liberal Party, and Aleesha Gostkowski, who ran for the New Democratic Party. I also want to acknowledge Corrado Brancato, who ran for the People's

Party. I want to acknowledge them, because it is difficult to run and put one's name on a ballot.

Shortly after the election, I sat down with Aleesha Gostkowski of the NDP. I had a coffee with her. We talked about the issues that came up during the election. On many of the issues we talked about, we found we had similar concerns. Those issues were housing affordability, housing attainability and food security for people who are finding it hard right now because of the financial pressures they are facing. I would add one more, which would be energy security.

Right now, we are seeing the cost of everything go up and an inflation crisis that is impacting broadly many people in my constituency, particularly in the area of affordable housing. Rents have been increasing. It is becoming harder and harder for people not just to put a roof over their head, but also to maintain a roof over their head, and no more so than with young people. There is a housing crisis that is happening in this country that we have not seen in several generations.

• (1725)

It is not just housing. It is the cost of everything. The cost of the necessities of life is going up as a result of what we are seeing with these inflationary pressures. Gas, food, heat and hydro are all going up, and it is becoming increasingly difficult. The anxiety that exists today among the people I represent, affordability anxiety, is real. I know that throughout the course of the speeches in response to the Speech from the Throne, we have heard about that, not just from the opposition side but from the government side as well.

The House of Commons is a place where we come as the people's voices. I have been receiving, and I am sure my colleagues have, numerous emails about the affordability crisis that is happening and how it is directly impacting people. I will make them short, but it is important to read them into the record to hear that it is not just me talking about this. These are, through me, the people I represent.

A young man named Justin emailed me. He said, “People my age are” for lack of a better word, it is unparliamentary, but he said, “screwed when it comes to housing. We are done for. We will be paying rent of \$3,000 a month or more forever, unable to save anything for a home and barely making ends meet.”

“I was distressed when I found out that developers are buying up detached houses with the aim of renting them at inflationary prices,” wrote Sherry.

“I see Barrie is now the highest rent in the country. I am a homeowner. I know that rent is tied to the value of the house, but this is getting out of hand. There are many people in my age group, 25-35 and lower, whose dreams of owning a home have been dashed with the current situation,” wrote Sean.

The Address

Speaking about the first-time homebuyers assistance, Greg wrote, “It is awfully difficult to access and it is time for a little non-partisan politics for the benefit of the country.”

Kim wrote to me, “I have been trying to help two friends look for different places to rent in Simcoe County, and I cannot believe how difficult it has been for both of them. This is a serious issue.”

This one is particularly troubling. Steph and Christie wrote, “We are a family of seven. Rent was \$800 a month just two months ago, but the landlord sold the house to a new owner and now our rent is over \$1,500 a month.”

This is the kind of stuff that is happening not just in the riding of Barrie—Innisfil but right across the country. People are anxious. They are worried about affordability and how they are going to pay not just to put a roof over their head, but for the necessities of life.

In the throne speech, little mention is made of the issue of agriculture. There was nothing of any substance in agriculture. In the large rural area I represent, the producers are concerned about the increasing costs, not just of the products they need to farm but also of heating, dryers, barns, etc., and in particular the impact the carbon tax is having on those.

There is very little mention of guns and gangs. I know we have been talking about that over the course of the last week, the difficulties that are going on and how there is not enough being done to deal with that issue.

There is nothing about the military. One of the things that concerned me as well is that there is nothing about veterans either.

As I said at the outset, it has been a hell of an 18 months. We have really been focusing on the expense side of the ledger through the different supports and programs that have been put in place, but we need to start looking at the revenue side of the ledger and how we are going to pay for this. The only way we are going to pay for this is through the power of the Canadian economy, and it will be led by business: the people they employ, the products they produce and the services they provide in every sector and every region of this country. It does not need big government intervention. We have to be competitive both domestically and internationally, and big government intervention will not allow for that to happen. We need to be focused and tactical in our approach to the way the economic recovery will happen.

Lastly, as I conclude, this Christmas season businesses need our support more than ever. They have been devastated over the last 20 months, and I encourage everyone, not just in Barrie—Innisfil but right across this country, to make sure they shop local and support local as well.

• (1730)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start off by echoing the statement the member just made. Let us shop local and encourage our constituents to recognize the difficult times that our businesses have had to endure over the last 18 months. One of the ways we can support them is to shop local.

There is another thing we can do collectively here in the House. We understand now that Bill C-2 will be going to committee, and I am hopeful and optimistic that we will see it come out of commit-

tee and ultimately get the support that is necessary to see it pass, because it too would support small businesses.

My question is more related to the issue of housing. We have seen over the years the amounts of money being invested in social housing, and they have been historic. There has been a housing strategy too, something that has never happened before in the history of Canada, at least for the last number of generations.

I am wondering what specific initiative the member believes would make a difference, from his perspective, because there are a number of initiatives already in place that are having an impact.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, that is an important question, because we have seen asset valuations increase directly as a result of governments and banks printing money. It is indisputable at this point.

I have spoken to local realtors, the Ontario Real Estate Association and the Canadian Construction Association. All of them say to organizations that we need to move to increase the supply. We need to make sure that houses are being built free of any regulatory burdens and make sure there is ample supply in the marketplace to ensure that young people can afford not just rent, but also the opportunity of home ownership.

There are lots of things that all three levels of government can do, and we need to make sure we work together. That is why we were sent here, and I believe this election, by its result, showed that Canadians want us to work together to solve these problems of great magnitude.

• (1735)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech. I appreciate and find it interesting that he is from Quebec. I wonder if we share any other concerns.

This week, my colleague from Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia proposed that we form a special task force of American, Canadian, Quebec and indigenous police officers with the goal of curbing firearms trafficking.

Also this week, some 50 firearms were seized on their way from Akwesasne to Cornwall. Today, an 80-year-old woman was killed, apparently murdered, because spent cartridges were found next to her in Coaticook.

What does my colleague think of the idea of forming a special task force to stop illegal firearms at the border?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I was born in Montreal, and I am from a francophone family. My father, Jean-Guy Brassard, is a real francophone. Montreal is where all my relatives live, on the French side.

The Address

[English]

It is a tough question. The issue of guns and gangs is an issue of guns and gangs. It is not an issue of law-abiding firearms owners. They are not running around the streets of Montreal, Vancouver or Toronto shooting up the place.

The issue of guns coming into the country illegally needs to be addressed. In our platform we talked about guns and gangs and how to address them, such as giving more resources to police forces across the country and setting up special task forces. Those are the things we need to do, not go after law-abiding firearms owners, who are the most responsible and have the strictest gun laws in the world.

Illegal guns and illegal gangs are the problem in this country, and it is time the government and all parliamentarians get serious about dealing with that issue.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the member's constituency stories in particular. I always like to hear from constituents.

A lot of what I am hearing from constituents in my riding is about the concerns in our long-term care homes, both for their loved ones in care homes and for the workers. I am wondering if the member could share his thoughts about the importance of putting into place national standards to better support those in long-term care homes.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, nobody understands the issue of long-term care facilities more than I do. We went through the situation at Roberta Place. That is in my riding.

All levels of government have a role to play, understanding that this is a provincial responsibility. However, we can work with the provincial governments to make sure that we have the type of standards that look after seniors in long-term care homes. Long-term care homes are getting better and are really doing a good job of protecting their seniors. My mother-in-law is in Roberta Place right now, and I feel extremely comfortable that she is there because of the staff and the people who are looking after her.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on to the next speaker, I want to remind members that the shorter the questions and answers, the more members get to participate. We keep running out of time.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand before you humbled by the enormous responsibility entrusted to me by the voters of Hastings—Lennox and Addington. In an ideal world, the people who are responsible for making this moment possible would be here with me. Though they are not here, they are certainly not forgotten.

There were dozens of volunteers and friends who put their lives on hold during our campaign. I want them to know that I count them as my political family. I will be forever grateful for their efforts and am so thankful to have them as part of my circle of trust.

I want to thank my husband Tadum for believing in me and standing beside me. Our life is beautifully chaotic, and I appreciate

him for being able to support me and make it possible for me to be here.

I also want to say that I am so incredibly proud of daughters, Tori and Reese, my volleyball player and hockey player. They always strive to be authentic and genuine. To my two sisters and their families, the village of support to help with the girls is so appreciated.

Next I want to thank my parents, Daryl and Carol Ann Kramp.

My mom has taught me to be fearless, respectful and responsible. She is an incredible role model, and I certainly know where I get my energy from.

My father has earned a tremendous amount of respect here in Ottawa, and the impact he has made in my riding over the years is remarkable. My dad and I share something very unique to Canadian politics. My father is our current MPP for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, while I now hold the federal seat. He is my political mentor, and more importantly he is my dad. May I follow his lead but mark my own path moving forward.

To the people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington, know that I will remain laser-focused on the task that has been given to me: holding the government accountable. I will be more than just a critic. I will propose solutions while representing my constituents, and I will never stop being an advocate for our riding. There are those who have grown tired of politics, and I hope to inspire them and restore their faith in this great institution.

Last Tuesday, the Governor General read the Speech from the Throne, the document that sets out the government's agenda and vision for the upcoming session. Unfortunately for the people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington, as well as other rural ridings across this great country, the speech did not appear to include them. Whether it is rural broadband Internet, the agricultural sector or rebuilding main street, the government has signalled that these issues are not areas of concern for it.

There is no plan to lower inflation, nor to address labour shortages and supply chains. There is no plan to ease the financial burdens of struggling business owners. The current government loves to talk about money. It talks about the amount of money promised, committed or spent, but the results are just not there. We have more consultants, more studies, more bureaucracy, more debt and more disappointment. Accountability and transparency matter. In my opinion, we are experiencing the most corrupt and divisive government in history. This matters and we need to do better.

The Address

Too many Canadians are suffering from depression, anxiety and burnout. Canada's mental health crisis has deepened. Mental health is health, and we should be collectively supporting it in a non-partisan manner. For those personally affected, please reach out. Surely the six people who may be the pallbearers at someone's funeral would rather lift them up now in their time of need. We send our love to Matt.

Allow me now to address the outlook for our agricultural sector. It is bleak. The farmers and livestock and dairy producers who are found in every corner of Hastings—Lennox and Addington are once again an afterthought of the government. In a nearly 3,000-word document, our agricultural sector was mentioned one single, solitary time. Let me be clear: Our united Conservative caucus knows it is farmers, like those found in Stirling and Napanee, who feed Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is high time the members on the other side of the House recognized this fact.

I was pleased that the throne speech spoke to the issue of reconciliation with Canada's first people. I have the good fortune to count the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte among my communities.

• (1740)

During my very first week as a member of Parliament, the people of Tyendinaga voted to ratify a partial land claim returning 300 acres to the Mohawk territory. In the spirit of reconciliation, I call on the government to settle the remaining land claims expeditiously, with fairness to all concerned.

As shadow minister for seniors, I would like to now focus on an area that is very close to the hearts of many Canadians. With this Speech from the Throne, the Liberal government has sent a chilling message to Canada's most vulnerable. With only a single mention in passing, the government chose to completely ignore some very serious issues. There was no mention of combatting social isolation, no mention of cracking down on elder abuse, no mention of improving access to palliative care and no mention of fixing the rising costs of critical goods such as groceries and medicine. This is a troubling trend.

During the previous Parliament, members of this place from every party and every province were receiving frantic phone calls, emails and letters from seniors in their ridings. The complaints were nearly identical: The GIS had been severely reduced or, in many cases, completely eliminated after the July recalculation period. Seniors who depended on the guaranteed income supplement to pay for food to eat, a bed to sleep in and medicine to live had their financial safety net torn out from underneath them overnight. The people who built this country suddenly found themselves abandoned by it as a result of poor communication from the government.

Realizing the very serious consequences of such a sudden and unforeseen reduction in disposable income, my colleague, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster, quickly took action and sent a letter to the then minister of seniors asking her to address the situation. She never received a response.

Not only are seniors' dollars not going as far as before, but they now have fewer to start off with. On top of this, many seniors are embarrassed to come forward. They are embarrassed to go to food

banks or to ask for help. Traditionally, seniors and our country have been self-reliant. This is becoming increasingly difficult. On page 14 of the 2021 federal budget are the words, "We owe our elders a great debt. This is a partial repayment." What the government has done in the intervening months is not only a spectacular failure to partially repay our elders, but rather it has increased the debt we owe to them. I know the government does not have the best track record on balancing budgets, but as a former financial adviser I can assure the government that it is not difficult to figure out that its policies have added to the debt it owes our seniors, not repaid it.

Being elected as a member of Parliament to represent the people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington, or anywhere across this great nation, is a privilege. We must never forget the people who sent us here and we must never stop fighting for them. It is my sincere and perhaps naive belief that every person who comes through the doors of this chamber has the intent to make our country a better place to live for ourselves, our children and our seniors. I grew up having so much pride in Canada being a self-reliant, resilient and resourceful nation. I ask members to join me in wanting to earn this back. Let us work together to give our young leaders the tools and resources to continue to make this country strong and free.

We all have a different approach as to what progress looks like, but it is that personal drive, that core tenet of public service, that unites all of us. This is what makes this place such a profound and powerful institution. Regardless of people's paths in life, they should do it to the absolute best of their ability. They must never stop learning, improving and making a difference.

In closing, I was fortunate to learn a great deal from an amazing parliamentarian. That knowledge and relationship shaped me into who I am today and is why I am here. The growth I was able to achieve learning from one parliamentarian was profound, and I cannot wait to see what learning from 337 others will do.

I thank my mom and dad for their kind words of wisdom: we should always believe in ourselves and always keep our doors open. Things do not happen unless we make them happen. We should be kind, love life and seek happiness along the way. God bless.

• (1745)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member and I share something in common. Her father is an MLA and she is an MP. My daughter is an MLA in the Manitoba Legislature and I am an MP. As I am very proud of my daughter, I am sure the member's father is exceptionally proud of her.

One of the things that we share in common, again, is that my daughter is a very powerful advocate for seniors, as I see the member opposite also wants to be. I have talked to my daughter about the need for different levels of government to work together. I am sure the member can appreciate the importance of different levels of government working together.

The Address

Would the member not agree that on the issue of seniors it is important that we recognize what both levels of government could do? We can work together to make a positive difference and have a more positive impact for seniors no matter where they live in our great country.

• (1750)

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Mr. Speaker, I certainly applaud the member for the relationship and special bond he has with his daughter. Both of them are serving the public.

There is no question that the importance of the coordination between different levels of government is integral. I served 15 years in municipal government. I can see the relationships and importance of working with municipal, provincial and federal levels. That is how things happen. The beauty of collaboration and co-operation is the spirit of democracy.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Hastings—Lennox and Addington. It is always nice to hear from new colleagues in the House.

I, too, want to ask a question about seniors, because we also care about that issue in the Bloc Québécois. I heard her talk about the guaranteed income supplement, which has been reduced since July. I absolutely agree on that. However, the Bloc Québécois has been calling for an increase to old age security since 2019, because seniors' purchasing power has been declining for several years. Benefits have not increased to keep pace with the average industrial wage.

I would like to know if my colleague agrees with us that it would take at least a \$110-per-month increase to do that.

[*English*]

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that seniors are the backbone for where we have come as a nation. We need to support our seniors. There needs to be a dialogue.

Our seniors need to have the dignity of being comfortable and not worrying about whether they can put food on the table, support their families or have the same quality of life they were accustomed to.

I also raised in my speech how intimidating it can be to admit that there could be trouble or concern. Taking away the barriers and making people feel comfortable is important.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to also congratulate the member. Like a few of us here today, I also have the honour of following in a parent's footsteps. As she may know, my mother was the former member for London—Fanshawe. I have learned so much from her, and I continue to learn so much from her. I also appreciate that parentage and that lineage.

I want to ask a question along the same lines as my colleagues have asked about protecting our seniors. Some of the seniors in my riding have come forward. They are dealing with the clawback on their GIS because of the money they received from the CERB. It has left them at a point where they cannot afford their rent. They are being forced into homelessness.

Could the member tell me if she and her party would support the NDP's push for the government to change that clawback of the GIS?

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there are scores of seniors who, as a result of the government's poor rollout of the CERB, are finding themselves in a really difficult situation. They are being stripped of their OAS and GIS. It is through no fault of their own.

I would certainly agree that the government needs to reverse the decision, and we need to allow seniors to collect what they have earned. We need to lead by example. We need to show them. We need to win on these issues together. Seniors do not need to be a political football.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is great to join the debate in the 44th Parliament. I will be splitting my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

First, I want to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on your election to the chair. We worked closely in the past on the Standing Committee on Health. I know you will do a good job.

I also would like to thank the people of Brampton South for putting their trust in me for the third time. Representing them is the greatest honour of my life. I commit to them to continue to be their strong voice and represent Brampton's best interests in Ottawa.

Behind each 338 members of Parliament is a strong team of volunteers who get us elected. I have an amazing team of volunteers and I could not have done it without their unwavering support.

Of course, a big thanks to my family. I know they are already proud of the work we are doing here. They are the real force behind me. I want to thank my son Akash, who is always supporting me, especially on the campaign trail. He is always there by my side.

It is an honour to address the House on behalf of residents of Brampton South to speak in support of the throne speech, which introduced our government's vision for the future of our country. I will be speaking about the priorities of the residents in my riding, as these priorities are reflected in this speech.

I have spoken to hundreds of residents in my community over the last few months and they are optimistic that we are coming through this pandemic. Businesses in Brampton are bouncing back. They know their government is ready to lead us through this recovery, tackle the challenges ahead of us and to build an economy that works for everyone.

The vision outlined in the Speech from the Throne delivered last week is the plan to finish the fight against COVID-19, make home ownership achievable, make life more affordable, confront public safety challenges and take strong climate action, while creating jobs and growing the economy.

The Address

Vaccination remains the most important tool in fighting COVID-19. This is the only way we can end this pandemic. Almost 90% of those aged 12 and over have received at least one dose, and our government is continuing to encourage uptake. We have mandated vaccines for civil servants and federally regulated workers. As of this Tuesday, all travellers taking planes and trains must be vaccinated.

Many of us see this decision as the right step. I heard international experts saying they wished to have the same system in their country. This will help our economy to reopen, but also protect our health care system and essential workers.

Peel Region, especially Brampton, was one of the hardest-hit communities in the country at the peak of the pandemic, with over 400 new cases a day at its highest point. We are a community of essential workers. They continued to go to their jobs every day so others could stay home. We are also a very diverse community, with over 100 different languages spoken at home.

I want to thank Dr. Lawrence Loh and his team at Peel public health, all the frontline health care workers in Brampton, the testing and vaccine clinics as well as all the multicultural community partners, faith leaders and service organizations that helped in the vaccination efforts. Thanks to their outreach efforts, working through language barriers and complicated work schedules, we are now one of the most vaccinated communities in Canada.

We are coming through this global health crisis. Our government will be there to work with the provinces to deliver the changes needed to improve health care. This includes mental health and addiction, long-term care and addressing and delivering vaccine boosters, and vaccine doses for children.

For most Canadians, housing is the single biggest portion of their monthly budgets. Whether it is through rent or a mortgage payment on a recently purchased home throughout Brampton and the GTA as well as many parts of Canada. It is a cost that is becoming unaffordable.

It is an issue I regularly hear about from my constituents. This is why our government has a plan to address this rising cost. Our government will do this by working with the municipalities to help them increase supply, with the housing accelerator fund, providing more support to first-time buyers and implementing an innovative rent-to-own program that will help Canadians obtain home ownership.

All members of the House agree we need to build more housing and build it faster.

• (1755)

Our government has a clear record on lifting hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty. Thousands of families in Brampton South have benefited from the Canada child benefit introduced by our government over the years.

In my riding, child care is also one of the most expensive costs for families with young children. In Brampton, it is not uncommon to find costs as high as \$1,500 or even \$2,000 a month per child in many cases. We are a community of essential workers, many of whom do not have the option of working from home. This high cost

is unaffordable for too many people. One parent, usually the mother, will decide to leave the workforce. This is not because she wants to, but because finding child care is impossible. At the status of women committee during the last Parliament, I frequently heard how important this was and how affordable child care options needed to be expanded. Affordable child care is the priority I have heard at the doors often in my riding. Our government's \$10-a-day child care plan will save families in Brampton over \$9,200 a year in 2022. That is a future year of tuition payment for the child or a year of groceries. By 2026, Brampton families are going to save almost \$16,000. This is a big number. The difference that our government's child care program can make in the life of a young family is significant. Our federal plan will allow many women to remain in the workforce and will increase economic output in Brampton and across Ontario once the new deal is signed.

I was also reassured to see that our government is taking action on keeping our communities safe. We have taken action to ban and restrict access to firearms and will continue to work with municipalities and law enforcement on fighting gun violence. However, as many residents know, the leading reason for 911 calls in Peel is for domestic and intimate partner violence. Every hour, Peel police receive two calls on average, mostly from women. Sadly, we see many instances of gender-based violence from coast to coast. Many of them are women of colour, those who are racialized or are indigenous. This is unacceptable. It was important for me to see that our government is taking this issue seriously by continuing to provide funding to shelters and women's centres as well. As with the commitment to address gender-based violence with the 10-year national action plan, this plan will account for women of all colours, abilities, ages and backgrounds.

I had the pleasure to speak with the middle school students earlier this year. The single greatest issue they are talking to me about is climate change. Climate change is real and we see the horrible consequences in British Columbia, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Climate change is not up for debate; it is a reality. Our government has a plan that will get us to net-zero emissions by 2050. We will invest in the green technology sector so we can create good, clean jobs for the future.

Brampton seniors remember the devastating floods in Brampton in the fifties and sixties. By investing in disaster mitigation projects like the Brampton Riverwalk project in the past, they are committed to working with the municipalities on green and sustainable infrastructure projects.

Our government is addressing both the infrastructure needs of our communities and fighting climate change. One of the biggest announcements that I participated in last year was when the City of Brampton received \$400 million from the Canada Infrastructure Bank to fully transition our transit fleet of 450 buses to electric vehicles by 2027. This is a real example of helping cities across the country to be leaders in the climate fight. I am looking forward to continuing this work over the coming years.

We need to build a cleaner, healthier and more prosperous nation for future generations. As a mother, this is what I want to leave for my children and future generations. I am asking all members of Parliament to support the values of this speech so that we can work together to build a better Canada.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of material in our colleague's speech. One of the things she referred to was planned federal investments in mental health. This is something that affects us all, and we are all sensitive to it.

However, can the member explain to me how mental health falls under the federal government's jurisdiction?

• (1805)

[*English*]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member on his election.

This is an issue I care very much about, and I know that the member shares that passion.

If the provinces are in agreement that these areas need to be improved, then they should welcome the strategy. Overwhelmingly, we hear from constituents who want to see national action. We are prepared to work with the provinces and make sure that this happens. It is an important issue, and I look forward to working with members to improve the lives of Canadians.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to work with the member, and we have discussed a fair amount today about seniors.

I would ask the member what her thoughts are when we know that the inflationary rates are so high that the cost of living for many of these seniors means that the amount they bring compared to their expenses has become very unbalanced. I would like to know what the member's solution is and how this government will provide for seniors in the future.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's passion on this issue. We have worked closely in the past, and I share her passion for seniors.

The Address

In this pandemic, seniors have been hit very hard, especially in long-term care. Seniors' issues are very close to me and our government. During this pandemic, in my riding, one of the nursing homes had the Canadian Armed Forces step in to support the seniors living there. Since then, our government supported long-term care with improvements in ventilation in my riding along with many other actions across the country.

I know that we need to do more. I look forward to working with members and, yes, seniors deserve a better life.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as a mother, I want to thank the hon. member for her words.

We do not hear enough of this in the chamber. However, I certainly hear a lot in my riding about mothers who work essential, frontline work with non-traditional hours. I thank the member's constituents for their essential, frontline work during this COVID pandemic.

Those frontline workers who work non-traditional hours rely on family members, such as mothers, sisters, brothers and fathers to help with their child care. However, too many in my riding cannot get visitor visas for their family members to come over to help them with their child care needs and to help them with emotional and physical support.

Can the member share what we can do or what the government can do to get those visas moving?

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the member opposite that the previous Liberal government was in the process of implementing a child care program, but we needed the remaining provinces and territories, including Ontario, to sign the agreement. This agreement will help young families in Brampton and all across the country to save money and help women enter the workforce. Our government will continue to pursue this until every Canadian family with young children has access to affordable, quality care. The Province of B.C. signed the agreement, and families in B.C. are already benefiting from it, which is great news.

I look forward to working with the member. I hope that Ontario will sign the agreement soon so that Bramptonians and young families, especially mothers, can get the benefit from this on the issue of child care.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to be standing in the House of Commons as the newly elected member of Parliament for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, located on lands covered by Treaty 13 and the Williams Treaties. Over several centuries, it has been traversed by many first nations and is currently home to indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island.

The Address

I am very honoured to be here to work for all residents of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill. I am committed to respectfully listening to all stated viewpoints and concerns from my constituents and my fellow members of Parliament to fully consider them and address them to the best of my abilities.

I would not be sitting here today without the support of my family and, of course, the hundreds of community members who spent years with me knocking on doors and making phone calls.

My husband of 27 years, Peter, has been unwavering in his support of my pursuit to serve, even though it has turned our lives upside down. Our six children, Peter Jr., Chris, Kyle, Tristan, Nadiya and Kristina, have all been supportive of my foray into politics in different ways. However, I want to call out, in particular, our youngest daughter Kristina, who stepped outside of her comfort zone, which is working with horses, to come out and canvass door to door with me.

My parents Kate and Tom Taylor have inspired and supported me since my birth, but never more than during this past election, when at age 86 they worked tirelessly making phone calls, putting up signs, preparing food and providing me with much-needed emotional support. My sisters Theresa and India have been at my side since I first ran for the nomination in 2019, despite their own personal challenges. My brother John, already stretched as the mayor of Newmarket, came out countless times to canvass door to door with me, and always provided invaluable advice.

As everyone can see, I have a large and supportive family of which I am very proud.

I am also proud of the residents of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill and Canadians across our great country. They have shown how they work together through difficult times.

Today, I want to focus my response to the Speech from the Throne on women. Why the focus on women today? Because this year is the 100th anniversary of the election of the first woman to our Parliament, Agnes Campbell MacPhail. Because this week, we are in the midst of 16 days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, as 32 years ago, on December 6, 14 women were killed at the École Polytechnique in Montreal simply because they were women. Because today women are still discriminated against and under-represented in elected office and leadership positions in my community, across Canada and in this great House of the people.

The issues that our government has focused on in the Speech from the Throne are of immense importance to all Canadians. However, they are of particular importance to women, as women have felt the negative impacts of the challenges we currently face more severely than men.

In the Speech from the Throne, our government is rightly focused on ending this fight against COVID-19. This is the most important step we can take to continue rebuilding our economy and in helping women.

Let us not forget that women were 12 times more likely than men to leave the workplace during this pandemic. Women are disproportionately represented in those sectors hardest hit during this pandemic: hospitality, tourism and small retail operations.

Women, who represent the majority of personal support workers and nurses, have been on the front line during this pandemic. They have been working tirelessly and bearing the brunt of the anger and anxiety that people have felt throughout this stressful time. Likewise, women have experienced domestic violence more often throughout this pandemic, and the people who work to help them, the majority of whom are female, have been overwhelmed by the demands on shelters and services to help victims.

Women have most acutely experienced mental health challenges during this pandemic as we still carry the greatest responsibility for the care of our children and our elders, both groups that have themselves struggled with mental health throughout this pandemic. The toll the pandemic has taken on our mental health can often be overlooked in light of the terrible economic and other health consequences it has caused, but it is no less significant.

• (1810)

This pandemic has taught us many things. One of the most important is that we need to view every policy through a feminist lens, which is something our government is committed to doing. Our government's actions encouraging all Canadians to get vaccinated and to follow public health recommendations and travel measures will work to contain new variants, such as omicron, and end this pandemic.

In addition to this, we must also directly address the economic challenges we face as a result of the pandemic. While Canada's economy is recovering well due to our government's support for workers and small businesses, the global health crisis has led to global pressures on the cost of living. The Speech from the Throne focuses on two areas to address rising costs: child care and housing.

In my riding, parents are faced with some of the highest child care costs in the province, with average fees coming in at just under \$1,600 a month. For a young family with more than one child, it is the equivalent of a second mortgage. Our government's bold, accessible and affordable universal child care and early-learning program will not only reduce costs for young families, but will result in greater workforce participation and productivity, producing significant economic benefits across our great country.

The Address

As the women's commissioner at the University of Toronto, I remember working with the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and fighting for a national child care program. This had been recommended in the Royal Commission Report on the status of women in 1971. Yes, we have been advocating for universal child care for 50 years. It is about time. It is an incredible honour to be here in the House and to see this finally come to fruition. It is the fulfilment of countless years of work from men and women, and is a significant accomplishment for this government.

The Speech from the Throne also outlines the important work our government will continue to do on increasing housing availability and affordability. It is an area of great concern for all Canadians trying to find affordable homes and for everyone who believes that all people should have a place to call home in a country as wealthy as Canada.

Once again, women are more likely to struggle to find an affordable home. Women are more likely to live in poverty, either as seniors living alone or as mothers raising a family. Lone-parent families headed by women are three times more likely to live in poverty than those headed by men. Of course, women living with disabilities, indigenous women and women in racialized communities experience even greater poverty and challenges in finding adequate affordable housing.

New Canadians and immigrants also have an incredibly hard time finding housing, and I want to recognize the work of two women. Fariha Shabazy and Sajida Habib are working tirelessly in my riding to settle newcomer families, including Afghan families, into affordable housing.

I am also pleased to see that our government has listened to the voices of Canadians on the need for increased mental health resources and supports. There are so many groups offering support for mental health in my riding, including Home on the Hill in Richmond Hill, CMHA York Region, the women's shelters and shelters such as Yellow Brick House and 360° Kids. I will continue to advocate here in Parliament to ensure they can deliver much-needed supports.

As I raise the issue of empowering women and protecting community health, I would be remiss if I left out the connection between these aspects of our lives and the very urgent climate crisis we are facing. Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill is fortunate to contain parts of Ontario's greenbelt and the beautiful Oak Ridges Moraine. These contain fragile ecosystems that we must work to protect and preserve for years to come.

In the Speech from the Throne, our government laid out how we will be taking bolder climate action and focusing on innovation and green jobs. I have heard from many in my riding who have innovative ideas to help create more resilient infrastructure. In this work, as in every other program our federal government is undertaking, we must work with the indigenous people with whom we share the land.

The path to reconciliation, truth and justice is ongoing, and there is much more to be done. I was so pleased to see our Governor General, a strong indigenous woman, deliver this throne speech and

to hear part of it spoken in an indigenous language, Inuktitut, as well as our two official languages of French and English.

I am grateful to be embarking on the road ahead as a parliamentarian, and I am looking forward to working respectfully and co-operatively with all parliamentarians in the House to deliver on the priorities set forward in this Speech from the Throne and help my constituents and all Canadians.

• (1815)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome the member opposite to the House.

She mentioned violence against women and gender-based violence as an issue. As the former chair of the status of women, in 2016 we authored a report with 45 recommendations for the government to be able to eliminate gender-based violence in Canada, so it is disturbing to me that in the throne speech Liberals are still talking about coming with a plan and there is still no funding attached to it, after six years.

Could the member indicate why the government is taking so long to do something that is so important?

• (1820)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, our government has been taking action. I have been working and speaking to staff at shelters and networks that have been helping women in our riding. I know that the money that has been put into these institutions to help these women to meet the challenges during the pandemic is much appreciated.

There are different initiatives. I was just talking to staff at Blue Door, an organization that addresses homelessness and helps build homes. They are talking about working with initiatives from the rapid housing initiative with the women's shelters to build townhouses that will provide transitional housing.

We are doing a lot and I know our government cares deeply about this issue. I thank the member for her concern and work on it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, I congratulate her for her election victory, and I was very pleased to see her this morning with the other members of the all-party caucus on the environment. I invite other members to join in.

Her government is ambitious about fighting climate change, but in reality, Canada has the worst track record in the G7. We believe we need to drastically reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and to do that, we need to cap oil and gas production.

The Address

It was a memorable visit, and one of the things that I will remember most about that visit is something that Dave Thompson told me. Just as we were leaving, we were gathered in their boardroom at their band office and he said, “Takla is a proud community. We are proud of what we showed you today, and we wanted to focus on the community's strengths, but I hope that does not give you the impression that this is a community that does not need help.”

His words made me think about northwest B.C., this place I am so humbled and honoured to represent here in the House of Commons and the people who call it home. The people of the northwest are resilient, resourceful, proud of where they live and proud of how they live. If I were to simply rattle through the list of the myriad challenges that people in northwest B.C. face, I would be worried that this fact would not come through first. So, instead I thought it was right to start by honouring the innate strength of my neighbours, their resilience and their love for the place that we call home.

As we face the most serious public health crisis in a century, a growing climate crisis that has been felt so acutely in British Columbia right now and a housing crisis that is denying such a basic human right to so many families, it is all too clear that the need for federal leadership has never been greater. Yet, reading through the Speech from the Throne, I think that many Canadians would be struck by its lack of depth and its lack of addressing the many issues that we face. At a time of so many pressing challenges, this speech failed to reflect the kind of bold vision and leadership I think Canadians and certainly the people in northwest B.C. feel that we need.

• (1840)

Across the northwest, the collapse of wild salmon stocks is causing real alarm. It is hard to describe how integral these fish are to people's way of life in Skeena for food, culture and livelihood, yet in a single generation this resource that people have depended on for generations, over thousands of years, is disappearing right before their eyes. The salmon that arrive at Takla Lake are not Skeena River salmon: they are Stuart River sockeye. They are from the Fraser River system. They swim over 1,000 kilometres from the ocean to spawn there. It is truly a miracle of nature. Sadly, the Stuart River sockeye have been decimated by the Big Bar landslide, mismanagement of fisheries, industrialization, habitat impacts and all of the other things that are impacting wild salmon.

When I was in Takla, Keith West gave us a tour of the new salmon hatchery. Earlier in the year, the residents travelled down to Lillooet on the lower Fraser and intercepted the early Stuart River run of those few fish that make it back up the river. They took the eggs from those fish and are now incubating them in a tiny shipping container hatchery in the community of Takla. They hope that the few that survive will make it back down the river, out to the ocean and then all the way back home to replenish the stock that community has existed on for millennia. In communities up and down the B.C. north coast, people are looking to the current government to finally come to the aid of wild salmon. There is hope in recent funding announcements, but people are waiting to see results on the ground and in the water. There was nothing in the Speech from the Throne about wild salmon.

Similarly, forestry has long been at the centre of many communities in the region, such as Burns Lake, Houston, Fraser Lake, Fort St. James and my home community of Smithers. Getting a softwood lumber agreement would make a real difference for the viability and long-term success of the processing facilities in those communities. However, after years of uncertainty, instead of an agreement what we see is the Americans doubling softwood lumber duties. There was nothing in the throne speech on softwood lumber and a softwood lumber agreement.

In a huge rural riding, transportation is a constant feature of the daily lives of people and often a challenging one. A few weeks back, as part of my commute east, I had a chance to ride on BC Bus North. This is the new regional bus system the B.C. government put in place in the wake of Greyhound pulling out of our region. In a region that includes the Highway of Tears, which tragically so many people have heard about, the trip on the bus was convenient and it was safe. At \$25 for a two-hour trip, it was also affordable.

A lot of regions across Canada are not as fortunate as northern B.C. I do not think any member in this place who is from a rural riding would disagree that having safe, affordable, consistent passenger transport is vital for their constituents. Today rural, low-income Canadians who do not drive have fewer transportation options than they have had in 100 years, yet there was nothing in the throne speech on connecting rural Canada. Sadly, the current government gave up long ago on passenger rail as a way to connect rural residents across our country. We cannot let it give up on bus transportation in the same way.

Housing affordability is a challenge in every single community across Canada, but in addition to affordability, there is another aspect that is being neglected, which is housing in indigenous communities. In the riding that I represent of Skeena—Bulkley Valley, the community of Klemtu is struggling with housing issues. It has a vision for building new houses and repairing the ones that are in the community. I heard recently from Chief Councillor Doug Neasloss about a storm that damaged 16 houses. These are now leaking and have mould issues. These homes house elders and children. That has to be improved upon, yet there was nothing in the throne speech on indigenous housing.

To finish, I will end where I began: with the strength and resilience of the people of the northwest. It has been a hard year and a half with this health crisis. People have lost loved ones. People have lost livelihoods. We have been called upon to look out for our neighbours and each other in ways that we have not for a long time. I know we are going to make it. In the meantime, there are many other pressing issues that deserve our attention, and I am thankful to the Speaker for giving me the time this evening to highlight a few of them.

• (1845)

The Deputy Speaker: When we return to the address in reply, the member will have five minutes for questions and comments.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1850)

[*English*]

HEALTH

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 17 years ago, I went to the Joel Steele arena in my hometown of Winchester, excited to donate blood for the first time. Little did I know, until I got to the questionnaire and it asked if I was a man who had sex with a man, that I would be disqualified from doing so.

I told Canadians, through a video earlier this year in some advocacy I have been trying to do to end the discriminatory blood ban, that this was one of the very few times in my life that I felt there was something wrong by being gay.

Here we are at the end of 2021, 17 years later, and that discrimination still exists in our country today. There is an experience and that experience is replicated by thousands of MSM men across the country.

The frustrating part is that there is a clear, scientific solution to end this discrimination and end this stigma that has lasted for far too long. The Canadian Medical Association, the All Blood is Equal campaign and numerous countries around the world have changed their questionnaire to be based on sexual behaviour as opposed to sexual orientation.

Six years ago, three elections ago now, the government promised to end it. It did not promise to study it or say it was pending review. It did not claim it was independent and could not do anything about it or that it could only study it and see what was recommended. It promised to end it.

Nevertheless, here we are the end of 2021 and Canadian Blood Services finally, back in June during pride month, said that it was going to recommend an end to the ban on donations for men who have sex with men. It is good news and a step in the right direction; I acknowledge that.

The government has now known for six months that this recommendation would be coming from Canadian Blood Services. It had

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the option, through the Food and Drug Acts, to act earlier to eliminate a provision no longer deemed necessary.

Blood Regulations, section (5) reads:

The Minister may, by notice in writing, remove a term or condition...no longer necessary to prevent a compromise to human safety or the safety of blood.

Last Friday, in the House of Commons, I asked what the government's plan was, knowing for six months that this application would be coming at the end of the year. At the end of the day, the minister's response to me was very inadequate. This issue deserves urgency and it deserves dignity.

I appreciate the minister being at the late show. I acknowledge the rarity of having a minister here and appreciate it.

My challenge in this brief time is to challenge the minister not to talk about the last six years, the studies and the research that had to go into this. It has now been done and we know an application is coming.

Gay and bisexual men in our country want to know what date they can safely donate blood. The minister and the government have known this was coming for six months. What is the process now, knowing that application is coming? What is the review and timeline process to finally end the discrimination and give the dignity back to the LGBT community?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for giving me my first opportunity in this Parliament to address the House and thank all those who put their faith in me for the third time just a few short weeks ago in the great riding of Québec.

Of course I want to thank my family, my partner Marie-Chantal, our children, Étienne, Clémence and Antoine, my parents, who guided me toward everything I have ever done, as well as my volunteers and my amazing constituency team members, who work for the people of Quebec City every day.

I am also grateful to my colleague for the opportunity to talk about diversity and inclusion in the context of blood donation in Canada.

Protecting the safety and security of the blood supply across the country is a top priority for Health Canada. Canada has one of the safest blood supply systems in the world thanks to complete regulatory oversight of blood collection.

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Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec supervise and administer Canada's and Quebec's blood supply systems. These organizations operate independently of governments and politicians and cannot be forced to change their blood donor exclusion policy unless safety issues arise.

The Government of Canada is committed to protecting the safety and security of the country's blood supply, and we are also committed to supporting blood donation policies in Canada that are not discriminatory and that are based on science.

In 2016, Health Canada approved a change in the waiting period for men who have sex with men and reduced it from five years to 12 months. In 2019, this waiting period was reduced again, this time to three months.

These changes were made following the detailed review of scientific data provided in the regulatory submissions of the Canadian Blood Services and Héma-Québec, and are gradual steps. In the meantime, the research is tending toward the ultimate objective of the pre-selection of donors based on behavioural criteria rather than gender.

To date, Health Canada has not yet received a request from the Canadian Blood Services or Héma-Québec to totally eliminate the waiting period in question.

Canada is a leader in this area. The United States, Australia and New Zealand all established a three-month waiting period after Canada made this change. Furthermore, in September 2021, Health Canada authorized a submission from the Canadian Blood Services seeking to implement other pre-selection and collection processes that would let men who have sex with other men donate plasma for fractionation.

The Government of Canada has also given \$3 million to the Canadian Blood Services to work with Héma-Québec on creating research projects that would help inform changes in this area.

Finally, as time always passes too quickly, I will add that the 2019 budget contained an additional \$2.4 million over three years for plasma donation research.

• (1855)

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, everybody in the House wants a safe blood supply in this country, and everybody wants to end the discriminatory blood ban. These two issues are not incompatible. Yes, I know the minister has not received the package yet. However, he knows it is coming.

There needs to be an urgency. There needs to be something of dignity to show that men who have sex with men can walk and chew gum, as an analogy, for lack of a better one. The minister could say he knows it is coming. He could outline the process and the time frame, give a date and give hope to make it happen.

I will say to the minister that I am not going away on this issue. Tonight's late show is one thing. It will continue. More detail, more urgency and more dignity need to be given to this issue. We are getting close, but the bureaucratic answers have to stop.

We can and we must end the blood ban now. Please.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos: Mr. Speaker, I will digress briefly from my notes to speak in English given that I am fortunate that the member is here before me.

[*English*]

I want to let the member know what I think he already knows, that his advocacy and length of experience with the matter is very credible, very touching, and everyone listening to him knows that we owe him a debt of gratitude. I would like to indicate that in the process.

[*Translation*]

I would also remind the member that the Government of Canada can only amend the Canadian Blood Services' or Héma-Québec's exclusion policies for safety reasons and that it must follow procedure.

[*English*]

SENIORS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is really happening in Canada. The poorest seniors in our entire country are losing their ability to support themselves. Just to be clear, and so that all Canadians understand, single seniors who are receiving the guaranteed income supplement make an income of just over \$19,000 a year. Couples make just over \$25,000. Regardless of what part of Canada they live in, they are below the poverty line.

My office is hearing from seniors across Canada. They are scared, desperate and afraid. A few have come forward to share very personal stories and to express their concern about the realities they are facing. I want to point out their tremendous bravery. They are terrified that by speaking out, their voices will mean that they are punished further. I certainly hope that the minister is listening.

I received an email yesterday from a 71-year-old senior who had been working. He applied for pandemic relief because he was no longer working due to the pandemic. Now his GIS has been cut off, and recently he was diagnosed with cancer. The reality is he cannot afford the medication he needs for his treatment. He is also facing eviction on December 23. I hope the minister puts that in her calendar. A 71-year-old senior in this country, sick with cancer, will be homeless on December 23, this month. This is what is happening to an estimated 88,000 seniors across the country, according to the PBO's report. It is one story of far too many.

I have heard the Prime Minister and minister say in the House that they are working on it, but I am here to say that is not good enough. This is a crisis. The most vulnerable are seeing their lives go up in smoke. When they do not know where they are going to live, and they do not know what is going to happen to their health and well-being, how can we ask them to wait? For me, this is about a bar of dignity. All of us as Canadians should collectively decide the bar, and if we see anyone fall below it, we are going to stand up and say that is too far and we must do better.

Imagine my shock when I heard the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, in response to a media question on this issue, say, "It's a more complicated issue than one would think because there's serious kind of fairness and equity issue for people who may have earned similar amounts in employment income. If a senior worked last year and made an equivalent amount, they too would have lost their GIS or had their GIS potentially reduced, and so we're working on a path forward that recognizes this." It appears that for the government, the bar of dignity needs to be lowered more.

May I remind the House again that single seniors receive just over \$19,000 a year and couples just over \$25,000. May I also remind the House that these seniors were working, and when the pandemic happened, this was the only source of help they could receive. Is it the plan of the government to punish the poorest? It certainly appears to be a plan to punish the poorest and protect the rich, such as the big corporations that received tremendous amounts of taxpayer dollars and wage subsidies and then gave their shareholders significant payouts.

Here is a quote from *The Globe and Mail*. Perhaps it will help the minister understand. The article states, "Beyond a handful of hedge funds, some of the largest wealth managers in the country - household names such as Franklin Templeton, CI Financial, Gluskin Sheff & Associates - collected CEWS. Collectively, these three companies manage close to \$110 billion of assets in Canada."

The Scotiabank Canadian Hedge Fund Index, which measures the monthly performance of Canadian-domiciled hedge funds with assets under management of at least \$15 million, shows an average return of 11% in 2020, the best year for the industry in the decade. The government owes seniors some respect.

• (1900)

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member on her re-election and on her role as shadow minister for seniors.

Before I respond to my hon. colleague's question, allow me to briefly take a moment to thank the constituents of Brampton West, who have elected me to the House for the third time as their voice. I will continue to fight for the priorities that matter to them. Allow me to also briefly thank my volunteers and supporters, who made this possible, and of course my family and friends, who have always had my back.

Being my community's voice in Parliament is truly the greatest privilege of my life, and as the new Minister of Seniors, I look forward to working with the hon. member and indeed all members of

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the House to find the best ways to serve Canada's seniors and ensure that the most vulnerable get the support they need.

My connection to seniors is a very personal one. During the pandemic, I volunteered to go back to my roots as a registered nurse. I spent my time on the front lines vaccinating health care workers and members of my community, and standing alongside the Canadian Armed Forces, who came to a long-term care home in my city of Brampton. It was one of the hardest hit long-term care homes in my province. The experiences I had remind me every day to continue to fight for the most vulnerable.

The health and social well-being of seniors across Canada has been top of mind for many, and the financial situation for seniors has been a challenge. However, when it comes to supporting seniors, I am proud of our record to date.

One of the first things we did as a government when we were elected in 2015 was to reduce the eligibility of OAS to age 65 from 67. The Conservatives had attempted to raise the age of retirement and take money out of the pockets of Canadians who need retirement benefits to make ends meet. We enhanced the CPP in a historic way that was mirrored by QPP. We also strengthened the OAS and raised the GIS for single seniors, which made a real difference in the lives of many seniors.

For immediate support during the pandemic, we provided a one-time \$500 payment for older seniors this year and will be increasing OAS by 10% for those age 75 and older next year. This historic increase will be their first real increase in decades, beyond inflation increases. This will make a difference for older seniors as they live longer and as their needs increase.

Canadians re-elected a government on a bold, ambitious plan that will help seniors who need it the most. I look forward to working with all members of the House on delivering this ambitious agenda.

We can all agree that the pandemic has been challenging for many seniors, but every step of the way, our government has been there to support seniors, especially the most vulnerable. We moved very quickly to provide immediate and direct financial support to seniors. Every year seniors across Canada benefit from programs and funding that our government provides through the New Horizons for Seniors program. I am extremely excited to announce that this year's call for proposals for NHSP is now open, and I encourage all members to apply.

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When it comes to the CERB and GIS issue, to remind the hon. member once again, we are aware of it, as I mentioned earlier. We know it has been hard on some seniors this year, and I can assure the hon. member that we are working on this issue to find the right solution to support those who are affected.

• (1905)

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I definitely respect the member's role as a health care provider and the work she may have done, but I do not understand in any way how the member is proud of her government right now.

I know that less than 8% of those living in the member's riding are seniors, but there are many seniors across the country who are at a point of total crisis. They are going to lose their homes. They are being evicted right now. They cannot afford their medications, which means they are in and out of the hospital because they are getting sicker.

Seniors used their pandemic funds to fix their cars, fix their teeth and pay off a bit of debt. It is so wrong that we are punishing the poorest while rewarding the wealthiest. This should not be a debate in the House and I am totally embarrassed that it is. The government needs to do better by the seniors who built this country.

Hon. Kamal Khara: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, I think we can all agree with how challenging the pandemic has been on seniors, especially the most vulnerable seniors, but every step of the way, our government has been there to support seniors by strengthening their GIS and ensuring they have the supports and services they need.

When it comes to the CERB and GIS issue, as I reminded the hon. colleague earlier, I understand it has been hard on some seniors this year. I can assure the hon. member that it is a priority for me. We are working actively on this file right now, and we are going to be there to support the most vulnerable, as we always have been.

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk in the House about housing supply.

Across the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, up to 25% of newly built luxury condos are sitting vacant and homes, including older housing co-ops and purpose-built rental apartments that have served our communities for decades are being bought up by developers at a rapid speed. Developers are buying them up, because government policies have turned the housing market into a stock market.

Governments at every level have overseen the financialization of housing. Instead of protecting our social housing stock they encouraged upzoning and gentrification in the name of density. Density dreams belong to developers. The financialization of housing is only working for the wealthy and leaving people behind. Truly affordable social housing has been sacrificed to create an asset class for pension funds and the wealthiest people and companies across the globe.

Right now in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, hundreds of older townhomes and apartments are sitting empty. There are entire blocks of single-family homes boarded up ready for redevelopment, and these homes have been empty for years. Developers choose not to fill them, so they do not have spend one cent on maintenance or pay tenants out when the time comes to begin redevelopment. This is wrong.

During this housing crisis, governments have allowed wealthy developers to hoard housing, allowing perfectly good homes to sit empty to protect the profits of corporations over the well-being of my residents.

There is also a problem with the marketing of housing. High-end sales centres for luxury condos exist overseas. Actually, when a traveller arrives through the international terminal at YVR, there are enticing posters of luxury housing to attract international investment. Even on the local front, developers begin marketing projects even before the municipalities rezone the land. It is disrespectful and it disregards communities.

The current housing crisis appears to be a crisis of negligence in protecting precious housing supply that people call home. I hear the calls for “supply, supply, supply”, and I need to clarify that call. What is needed is affordable supply. The federal government must put a laser focus on maintaining what is left of housing co-ops, purpose-built rentals, not-for-profit-run housing, in the country before it is all gone, and the federal government needs to immediately reinvest in social housing, not in capital loans, but ongoing, stable operating funds to get people housed now.

I want to share just a few of the things I have heard from social housing partners on the ground that are competing with corporate interests to keep the most vulnerable housed. For every new purpose-built rental unit that is being built, we are losing three. The federal government needs a moratorium on REITs. The rate they are buying up co-ops and purpose-built rental housing is alarming and is contributing to disappearing rental stock. We need a social development acquisition fund in addition to the urban housing accelerator fund, so not-for-profits can buy housing.

What I hear from the not-for-profits is that right now they need to put up their own capital to secure funding for the rental housing incentives, and that does not work for them. CMHC is not nimble enough. The limitations at CMHC need to be fixed. It has not been able to deliver housing at the pace of the need.

I ask the minister again to get much-needed affordable homes to people now.

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• (1910)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam for her question and for her advocacy, and I want to congratulate her on her recent election.

I welcome the member's focus on affordable housing, and our government agrees with that side of the House that every Canadian deserves a safe and affordable place to call home. This is an issue that should unite all of us. The need for more affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges our country is facing. It is not just a question of housing; it is also a question of making sure our economic recovery after COVID is an inclusive economic recovery. Housing will be key to making sure no one is left behind. This is not a new problem. It requires a long-term plan and consistent action.

Housing, therefore, is a key priority for our government. That is why we developed Canada's first-ever national housing strategy, followed closely by the National Housing Act and a commitment to take a human rights approach to housing.

In 2017, the national housing strategy was projected to spend \$40 billion over the next 10 years, and that program has now grown to \$72.5 billion. In the past year alone, we have made hundreds of announcements and held countless opening celebrations to welcome people into their new homes, in British Columbia, for example. All of them were possible through the national housing strategy. It required, and was the result of, strong partnerships from coast to coast to coast.

Take, for example, the bilateral housing agreements that we negotiated with every province and territory. Through those agreements, we are able to not only build new housing but also maintain the federal community housing stock that is there.

As my colleague from Port Moody—Coquitlam may recall, just last March we announced significant support for individuals and families in British Columbia. Our 10-year, \$517-million Canada-British Columbia benefit will go directly into the pockets of British Columbians, helping 25,000 households across the province of British Columbia to pay their rent. That is the national housing strategy in action.

As we continue to make progress on that strong foundation, we recognize that more work needs to be done, so that is why we introduced the rapid housing initiative in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, as a response to the housing challenges made worse by the pandemic. Through the first round, we were targeting building 3,000 new permanent affordable housing units, and we blew past that target to build 4,700 housing units: 100% federally funded, permanent, affordable housing units. In the second round, collectively with the first round, we seek to build 9,200 permanent affordable housing units for Canadians experiencing homelessness or those who are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

As I said, there is more work to be done, and I agree with my hon. colleague. That is why, in the throne speech, members heard that we are planning to launch a housing accelerator fund that will help cities expedite housing. It will bring on more planners. It will

offset the cost of land purchases. It will help build the infrastructure needed for housing.

Home ownership is also important. We need to make sure more and more Canadians can access the dream of home ownership, so I look forward to the hon. member's supporting these initiatives. We are making deep, sustained and long-term investments in housing, but we share the member's commitment to making sure all Canadians have a safe and affordable place to call home.

• (1915)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Mr. Speaker, I remember the minister coming to my community for an opening, for a photo opportunity, and the government came in at the very last minute, at the 11th hour of that project, with a loan. After almost five years of negotiation with local partners, with non-profits, with our city and with the taxpayers of the city of Coquitlam, who came forward with their own money, the government showed up at the 11th hour with a small loan.

This is not working for housing providers. The housing is just not getting on the ground at the speed that it needs to come. In relation to the rapid housing initiatives, that information did not come down to municipalities fast enough. There were so many problems and gaps with it. There were many, many projects denied, which did not get built.

We need solutions now. I understand there are plans. What can we be doing now?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen: Mr. Speaker, for every challenge the hon. member mentioned, we actually have a different program in the national housing strategy to address it.

On the issue of loans, that is for rental construction. We have another program called the co-investment fund that builds deeply affordable housing. On the rapid housing initiative, I am surprised the hon. member is saying the money did not get there quickly enough. We had a separate stream for cities, and we gave the money directly to them. The only condition we put on them was that the housing had to be built in 12 months or less and had to target vulnerable populations. Whether they built new housing or acquired existing properties was totally up to them; we trusted them to make the right decisions because they know best what they need to do.

In terms of the project stream, those projects are landing in British Columbia and they are creating deeply affordable housing. Does that mean that the job is done? Absolutely not. We need to do more. In terms of the solutions that are necessary, we are always open to partnering with municipalities, provinces and territories, and indigenous governments to make sure that more and more affordable housing is being built for Canadians.

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• (1920)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House

stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:20 p.m.)

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