



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 127
Tuesday, November 15, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1005)

[*English*]

AUDITOR GENERAL OF CANADA

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 7(5) of the Auditor General Act, the fall 2022 reports of the Auditor General of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(3)(g), these documents are deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

* * *

[*English*]

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House resumed from November 14 consideration of the motion that Bill C-32, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 3, 2022 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be

splitting the remainder of my time with the member for Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook.

I will pick up where I left off. I was talking about the importance of cancelling the federal portion of interest on student loans. When this was announced, I received a number of letters from recent grads in my riding. I have permission from the authors of two of them to read them to illustrate what the cancellation of interest meant on the ground for folks in Halifax.

The first letter reads, “I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the plan to make student loans permanently interest free. This makes sense on so many levels. Interest rates are way too high for recent graduates to be expected to pay. It's a poor tax. Personally, me and my family are super relieved to hear about this. I just graduated in September and we had our first child this summer. Budgets are tight, we are lucky enough to have an affordable apartment for the time being.... The announcement today is a much needed reprieve from the way things have been going. Please keep it up!”

Another reads, “I just heard about the federal government's proposal to permanently eliminate interest on the federal portion of student loans and I just had to reach out to say THANK YOU!!!!!!!!!! You have absolutely no idea how much of a burden has been lifted from my shoulders by this announcement. This will be so helpful for myself and all Canadians struggling to pay back their loans, I simply can't thank you enough. I actually burst into tears when I read the announcement, I was so stressed out about my payments going up again in the spring. Things are so hard for a lot of people right now and this move shows that the liberal government truly cares about Canadians. So thank you so much for this incredible move!”

I would now like to move on to the fall economic statement's revamp of the Canada workers benefit.

The Canada workers benefit has filled in a gap in our social safety net. We recognize that many of our support systems have been directed at families, seniors and students, but one refrain I hear often is this: What about single, hard-working folks out there who also need help, the lowest-paid workers who are slipping through the cracks? That is what the Canada workers benefit is all about: top-ping off the income of three million of our lowest-income workers.

Government Orders

In last year's budget, we increased the benefit by up to \$1,200 for singles and by \$2,400 for couples. We are now ensuring that these payments are delivered on a quarterly basis rather than once a year, as they are now, so those who rely on the benefit can access it when they need it.

Next I want to talk about credit card fees and the pledges made in the economic statement to reduce the burden on our small businesses.

Small businesses, as we all know, are the backbone of our local economies, employing the vast majority of Canadian workers. The pandemic has hit them hard. We delivered critical financial supports for them through COVID, which is why we had an economy to return to, but we cannot stop there.

With rising credit card fees, small businesses are feeling the pressure. This is something that has been frequently raised to me by my local chamber, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, and by business organizations such as the Halifax Partnership. I am pleased to say that in the fall economic statement, we are moving forward with our plan to help lower credit card transaction fees for small businesses. This way they are not forced to choose between lowering their profit and passing on fees to customers. That benefits both the businesses and the customers themselves.

The fourth measure I would like to highlight from the fall economic statement is all about housing.

Halifax has seen remarkable population growth in the last decade, and as such has experienced growing pains. The availability of affordable housing options has become increasingly scarce, and people are looking for the government to act.

The fall economic statement implements many of the housing commitments we ran on in the last election. For example, it creates a tax-free first home savings account that will allow Canadians to more quickly save a down payment to buy a home. Also, because we know closing costs on houses are increasing, we are doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit. Next, because we know homes are for living in, the fall economic statement cracks down on house flipping, slowing the rising cost of homes and giving more people the opportunity to buy their own.

The last example I will give, which is one I advocated for for a long time as a city planner well before my time in politics, is support for secondary suites. If a grandparent or family member with a disability wants to move back in, Canadians are now eligible for a multi-generational home renovation tax credit so they can afford to build a granny suite, laneway housing or whatever else to allow family members to live with them while maintaining independence.

I would like to address one more set of measures in the fall economic statement, and they are about climate change. As COP27 has made clear, if it was not already, we need to be moving further and faster in the fight against climate change. That is why I am really glad to see that the statement includes new tax incentives for companies adopting clean technologies. This means a refundable tax credit equal to 30% of the capital cost of investments in electricity generation systems such as solar, wind and hydro; stationary electricity storage systems that run on non-fossil fuel energy; low-car-

bon heat equipment such as solar heating or air-source and ground-source heat pumps; and industrial zero-emission vehicles.

• (1010)

All this and so much more is included in the fall economic statement. I believe that it provides the necessary support to some of the most urgent challenges facing Canadians, including those back home in Halifax. I look forward to working with colleagues to ensure it passes through Parliament in a timely fashion, as I know that all of our constituents will benefit from the measures that it contains.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague talked about secondary suites, and they are near and dear to my heart. I was in municipal council and we tried to push for more secondary suites. What we found is that if we are going to create more secondary suites, we need more workers. We need more skilled workers who are able to go into homes and build either a coach house or a secondary suite.

Can the member please give the House some ideas on how we can get more skilled trades into the workforce? We are short about a million skilled jobs in the country and part of that is skilled trades. How do we get more skilled trades so we can build more secondary suites?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, at home in Halifax, we need to be building about 10,000 units a year. We have a complicated machine composed of tradespeople, supply chains, building inspectors, people who grant permits and people who provide the appliances that go into homes, and we can only deliver about 3,000 homes a year. It is clear that we need help across that continuum, that big machine that builds housing, not just in Halifax but across the country.

A critical piece of that, of course, is the talented workforce. We are seeing the Minister of Immigration focus, with great precision, on creating streams that would bring talented and skilled tradespeople into the country.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, the fall economic statement includes a bunch of measures the NDP pushed really hard for that are going to help make life easier for Canadians during these challenging times. However, one pretty large omission is any sort of help with the cost of home heating, which is going to skyrocket this winter.

Government Orders

We have been pushing for the federal government to remove the GST from home heating, which of course would help not only the people who heat with fossil fuels but also the 40% of Canadians who heat with electricity.

Could my colleague from the Liberals speak to why so far his government has not chosen to remove the GST from home heating?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, we are always glad to have the support of the NDP caucus for the measures that we work so hard to pass through the House. It is great to have people cheering from the sidelines.

On the question of GST rebates, Canadians can see that we are deeply invested and involved in lowering home energy costs for Canadians, such as through the loan programs and rebate programs to switch from fossil fuel heating systems to decarbonized heating systems.

I encourage the member to stay watchful for other measures that may come that will provide more immediate relief, but he should know that the long game is the important game. We are working to decarbonize in a way that is equitable for all Canadians so that we can all participate in the decarbonization of our economy.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague could provide some additional thoughts with regard to the forgiveness of interest on student loans and the impact that this is going to have on the affordability issue of post-secondary education, something that I know many of my constituents are very concerned about.

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Madam Speaker, in my remarks, I gave some first-hand testimony from students who are feeling the relief that the elimination of the federal portion of interest will provide. Students and youth are the future of our economy. They are the future of how we are going to fight climate change. They are the future of how we are going to create an equitable, inclusive and low-carbon economy in the future. To accomplish all of those things and to live up to the pressure that we are placing on them to change the world we all live in, they need to be educated and they need to get trained. They can only do that if they can afford it.

There is tremendous relief across my community and across the Canadian student population through this measure. It is going to make education accessible at the exact moment that we need these youth to be getting an education.

• (1015)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a great pleasure for me to rise in the House to talk about the work that the government is doing and the impact it is having in our ridings.

[*English*]

Let me share with the House the importance of the fall economic statement. It follows the budget and brings us to the fall. It will look at some of the measures that we passed lately that will help af-

fordability for Canadians, but it will also share some key investments as we move forward, which are so essential.

Let us not forget that we went through two difficult years with COVID, and we were able to help Canadians because we were in a strong and positive position financially. We were able to help Canadians individually, as well as families and businesses. We were there and we had their backs.

Once again, we are faced with affordability challenges for Canadians, like at the pumps and at grocery stores, and we need to be there for Canadians. We need to be more focused on targeted supports for Canadians so that we can help those who are having the greatest difficulty.

Let us look at our accomplishments. When COVID hit, we lost over three million jobs overnight. Since coming out of COVID, by building back better, we recaptured millions of jobs that were lost, but we also added, as of today, 400,000 jobs to the economy, which is a direct indication of some of the successes of our government in building back better. We are in great shape this time around with the strongest economic growth in the G7. We still have a strong AAA credit rating and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, which puts us in great shape to move forward.

Let us talk about some of the things we have done in the last few months with the help of the House and the other parties. We are doubling, for six months, the GST credit for people who receive it. How many people are we helping? We are helping over 11 million families with that investment, which is really important. We are also helping seniors with an average of \$225 more over the six-month period. It is a big investment to help people with low incomes with the GST credit.

The second thing we are doing is the top-up for housing for individuals who are struggling. This is a one-time, tax-free payment to make sure that it does not affect their income as we saw with some of the investments during COVID. We were able to make the adjustments beforehand to help 1.8 million Canadians, which is so important.

We also passed a very important tax-free payment for dental care. It is for families with kids under 12 years old, and that is essential. Every member of Parliament has coverage for dental care, but these individuals and these families do not. Families making \$90,000 or less will be able to benefit from this investment. This will help over 500,000 children across this great country.

I will mention some of the new initiatives that are so important to Canadians and low-income individuals. Single individuals are asking what kinds of supports are available for single Canadians in the country. Our expansion of the Canada workers benefit will help over three million people with low incomes, people making minimum wage or just above minimum wage who are working extremely hard. Our government recognizes that they too need some supports.

Government Orders

These supports have been put in place through budget initiatives. However, this time with this investment, we are going to be able to advance the payments quarterly so that these individuals can receive these monies, rather than waiting a whole year to get the tax credit. This will be a very big change that will help many Canadians and it will take place in July 2023. It is not that far away. I have spoken to many people in my constituency about this as well.

• (1020)

With respect to the elimination of interest on student loans, as the House knows, I am a former teacher. I know the investment and cost to families and individuals for education, whether it be for university, community college or whatnot. Having to pay interest is one thing, but having to pay it when the interest rate is climbing very quickly makes it that much more difficult. Many of these individuals will save up to \$3,000 in interest over the life of their loan. That is a big support for those individuals.

The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations has stated that there is big news for students right across the country. Starting on April 1, 2023, the Government of Canada has removed the interest on Canada student loans, and this investment is welcomed by past, current and future students who borrow money for their education.

Housing is also a big initiative. This government is the first government to bring forward the national housing strategy, which has various features to support Canadians in many ways with respect to housing. One of the initiatives we are bringing forward is the tax-free first home savings account, where individuals can put away up to \$40,000. There is no tax going in or coming out, which is very similar to the TFSA that has helped many Canadians. Also, there is support of up to \$1,500 for closing costs when one is purchasing a home.

The other initiative that is very important is the multi-generational home renovation tax credit. I have heard many families talk about having a second suite for a parent, a senior or people with disabilities. A constituent called me to ask if she would be able to renovate her garage into an apartment for her child who has some challenges, barriers and disabilities. Yes, with this investment, people can receive up to 15% of their investment. Therefore, if someone invested \$50,000 to make the transformation, they would be able to receive \$7,500 on their tax return. Those are big, focused and targeted areas to support Canadians.

Let us also talk about jobs, growth and the economy, which are so important. We are making investments into skills for a net-zero economy. We need to be better prepared to put forward the necessary skills to meet the needs in the labour market to achieve our transition goal. This investment into a sustainable jobs training centre is extremely important, and departments will come together to help in that area.

Jobs for youth are very important. One investment is the youth employment strategy. For people across Canada facing barriers there is Ready, Willing and Able. In Nova Scotia, this has increased participation in the workforce for people with disabilities. We have been able to establish 265 jobs, many of which are with Air Canada, Costco and Shoppers Drug Mart.

With respect to Canada summer jobs, we have seen over 70,000 jobs. Those are key for young people who not only want to attend university or community college, but also want to achieve success by learning new skills and getting out into the workforce to meet with many entrepreneurs, which will help them get various jobs in the future.

Immigration is a strategic keystone for our government. We need to bring more people into the country. We know we have a shortage of workers for over one million jobs, so we need to find ways to fill those. People forget that just over 60% of people who immigrate to Canada have the skills to meet the needs of our country. That is extremely important. We are also bringing some programs forward that will help the regional and rural communities, and we are doing extra in that area.

• (1025)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, on page 61 of the fall economic statement there is a line item for \$135 million. It is indicated that the money is being allocated for temporary lodgings for asylum seekers in need of shelter.

Indeed, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada rightfully shut down Roxham Road and other illegal points of entry.

Why is the Government of Canada opening up these illegal points of entry and putting \$135 million forward for people who jump the immigration queue in Canada?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech, immigration is key to the success of our country and to the growth of our country.

We have made some changes that would bring more people, skilled workers, to support us. We have the family reunification, which would bring families together, adding family members. The francophone strategy would bring a 4.4% increase in francophones to Canada. Those are key areas that we need to work on and support our country by bringing more immigrants to Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my Acadian colleague for his comments. I love working with him on issues affecting francophones.

The government is generally rather quick to acknowledge sensitivities. However, with this bill, it seems as though the government is discriminating between two classes of seniors, those between the ages of 65 and 75 and those aged 75 and up.

I would like to know why a government that is usually so sensitive to such sensitivities, to use a redundancy, is engaging in this sort of discrimination. We think that is unacceptable.

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

Members know that, when the government makes investments, it has to determine where the greatest needs lie. Research has clearly shown that seniors aged 75 and up have a lot more expenses than younger seniors.

That does not mean that we should not help seniors between the ages of 65 and 75, but for the moment, the investments are targeting those with much higher expenses, particularly health care expenses.

Older seniors may lose their spouse and have a harder time staying in their home because of a lack of financial support. There are many strategies related to the investments we are making.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, our role in this place, and something New Democrats have been fighting for, is to distinguish between the needs and wants of Canadians.

It is important that Canadians, especially right now when they are feeling the cost of living pinch, see our economy get better. Part of that is ensuring that we actually tax those that have been disproportionately benefiting from this crisis, like Loblaws, which has benefited \$1 million a day.

I was pleased to see the Canada recovery dividend in the member's speech. I was also pleased to see that the government was going to act on this. That is a 15% tax on banks and life insurers. We have also seen incredible greed from not just food companies but also the oil sector.

Why would the government not expand this tax and tax those that are making disgusting profits?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, one of the first things we did when we formed government was to add a 1% tax on those most fortunate, and that was a key step forward. That allowed us to bring some revenue in to reduce taxes for the middle class, which was essential.

There are very important questions to be asked around banking and the profits of some of the bigger companies. I agree with my colleague that we need to find ways to ensure that they are paying their fair share. That is exactly what we are working on now.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise once again as Thornhill's voice in Ottawa. I will be sharing my time with my friend, the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Everything is fine; Canadians have never had it so good. That is the constant refrain we hear from the Liberals and their NDP coalition partners, while Canadians from coast to coast to coast are struggling and while everyone in Canada pays the highest taxes on record, ever.

We have a problem in this country, and the Liberals must know it by now. It is hard to ignore. They either are not listening or they do not care. The Liberals have doubled our national debt since they came to power. The Prime Minister has incurred more debt than all

Government Orders

prime ministers who came before him. The Liberals have doubled the debt. They have tripled the carbon tax. They have quadrupled Canadian mortgage payments, because Liberal inflation has led to Liberal interest rate hikes. We have a cost of living crisis in this country. The Liberals must have some inkling of that now.

The fall economic statement really could have helped. However, unfortunately it would do nothing to address the immediate cost of living crisis the Liberals seem to be ignoring. We asked for two very simple things from the Liberals: no new spending and no new taxes. This statement delivers neither. We asked for compassion for Canadians trying to get by and fiscal responsibility for future generations, and this statement delivers neither.

For weeks, Conservatives told Liberals this statement would have the opportunity to change the course, to freeze spending, to freeze taxes and to reverse the failed policies that are causing the chaos we see all over the country. It seemed like the Liberals were finally getting the message. The Deputy Prime Minister told Canadians it was time to cut back, that we should live within our means and that the era of big government spending was over. We even heard the Prime Minister utter the words “fiscal responsibility”. I almost fell out of my chair when he said those words together in the same sentence. However, when the update was delivered and Liberal promises and talking points collided with reality, like on every other issue, they fell short. Only a Liberal would think that this year's fall economic statement shows fiscal restraint.

Since April, the Liberals have added \$11.6 billion to new government spending, and this update will add another \$11.3 billion. The Liberals are addicted to spending, and Canadians are paying the price. On top of all that are the new taxes that this statement fails to do away with, like tripling the carbon tax and putting new taxes on paycheques, and inflation is already at 6.9%.

Interest rates are the highest they have been since the financial crisis. Rental rates are up 15%, and food inflation is at 11%. Where do families find that money? Gas is up to over \$2 in many parts of the country. Diesel hit \$3. Canadians have never felt worse about their finances. Every survey to every Canadian comes back with exactly the same refrain. All the Liberals have to do is check out of the \$6,000-a-night hotel room, turn off the Disney+ and talk to Canadians to understand what is going on in this country.

Government Orders

The Liberals are flooding the market with cheap cash that is driving up the cost of goods, while simultaneously making people pay even more in taxes. How does that make any sense? They hear from the same people as we do, who are just struggling to get by. They read the same statistics as we do. The fact that 1.5 million people in this country used a food bank in a month should not be lost on anyone. This is Canada. The Liberals go back to their constituencies at the end of the week, just like we do. Therefore, why are they not changing course? Why are they not listening? Why are they continuing to do the same thing that got us into this in the first place?

The Liberals know their actions, their policies and their spending are causing inflation. The Deputy Prime Minister said it herself. The Bank of Canada governor said it, and the one before him said it. The banks have said it. Everybody except for members on the other side has said it, with the exception of the Deputy Prime Minister. The simple answer is that the Liberals care more about the power of government than the power of people. They care more about helping making their friends rich than helping struggling families get by. They care more about the voices on the cocktail circuit than the voices of real, everyday Canadians telling them to stop.

• (1030)

It is time to start listening to real people who know that budgets do not balance themselves, real people who know that monetary policy is important, real people who know that cancelling Disney+ is not a solution to put food on the table, real people who know that \$6,000 for a hotel room is absurd, real people who know that \$12,000-a-month grocery bills at the Prime Minister's house are ridiculous, and real people who know that private jets and limousines are insulting as they cancel their vacations and struggle with driving to work every day. Maybe this is a statement of fiscal restraint for the Liberals, but it is not a statement of fiscal restraint for anybody else in this country.

I will promise Canadians that fiscal restraint, for the Conservatives, means deficits are at zero, not \$15 billion and not \$30 billion, but zero. For every dollar spent there will be a dollar found, because that is how real people live in the real world. The Deputy Prime Minister herself has warned of difficult times ahead, and for her to spend so recklessly despite knowing all that is, frankly, unacceptable.

What will the government do when the cupboards are already bare? That is the position we are in. How will it be able to deal with the rising interest rates on our debt, which will soon exceed the amount of money the government transfers to provinces for health care in a crisis? We are going to pay more interest on the debt than we are going to pay for health care in this country, from the federal government. Here is a spoiler alert: It will not. It will be the fault of this government, and Canadians will suffer more for it.

As I have said before and will say again, I have been part of budget processes before. In fact, the last one I was a part of in this country was balanced. I have never seen a government's fiscal policy so lacking in vision and so utterly meaningless. At least in the last crisis, Canada had a plan; we had a direction. It was because of our strong fiscal management that we were able to make it out of

the worst economic crisis in a generation at the top of the G7. We were the last ones into the recession and the first ones out. We need a plan, no more platitudes, no more talking points and no more half measures of NDP fantasies to keep the Liberals in power.

I would support the economic statement if it had a meaningful solution anywhere in the document, but instead I will tell Canadians what we need to do. Consider this a bit of an edit. There is hope for the future, because we live in the best country in the world. We have so much of what we need right here, like our farmers, our oil sands, our natural resources, our minerals and, of course, our people. It is just a shame that we are not doing more to support any of those things. We are squandering our riches. We need to spend less cash and make more of what cash buys right here in Canada.

We need to build more infrastructure, pipelines and LNG facilities, and get government out of the way to make that happen. We need to increase building new homes by 15% in the biggest cities, where they are needed most, and make sure the people who can help with this, qualified immigrants being blocked by pointless government rules and perpetual backlogs, can get the certifications they need to get the jobs they truly deserve. I am a child of an immigrant, an uncredentialed engineer, who came here to drive a cab. Almost 50 years later, the story is the same, only that uncredentialed engineer will be driving an Uber.

We need no new taxes: no new carbon taxes and no new paycheque taxes. We need to ensure the documents presented to this House have a plan to grow the economy and not flood it with cheap cash. We have the lowest projected growth in GDP of any advanced economy in the world, and that ought to terrify anybody who wants to see this country remain competitive in a race we are losing.

It starts now. It starts with rejecting everything in the fall economic statement and what it stands for. "Bigger government, more spending and higher taxes" should be its title, and it will end when we elect the member for Carleton as the next Prime Minister of Canada.

• (1035)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard you toward the end talk about getting out of the worst economic crisis at the top of the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will remind the hon. member that she did not hear me.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I heard the member, towards the end, talk about getting out of the worst economic crisis of our century at the top of the G7, and I can only assume she is referring to what this Liberal government has done during the COVID pandemic, since we all acknowledge that it has been the worst economic crisis. I am wondering, if that is the case, why she is referring to our agenda and our fall economic statement as having no plan.

Government Orders

• (1040)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, perhaps the member opposite should listen to my remarks. I talked about being the last ones into the last global recession and being the first ones out. In 2008, this country ran deficits of \$58 billion and paid them back by 2015, because there was a plan. There was a responsible plan with leadership put on the table.

The government has spent \$500 billion, \$200 billion of which had nothing to do with COVID, and instead of showing a modicum of fiscal restraint, the Liberals keep spending to fuel the crisis that they themselves started.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is always amusing to hear from our Liberal government friends across the way.

When it comes to health care, the federal government does not run a single hospital, train a single doctor or pay a single nurse. However, it claims to know how health care works and tells the provinces and Quebec to do this or that in order to get money.

The passport crisis has shown us just how unbelievably incredible, outstanding and exemplary the federal public service is. Oh, the lessons it could teach, but it is not going to. Last week in Vancouver, the Minister of Health said that, unless there were conditions in place, there would be no cheques.

If my Conservative friends were in power, would they agree to the demands of all the provinces in Canada and Quebec to increase health transfers from 22% to 35%?

[*English*]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, the member opposite raises some very valid points. Canadians cannot get a passport in this country. Those who want to come to Canada cannot come here, because we have a 2.8-million backlog in immigration. The basic government services that the government purports to run are all broken. Everything is broken in this country, and now we see the interest on the debt going up, with our payments in Canada exceeding the current Canada health transfer by next year. That should be concerning to every member in the House; that should be concerning to every Canadian, and until the government gets everything in order, we cannot commit to anything.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the member asked where families are to get this money from and mentioned that there is no meaningful solution. I would say that there is a meaningful solution in the Canada recovery dividend, which will gain \$1 billion over five years.

Although this is not enough, does the member agree that this windfall tax needs to be extended to major corporations reporting record profits, like Loblaw's, which has been showing \$1 million a day in profits?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, Conservatives believe everybody should pay their fair share of tax in this country. We also believe we need a responsible plan to go forward, whereby cheap cash is not flooding the market and cheques are not going to prisoners or corporations who have not made good on their tax payments.

We know the government has flooded the market with cash. Its members talk about cheques in mailboxes. Well, guess what? There is also a credit card bill. They said they would take on debt so Canadians did not have to, and now Canadians are there to pay the debt they have incurred.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of Canada's number one riding, Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon. I am pleased to share some initial thoughts on the fall economic statement.

The economic update released by the costly coalition fails to address the cost-of-living crisis created by the out-of-control spending government. The Prime Minister's inflationary deficits, to the tune of half a trillion dollars, have sent more dollars chasing fewer goods. His inflationary scheme is hiking up the price of groceries, gas and home heating. Canadians have never paid more in taxes, because of the Prime Minister, and have received less.

To reduce inflation and improve the cost-of-living crisis that Canadians are living with each day, the Conservatives had two very simple and clear demands: first, stop new taxes; and, second, stop new spending. None of our demands were met in the fall economic statement. For that reason, the Conservatives will not support this irresponsible economic statement put forward by the government.

The cost of government spending right now is driving up the cost of living and Canadians have had enough. As the member for Thornhill just mentioned, we have a government that is focused on the power of government, of extending the reach of government. The Conservatives want to put power back into the hands of Canadians, back into the hands of people who can create things, produce things, pay taxes and be responsible citizens. However, because the government continues to spend more, to infringe upon our rights and into our day-to-day lives, it is taking away the power of people to live the type of life they want to live. I am opposed to that.

Before I go on, I would be remiss if I did not mention one line item in the fall economic statement that relates solely to my riding of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, and that is the promise made in June of this year regarding the \$77 million put forward in good faith by the Government of Canada to rebuild the community of Lytton. I have yet to receive an answer other than to say that by transferring the funds from Pacific Economic Development to Infrastructure Canada, the village of Lytton would have more flexibility.

Government Orders

What I am concerned about, and what I hope I get an answer very soon from the government on, is why it has decided to extend that unique and historical payment over a five-year term. Right now, my community is without a village office and some core services, and debris removal is still taking place. The constituents of Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon need that \$77 million and the flexibility to build in the upcoming spring. Having that money spent over five years, I am afraid, will delay even further the necessary construction work that needs to take place.

Lytton has been waiting long enough. The government came forward in good faith with a response. Let us move forward and let us get that money to Lytton sooner rather than later.

Turning back to the fall economic statement and the other measures included within it, I would be remiss if I did not mention a few points regarding small businesses.

One key item that has broad support across the country is addressing credit card transaction fees. Canadian small businesses pay some of the highest credit card transactions in the world. To the government's credit, in budget 2021, it agreed to address this issue. In budget 2022, it agreed again to address this issue. Now, in the fall economic statement of 2022, it says that if the private sector does not address this issue by December then it will do something about it.

While small businesses are struggling with a very challenging recovery in a post-pandemic economy, the government is dragging its feet on an area that there is broad consensus that needs action right away. My point is that it should take action now to get this problem fixed and help small businesses.

The second point I would like to address is CEBA loans. Over the last number of weeks, industry associations and small business organizations have been coming to Ottawa and speaking about the challenges they are facing.

● (1045)

I met a number of restaurant owners from Vancouver who are dealing with some very big challenges. They have said that in December next year, they are going to have to start repaying their loans. Right now, if they break it out on a month-by-month basis, they are going to have to pay approximately \$10,000 to the Government of Canada to meet their loan payments. Small business owners want to pay back that money. They took it in good faith and took responsibility for that, but they asking the Government of Canada to give them some more flexibility, perhaps extending the timeline.

I mention this in the context of what is taking place in British Columbia. On the front page of the Vancouver Sun just a few weeks ago, it said there was lawlessness in Vancouver, that Canadians felt a sense of lawlessness. Property crime has never been higher. Businesses are not only dealing with smaller revenues and labour shortages, but also with property crime that is impacting their ability to produce goods and create money, like they were before the pandemic. My plea is that the government extend CEBA business loans and give our small business owners a break. We all need them, and we need to stand behind them.

The third item I would like to address is the ever-ongoing housing crisis. In budget 2022 and during the election campaign, the government talked in grandiose terms about a housing accelerator fund that would help the private sector build 100,000 new homes by next year. The government is not talking about that anymore because it has not done anything about it. It has done nothing to address red tape or work with municipalities to get housing built. We all need new housing, even in this affordability crunch, that will reduce the cost of living for Canadians. We all agree in the House of Commons that we need more housing. Let us move to do it right now. The government is not, and that is a failure.

The fourth point I would like to make is with regard to tax increases. On January 1, small business owners are going to have to pay more taxes to the Government of Canada. I recently mentioned that a small business owner with, say, 15 employees making over \$60,000 will be paying over \$20,000 every year to the Government of Canada just on employment insurance premiums. At a time when everyone in the country knows that small businesses are holding on by a thread, why is the government choosing to increase employment taxes on them right now? That is irresponsible and it will not help wealth creation or job creation in our country.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the elephant in the room, and that continues to be overspending by the government. Why is this a problem? It is a problem because in the very near future we will be paying more for debt than we are for health care. That is a sad reality for a country as wealthy and as prosperous as Canada. We have a health care crisis and we need to put more money into health care, not into debt payments. However, we cannot do that because the government overspent when it did not need to, and that is hurting Canadians across the country.

The final point I would like to make relates to government operations. In the fall economic statement, there is a special line item fund for \$135 million to provide shelter to asylum seekers coming into Canada. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada shut down the illegal crossings across Canada. Why did it open them up again and why is it putting forward \$135 million?

People across the world want to come to Canada, want to be productive citizens and want to have a fair chance to do what my grandparents did and what many members of the House of Commons did, which is to make a fair go of it in Canada, to pay taxes and be a productive member of society. However, with this \$135 million, the government is saying that asylum seekers can break the rules and it will still support them. Shame on the government for not taking real action to address our border crisis and support the people who have followed the rules and who have waited for years, in good faith, to have the opportunity just to become a Canadian. We can do better.

We also need to address the brokenness of the federal public service. I was near the Service Canada office in my riding very recently and about 60 people were lined up outside. They could not access government services in a timely manner. Despite the growth in the public service by 24% since 2015, despite more spending than every other government in the history of Canada combined, people cannot get passports, seniors cannot get timely information on CPP and the guaranteed income supplement, and we cannot even give our hospitals enough money to give people the operations they need.

The government needs to get its house in order. This fall economic statement is irresponsible and, frankly, it is damaging to the well-being of Canada.

• (1050)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, many aspects of the member's speech somewhat contradict the way he will be voting.

Let me give an example. He talks about housing being important, and it is important. If we look at what is being proposed, we have the doubling of the first-time home buyers' tax credit, the multigenerational home renovation tax credit and the 1% annual tax on underused housing being put into place. These are some of the initiatives taking place, yet the member says Ottawa needs to do more on housing.

We are taking actions that deal with some of the things the member is talking about, yet he is voting against it. That is consistent with the Conservatives. They say they want to see this, but when they see it happen, they end up voting against it.

Does the member not recognize that many would see that as a sign of hypocrisy?

• (1055)

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, the only hypocrisy in the House of Commons right now is for a government to call an unnecessary election during a pandemic, to make pie-in-the-sky promises about addressing housing, and a year later doing absolutely nothing.

Shame on the government for making it harder for young families to have a home. Shame on the government for spending too much. Shame on the government for putting so many Canadians into a position where they cannot afford their variable rate mortgages because the government overspent.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech. We disagree on so many things, but there is one thing we do agree on. In Canada, Quebec and the provinces are of one mind when it comes to increasing health transfers. This sanctimonious government, which professes to be doing good things in certain areas, such as health, but is not capable of doing anything good in areas that are actually within its purview, is trying to tie conditions to a health transfer increase. Let me reiterate that this is a unanimous request to increase transfers from 22% to 35%.

Government Orders

Would my colleague please state, for the record, whether the Conservative Party supports increasing health transfers from 22% to 35% as soon as possible with no strings attached?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, I will be very clear on this. The federal government needs to leave health care powers to the provinces, be it for British Columbia or Quebec. I would add that, if the Government of Canada were not such a big spender, there would be more money left for the provinces and for health care services.

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for a very impassioned speech on the very important need to address the cost of living for Canadians. Hopefully members of the House heard it.

I want to contribute to the conversation in a way, and I hope the Conservatives can, in their response, that highlights the importance of the employment insurance program and the Canadian pension plan.

EI is not a tax. Nor is the Canada pension a tax. I offer this in the most respect to the workers, the men and women who continue to contribute to their EI and their Canada pension plan. EI is a program that helps folks when they are unemployed. Workers pay into that and they also work for that. The same goes for their pension. These are two important programs to our social safety net.

Could the member speak to the importance of EI and the Canada pension plan?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, that is a very legitimate question.

On employment insurance, when an employer hires people, those employees are required to pay 1.6%, I believe, of their insurable earnings, up to \$60,000, into the general revenue fund of Canada toward their employment insurance contributions. The employer is required to pay 1.4% of the employee contribution into the general revenue fund of Canada. The employee and the employer contributions are mandatory.

As it relates to the Canada pension plan, employees are required to pay a portion of their salary, up to a threshold, into the Canada pension plan. The employer is also required to pay a contribution into the Canada pension plan.

On employment insurance specifically, both Conservative and Liberal governments have taken money designated for employment insurance from the general revenue fund to pay for government deficits—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you that I will be sharing my time with the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Government Orders

I am pleased to rise today in support of Bill C-32. The economic statement presented by my colleague, the member for University—Rosendale, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, earlier this month once again demonstrates how committed our government is to helping those most in need, to helping Canadians deal with the rising cost of living and the housing crisis, just as we are helping Canadian businesses. This is exactly the kind of bill my constituents want from our government.

It is actually a bit like a bill I introduced in the House, namely Bill S-207, which sought to change the name of my riding from Châteauguay—Lacolle to Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville. Some members in the House told me that they understood my constituents' frustration and they supported my efforts to change the name. Then they voted against the motion, for reasons that I will never understand. They voted against the very will of the people of my region. Others claimed that I was not using my time wisely by wanting to correct a mistake that was affecting my constituents, and that I should have introduced different legislation.

It is not just the fact that I was elected here to represent—

• (1100)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member. There is a point of order.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I totally understand my colleague's frustration, but I do not think the defeat of her bill has anything to do with what we are debating today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that we have a lot of latitude in speaking. I am certain that the hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle will get to her point.

The hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Madam Speaker, I was saying that I am here to represent my constituents, who were frustrated when Bill S-207 was rejected but are happy about Bill C-32, which we are discussing today.

They are happy because this government bill contains precisely the measures my constituents need across every sector. For example, we are delivering on our commitment to make home ownership more affordable for young people and new Canadians with a new tax-free first home savings account that will make it so much easier to save for a down payment. That is very important for young Canadians.

We are delivering on this commitment by doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit to help cover the closing costs that come with buying that first home of one's own. We are delivering a multi-generational home renovation tax credit. That is something I am very much looking forward to myself. This will help families across Canada afford to have a grandparent or a family member with a disability move back in if they want to.

We are working to make sure families do not have to choose between taking their child to the dentist and putting food on the table. We are establishing a new quarterly Canada workers benefit, a little-known but important measure for low-income workers. This

measure will deliver advance payments and put more money, sooner, into the pockets of our lowest-paid and often most essential workers.

We are providing hundreds of dollars in new targeted support to low-income renters and doubling the GST credit for the next six months.

We are working to deliver lower credit card fees. This is very important for our SMEs, which are often family businesses. That way, they will not have to choose between cutting into their already narrow margins and passing fees on to their customers.

We are taxing share buybacks to make sure that large corporations pay their fair share and to encourage them to reinvest their profits in workers and in Canada.

We are tackling housing speculation and making sure that homes are for Canadians to live in, not a frequently flipped investment asset. That is proof of our respect for the citizens of Canada and Quebec.

That is what we are dealing with, and that is why we must work together here in the House of Commons. That is what Canadians expect of us and why they elected us. They do not want to see frivolous quarrels and they do not want pointless drama. No, Canadians expect us to work together to take concrete action to improve their quality of life.

Bill C-32 includes measures that Canadians are eagerly awaiting, in my riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle and across the country.

I was in Lacolle last weekend, and the mayor asked me a question about Bill S-207. That said, I do not want to stray from the topic at hand.

In my riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle and across the country, people are counting on the government to help them through these tougher economic times. Everyone is feeling the crunch. We are fortunate to have numerous organizations we can count on, such as the Châteauguay Community Centre, La Rencontre châteauguoise, Entraide Mercier, Sourire sans fin and the many volunteer-run centres and services in the region. These organizations help the most disadvantaged on a daily basis. There is also the Société locative d'investissement et de développement social and the Fédération régionale des OSBL d'habitation de la Montérégie et de l'Estrie, which work to offer affordable housing. Some wonderful projects have been implemented in my riding recently thanks to the tireless efforts of these people who work in the field of social housing. That being said, even these organizations are swamped with a growing number of requests from citizens in need.

Government Orders

We need to be there to help our fellow citizens. Canadians expect us to help them by investing in quality of life and by supporting SMEs so that they can continue to operate in a stable environment.

• (1105)

In my riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle, we are very proud of our spirit of entrepreneurship. These SMEs are our partners. They support millions of Canadians by providing jobs that allow them to support their families. Canadians would not want to see us squander our nest egg on cryptocurrency.

What is it with bitcoin? It makes me mad. That is what some members have proposed here in the House and elsewhere.

Our government is aware of the challenges Canadians are facing. Right now, Canadians across the country are feeling the effects of inflation thanks to increased food and rent prices, but they are also worried about the future. It is our role as members of Parliament to reassure them by implementing measures like those in Bill C-32.

We want to continue making life more affordable for people and building an economy that works for all Canadians. It is not complicated. We invest in Canadians in need and ask the wealthiest, especially companies, to pay their fair share. That will help everyone.

The 2022 fall economic statement is focused on building an economy that works for everyone and ensuring that no one is left behind. The investments we are making today will make Canada more sustainable and more prosperous for generations to come.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is rather fascinating to listen to my colleague. The Liberal government is pleased to be pleased. It is pleased to be pleased on housing.

In the statement we are looking at today, the first-time homeowner tax credit has been doubled. That increases demand.

Last year, the president of the CMHC said in committee that the first thing to do to help with the housing crisis in Canada is to increase supply. We need 3.5 million housing units in Canada over the next 10 years. We are halfway through the Liberal government's national housing strategy and 35,000 housing units have been built. Bill C-32 does not provide for any more, either.

Is my colleague truly satisfied with her government's record on housing over the past five years?

• (1110)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Madam Speaker, I have had the pleasure of participating in debates with my hon. colleague on social housing in our region. I think he knows that projects are under way and people are working on it.

To hear him speak, it is as though the people working for FROHME and for co-operatives back home were doing nothing. That is just not the case. We receive applications, we support projects and we are getting results. We will keep doing the work.

Is there still a lot to be done? The answer is yes, Madam Speaker. However, everyone has to work on it.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, during and after COVID-19, stable employment became and continues to be challenging.

The member's party has not implemented its promise, for seven years now, on a comprehensive EI reform. Could the member explain what the plan is to help protect workers and improve the employment insurance program?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Madam Speaker, I have worked in the field as a social worker, and I know how important the employment insurance program is as a safety net.

It has actually expanded over the years, as it started as something very basic after World War II, then over time it has continued to be used. There are mandatory contributions to make sure the fund is healthy and well funded. We never know when we are going to be in need. Any one of us could be in that situation at any given time.

There is reform that needs to be done. I am confident, with the evolution that we have seen to date, that that reform is forthcoming.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a great honour to rise today to speak to the government's bill, Bill C-32, which is an act to implement some of the measures announced in the fall economic statement just a few weeks ago before we were all home for the week of Remembrance Day in our respective ridings.

Many of my colleague from all parties have spoken about this, but this comes at a time of great struggle for constituents in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. Overwhelmingly, the correspondence I get in my office regards the high cost of living and the fact that their wages are not keeping up.

We know that the increase in food prices is forcing families to make very difficult decisions at the grocery store. For that reason I am very glad to have won the unanimous support of the agriculture committee to commence a study into that and to have also had a unanimous vote here in the House of Commons acknowledging that this is a very real problem and supporting our committee's work in the weeks ahead. I, for one, am looking forward to hearing representatives of large grocery stores speak to what their companies are prepared to do to address this issue.

There is, of course, the high cost of fuel. The war in Ukraine has sent shockwaves through the energy world. We know this because Russia is a major exporter of oil and gas. Through their geopolitical manoeuvring and attempts to punish countries that are supporting the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom and in their fight to halt Russian aggression, we have a situation where fuel prices for all sorts of fuels have spiked dramatically.

Government Orders

We have a very real problem of private companies involved in those industries engaging in what I would, frankly, call war profiteering. They are taking advantage of geopolitical tensions to rake in billions of dollars of profit, at a rate that we have never seen in this country before.

As for our health care system, and I think that this is the big sleeper issue in Canada that is only just now starting to get the attention it deserves, it has gotten so bad in my riding that, while it falls largely under provincial jurisdiction, constituents are now coming to me as a federal member of Parliament and pleading with me to do something.

We need to have a nationally focused amount of attention on this crisis. We need to have a Canada where people can be assured that they can have access to primary care when and where they need it. We need to find innovative solutions to help this crisis and address it. I am disappointed that the recent meeting between provincial ministers and the federal minister has yet to result in anything concrete to address the crisis.

Of course, while Canadians are struggling, they see a situation in which it was reported that we collected \$31 billion less in corporate taxes than we should have last year. At a time when Canadians are struggling with costs to make their own family budgets work and are seeing more and more of the burden falling on their shoulders, they see Canada's largest and most profitable corporations getting away with it, through innovative tax schemes and hiding their wealth offshore to escape the burden of paying their fair share in this country. That is an issue that we absolutely must pay attention to.

In response to these big issues, my friends in the Conservative Party have focused a lot of their attention on the carbon tax. Yesterday, at the agriculture committee, I agreed with my Conservative colleagues in taking a small step to address some of the challenges that our agricultural producers are facing. We will be reporting Bill C-234 back to the House.

However, on the larger issue, I think that what is ignored by my Conservative friends is the fact that the federal carbon tax does not apply in all provinces. What they are advocating for will have no effect on residents in my province of B.C. because we, as a province, have chosen not to have an Ottawa-knows-best approach on pricing pollution.

We, as a province, have preferred to retain autonomy, so our policy is determined in the B.C. legislature in Victoria under the good and sound guidance of the B.C. NDP government. It allows our province to basically take that revenue and distribute it in ways that it sees fit because we, as a province, do not think that Ottawa should have control over that policy, so we, as a province, have decided to retain autonomy.

• (1115)

The Conservatives' fixation on the carbon tax does not take into account the fact that the inflationary pressures we see in the world are the result of things that are largely beyond the control of Canada as a country. In the United Kingdom, the Labour opposition is blaming a Conservative government for the same thing Conservatives in Canada are blaming a Liberal government for. This is a

problem we see in many of the G7 countries. It is not limited to one side of the political spectrum or the other.

Again, if one is going to talk about inflationary pressures and completely ignore the massive profits oil and gas companies are making, one is doing a disservice to one's constituents. One is not addressing the elephant in the room here, which is that corporations are using inflation to hide and to pad the massive profits they are making. We need to have a serious conversation about that.

If we truly want to help Canadians with the unexpected costs that come with heating their homes and fuelling their vehicles, we need to develop policies to get them off fossil fuels. It has always been a volatile energy source. If we go back to the 1970s when OPEC, as a cartel, decided to cut production, we see what that did to North America. It has always been volatile, and as long as we remain dependent on it as an energy source, no matter what the tax policy is, we are going to suffer from that volatility. If we want to truly help Canadians, we need to encourage things such as home retrofits, and encourage programs that get them on different sources of energy.

In the meantime, if we want a policy that is effectively going to help Canadians no matter what province they live in, why do we not go with the NDP policy of removing the GST on home heating fuels? That, in fact, would benefit residents in British Columbia, unlike singly focusing on a federal carbon tax.

When I look at Bill C-32, there are certainly a few good things. I appreciate that the Liberals are starting to see things such as a Canada recovery dividend are necessary. They are limiting it to the large financial institutions. We would like to see such a model be not only not temporary but also extended to oil and gas companies and to the big box stores. This is about putting fairness into the system because right now the free market, the so-called free market, is largely failing Canadians. The free market is trying its best, but the wages are not keeping up with rising costs.

One thing members have not yet mentioned either is that there is a critical mineral exploration tax credit in Bill C-32. Canada has a very troubled history with mining, and any projects that go forward need to absolutely be done in conjunction and in consultation with first nations. If we are truly going to transform our economy into the renewable energy powerhouse it should be, those critical minerals that Canada has an abundance of are going to be key to developing that kind of technology.

What I have often found with the Liberals over my seven years of being in this place is that there are a lot of good ideas but they are not fully fleshed out. They do not go as far as they could have potentially gone to make the full impact we wish they would have done.

Government Orders

There is a lot in Bill C-32 for the committee to consider, and I hope it takes a lot of feedback from a wide variety of witnesses. There are measures here that are building on what we, as new Democrats, have been able to force the government to do, such as doubling the GST credit, providing an interim benefit for dental care and making sure there is help for renters.

I am proud that a caucus with less than 10% of the seats in the House of Commons has been able to achieve these things. This is what I came to Ottawa to do. I came to deliver for my constituents and bring tangible results that make a difference in their lives. Through this and other measures, I will continue to do that, to make sure they are getting the full benefits and assistance they need to weather these tough times so they can come out even more prosperous on the other end.

• (1120)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for his thoughtful remarks and for going into detail on some of the measures in this fall economic statement.

One of the things that I was particularly glad to hear was his comments on the price on pollution, and I do agree with them. The member opposite mentioned the program in British Columbia and how the Government of British Columbia knew best how to deploy the resources. However, in the same context, the member mentioned in his intervention that the health care crisis is looming.

Would the member opposite have any comments on the tension between provinces knowing best and wanting to control health care expenditures while the federal government is trying to work to address this crisis, and how the member sees that in contrast to, or relating to, the price on pollution?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, every province is different, and that is why they absolutely need to have primary jurisdiction over health care delivery.

I know in British Columbia we are looking at an innovative model of how we pay primary care physicians, getting them off of a fee-for-service model and more to a salary model. In Alberta, there have been discussions about allowing nurse practitioners to deliver more primary care because of the doctor shortage.

What I will say though, as a federal politician who is in some way responsible for the federal purse, I do not want to just hand blank cheques to the provinces. I do believe that, if that money is going to be consistent with what is already under the Canada Health Act, there should be some national conditions on what we want to achieve as a country. It should not necessarily be just a blank cheque. I do want to see some federal leadership in determining what kind of health care we want to see so Canadians from coast to coast to coast have access to the care they should have.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, there were a few things in my colleague's speech that I would question him on.

He talked about war profiteering in Canada, resources and the taxes that our natural resources industries paid. They have paid \$30 billion more in taxes over the last six months than in the previous year. There has been a rise in commodities across the board. How-

ever, in Canada, let us acknowledge our price for oil and gas. For oil, it is \$30 less than it is in the U.S., and at times this summer our natural gas price was actually negative.

The member is right in some respects, when he says the free market is failing Canadians, but that is because there is no free market, as the government has held up all kinds of infrastructure, which is, no doubt, one of the things we should be focusing on.

I do want to focus on one thing he talked about, which is the carbon tax. He said that Ottawa should not have control over this part of the economy, and that is something I completely agree with him on. Would he suggest that Alberta was the first province in Canada to have an industrial cost on carbon over 20 years ago? Is he suggesting that maybe this should be the way it is? Would the member side with the Conservative Party here in saying we should get the federal government out of its ridiculous carbon tax regime, which is not working?

• (1125)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I will clarify my remarks because my hon. colleague misinterpreted what I meant.

What I meant was that in British Columbia we are happy that our provincial government actually took leadership. In fact, they were the first province to go down this road. It was a Conservative government. They called themselves B.C. Liberals, but they were the ones that brought in the price. By the way, do we all remember the name Preston Manning, when he used to advocate for a carbon tax? I remember that.

Ultimately, what I meant is that it is good that a provincial capital in B.C. took the reins because it allows us to have a little more flexibility over how we distribute that income and help our local citizens in need.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my question is somewhat related to Bill C-32.

I would like to talk about Bill C-31, because I have never had the opportunity to ask my NDP friends a question about something that puzzles me. Bill C-32 contains some mini-measures on housing, but they do not really address the housing crisis.

There is an important measure in Bill C-31, a \$500 cheque to help people. I have spoken to every housing agency in Quebec and they were just about beside themselves when it came to Bill C-31, which hands out so much money without building a single thing.

Government Orders

People had expectations about the agreement between the NDP and the Liberals. They thought that the NDP would be able to push the government to build housing. Does it not seem to my colleague that the NDP members sold their souls for a bowl of lentils with their agreement with the Liberals?

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, no, absolutely not. I am proud to stand in front of my constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and show them concrete measures that I have been able to deliver as a member of Parliament, which are going to make a difference. Yes, there are going to be some kinks with dental care, and I agree that more needs to be done on housing, but there are measures here that are going to help Canadians, and I am proud that we have been able to deliver on them.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is truly a privilege to rise in this place and have the opportunity to speak to the fall economic statement. Before I begin, I note that I will be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

I listened with interest to the interventions made during the debate, both yesterday and this morning, and I just want to thank my colleagues on this side of the House for speaking up for Canadians. Canadians are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, as there is more month left at the end of the money, and they are having to make really tough choices because the Prime Minister and the government did not.

This piece of legislation comes at a critical time for Canadians. There is a severe cost of living crisis, which the Liberal government has done nothing to address in this statement. Instead, it continues to spend more, which continues to push the inflation rate higher, causing the fastest rise in interest rates in decades. This has had devastating consequences for Canadians. In the fall economic statement, the Liberals are predicting that economic growth will be 0.7% lower next year and that Canada's national debt will reach \$1.177 trillion.

Home prices have doubled since 2015. The increase in the housing prices and skyrocketing inflation and interest rates have put the dream of home ownership out of reach for millions of Canadians. Paycheques no longer go as far due to just inflation. Nearly 50% of Canadians are \$200 away from insolvency, and the price of groceries, gas and home heating just keeps going up.

While the Deputy Prime Minister made the difficult decision to cut Disney+, too many Canadians are being forced to cut their diets. Food bank usage is at an all-time high. With the price of groceries up by almost 11%, moms are adding water to their children's milk, and seniors cannot afford to heat their homes. Canadians are getting closer to the edge, and the Liberal government just keeps pushing them further. The government does not understand how to assist Canadians.

Over the past seven years under the government, it has only gone from bad to worse. While believing that budgets will balance themselves and promising to budget from the heart out with no more than \$10 billion in deficits, the Prime Minister has spent more than all previous prime ministers combined, running the most expensive government in Canadian history.

Now I know the government likes to use the pandemic for cover on spending issues, but 40% of all new government spending measures have nothing to do with COVID. That is over \$200 billion. By next year, the cost to pay just the interest rate on our national debt will be equal to the amount being spent on the Canada health transfer.

Canadians need relief now, not more empty promises from the Liberal government. With over \$170,000 being added to the deficit every minute, every minute counts.

That is why we called on the government to do two things: stop the taxes and stop the spending. The government could have, and indeed should have, committed to cancelling any planned tax hikes, including the tripling of the carbon tax. This would keep more money in the pockets of Canadians as they plan for their futures. Additionally, the government should have cut its wasteful spending and required ministers to find an equivalent savings to any new spending put forward. These are two simple initiatives that would have an immediate impact on helping Canadians.

Businesses are also feeling the impacts and struggling. While at home in my riding this past week, I had the pleasure of meeting with representatives from the Prairie Sky, Rosetown and Humboldt chambers of commerce. It was the first time that we were able to meet face to face. I would like to thank the executive directors and chamber boards for taking the time to meet with me.

● (1130)

While our conversations covered a wide range of topics, a common theme was how difficult the past two and a half years have been for local businesses, especially independent retailers. As I mentioned yesterday, I also heard about how lockdowns have driven customers to larger retailers and online shopping sites like Amazon. I heard how lockdowns have had not only a devastating impact on independent retailers, but a negative impact on supply chains.

The impact of inflation was top of mind for most, whether they were business owners or municipal representatives. For business owners, not only is inflation cutting into the bottom line of their customers, but it is also increasing costs for businesses, making it difficult for them to survive let alone thrive. In addition to the federal-government caused inflation, the recent hike in interest rates by the Bank of Canada is having a big impact on individuals and businesses alike. The likelihood of renewing loans and mortgages at rates more than double what they are currently paying is bringing solvency into doubt for both.

Government Orders

Added to this is the mess the government has made of the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. Many business owners have told me that they are desperate for workers in certain industries but that it takes far too long for qualified people to get through the system. While the government loves to make grand announcements, citizens, business owners and newly arrived immigrants are telling me the system is broken.

The Liberals' mismanagement knows no bounds. The pattern of the government over the years has been to completely disregard the needs of Canadians and a consistent inability to manage Canada's finances.

Inflation is not just hurting individuals and businesses. One mayor told me that inflation is causing municipal projects to run 25% to 40% over budget, forcing municipalities to make cuts and raise taxes in order to balance their budgets. I have also heard from many municipal leaders in recent weeks that they may be forced to cover the back pay for the RCMP following the conclusion of the force's collective bargaining agreement with the federal government. If municipalities are forced to cover the back pay of an agreement they had no say in negotiating, this will put more pressure on municipal budgets. This means individuals and businesses would have to pay more for less from their municipal governments.

Canadians, small and medium-sized business owners and municipalities need a Conservative government that will put an end to the Prime Minister's inflationary spending, which is driving up the cost of everything. Under the leadership of the member for Carleton, our Conservative caucus has been working to develop policies that will address the issues facing our country.

The Conservatives have a plan to make life more affordable for Canadians. Instead of printing more cash and fuelling the inflation crisis, we will create more of what cash buys: more homes, more gas, more food and more resources here at home. By increasing the supply of goods, we can fight the rising cost of living. We will make energy more affordable by repealing the anti-energy legislation of the Liberal government, and we will cut corporate welfare and get rid of the carbon tax.

To fight climate change, we will make alternative energy cheaper rather than making Canadian energy more expensive. We will ensure that paycheques go further. We will reform the tax and benefits system to make sure that when a Canadian works an extra hour, takes an extra shift or earns an extra bonus, they are better off and will keep more of their dollars in their pockets.

The Conservatives will continue to fight for Canadians across the country. We will continue to hold the government to account for its inflationary spending, and we will continue to put forward policies that put Canadians first before Liberal insiders and their friends.

• (1135)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, time after time, the Conservatives get up and say the same thing. They say that this was Liberal-made inflation, and they suggest that it is only happening in Canada. However, the reality of the situation is that this is incredibly false. Among the G7 countries alone, Canada has the third-lowest inflation rate in the

most recent summary of them. As a matter of fact, while Canada is sitting at 6.9%, the U.S. is at 7.7%, the U.K. is at 8.8%, Italy is at 8.9% and Germany is at 10%.

How is it that Conservatives say this time after time? Are they completely oblivious to what is going on in the rest of the world?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do not take my hon. colleague's word for anything. All he needs to do is talk to the past governor of the Bank of Canada or the current one to know they are starting to recognize that this inflation is becoming more and more Canadian made. The Prime Minister has spent more than all previous prime ministers combined, running the most expensive government in Canadian history. As I said, Canada's national debt will reach over \$1 trillion next year, and the Liberals are adding \$170,000 to the national debt every minute. We cannot afford—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have a brief question for my colleague. We are used to hearing Liberal ministers and members beating around the bush and not answering questions. We spend 98% of our time here not getting answers to our questions, but since the member is from the opposition, perhaps I will get a fairly clear answer. That would be nice.

There is a huge health crisis in Quebec right now. Emergency room physicians are sounding the alarm. People are dying in Quebec's emergency rooms. The provinces' demands are quite simple. Health transfers must be increased, no strings attached.

If the Conservative Party were in power tomorrow morning, would it increase transfers from 22% to 35%, as the Quebec government is calling for?

• (1140)

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I think if the pandemic has highlighted anything, it certainly shone a light on the health care system across the country. We know the federal government must respect the jurisdiction of the provinces when it comes to health care, and we now know that the cost of servicing the government's debt is going to equal the health transfer payments. That is staggering and astounding. What we need to do right now here in this place is focus on holding the government to account in getting its financial house in order.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am glad the member had a focus on some of the social issues that are being experienced all across Canada. One of the things I like about the bill is the Canada recovery dividend, because it would tax banks and major insurers, but I think the gap in it is that it would not be taxing major corporations that are showing great profits.

Government Orders

I wonder if the member agrees that we also need to make sure major corporations that are showing greater profits are included so that the Canada recovery dividend is greater.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I would point out to the member that the Conservatives did support the NDP's opposition day motion to study possible price gouging by grocery chains and other major retailers during the pandemic. We are definitely concerned with the allegations, and we want to ensure that Canadians are not being taken advantage of. We recognize that the motion called for a study, but what is really grievous is knowing that the member and her party are supporting the government in taking away resources from committees that would probably be tasked with doing the very study they asked for.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her excellent speech.

I will start with a number: \$1,000. That is how much one mom just paid to fill her heating oil tank for the first time this season. That \$1,000 was a big surprise, a huge amount of money for her.

She wrote to me this morning to say that she hopes the winter will not be too harsh, because, at \$1,000 a pop, she cannot afford to fill the tank four times, as she usually does every year.

This is not about comparing ourselves to other countries or to what we had in the past. This is not about saying Canada is doing well. This is about making sure everyone knows about this mother, who wrote to me today to say that her bill was \$1,000 and that she will probably have to fork out that much cash at least three more times this season if the winter is mild, or maybe five times if the winter is severe.

This mother is desperate. She is also desperate because of the rising price of food. Groceries now cost 11.4% more than last year. That is the overall price of groceries, but looking more closely at the price of meat and essential items, for example, we can see that the price of pasta, which is a staple among students, has increased by 30%. The go-to food for students who do not have much money has just increased by 30%.

That is the reality facing families, students and this mother, who will have to choose between hamburger, pork chops and bologna to feed her family and make sure her children get enough protein. That is the reality.

The reality is also the ever-increasing price of gas. People work and need to drive their car, especially in the regions. Why? Because there is no public transit in the regions. They cannot go to work if they do not have a car. In the regions, jobs are often far from home. People absolutely need a car to get around.

Also, there is winter in Quebec, as in many other regions of Canada. Winter is hard. There are snowstorms, but people still have to drive to work. Their vehicles are a little bigger. They have trucks or SUVs. Unfortunately, the price of gas is rising, and we are hearing more and more from people who wonder how they will be able to get to work. Since they have to get to work, they must make other choices and cut into their food budget. That brings us back to our mother's heartbreaking choice between buying hamburger or

bologna to feed her children. With the money that is left after she pays for gas to get to and from work, she will have no other choice but to buy bologna. That is the reality in Canada today.

We asked the government to do something to help families, or at least not to make things worse for them, by January 1. In the economic statement, we were expecting the government to take action and do something, as the hon. member for Carleton and leader of the official opposition requested. We had two very simple requests, starting with the cancellation of the tax increases that are to come into effect on January 1.

The Liberals will say that increasing employment insurance and Canada pension plan contributions is not a tax increase. The result is the same. It is exactly the same thing: The mother I was talking about, who was already having to make difficult choices to pay for heating and groceries, will have a smaller paycheque. She has just been told that on top of all her problems, she will now have a smaller paycheque to pay for everything that costs more.

● (1145)

We expected the Liberals to hear that mother's message instead of including more inflationary spending in the economic statement. It seems that the Liberals have not heard the message, since that mother's paycheque will unfortunately get smaller as of January 1.

Things will be even worse in some parts of Canada, since several provinces will see an increase in the carbon tax. This will cause this family even more hardship, since absolutely everything will be even more expensive. By tripling the carbon tax, the government is tripling costs for families, who will have less money to pay for gas, food and rent. That is our current reality.

We expected the government to say that it understands that the situation is difficult, that interest rates and food prices are the highest they have been in 40 years, and that it would give Canadians a break.

Well, no, they did not hear the message. When we ask the government ministers questions day after day in question period, they tell us all sorts of things. They tell us that this is a global crisis and that Canada is doing a little better than other countries, and they come up with every imaginable excuse. We are told, for example, that the war in Ukraine is responsible for all this, but we never hear a minister take responsibility for the situation. The government, however, must also look at itself in the mirror and ask what it did to get us where we are today.

To understand this, we have to go back to the election of the Liberal government in 2015. I remember very well that the Prime Minister campaigned on a promise that there would be three tiny deficits, \$10 billion the first year, \$10 billion the second year and \$6 billion the third year, and that we would then return to a balanced budget. Wow. I cannot say that he lied, but I can certainly say that he misled Canadians.

In reality, the deficits were not tiny; on the contrary, they skyrocketed. We are talking about a \$100-billion inflationary deficit, even before COVID-19. That is not surprising, given that the Prime Minister stated in his maiden speech that it was the right time to borrow, since interest rates would remain low for decades. At the time, interest rates were 0.5%, 0.25% or 0.75%. The interest rates were very low. The Prime Minister's crystal ball showed him that it was not a problem, he could borrow money and that was the time to do it.

However, members of the House, mainly members of the official opposition, had warned the government that interest rates would go up and make things difficult for families. The government chose to close its eyes and turn a deaf ear. It did not listen and continued to borrow money.

Then the unexpected happened, COVID-19, and another \$500 billion was added to the deficit. We would have expected that money to be spent on measures to help Canadians get through the COVID-19 pandemic. However, of that \$500 billion, \$200 billion was spent on new programs and expenditures that had absolutely nothing to do with COVID-19.

The Minister of Finance's fall economic statement was literally a failure on all counts. We cannot support measures that will just add to the deficit when the government has received \$40 billion in new revenue from taxpayers' pockets. Think about the mother I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, who must make difficult choices to pay for her heating and groceries and to get to work.

• (1150)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know the member spoke about inflation as well. I asked a question of the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek prior to this member about inflation being a global issue, not something that is related just to Canada. I asked her to explain what she thought about that. Her response was that she was not going to trust my opinion on it or take my word for it, and now she is saying that is right.

What I am reciting here is from the OECD. These are well-known, factual stats, not my opinion on what inflation is throughout the world. I cannot believe that we have now gotten to a point where Conservatives are openly saying that inflation throughout the world is just someone's opinion. These are stats. These are facts.

Can the member comment on whether he agrees with the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek that this is my opinion?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I spoke in English and French during my speech, so I was expecting that my colleague was listening to me and to what I said. I was talking about the mother

Government Orders

who is struggling to pay for the home heating of her house, for her groceries and for the gasoline that she needs to go to work.

No matter where we stand in the OECD, nothing in this fall economic statement, nothing, helps that mother face that new spending.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for giving us his perspective.

I would like to ask him this. He brilliantly explained the risks that going in the direction of this bill would pose for Canada, but I would like him to be more specific and tell me whether this bill contains any measures that are good for Quebec. Let us forget about the rest of the country for a moment. What measures does this bill contain that are good for us and what does he think is important?

• (1155)

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, the main thing I see is the direction the Liberal government is taking with the interest payments on the ballooning debt that we are seeing year after year. Next year or the year after, the government will be paying more in interest than in health transfers for all of the provinces. That greatly reduces the flexibility the government could have had to help the provinces, including Quebec, deal with the current health crisis. I am trying to think of something good in the fall economic statement, but unfortunately, I still cannot figure out how it will improve the lives of Quebecers.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have yet to hear Conservatives talk substantially about the record profits that oil and gas companies are making. These companies are literally swimming in piles of cash right now. We have not seen profits like this for years.

I am wondering if my Conservative colleague would like to address the elephant in the room. They complain about high fuel prices but say nothing about record profits. Does he have any comments or policies to address that unfair situation, which is affecting people from coast to coast to coast?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, if we are talking about the elephant in the room, why can we not talk about this costly coalition that the government formed with the NDP? This is the elephant in the room. It will cost us \$21 billion more in new spending. That is in the fall economic statement. That is the costly coalition's fault, and I think we should talk about the elephant in the room.

Government Orders

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Madam Speaker, what I am hearing in my riding and from people calling in is that they are having trouble with the cost of food. I have mothers who call in and are beside themselves because they cannot decide if they are going to have a family that eats or a family that will have heat on.

I am just wondering if the hon. member is having some of those calls into his office as well.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear that my colleague is also getting those kinds of calls, as are all members of the House. I am convinced that we are all getting these kinds of calls from people who are really struggling.

We were asking the government to do one thing, specifically not to raise taxes for all Canadians on January 1 so that everyone could get a bit of a break. Unfortunately, the government chose to do otherwise.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Davenport.

I am thankful for the opportunity to take part in today's debate on Bill C-32, which introduces measures in the 2022 fall economic statement and key initiatives from budget 2022. The 2022 fall economic statement includes a series of new targeted measures that would help Canada weather the coming global economic slowdown and thrive in the years ahead. They are measures that would deliver good-paying jobs by seizing the opportunities of the net-zero economy, by attracting new private investment and by providing key resources to the world.

The next few years offer a historic opportunity for Canada. It is a time when we can continue building an economy that works for everyone and create the good middle-class jobs that Canadians will count on for generations to come. However, if we are to capitalize on the opportunities before us in the years to come, we need to step up and make more smart investments today.

Today, I would like to speak to a measure in the 2022 fall economic statement and Bill C-32 that would grow Canada's economy, create opportunities for workers and continue to address Canada's challenge with investment and productivity that has stretched back for decades.

Our government knows we are at a pivotal moment. The climate crisis is more urgent than ever. Canada is already experiencing an increase in heat waves, wildfires and heavy storms. These impacts and the economic and health repercussions that come with them will continue to accelerate if we do not act now.

We know that climate change is real and the path forward is clear. To protect our planet and build a stronger economy, we must do even more on climate action. Over the past six years, the federal government has taken important steps to position Canada at the forefront of the fight against climate change while also working to seize the economic opportunities provided by the global transition to net zero.

Canada's commitment to putting a price on pollution has provided an incentive for businesses and households to pollute less, conserve energy and invest in low-carbon technologies and services. However, it is clear that Canada will need to do even more to secure our competitive advantage and continue creating opportunities for Canadian workers. This challenge has become even more pressing with the recent passage in the United States of the Inflation Reduction Act, the IRA.

Since 2015, the government has been making foundational investments in clean technology, which the U.S. is doing now with the IRA. We welcome the U.S. legislation as it will play an important, pivotal role in the global fight against climate change and will further accelerate the building of sustainable North American supply chains. More importantly, the IRA's build North American policy for critical minerals and electric vehicle tax credits are also good news for Canadian workers and Canadian companies.

While the IRA will undoubtedly accelerate the ongoing transition to a net-zero North American economy, it also offers enormous financial supports to firms that locate their production in the United States, from electric vehicle battery production, to hydrogen, to bio-fuels and beyond. Without new measures to keep pace with the IRA, Canada risks being left behind.

As a first step in Canada's response, the government is launching the Canada growth fund, which will help to attract billions of dollars in new private capital to create good-paying jobs and support Canada's economic transformation, as well as bringing forward two new measures to support the adoption of clean technology across Canada. Today's legislation would authorize the Minister of Finance to requisition up to \$2 billion from the consolidated revenue fund in order to provide an initial capitalization to the Canada growth fund. The legislation would enable the minister to purchase non-voting shares in the corporation in exchange for capital.

Canada's road to achieving our climate targets, creating and maintaining good-paying jobs and building a net-zero economy that works for everyone will require the transformation of our industrial base, specifically the commercialization and deployment of low-carbon technologies and resources and the continued growth of clean technology businesses across Canada.

Government Orders

• (1200)

We have an opportunity to lead the way on the road to net zero and ensure that Canadian workers can benefit from good jobs for decades to come. However, this will require investment on a scale that government alone cannot provide. There are trillions of dollars in private capital waiting to be spent on creating the good jobs and prosperity for workers that a net-zero economy will bring. Canada is competing with other countries to attract the private investment we need.

To succeed, Canada needs to address two challenges. First, we need to incentivize companies to take risks and invest in cutting-edge technology in Canada. Second, we need to keep pace with a growing list of jurisdictions that are using public financing to attract private capital and create the jobs and prosperity for workers that accompany it, from the United States to the European Union and beyond.

In budget 2022, we announced the government's intention to create a Canada growth fund that will help attract private capital to invest in building a thriving, sustainable Canadian economy with thousands of new, good-paying jobs. It will also help Canada keep pace with a growing list of jurisdictions that are using innovative public funding tools to attract the significant private capital required to accelerate the deployment of technologies required to decarbonize and grow their economies.

Since Canada's economic prosperity has traditionally been built on natural resources and other emissions-intensive industries, a substantial transformation of our industrial base will be required to meet our climate targets and ensure long-term prosperity for Canadians and the Canadian economy.

Canada needs to build the technology, infrastructure and businesses to reduce our carbon reliance, but this will not occur without rapidly increasing and then sustaining private investment in activities and sectors that will strengthen Canada's position as a leading low-carbon economy.

Today, while companies and investors are aware of opportunities to commercialize and deploy emissions-reduction technologies, they are often restrained due to investment risks that are frequently associated with these investment opportunities. That is why the fund is designed to invest in a manner that mitigates the risks that currently limit private investment and unlock the domestic and foreign capital that Canada needs now.

The 2022 fall economic statement outlines the design, operation and investment strategy of the growth fund. The mandate of the growth fund will be to make investments that attract substantial private sector investment in Canadian businesses and projects to help seize the opportunities provided by a net-zero economy.

This includes investments that will help reduce emissions and achieve Canada's climate targets; accelerate the deployment of key technologies, such as low-carbon hydrogen and carbon capture, utilization and storage; scale up companies that will create jobs, drive productivity and clean growth, and encourage the retention of intellectual property in Canada; and capitalize on Canada's abundance of natural resources and strengthen critical supply chains to secure Canada's future economic and environmental well-being.

In the challenging economic landscape that Canada and the world are contending with, there is no country better placed than Canada to weather the coming global economic slowdown. The measures in Bill C-32, such as the Canada growth fund, will build on actions the government has taken to make sure that Canadians and the Canadian economy come through this challenging economic period as quickly as possible, and that we are ready to thrive when we do.

I encourage all members of the House to support this legislation.

• (1205)

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague in the House and I sit in committee with the member as well. I often think he is reading off a page because so much of what he says is dissonant with reality.

He is now talking about a Canada growth fund on top of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. The financial incentive systems, which are built throughout the government to foster investment in Canada, throw money at a wall on some of these technologies that are not going anywhere. The Liberals continue to risk taxpayers' money.

In the time the government has been in power, hundreds of billions of dollars of foreign investment and Canadian investment has left the Canadian economy. The government is now trying to backfill it with more Canadian government money and it is putting a finger in the dike. The government has caused an investment climate that is destroying foreign investment and all investment in Canada.

Can he get to the root of the problem, undo some of the destructive policies and not throw more government money at a wall?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy the hon. member's interventions at the environment standing committee.

I think the hon. member should give his head a shake. We have invested \$9.1 billion in the emissions reduction plan. I know that many of his colleagues in Alberta are very supportive of our plans. The oil patch has embraced net zero by 2050. It is working closely with us. We will be capping oil and gas emissions, working with the oil patch. We are investing in carbon capture, which I know the hon. member supports.

The clean technology market is worth \$2.5 trillion. It will be worth \$80 billion in Canada in just a few years. We have to get on that train. Unfortunately, the hon. member will be left at the stop.

Government Orders

• (1210)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, whenever I hear my Liberal friends talk about the environment, I feel like I am in an episode of *The Twilight Zone*. I feel like we are not in the same room, not watching the same movie, or not listening to the same story. It is ridiculous.

Last week, in the context of COP27, we learned that Canada is still investing \$8.5 billion U.S. a year in fossil fuels. For that reason alone, we should be denouncing the government every day. We learned another exciting little fact. Canada is the worst country in the G20 when it comes to average greenhouse gas emissions per capita. Furthermore, Canada is the only G7 country whose greenhouse gas emissions have increased since the Paris Agreement, in other words, since the Liberals started sitting on that side. They make grand speeches, saying that they are green and they support the green transition. However, Canada is the worst country in the G7 and the second worst in the G20 for investment in fossil fuels. Clearly, we are not talking about the same thing.

What is the Liberal plan to deal with these issues?

[English]

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am just curious; I do not think we have quorum in the House at the moment.

The Deputy Speaker: Let me ask the Table to do a count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We have quorum.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. There is only one Conservative in the House. Does that matter with respect to the quorum count?

The Deputy Speaker: That is part of the debate we are having. I believe we have quorum, and I said that, so thank you for that intervention.

Questions and comments. I believe the parliamentary secretary was just finishing up his thought or going to be responding to the question.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I am a great admirer of the hon. member because he is a fellow curler, and I am sure he is very good. I introduced him to my father a few short weeks ago.

With respect to his question, emissions went down in this country in 2019 and 2020. We are working very hard with the oil and gas sector. We are going to be capping oil and gas emissions. We are eliminating fossil fuel subsidies.

Like the hon. member, we want the oil and gas sector to step up. It is making record profits. It needs to invest in the clean economy. It needs to reduce its pollution. Together, we can ensure there is a livable planet for our kids and grandkids.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the parliamentary secretary for focusing on the environment. In Nunavut, 25 communities rely entirely on diesel for power, and there needs to be a transition from these polluting energy sources to

renewable energy. Oil and gas companies are the largest contributors to polluting the environment.

Can the parliamentary secretary explain why the government did not extend the windfall tax to oil and gas companies to help Nunavut get off its reliance on diesel?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Mr. Speaker, we know the Arctic is warming at three times the rate of the global average, so climate change is up close and personal. We are challenging oil and gas companies to step up and to invest in the clean economy. They have committed to net zero by 2050, but we need to accelerate the pace and get there sooner.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a true honour for me to rise in the House today to speak to the fall economic statement, Bill C-32, on behalf of the citizens of my riding of Davenport.

I would remind those who may be watching the speech that the fall economic statement provides insight into Canada's economic outlook and outlines the government's intentions moving forward. The fall economic statement also builds on the fiscal and economic work already under way in Canada to make life more affordable for Canadians, to build a stronger economy and to prepare for what lies ahead.

It is also always good to take stock of what the current context is. We have high inflation due to two and a half years of historic turmoil, including the after-effects of a pandemic, the current destabilizing geopolitical situation as a result of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the energy crisis and the impacts of climate change, to name just a few.

I am very proud of how the federal government stepped up to support Canadians during the pandemic. We were generous with our support. Some say it was too generous, but I feel very good about the decisions we made. I am also very supportive of the investments and additional supports to Canadians that we have been making over the last year. National child care is now in the process of being implemented, and my home province of Ontario and the city I live in, Toronto, will see child care costs reduced by 50% in December of this year, which is huge for families not only in Davenport but right across this country. We have seen an increase of 10% in the OAS for seniors over 75; and we have seen the doubling of the Canada student grant for post-secondary students, among many other targeted supportive measures.

More recently, as members will know, we have doubled the GST credit for the next six months, and 11 million Canadians received some additional funding this last Friday. We also have the dental care benefit and the housing benefit winding its way through the Senate. As well, we have announced that students who have Canada student loans will not need to start repaying their loans until they have earned \$40,000, which is up from \$25,000.

All these measures will go a long way toward helping Canadians who are struggling with the rising cost of living. I hear from Dav-enport residents every day, and they worry about the prices. They are appreciative of the support the federal government is giving, but they are also hoping the prices come down in the near future.

The fall economic statement puts forward a number of additional measures to support Canadians and to grow our economy, one that works for everyone. I wish I had more time, but I will be able to cover only two or three key measures, so I am going to cover immigration, business investment incentives and growing the clean, green energy economy in Canada.

A couple of weeks ago, the Minister of Immigration announced new immigration levels for Canada that would see us move to invite 500,000 new immigrants to Canada by 2025. This is going to help with the persistent labour shortages that we continue to have, especially in health care, construction and manufacturing. It will also help with ensuring that we continue to have a strong welfare system.

As was indicated to me, about 10 years ago we had one retiree for every seven workers in Canada, and now it is down to one retiree for every three workers. Therefore, if we want to continue to have a strong social welfare system, we have to make sure we are replacing our workforce.

The fall economic statement, more specifically, is going to increase the money to the immigration system, which will increase the capacity to ensure that applications are processed as quickly as possible and that backlogs are eliminated. It is also going to invest in the systems we need to help make sure we bring the talent and skills we need. The details are that the federal government has committed \$1.6 billion over six years for the processing and settlement of new permanent residents, and then an additional \$50 million in 2022-23 to address the ongoing application backlogs that I can assure members so many of our offices have. It is very frustrating to try to deal with them, but it is wonderful that we continue to put additional resources towards addressing this issue.

I would note as well that we are bringing in a historic number of immigrants and refugees. We should be very proud that over the last three years Canada has settled the highest number of refugees in the world. That's not the highest number per capita, but the highest number of refugees in the world for each of the last three years. It is something I am very proud of. We believe that diversity truly is a strength. We truly believe the increased diversity makes us a stronger and better country.

● (1215)

The next thing I want to talk about is something I worry a lot about. It is the lack of business investment by our businesses in Canada. I am sad to say that business investment in Canada is about half of what it is in the United States. I was reading a few reports online. C.D. Howe put out a report recently and I agree with a number of the things it says. One of the things it says is that business investment is so weak that the labour force is falling and the implications for incomes and competitiveness are ominous. Basically, it reaffirms the fact that business investment is very weak in Canada, which has huge implications for our competitiveness, both today and tomorrow.

Government Orders

Over the last 10 years, when we have had historically low interest rates, our businesses in general have not invested in research or innovation or in increasing wages. Therefore, the government needs to step in and take some action. One of the key things we are doing, which we are introducing in the fall economic statement, is to introduce a corporate-level 2% tax rate that would apply to all share buybacks by public corporations in Canada. This is a similar measure to the one that was introduced in the United States.

It is estimated that this measure would increase federal revenues by \$2.1 billion over five years, while also encouraging corporations to reinvest their profits in workers, in innovation and in their own businesses in terms of growth. I believe this is a great first step. Far more needs to be done to ensure competitiveness in Canada, and there are a number of additional measures that we are looking at and considering as we run up to federal budget 2023. Our future economic prosperity depends on our getting this right.

The next thing I want to talk a bit about is climate change and growing—

● (1220)

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I hate to be a nag but it looks like we do not have quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: I will call for quorum, so let us start the count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: There we go. I believe we have quorum.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would just point out that there are several Liberals who contribute to this quorum but virtually no Conservatives.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, I believe it is not proper to call out the presence of or the absence of anyone in the House. I would also make note that it is the Liberals' job to do the work in the House, with their NDP lapdogs. It is not being done properly.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Order.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I want to apologize for pointing out the fact that there are virtually no Conservatives here. I apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: I know we do this in laughter. We are not supposed to point out the absence of members or whether or not members are in the chamber. The quorum call should be just that: We count the members who are here to make sure that we have quorum; it is not to underline who is and who is not here.

Government Orders

I am looking at the time that we need to get the number of speakers in. I know the member for Davenport was wrapping up her thoughts. She has about two minutes and 53 seconds left. I think she was starting to wrap up. She had a couple of great ideas there, so I was looking forward to the rest of her discourse.

The hon. member for Davenport.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I have lots more to say, but I know I only have less than three minutes left.

The next thing I want to point out in the fall economic statement is because the residents of Davenport are very passionate climate activists. They really feel very strongly that we need to move as aggressively and urgently as possible toward meeting our net zero by 2050 targets, so the fact that there are some measures in the fall economic statement that will accelerate decarbonizing our economy and meeting our climate change goals, I think, is welcome news to them.

We were all alarmed when we heard the Secretary-General of the UN, Antonio Guterres, say this:

And the clock is ticking.

We are in the fight of our lives.

And we are losing.

Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing.

Global temperatures keep rising.

And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible.

It is incumbent on all of us to take as many measures as possible, so I am pleased to say that the fall economic statement proposes major investment tax credits for clean technology and clean hydrogen, which will make it more attractive for businesses in Canada to invest in technology and to produce the energy that will help to power a net-zero global economy.

The fall economic statement 2022 proposes a refundable tax credit equal to 30% of the capital cost of investments in the following: electricity generation systems, stationary electricity storage systems, low-carbon heat equipment, industrial zero-emission vehicles and related charging or refuelling equipment, among other things. I want to note that the Department of Finance is going to consult on additional eligible technologies. We, of course, are introducing these measures not only because we want to meet our net-zero target by 2050, but also in response to the adoption of the inflation reduction act in the United States, to ensure that we remain competitive in both the current and the future economy.

Given the fact that I have only less than a minute left, I will mention two other small measures, but I think they are significant ones that are going to be helpful to individuals, to all Canadians across the country.

The first is the elimination of interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprenticeship loans. Anything we can do to help students start their lives without debt or with as minimal debt as possible is going to be helpful.

The second is the new, quarterly Canada workers benefit, which is \$4 billion over six years. We are going to be issuing that Canada

workers benefit quarterly, which will be helpful and put money into the pockets of low-income Canadians sooner rather than later.

I am thankful for the opportunity to speak to the fall economic statement on behalf of the residents of Davenport. I would urge my colleagues on the other side to support this bill as expeditiously as possible.

• (1225)

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in the fall economic statement that addresses single senior women. There was a report from the CBC. I am sure colleagues have all read it. It was about two women, one in Nova Scotia and one in Toronto, who are still living in their cars and unable to afford housing.

What does the government plan to do to help single female seniors to have the retirement they so much deserve? If it were not for them, we would not be here today.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of measures that we have introduced. As I mentioned as a part of my speech, we have already introduced a doubling of the GST credit for the next six months. That is going to give individuals an additional \$234 and seniors an additional \$225. That is one of many measures.

We also have a national housing strategy that has put billions of dollars more of investment into building more affordable housing and to make housing more affordable for Canadians. That includes all Canadians, including our seniors. The fall economic statement has some targeted measures that I do not have time to go through, but I would urge the member to review this.

The message I want to leave is that we will continue to do more for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find that surprising. I have been hearing the Liberals boast about the government's economic update all morning.

I do not understand why they think it is so positive, given that there is a really important request, not only from the Government of Quebec, but from all the provinces in Canada. It may be easier for the government to be amenable to a request when it does not come from Quebec. However, since it was not just Quebec that was asking for health transfers this time, we hoped that the government would listen.

Why are they not increasing health transfers? There is no mention of it in the economic update, and yet this is a unanimous request. Everyone is calling for this. I cannot understand it.

[*English*]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, we are all concerned about our health care system. Not a day goes by that one of us does not hear stories about the backlog in our emergency systems.

Government Orders

I want to remind the member that we have put a massive increase of funds into the health care system over the last few years and that we have made the commitment to put more money into it. I understand that while we want to put far more money into the health care system across Canada, we are looking for some accountability from the provinces and territories to ensure that money actually goes to reducing wait times, producing more physicians and hiring more nurses as opposed to tax rebates or tax cuts that a number of provinces are engaging in right now.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I was particularly interested in the member's comments about welcoming immigrants.

Nunavut Premier P.J. Akeagok said in a statement recently that Nunavut was not able to welcome immigrants because there was a lack of housing. I wonder if the member agrees that there needs to be investments in housing so that Nunavut can take part in welcoming immigrants?

• (1230)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member 100%.

New immigrants cannot be brought in without having a housing plan and without ensuring there is sufficient support for settlement services across the country. Both of those things are absolutely necessary.

In the north, in my opinion, there is a need for additional IRCC resources in general just to support the population with respect to additional newcomers to that part of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by saying that I am sharing my time with my colleague from Jonquiere.

I rise today to speak to Bill C-32, on the 2022 fall economic statement. Unfortunately, this bill seems more impressive in form than in substance. Bill C-32 contains maybe 25 various tax measures and a dozen or so non-tax measures. It may seem like a lot at first glance, but these are in fact two kinds of measures. Some are just minor amendments, like the ones this Parliament adopts on a regular basis, while others were already announced in the spring budget but had not been incorporated into the first budget implementation bill in June, Bill C-19. In cooking we call that leftovers.

Simply put, like the economic statement of November 3, Bill C-32 does not include any measures to address the new economic reality brought on by the high cost of living and a possible recession. This is a completely missed opportunity for the federal government. This bill will not exactly go down in history and its lack of vision does not deserve much praise either.

However, it does not contain anything "harmful" enough to warrant opposing it or trying to block it. The government often tends to bury harmful measures in its omnibus budget implementation bills, hoping they will go unnoticed, but that is not the case here. The bill contains no surprises, either good or bad.

As my colleagues can see, I am trying very hard to show some good faith. Bill C-32 contains some worthwhile measures, but they

were already announced in the last budget. I will go over them briefly.

An anti-flipping tax has been implemented to limit real estate speculation. That is a good thing. A multi-generational home renovation tax credit has also been created for those who are renovating their home to accommodate an aging or disabled parent. The Bloc has been calling for such a measure since 2015, as have many seniors' groups that have contacted me many times about this issue. I commend the government for introducing it.

There is also a first-time homebuyer tax credit to cover a portion of the closing costs involved in buying a home, such as notary fees and the transfer tax. It is hard to be against apple pie. There is also a temporary surtax and a permanent increase to the tax rate for banks and financial institutions, as well as the elimination of interest on student loans outside Quebec. Quebec has its own system, so it will receive an unconditional transfer equivalent to the amount Quebecers would have received had they participated in the federal program.

In addition, a tax measure that supports oil extraction has been eliminated. It is just one drop in the bucket of subsidies, but it is a start. A tax measure is being implemented to promote mining development in the area of the critical minerals that are needed for the energy transition. In addition, assistance can be provided to a particular government. That is interesting. A total of \$7 billion to \$14 billion will be available for all foreign countries, when previously, it was \$2.5 billion to \$5 billion. While we are still far from the United Nations goal of 0.07% of gross GDP, the government is enhancing Canada's international aid, something the Bloc has been calling for for some time. As the status of women critic, I am regularly reminded that Canada can and must do more and better to safeguard the health of women and girls internationally.

Bill C-32 sidesteps the big challenges facing our society, but there is nothing bad in it. It puts forward a few measures and does some legislative housekeeping that was necessary under the circumstances.

As such, I will reiterate, half-heartedly, what other Bloc members have said: We will vote in favour of Bill C-32 even though the economic statement was disappointing. We take issue with an economic update that mentions the inflation problem 115 times but offers no additional support to vulnerable people and no new solutions despite the fact that a recession is expected to hit in 2023. The government seems to think everything will work out with an "abracadabra" and a wave of its magic wand.

Quebeckers concerned about the high cost of living will find little comfort in this economic update. They will have to make do with what is basically the next step in the implementation of last spring's budget, even though the Bloc Qu b cois did ask the government to focus on its fundamental responsibilities toward vulnerable people.

Government Orders

For the rest of my speech, I will therefore focus on the lack of increased health transfers, the lack of adequate support for people aged 65 and over, and the lack of much-needed genuine reform to EI, which, I should note, is the best stabilizer in times of economic difficulty. Sadly, the government dismissed our three requests, even though they made perfect sense. We can only denounce this as a missed opportunity to help Quebecers deal with the tough times that they are already going through or may face in the months to come.

First, the Bloc Québécois asked the federal government to agree to the unanimous request of Quebec and the provinces to increase health transfers immediately, permanently and unconditionally. ER doctors are warning that our hospitals have reached breaking point, but the federal government is not acting. It clearly prefers its strategy of prolonging the health funding crisis in the hope of breaking the provinces' united front in order to convince them to water down their funding demand. It is the old tactic of divide and conquer.

• (1235)

I want to remind my colleagues that yesterday, at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, on which I sit, during our study on the mental health of women and girls, the ministers of Women and Gender Equality and of Mental Health acknowledged that the national action plan concept, which seeks to impose national standards, was slowing down the process. Meanwhile, the women and girls who are suffering are being held hostage. The government's feminist posturing must end.

Second, people between the ages of 65 and 74 continue to be denied the increase to old age security, which they need more than ever before. Seniors live on fixed incomes, so they cannot deal with such a sharp rise in the cost of living in real time. They are the people most likely to have to make tough choices at the grocery store or the pharmacy, yet the government continues to penalize those who are less well-off and who would like to work more without losing their benefits. Unlike the federal government, inflation does not discriminate against seniors based on their age.

Currently, Canada's income replacement rate, meaning the percentage of income that a senior retains at retirement, is one of the lowest in the OECD. We cannot say that the government is treating seniors with dignity.

There is also the increase to old age security, which should prevent demographic changes from significantly slowing economic activity. Contrary to what the government says, starving seniors aged 65 to 75 will not encourage them to remain employed. That is done by no longer penalizing them when they work.

Not a day goes by that I do not receive a message from citizens about this. This morning, I again received comments from important seniors' groups such as AQDR and FADOQ, and they can be summarized in one word: disappointment. I do not even want to talk about the brilliant decision-makers who want to delay the pension process for 10% of seniors.

Third, let us remind the government that employment insurance is an excellent economic stabilizer in the event of a recession. While more and more analysts fear the possibility of a recession in 2023, the Canadian government seems to be backtracking on the

comprehensive employment insurance reform that they promised last summer.

Essentially, the system has been dismantled over the years. Currently, six of 10 workers who lose their jobs do not qualify for EI. That is significant, it is a majority, it is 60%. Seven years after the government promised reform, time is running out. We must avoid being forced to improvise a new CERB to offset the shortcomings of the system if a recession hits.

During the pandemic, we saw that improvised programs cost a lot more and are much less effective. Above all, the government's financial forecasts show that it does not anticipate many more claims. In fact, the government is forecasting a surplus of \$25 billion in the employment insurance fund by 2028, money that will go to the consolidated fund rather than improve the system's coverage. As for the 26 weeks of sick leave, the measure was in Bill C-30 to update budget 2021, passed 18 months ago, even before the last elections. All that is missing is the government decree to implement it, but those who are sick are still waiting.

One last important thing: Last weekend, I attended the Musicophonie benefit concert for a foundation in our area, the Fondation Louis-Philippe Janvier, which helps young adults suffering from cancer. I was told that the organization does indeed have to make up for the government's lack of financial support. That adds to the unimaginable stress on those who are sick, who should instead be focusing on healing with dignity. Even 26 weeks is inhumane. A person cannot recover properly in that time frame.

In closing, the government is acknowledging the rising cost of living without doing anything about it. It is warning of difficult times ahead this winter without providing a way to get through them. It makes some grim economic predictions without ever considering any of the opposition's proposals as to how to prepare ourselves.

As a final point, I want to talk about supply chains. We learned how fragile they are during the pandemic. Last spring's budget document mentioned the problem 71 times. The budget update mentioned it another 45 times. Neither one includes any measures to tackle the problem, leaving business owners in limbo. The new Liberal-Conservative finance minister missed the opportunity to send a clear message of leadership and instead raised fears about potential austerity. The government is rehashing past measures, implementing what it already announced in the April budget, but there is no indication that it has a clear sense of direction, leaving the people who really need it out in the cold.

For those who lose their jobs, we need EI reform. For those who are sick, we need to increase health transfers. For our seniors, we need to give them more money so they can age with dignity.

Government Orders

• (1240)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Bloc is supporting the legislation and that it has concerns with regard to health care. When I reflect on health care, it is important to recognize that there is a strong role in health care coming from Ottawa, whether it is through the Canada Health Act or through recognizing things from the pandemic such as long-term care, mental health and so forth.

I am wondering if the member could provide her arguments as to why she believes the federal government should not play more of a role in health care. I would ultimately argue that a vast majority of Canadians want a national government that is there for health care and in more ways than just being an ATM.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Winnipeg North for his question, and I will ask him the same question I asked the Minister of Mental Health yesterday.

How is it that he knows more about the health care system than anyone working in Quebec's health department? What does he know about running a hospital that they do not?

In the meantime, patients are being held hostage and waiting on stretchers. Do not talk to me about the debate at the federal level. The federal contribution was originally 50%, and it has dropped to 20% or 21%. That is a huge loss. The government needs to give back what it owes to the Quebec health system.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoy working with my hon. colleague on the status of women committee.

My question is on a lot of what she spoke about and what we work for at the status of women committee in particular. In the fall economic statement, the words "mental health" were only mentioned three times. The Liberal government continues to say that it cares, but its actions show the complete opposite. It continues to solve problems with the problem of inflationary spending.

I am curious to know her thoughts on that aspect of the fall economic statement.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. I enjoy working with her at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women as well.

As I said yesterday to the minister and as we can see, the management of our health care systems is the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. I brought in some organizations during the study in committee. They came to tell us that there are plans on the table that cannot be completed because the organizations do not have the necessary funding. They are being forced to save money by cutting corners because the federal government is not paying its share.

Again, the government says it is championing health care, but it is still incapable of implementing genuine EI reform and it thinks that cancer can be dealt with in 15 weeks.

To come back to mental health, the government needs to leave that to Quebec and the provinces. I think that they already have a plan to address mental health problems and help the women and girls suffering from mental health challenges.

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague with regard to the crisis we are facing in our health care system. It is no secret that health care, whether in Alberta, British Columbia or Quebec, is facing a dire crisis. We are seeing hallway care prioritized and becoming far more common across the country, and we know the federal government must play a role.

The member spoke about the need for enhanced federal spending in our public health care system. However, what we are seeing in my province of Alberta is a concern that I hope she recognizes and shares with me. In Alberta, we are starting to see a decrease in public spending on health care and an increase in the allowance of private surgeries, which is something Canadians do not want.

We know we need a publicly accessible and publicly administered health care system. Does the member agree?

• (1245)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Qu b cois believes the health care system must remain universal and free.

I think health transfers will breathe life into the system. This is important. It is crucial.

With respect to private medicine, as I said, the Bloc Qu b cois is in favour of universal free public health care. That is essential.

That means the federal government has to stop shortchanging the health care system, as it has been doing for far too long. We all know the Liberals and Conservatives have been making cuts since the 1990s. Let us reinvest in our health care system and give Quebec and the provinces the money they need to make good things happen and give sick people the care they deserve.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquiere, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as always, you seem jubilant and you are in shape, so I will be pleased to talk to you about health.

As my colleague pointed out with respect to implementing the economic statement, we do not find the required measures in this bill to counter the reality that affects us today, that being inflation. Members can rest assured; I will not take the same direction as my Conservative colleagues. I do not think that the best way to fight inflation is to feed the gluttons in the oil and gas industry.

Government Orders

As my colleague demonstrated earlier, there are no measures to support seniors, either. This is very disappointing. We have been asking for that for many years now, almost three years.

I would say that the most glaring omission in the economic statement is the increase in health transfers. Whoever watched question period yesterday could see the Minister of Health's usual attitude when we spoke of health transfers, one that I might describe as "stubborn and arrogant". This makes me want to dedicate all of my speaking time to these health transfers we keep hearing about.

I do not want to impugn the government's motives, but I know very well that, through their action, what the Liberals want in the coming weeks is to break the common front that has formed between the provinces in order to reach a cut-rate agreement. My colleague pointed that out earlier. However, the situation will not disappear that easily. The current situation is putting enormous pressure on our health systems. Mandatory overtime for nurses and population aging are but two of the factors that are putting pressure on the system.

I would first like to go back to why we have been making this request for health transfers for such a long time. Let us remember that this involves \$28 billion, which would increase the government's share from 22% to 35%. If we put that into perspective, we know that when the health care system was first created in the early 1960s, for every dollar invested in health, 50¢ came from the federal government and 50¢ from the provincial government. What an interesting system. Health costs were divided fifty-fifty. That is no longer the case today. In Quebec, the government's share is barely 22%.

The pandemic has also played a major role in the drastic rise of health care costs, so much so that everyone now agrees that major federal reinvestments are needed. The Quebec National Assembly passed a unanimous motion in this regard. The circumstances are clear: there are needs. Everyone, except perhaps the Liberal Party, agrees that the federal government is not doing its part.

Now let me try to explain those economic circumstances. I have no choice but to revisit something that is quite annoying to the government and federalists in general, namely the fiscal imbalance. I am not sure if members recall the Séguin report. I am not talking about the guy who has a goat or about Richard Séguin, the singer; I am talking about Yves Séguin, who was a Liberal finance minister. He was not a sovereignist, nor was he trying to embarrass Canada. He simply gave a presentation on Quebec's fiscal situation in relation to the federal government.

As the Séguin report so well said, the definition of fiscal imbalance, according to Yves Séguin, is as follows: the provinces' spending structure is such that expenditures grow faster than the economy, while those of the federal government grow at roughly the same pace. Furthermore, when it wants to revise its spending, the federal government can simply act unilaterally by cutting transfers to the provinces with no other political consequences for itself.

I will come back to this often. We should keep in mind what he said: with no other political consequences for itself.

The federation's major problem is that the federal government can strangle the provinces by cutting its transfer payments, and it

never pays the price for that. Allow me to demonstrate this. We have seen the same thing consistently for 20 years, according to reports from the Conference Board of Canada and the Parliamentary Budget Officer, not just the Séguin report: The federal government rakes in surpluses, and it can balance its finances on the backs of the provinces without paying a price for it.

● (1250)

A 2013-14 Conference Board of Canada report stated that if nothing were to be done in subsequent years, which is what happened, the combined deficit of the provinces could reach \$171 billion in 2034, while the federal government could amass surpluses.

This analysis predates the pandemic, of course, but it does demonstrate that even a neutral organization like the Conference Board of Canada realizes that the fiscal imbalance does exist. The Parliamentary Budget Officer also reported that over the next 25 years, Quebec's revenues will probably be 0.6% less than its spending, while the federal government's revenues will increase rather than decrease.

This does not come from a member trying to provoke the government, but from neutral entities. Canada has a fiscal imbalance problem, and it is usually addressed by cutting transfer payments.

That brings me to our friend, the Minister of Health. He has come out in the last two weeks saying that he is acting in good faith. I would like to see if my colleagues think the Minister of Health is acting in good faith in making these statements. When talking about unconditional transfers, he said, and I am paraphrasing, that all they want is a cheque made out to their finance minister with no strings attached. That is not a plan.

As for sending a cheque to the provinces without a plan, with no strings attached, is it the role of the federal government to establish a health plan? I would simply like to point out that the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over health, with the exception of military hospitals, quarantines, indigenous health and drug approvals. The provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over everything else. Why would the federal government want to come up with a plan of its own?

In my view, the plan should come from the people who have expertise in this field. Who has expertise in health care? It is the people who work in the system, people from within the sector. The Minister of Health has said we need to let health professionals do their jobs. I find that interesting. Perhaps we also need to listen to what they are saying. I do not know if my colleagues recall, but with my colleague's help, we got all the stakeholders in the health sector together: physicians' associations, medical specialists, people who work in public health and the major unions. We brought together all kinds of health care personnel. They came here to Ottawa and told the government that it needs to increase transfers. Why will the Minister of Health not listen to those individuals?

The Minister of Health said we must work together to ensure that patients get the care they need, where and when they need it. I will take the minister at his word. If he wants us to work together, why does he refuse to do what we have been asking of him all along, which is to hold a health summit?

The minister also talks about old ways of doing things. However, the current health care crisis shows that the old ways of doing things do not work. When he talks about old ways of doing things, do members know what it makes me think of? It makes me think of the Liberal government's ongoing cuts. In 1997 and 1998, the government cut \$2.5 billion a year in provincial health transfers. Who paid the price at the time? It was Lucien Bouchard. The same thing was done when a Liberal government was in office. Who paid the price? The Couillard government had to bring in austerity measures.

What is worse, the Minister of Health is talking about effectiveness and results. He basically said that before we can talk about money, we need to agree on the objectives. I can give him objectives for immigration, passports, insurance and old age security. There are 70,000 new retirees who are waiting for their cheques. Worse still, the Liberals implemented a dental cheque scheme that is going to be twice as hard for Quebecers to access.

The culmination of this bad faith is the futile debate. The Minister of Health told us that this debate is futile. The day that the federal government has to invest 42% of its budget in a single budget item, then it can tell me that this debate is futile.

• (1255)

This means that the remaining 58% of Quebec's budget must cover everything else: education, the fight against poverty, child care, infrastructure, municipalities and support for Quebec businesses. Quebec only has 58% of its budget to cover all that. It feels that it is still not enough.

In closing, I would like to say that I had a lofty goal in life, that of making my son and my wife happy. Now, I have another goal, which is to hold the Liberal government to account for all the terrible things it is doing in the area of health care.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation, and I know he is not going to like what I am going to say.

He likes to talk about the 22% health transfer, but I do not know if he is aware that in 1977, which may be before he was born, the federal government transferred tax points to all the provinces. The federal government reduced its tax room and transferred it to the provinces. If we take into consideration the tax room acquired by Quebec and the other provinces, the federal government's contribution to health is actually 33%.

Is my colleague aware of the historic 1977 decision to transfer tax points?

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I am indeed aware, but I feel like asking my colleague whether he is aware that since 1977, health technologies have advanced and the tax points given in 1977 are no longer adequate.

Government Orders

Is he aware that the Séguin report came long after 1977? Is he aware that the reports from the Conference Board and the Parliamentary Budget Officer that prove that the federal government is not paying its share came long after 1977?

It is unacceptable today to know that only 22% of health care funding comes from the federal government.

[*English*]

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech of my colleague from the Bloc, and in particular the conversation around the fiscal imbalance of it. In the context of Alberta, there certainly is a significant fiscal imbalance between transfers going into the federal system and what are being paid out.

More specifically, my question for the member from the Bloc is related to how the Liberals have been hedging a lot of their policy decisions, and we saw a continuation of this in the fall economic statement, on Ottawa determining how provinces should do A, B, C, or D. That flies in the face of what our federation is supposed to be and it is certainly contrary to the work of many provinces. I know there was a meeting with health ministers this past week.

I would be curious to hear his thoughts on how Ottawa should stick to what Ottawa does best and let provinces do what provinces are supposed to do.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague. Respecting jurisdictions is one thing that could improve the federal system, which is completely dysfunctional. Unfortunately, we have a government that is very centralist when it comes to health. We now have a Minister of Mental Health. I did not know that was a federal responsibility.

I completely agree with my colleague. Things would be better if the federal government respected its jurisdictions.

• (1300)

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to ask about the Inuit in Nunavut in northern Quebec who suffer quite similar health disparities to my constituents in Nunavut. What does he have to say about ensuring improvements can be made to address the health disparities suffered by Inuit in northern Quebec?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard: Mr. Speaker, to be honest, I think the first thing that needs to happen is for the Minister of Health to understand that this is not just about who has the power. There are real needs on the ground. Unfortunately, the federal government does not have the skills to analyze those needs. It has to listen to health experts and it has to listen to the provinces.

That is not what it is doing right now. What it is trying to do is make sure it can balance its budget at the provinces' expense.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize that I am appearing virtually and that I am very fortunate to live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Musqueam and Coast Salish peoples.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Ottawa West—Nepean.

We live in serious times. The world continues to grapple with the economic effects of the pandemic. The Russian invasion of Ukraine rages on, costing tens of thousands of lives, and continues to distort the world economy.

Climate change continues to cause droughts and extreme weather events around the world. We saw the devastating impact of the atmospheric river in my home province of British Columbia and, more recent, the disproportionate harm witnessed in nations like Pakistan.

Inflation and rising interest rates are a challenge for millions of Canadians, for our friends, our families and our neighbours. No nation is immune to these effects and Canada is no exception. As leaders, we must be candid about the future and that is exactly what the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has done in this year's fall economic statement.

Canada cannot avoid the global economic slowdown coming our way any more than we could have prevented COVID from reaching our shores once it had begun. Again, as leaders, we must be able to adapt, adjust, revise and modify accordingly.

The fall economic statement lays out a fiscal and economic road map that is targeted, practical and responsive to the current and future needs of Canadians. It takes advantage of Canada's strengths, our record-low unemployment rate, a shrinking deficit, our AAA credit rating, the lowest net debt and deficit-to-GDP ratios and the strongest growth in the G7. We have witnessed historically low unemployment rates. Just last month, the Canadian economy added over 108,000 jobs.

Due to the Government of Canada's strong fiscal position and outperforming provincial economies, we are still capable of making strategic investments, investments in programs like the Canada growth fund, which will help to attract billions of dollars in private capital to create even more well-paying jobs and support Canada's economic transformation.

This year alone, auto manufacturers have committed to billions in private investment to retool our auto sector, to produce EVs and batteries.

The Canada growth fund will help target these kinds of opportunities to attract private investment.

Ensuring Canadian businesses remain competitive is critical if we are to attract private investment and grow the economy. Building upon billions of dollars of net-zero investment since 2016, the government will implement a refundable tax credit equal to 30% of the capital cost of renewable technology. From power generating and storage systems to low-carbon heat equipment and industrial

zero-emission vehicles, helping Canadian businesses go green is not just good for the environment; it makes good economic sense.

To make this transition a reality, Canada must have a steady supply of skilled workers. That is why we are continuing to invest in Canadian workers.

Starting in 2023 to 2024, the fall economic statement proposes to invest \$250 million over five years to help ensure that Canadian workers can thrive in a changing global economy. These investments would include the sustainable jobs training centre that would bring unions, employers and training institutions together. The centre will target areas of high demand, such as sustainable batteries and low-carbon building, as well as help forecast future skills requirements and develop on-site learning to train 15,000 workers.

A new sustainable job stream under the union training and innovation program will support unions in leading the development of green skills training for workers in the trades. It is expected that 20,000 apprentices and journey persons will benefit from this investment.

● (1305)

Finally, the government will create a sustainable jobs secretariat to offer a one-stop shop for workers and employers. That will provide the most up-to-date information on federal programs, funding and services across government departments, as Canada works to build a low-carbon economy with opportunities for everyone.

Most of these policies are long-term solutions, but we know Canadians need help with affordability and housing now. That is why we are rolling out a new dental care plan, starting with children under 12, to help families save this year. The government is also doubling the GST tax credit for six months and will start issuing advance payments of the Canada workers benefit in July.

To help more Canadians buy their first home, we are doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, and we have the tax-free first-home savings account. We will also help increase the supply of housing by banning foreign buyers for two years as of January 1 and by taxing underused housing to limit speculation in the housing market.

To help Canadian students, we have doubled the Canada student grant and are permanently eliminating interest on Canada student loans and apprenticeship loans. The government is committed to supporting young Canadians in the economy. That is why the fall economic statement commits over \$800 million to the youth employment and skills strategy over the next three years.

Immigration is core to our identity as Canadians, while also being a key driver of Canada's economic growth. Helping Canadian businesses access the skilled workers they need now is essential to reducing the labour gap. That is why the government is investing an additional \$50 million in our immigration system and hiring 1,250 new employees. These resources will help tackle backlogs and increase processing capacity, allowing for skilled newcomers to fill critical labour gaps faster.

We stand at a pivotal moment in our history, indeed, in our world history. Climate change continues to threaten the way of life for millions around the world and in Canada. The global economy is still feeling the effects of the pandemic, which is being further aggravated by Russia's ruthless invasion of Ukraine. It is in times like these that Canada has stepped forward to lead.

The future of our earth and our children depends on transitioning away from fossil fuels and toward a green economy. Canada must be a leader in sustainable technology if we are to secure the fruits of this economy. The fall economic statement builds on the billions of dollars in past investments in clean technology and is a clear commitment to ensuring Canada's global competitiveness by continuing to invest in our net-zero economy.

Having the vision to introduce and implement solution-based ideas brings progress, and Canadians elected this government to bring about progress. That is exactly what the fall economic statement would deliver.

● (1310)

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

I listened to my colleague's speech in which he spoke about climate change. What he did not speak about is affordability. I understand that we certainly do need to recognize climate change, and I look forward to my party leader's plan, which I know will inspire confidence among all Conservatives and hopefully all Canadians. However, how does the hon. member heat his house? How do his constituents heat their houses? What I am hearing from people is that they cannot afford to heat their houses because of tax upon tax, taxes that the member and his party support.

It is a simple question. How does the member heat his house?

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member from Kamloops. It is a beautiful place in British Columbia, and I enjoy going there.

We absolutely understand that times are tough for so many Canadians today. Over the last couple of months, our government has put forward plans to provide a \$500 top-up to the Canadian housing benefit, provide up to \$1,300 through the Canada dental benefit for

Government Orders

low-income kids under 12 and double the GST tax credit for six months.

As Canadians and the Canadian economy contend with global challenges, our fall economic statement builds on this responsible fiscal plan. It proposes new targeted measures to support Canadians, such as the ones he is talking about, who need it the most and grow the Canadian economy.

This includes permanently eliminating interest on federal student apprenticeship loans and the launching of the new Canada growth fund, which will help bring Canada billions of dollars in new private investment required to reduce our emissions, grow our economy and create good jobs.

We are creating a new quarterly Canada's workers benefit with automatic advanced payments and delivering on key pillars of the government's plan to make housing more affordable, including the creation of the new tax-free first home savings account and a doubling of the first-time home buyers' tax credit, ensuring that property—

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I believe the member has already had his 10-minute speech. We do not need another one. Perhaps we could get onto some questions from members in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: I will remind all members of the House that the shorter the questions, the shorter the answers, and the more people who get to participate in the debate. I will remind folks to answer the questions. Let us ask quick questions and give quick answers.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I cannot guarantee that I will make this short, but I will try.

My colleague talked about climate change; I find that interesting.

In Longueuil, there is an airport. The Pratt & Whitney company is involved in research into developing a hybrid electric engine. It is very involved in this. What is going on there is very important work. There is even a flight school in Longueuil—Saint-Hubert with an electrically powered aircraft. It is starting.

In Quebec, we make electric buses, electric snowmobiles, and even electric personal watercraft. This is the future, but the future takes investment.

Government Orders

Meanwhile, the government of the member who just spoke is investing \$8.5 billion U.S. a year in an energy of the past: fossil fuels.

If we took all this money and invested it in the technologies of tomorrow, we would create jobs and wealth, and we would fight greenhouse gases. Does my colleague agree with me?

[*English*]

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, the member talked about electric buses. The riding of Steveston—Richmond East has made tremendous investments in businesses, such as Line Electric and Corvus Energy, and investments made in electric batteries. That is a \$2-billion investment to make sure that electric batteries are developed domestically in Canada. Those are measures showing the investments we have made in clean energy and clean technology.

• (1315)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am going to ask a similar question to the one I asked the parliamentary secretary. The Canada recovery dividend needs to be extended to oil and gas companies. In his response, the parliamentary secretary said they are working with oil and gas companies, but he failed to describe how.

Can this member describe how they are working with these oil and gas companies to address climate change?

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, we are working closely to move forward on the climate change initiatives we are introducing to work with oil companies to transition to clean energy.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member for Steveston—Richmond East did a great job with his speech. He talked about immigration. I would like to hear more of his thoughts on how the levels plan of increasing to over 500,000 new immigrants by 2025 will help benefit our country and help us deal with the labour shortages we are seeing across Canada today.

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for all his great work in Calgary.

If we look back at the unemployment rates we have historically hit, we are having all-time lows in these recent times, all-time lows in Canadian history. We have strong, good-paying jobs coming from a lot of the investments we have already made.

We need the skilled labour, and the people we are looking at with the levels plan are the people who are getting their education here. International students are coming here in droves because this is the place to be. This is the place they want to live, work and play. It will only benefit the growth we are talking about. The economic development, the investment—

The Deputy Speaker: Continuing debate, we have the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to speak to Bill C-32, the fall economic statement implementation act, 2022.

I hope that we will pass it quickly through the House because it includes much-needed supports for Canadians during these challenging times. The last few years have not been easy. We have gone through a global pandemic. Many of us have lost loved ones. The

economy shut down overnight. We witnessed horrific conditions in long-term care homes, and many of the existing divides in society were made visible, including inequalities that have gone ignored for too long.

[*Translation*]

Since March 2020, the world has changed. I know that many Canadians are struggling with illness, job loss and isolation. Front-line workers have physically risked their own lives and mental health to be there for others, domestic violence has increased and teenagers have missed a key milestone in their formative years.

Now, when everyone wants to get back to normal, we are faced with inflation and the rising cost of living. Our government will continue to be there to help Canadians and build a strong economy for the future.

[*English*]

Just as it seems like we may be putting the pandemic behind us, the world is facing a rise in tyranny and authoritarianism with emboldened dictators around the world acting more aggressively, triggering conflicts and egregious human rights violations. The most alarming of which is Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine. This has shaken a world already reeling from the pandemic with supply chain disruptions; global food insecurity, which has left 50 million people in 45 countries on the brink of famine; and energy shortages, which have led to a global inflation crisis.

At the same time, the world continues to face a climate emergency with extreme weather events that have led to devastation, as we saw recently in Atlantic Canada with hurricane Fiona and, earlier this year, the rare derecho that hit parts of Ontario and Quebec, including my riding of Ottawa West—Nepean.

Canadians are resilient, but these have been trying times. Most of my constituents just want life to go back to normal. We are all exhausted, worried about our quality of life and uncertain about the future, but these are exactly the times when we all need to pull together the most. Through all of this, our Liberal government has been there, responding to keep Canadians safe and healthy and to mitigate against the worst effects of these crises.

Government Orders

I am not going to stand here and pretend that everything is going to be okay tomorrow. According to the fiscal update, while we will see improvements, we will likely still be battling inflation and possible economic slowdown for potentially another 18 months or more as the global economy corrects itself. There are two things we can do. First, we need to keep putting in place the building blocks for Canada to not only recover, but also prosper and lead the world in the new economy. Second, we need to ensure that those who need it most are able to make it through, and that the opportunities we create will benefit everyone.

Let us start with a few facts. One of our key economic goals during the height of the pandemic was to avoid major layoffs, business bankruptcies and high rates of unemployment coming out of it. In this, we were successful. There are 400,000 more Canadians working today than before the pandemic. We have recovered 116% of pre-pandemic jobs and our economy is larger than it was before.

At the same time, the fall economic statement is fiscally responsible. Canada's net debt-to-GDP ratio is the lowest in the G7. Our inflation rate is lower than the G20 average, the European average, the U.K. and the U.S. As, well, both Moody's and Standard and Poor's have confirmed Canada's AAA credit rating with a stable outlook. We are also investing in skills training, tax credits and a Canada growth fund for the new green economy, both to tackle climate change and the costs of climate-related disasters and to make sure Canada is well positioned to benefit from the economic opportunities of a net-zero economy.

However, none of this changes the fact that people are hurting right now. That is why the fall economic statement includes supports targeted specifically for those who need it most. We are doubling the GST rebate for the next six months. In fact, last week, 11 million Canadians automatically received hundreds of dollars in their bank accounts because of this.

● (1320)

About 4.2 million low-income working Canadians are receiving an extra \$1,200 a year through the Canada workers benefit. With this fall economic statement, they will receive this four times a year instead of having to wait until tax time.

About 1.8 million low-income renters will receive a \$500 top-up through the Canada housing benefit. Families with children under 12 will be eligible for up to \$1,300 to cover dental care. We are also eliminating interest on all federal student and apprenticeship loans permanently. This is in addition to previous measures such as increases to the OAS and the GIS for seniors and the Canada child benefit, which have already lifted 1.3 million Canadians out of poverty, including 435,000 children and 45,000 seniors.

Also, we are addressing issues that contribute to the wage gap between women and men, including pay equity legislation, and are cutting child care fees by 50% and ultimately to \$10 a day. This is putting thousands of dollars back into the pockets of Canadian families and allowing more women to stay in the workforce.

On top of that, we are making sure that in these uncertain times, vital programs such as employment insurance and the Canada pension plan will be there when Canadians need them. Let us get the facts straight. The opposition is referring to the regular annual in-

crease to EI and CPP premiums as payroll taxes. This is misleading. Putting money away for retirement or in case people lose their jobs is not a tax. It is a safety net and it is essential.

With respect to the so-called taxes on groceries and home heating, what the opposition is talking about is the price on pollution. This is a revenue-neutral tax, which means that every single dollar is returned to Canadians in the province where it was collected. Because everybody gets the same amount back, it means the people who spend the least and need the most will get more. In Ontario, eight out of 10 Canadians are benefiting, getting more in the rebate than what they will pay. If they are seniors or students living in a one-bedroom apartment and taking public transit, they will pay far less for the price on pollution than the amount they get back. Therefore, as this so-called carbon tax goes up, the amount people get back will also go up. This will help not only the people who need it, but also the people who are doing their part in their households to fight climate change.

There are those on the other side of the House who say that a few hundred dollars here and there make no difference, so I want to talk about a young woman who called my office a few months ago. She was very embarrassed to say that she had resorted to using food banks. They only allow people a certain number of points and she had run out of points for the month. This call happened to be the day after the climate action incentive was distributed and I mentioned this to her. While she was on the phone with me she checked her bank account, and she said there was money in her account and that she could now get groceries.

The amounts that our government is providing make a real and tangible difference, and I hope all members will vote for this.

● (1325)

[*Translation*]

While it cannot solve all the problems in the global economy, the fall economic statement lays the groundwork for a strong recovery. This includes hundreds of additional dollars by doubling the GST/HST rebate, an additional \$500 for low-income renters, \$1,300 for dental care for children under 12, and an additional \$300 every three months for workers under the Canada workers benefit.

Government Orders

We have been there for Canadians during the pandemic and we will continue to be there.

[*English*]

The fall economic statement not only includes vital supports for the most vulnerable Canadians during these difficult times, but also lays the groundwork for stability and future prosperity, a prosperity that we will make sure is shared by everyone. I know that after the last two years, it is very hard for many Canadians to be optimistic, but our economy is strong, our position is secure and our government has Canadians' backs.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the hon. member.

You spoke about facts, targets, housing benefits and the most vulnerable Canadians. Can you please explain this to me? This morning, the Auditor General of Canada, in paragraphs 20 to 24, made some comments on that. I am going to read paragraph 20 to you. It states:

[A]lthough 5 years have gone by since the launch of the federal government's National Housing Strategy, there is still no organization in the federal government taking the lead on Canada's target to prevent and reduce chronic homelessness by half by 2028. In addition, the organizations did not know whether their efforts so far had improved housing outcomes for vulnerable Canadians.

This is my concern. We have a lot of single senior females who cannot afford housing. They are living in their cars. How is the Liberal government going to help my seniors?

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind members to run questions through the Chair. I know that sometimes we get passionate about them.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to hear the hon. member opposite talk about support for housing, because in the fall economic statement we are including a \$500 top-up for low-income renters through the Canada housing benefit, which is one of the benefits from our \$70-billion national housing strategy.

I would add that this is very tangible. Right in my riding, at Michele Heights we have been able to build, through federal money, new community housing for families. We have also been able to build, at the Carlington Community Health Centre, affordable seniors housing for the very seniors the member was mentioning, which is right above a health centre so that these seniors have all of the supports they need when they go down the elevator.

This is making a difference, and I am very glad to see that my hon. colleague is so concerned about housing that she will vote for the fall economic statement implementation act.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the Auditor General tabled four reports. In one of them, she mentions that Infrastructure Canada and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation are not talking to each other at all about the national housing strategy. There is a glaring communication problem.

Similarly, in the economic statement, there is a complete lack of collaboration with colleagues in the same government. The Minis-

ter of Innovation, Science and Industry talks about reforming the Competition Bureau, but there is absolutely nothing in the economic statement.

My question is simple. Do people talk to each other on the government side? Are they working together?

● (1330)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Mr. Speaker, housing is necessary. The budget for housing is \$70 billion.

[*English*]

I would add that right in my riding, with the CMHC's help, we were able to build a new women's shelter. There was an old shelter in a house that was basically falling down, and now we have Nelson House, which not only is a women's shelter for women and their families, but is accessible and modular.

Opposition members say they do not see the results of our housing strategy, but all they have to do is drive 15 minutes down the road here in Ottawa to see what has been built for people with the national housing strategy.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I believe there are important measures in this fall economic statement, but it is important that on behalf of my constituents, we talk about the things that are not there so we can invite the government to hopefully take up some serious issues that are facing Canadians.

One of those issues from the community members of Edmonton Griesbach is housing. We are seeing a housing crisis, and it is not just in my community but from coast to coast to coast. Beyond that, we need to see a true mental health strategy. We also need to see a real tackling of the problem we are seeing with the drug-poisoning crisis.

Would the member speak to these three incredibly important issues facing my community?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Mr. Speaker, I have too short a time to talk about all of the initiatives, but in the fall economic statement, there is the \$500 top-up for housing for the people receiving the Canada housing benefit.

I am very pleased that the member mentioned mental health, because our status of women committee right now is doing an incredibly important study on the mental health of young women and girls. I know that his colleague is working very closely with the rest of the committee members to make sure that we are addressing what is truly a crisis. The number one issue that is raised by my youth council is mental health, and it is the reason we will be there for Canadians.

I look forward to working together further with all members of the House to make sure that we address these important issues.

Government Orders

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will say at the outset that I am splitting my time with the fabulous member for Haldimand—Norfolk.

We are debating the fiscal update, or the fall economic statement, and when we look at the update, it is important that we have some context for the environment it was put into. Let us go back seven years to when the government was elected.

At that time, the soon-to-be Prime Minister said there would be a tiny deficit, one so small that we could not even see it: a measly \$10 billion that would disappear by the end of his first term. At the end of his first term, there was \$100 billion in pre-COVID deficit spending. That is literally thousands of dollars of burden that he put on the backs of Canadians. During COVID, there is no doubt there was some good money spent to support Canadians. The Conservatives supported programs like the wage subsidy, but we wanted controls on the wage subsidy to make sure multi-billion dollar corporations were not buying back shares or giving dividends at the same time they were receiving government money.

In addition to that COVID money, \$200 billion, according to the Prime Minister's own Parliamentary Budget Officer, went out the door in non-COVID-related dollars. That equates to \$5,400 for every woman, man and child in Canada. That is \$5,400 for non-COVID-related spending. For a family of four, that is \$20,000.

I spend a lot of time, as I am sure all members in the House do, with Canadians when travelling. Of course, we had the unnecessary, unneeded and very expensive election, but I did have the great opportunity during that time to spend my time talking to constituent after constituent. Not one of them had an extra \$20,000 in their bank account because of this excess spending, so I question the value of that money spent.

The reality of an extra \$200 billion, \$400 billion or \$500 billion in spending is that the government does not have the money. The government has three ways of raising money. One is by going to the markets and asking for a loan, and it did not have the fiscal framework or the ability to borrow \$500 billion from the markets. The second is by raising taxes. Even the current government did not have the stomach to raise taxes that much that quickly. Finally is by printing money. That is through a fancy term called quantitative easing, where the government sells bonds and buys them back itself. In reality, it has the same effect as printing money.

For the last more than 2,000 years, we know what happens in this story, from the ancient Romans to the Weimar Republic to Yugoslavia shortly after World War II to Argentina, to name just a few examples. Actually, there is one right here in Canada. There was a prime minister here by the name of Pierre Elliott Trudeau who engaged in the same type of money printing, and guess what we got. We got inflation.

There was one individual who stood up over and over again and said that we would get inflation and that we should be worried about inflation. That was the member for Carleton, who was to become the official opposition leader. He said that inflation was on the way, and I heard heckles and people saying no. In fact, I cannot believe this is not the biggest news headline every day as we sit in perhaps the biggest monetary crisis of my lifetime.

We had a deputy leader saying that there was going to be no inflation, none. The Liberals said we should not worry about it and that the real problem was deflation. Talk about getting it wrong. Holy mackerel. Then we heard the Prime Minister say in public, not just in the quietness of his own home, that he did not think about monetary policy. Well, that is obvious.

• (1335)

As we see now, inflation is out of control. The inflation numbers will be coming out again and we will see what they are, but I guarantee they will not be in the Bank of Canada's target rate of 1% to 3%. Inflation is not just the numbers, it is not just the spreadsheets, it is not just the statistics; it is having a real impact on the lives of Canadian.

Parties on the other side of the spectrum like to say that the Conservatives are heartless. What is heartless is releasing a fall economic statement in the throes of one of the greatest affordability crises, with high inflation rates, and not addressing it. That means we will continue to see record use of food banks. In one month alone, in this great country that I love so much, 1.5 million Canadians went to food banks, a third of which were children. Five hundred thousand children in our great land were forced to go to a food bank, because the Prime Minister does not think about monetary policy. He should think again. Canadians are really struggling. Twenty per cent more than ever before are using food banks because the Liberals have failed Canadians over and over again.

What was the response in the fall economic statement to the affordability crisis, such as single moms not being able to feed their children; seniors not being able to make it to the end of the month, not being to pay their rent; young adults not being able to afford houses? We are going to have a 2% tax on share buybacks. I have had a number of constituents, neighbours and friends come to me saying they are having a tough time. They are having challenges. What we really need is a 2% tax on share buybacks, because that will create greater amounts of capital incorporation, which will create economic prosperity for all. Is this for real? Is this serious? This is a real document.

Government Orders

As we go on in this document, a document prepared by the Liberals, here is what it says. The bad news is that we are going to have high inflation. The bad news is we are going to have high interest rates. The topper is that we might be going toward a recession. The way the government assembled this document would be funny if it were not so sad. In their economic projection, the Liberals have said that we will have one-quarter of negative growth at baseline and the other one at 0%. Two negative quarters make a recession. It was like my nine year old changed his homework a little so he did not have to call it a recession. By the way, somehow inflation rates, which will come out tomorrow, will drop to 3.5% in 2023, less than 50 days from now. I am not going to buy some swamp land from the Liberals and I am certainly not going to accept that ridiculous notion.

With the fall economic statement, the government had a real opportunity to do something great to help Canadians with the affordability crisis to get them back on their feet by getting off their backs. It could have reduced the carbon tax. We are the only country in the G7 that did not do that. The Liberals had the opportunity to truly help Canadians by reducing the payroll tax, but they seem intent on penalizing, not rewarding, all those Canadians who are working so hard. They take more and more. Their greed knows no end. The government is out of ideas and it needs to be taken out of its misery.

• (1340)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always interesting to hear the member opposite.

One thing I have noticed is that he and his colleagues continue to criticize the federal government for introducing COVID-19 emergency programs. I understand the criticism, but I do not agree with it. If they have that criticism, why did they support those programs? Why did they vote in favour of them?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I may have to repeat my speech for the member as he must have not heard it or he was not here.

It is not the money that was put toward the COVID relief, which we did support; it is the \$200 billion in non-COVID dollars and the \$100 billion in deficit spending prior to COVID. That \$300 billion is more than \$20,000 for a family of four. It is that money we want back in the pockets of Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my Conservative friends will be pleased because I am going to triple my question. This morning, I asked my Conservative colleagues the same question twice, but I did not get an answer, so I am going to ask it a third time.

The Liberal government opposite refuses to provide proper funding for the health care system, funding that is sorely needed, especially in Quebec. There is no way that my Quebec colleagues here have not seen the pictures of Quebec's emergency rooms. It is truly outrageous.

The Liberal government is saying no. If the Conservative Party were to take office tomorrow, which is not necessarily something

we want to happen, would the Conservatives agree to increase health care funding from 22% to 35%, yes or no?

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, what we can all agree upon is that a strong balance sheet helps us with all of our priorities, regardless of what they are. In 2023, we are forecasted to spend \$43 billion in interest payments. That is more than the health transfers to all the provinces. What we can do is get our balance sheet, just as it was underneath Stephen Harper, under control and then we have more money to spend on all our priorities, including health care.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, Food Banks Canada said that nearly 1.5 million visits were made to food banks this year. This is a 15% increase from the previous year. At the same time, the revenue of Loblaws was \$12.12 billion. I say these two figures because I wonder where the food banks got their groceries. I am sure they bought them from Loblaws.

Does the member not agree that the Canada recovery dividend needs to be extended to these kinds of for-profit corporations?

• (1345)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, the institution whose revenue has raised higher than Loblaws and higher than any oil and gas company is the federal Government of Canada. If anyone needs to give a refund or a dividend back, it is the Canadian government. It is called tax relief. It is called not tripling the carbon tax. It is called reducing the payroll tax and incentivizing workers entrepreneurs instead of penalizing and demonizing them.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member can explain to Canadians why the Conservative Party continues to vote against measures that would give breaks to Canadians in all regions. In this legislation, for example, we have interest relief. Students who go to post-secondary facilities will not have to pay interest if the legislation passes.

Why does the Conservative Party consistently vote against supporting Canadians?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals just do not get it. Their seven years of tax and spend have put students in a difficult position. They are having to go to food banks. They are giving up the dream of home ownership. They want more. They want a Conservative government.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to the fall economic statement implementation act, 2022.

Government Orders

There is an adage that is found in the *Book of Proverbs*, written by one of the wisest men who ever lived. King Solomon wrote, thousands of years ago, “A good man leaves an inheritance to his children’s children.” It is a statement that reminds us that the decisions we make today impact on the future. They can impact, and do impact, on future generations to come.

How much more is this true of leaders who are in charge of our nation’s finances. This proverb teaches us that if we want to be truly good, if we want to be wise and if we want to leave an inheritance for our children’s children, we must conserve. We cannot just spend. We must save and invest in our future.

As elected leaders, we have been entrusted with a profound responsibility to be stewards of our democracy and to preserve our Canadian way.

I am very concerned about the direction of Canada and about the short-sightedness of the government. Canadians want clarity about the social contract that they have engaged in with the government. They know what they are giving, but they do not know what they are getting back. Often their questions are dismissed, laughed at and mocked by the government.

Canadians want answers to simple questions like: How can we buy an electric car to save the environment, when we can barely afford food to eat? Why does the government raise taxes on home heating, fuel and groceries, only to refund us a pittance of what has taken in the first place?

Canadians just want to be able to fill up their gas tanks, to have a roof over their head, to not have to skip meals and to be able to take their children to school and to soccer practice.

Canada is almost \$1.3 trillion dollars in debt. The government has spent more than all other governments combined in the history of this nation. Right now, Canadians owe \$56,000. That is their share of the national debt, and it is increasing by the day. Next year, interest payments alone will be nearly as much as the Canada health transfer to all provinces combined. That is at a time when people are literally dying in emergency rooms because they cannot be seen within a reasonable time by doctors.

Just a few years ago, the Prime Minister promised to never go over \$10 billion deficit. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 40% of all new spending measures have had nothing to do with COVID. That is over \$205 billion dollars.

The Liberal government used COVID as a cover for its non-essential, wasteful spending. The Prime Minister cannot be trusted with our finances. His government cannot be trusted. Things are falling apart.

The government spent \$54 million on an unnecessary app, the ArriveCAN app, that discriminated against seniors without smart phones and accidentally sent thousands of vaccinated Canadians into quarantine. One developer replicated this \$54 million project in one weekend and said that it should not have cost more than \$250,000. Several contractors said that they never worked on the app and that they never received the millions of dollars the government said it paid them.

Millions of dollars are missing for which the Liberals just cannot account. The Liberals’ out-of-control has led to inflation, which has caused an increase in the cost of living.

The price of food has seen double-digit price increases, and 1.5 million Canadians visited the food bank last month, which is an increase of over 35% from last year. People are worried that they will have to choose between food and heating their homes this winter.

The cost of housing has become unaffordable. Even for people who do not have mortgages on their property, it is difficult to pay the utilities bills and the cost of heating. Young people cannot afford to move out of their parent’s homes. Seniors and those on disability do not have the ability to earn extra money to supplement their income. People on fixed incomes are living an unaffordable existence.

● (1350)

I met a lady named Hilary this weekend in my riding. She told me that to buy half a tank of oil it cost \$1,100, of which \$300 was government taxes, and this will only heat her home for one month. I receive calls from farmers, manufacturers and small businesses that are desperate for workers, yet we see massive backlogs at Immigration and Citizenship Canada. Despite this, the government still plans to triple the carbon tax on home heating, gas and food.

We are seeing billions of dollars of spending in this fall economic statement, yet the same problem of lack of transparency still exists. The Liberals have announced the Canada growth fund in the fall economic statement, which is found in part 4 of the act. The fund will largely give corporations money to undertake projects in the area of climate change with investments toward a net-zero economy. While I and most Canadians support protecting the environment, it must be done in a transparent way that yields accountability and reduces emissions.

Under the growth fund, we see a reference to ESG, “Environmental, Social, and Governance”, stated on page 30 of the fall economic statement. While the government has embraced this vague term, the average Canadian does not know what it means, but we have seen these types of pet projects before, like the growth fund, that have resulted in outrageous waste. The \$35-billion Canada Infrastructure Bank has not finished one project that the Liberals announced in 2016, six years ago.

Statements by Members

The whole approach has been a failure. It was supposed to attract private sector investments, but has repeatedly failed to do so. Instead, the Liberals are spending millions on bureaucracy, overhead, operations and executive termination packages that yield no financial benefit to the taxpayer. Now we are expected to trust the government with billions of dollars in this Canada growth fund, a taxpayer-funded investment fund that, just like the Canada Infrastructure Bank, will subsidize experimental corporate private business projects.

Despite the failure of the Infrastructure Bank in getting a single project completed, the Liberal government wants to invest \$15 billion under the promise of a net-zero economy in a similar scheme, but Canadians have questions about the Canada growth fund and about ESG. Here are some of the questions that came to my office.

Since we know that businesses will have to register their products and services and that all transactions will be digitally recorded and tracked under ESG, environmental, social and governance, does that mean that the spending of Canadians will also be tracked?

How will this accounting for the entire emissions life cycle of a project affect small and medium-sized business owners? Will small and medium-sized business owners endure more red tape, and thereby have to spend thousands of dollars on lawyers, accountants and environmental, social and governance consultants in order to comply with this ESG requirement?

Since the goal is to reduce the carbon footprint and reach net zero, will there be limits on what Canadians can buy, where they can go and how much fuel and products they can consume? These are natural questions that Canadians are asking.

There is so much that is broken in our system, and we are not going to fix it with more Liberal policies and continued spending that lacks transparency and accountability. We cannot move forward when questions that Canadians are asking about policies, like environmental, social and governance and how this will affect their lives are left unanswered and mocked by the Liberal government.

This is not about politics. This is about the future of Canada. This is about making sure that we leave a good inheritance for our children's children. That is why, in good conscience, I cannot vote in favour of this reckless, inflationary bill that lacks transparency.

• (1355)

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past couple of days, during the debate of this bill, all I have been hearing from the Conservatives' side are highly partisan campaign-style slogans.

The hon. member opened up her debate by talking about the future. Today, we know that the world population has surpassed eight billion. There is no bigger issue for the world right now other than climate change.

That is why the government came up with the carbon pricing system, where the provinces can come up with their own systems or they can adopt the federal system. With that, we offer rebates, growing from \$300 plus to \$700 in the province of Ontario. I think it is working to reduce emissions and combat climate change.

Does the hon. member have any substantial, real suggestions or possible amendments to this bill that would help us fight climate change?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that I have a master's in environmental studies. I do not focus on slogans. The environment is something that I do not believe is a partisan issue. It is a very important issue that we should not be using to advance our political agenda.

What I see from the Liberals is that they are making life more unaffordable by tripling the taxes on home heating, gas and fuel. The Liberals are not serious about protecting their environment. They have not even met their targets under the Paris accord. They are not serious. It is a slogan for them and they know the meaning of a slogan.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not necessarily agree with the environmental strategy that the Conservatives have, but it is very spectacular that the government is number 58 out of 64 and bragging about its environmental record. I think we can agree on that.

Coming back to the motion that we are talking about right now, three hospitals in my riding have had their emergency rooms shut down repeatedly. In fact, in October, in Port Hardy, for 28 days of the month there were no emergency services offered for the whole evening and night.

I am wondering if the member shares my concern about the reality that we are seeing no investment from the federal government to support provinces in being better able to deliver these services.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, indeed, Conservatives do share that concern about our failing health care system. One of the reasons the health care system is failing is that the government has spent more than all other previous governments in the history of this country combined.

By next year, we will be paying more on our interest payments on our loans than we are paying in the health care transfer. This is the reason we have a failing health care system. We need to get our finances in order and stop wasteful spending.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was World Diabetes Day. I want to recognize the patients, advocates, health care professionals and others who are working hard to fight diabetes.

Statements by Members

Yesterday, I was pleased to meet with JoJo and Martin who are advocating as part of Kids For a Cure. I want to thank all researchers who are working across the country to defeat diabetes. Through the national framework for diabetes, this government is working collaboratively to support those Canadians and indigenous people living with diabetes.

I also want to commend the efforts of Diabetes Canada, JDRF Canada, Diabète Québec, Indigenous Nurses Association and many more. I encourage all parliamentarians to attend Diabetes Canada's reception on the Hill, on November 23, for an empowering evening and the opportunity to celebrate this achievement.

I invite all Canadians to learn more about diabetes so we can take action to prevent it and better support people living with diabetes.

* * *

RICHARD ROSS WILSON

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, heaven has another angel. On Saturday, November 5, Richard Ross Wilson returned to be with God. Rick, as he was known to friends, was larger than life. He was intelligent, kind, compassionate and was always the first to step up when he saw the need.

When diagnosed with ALS, he did not worry about himself. He worried about his family. He turned his attention to his fellow Canadians who would be diagnosed with this terrible disease after he was gone.

As a board member for ALS Action Canada, he poured his heart and soul into helping others. They say that the measure of a man is not, "How did he die?" It is, "How did he live?" It is not, "What did he gain?" It is, "What did he give?" These are the units that measure the worth of a man.

This is a loss not just for the Wilson family but also for all of Canada. To Brett and the Wilson family, I want them to know we are thinking of them and we are praying for them. Canada needs a rare disease strategy now. Time is not on our side.

* * *

COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently Coptic Orthodox Church leaders visited Parliament. The delegation was led by His Grace Bishop Boulos and included Father Marcos Messih, Father Raphael Bichara, Madame Mireille Mishriky and Adel Boulos.

I had the pleasure of working with the community, and particularly with Father Shenouda Boutros of St. Mary Coptic Orthodox Church in Nepean. We cannot ignore the growing religious intolerance and sectarian violence against Coptic Christians in Egypt in recent years directly affecting the families of Canadian Coptic Christians.

I would like to use this opportunity to recognize the contributions that Canadian Coptic Christians have made to the socio-economic development of our country, adding to our rich, multi-faith and multicultural fabric.

[*Translation*]

AMBULANCE SIMULATOR

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, recently, Guy Lussier, of Lussier Chevrolet Buick GMC in Saint-Hyacinthe, and Robert-François Demers, of Simleader, a high-tech company in the Saint-Hyacinthe region, announced a world first: an ambulance simulator. This model is built entirely in Saint-Hyacinthe.

These simulators are complex, ultrarealistic and provide total immersion, which will enable student paramedics to perfect their driving techniques and medical procedures in realistic road conditions. Clearly, this technology will improve training and education in ambulance care.

These simulators are also environmentally friendly, as they are based on old ambulances that would normally end up in the landfill. Rebuilt with new materials, they are also 100% electric.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to congratulate the two Saint-Hyacinthe area companies behind this great invention that can only improve the world of health care on a national and international scale.

We are very proud of them. Congratulations.

* * *

● (1405)

[*English*]

LABOUR

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today we welcome to Parliament Hill members of the Unifor national executive. They are here to talk about the challenges and opportunities for Canada's workers. I am especially proud to welcome Dave Cassidy and Dana Dunphy from Unifor Local 444.

Unifor represents more than 315,000 workers across every sector of Canada's economy, and together our partnership is building an economy that works for everyone. This includes the battery plant in Windsor that will create 5,000 good-paying auto jobs.

We are partnering on skills training. We are listening and delivering on child care and dental care, and making post-secondary more affordable. We are modernizing EI to make sure it is there for workers when they need it.

There is more work ahead to make essentials like housing more affordable. However, building a better Canada starts with a solidarity that rises up to defend workers' rights and freedoms when they are under assault and a solidarity that delivers for workers and all Canadians.

*Statements by Members***RECOGNITION OF MILITARY SERVICE**

Mr. Chris d'Entremont (West Nova, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, on Remembrance Day, Canadians from across the country paused to reflect and honour the many contributions and sacrifices made by brave men and women in uniform who served and continue to serve our country with the utmost courage, bravery and respect.

It is because of veterans like Jim McRae from my riding of West Nova that we have been fortunate to enjoy the liberties we hold today, living in a free, safe and democratic country. Jim, who turns 105 years old at the end of the month, is in fact the last living veteran of the Second World War to be still wearing the Distinguished Flying Cross. From joining our military in 1941 to serving our community as a firefighter and a bus driver, Jim is a true example of someone who devoted his life to public service by proudly serving the country we all truly love. Veterans like Jim McRae are living reminders to us and to future generations that freedom is not free and that we need to carry a torch of remembrance in memory of their legacy.

I ask members to please join me in wishing Jim an early happy birthday. We are forever grateful and shall never forget.

* * *

LIONS DAY ON PARLIAMENT HILL

Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for over 30 years my dad was a Lions Club member. For over 100 years, the Lions of Canada have been pillars of Canadian communities, empowering thousands of hard-working volunteers to enrich their neighbourhoods, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international co-operation. Today, I had the pleasure of meeting with past Lions council chairperson Paul Cousins from my riding, along with his colleagues Beryl, Marianne and Bernie, as part of an inaugural Lions Day on Parliament Hill.

In addition to being great people, these Leos reminded me that Canada is filled with compassionate, dedicated individuals who love their communities. The ethos of the Lions Club can be found in their words, "Learn, Discover, Act, and Celebrate". These words transcend formulas and borders, and we as parliamentarians would do well to take them to heart.

I thank the organizers and the Leos here in Ottawa and across the country for their service and spirit.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while trained as a professional forester, my father worked some 25 years in and around the Canadian mining industry. I too worked adjacent to it, as an accountant, early in my career. It is from that history and with great respect that today I recognize the important work done by the Mining Association of Canada.

The "towards sustainable mining" initiative of MAC is changing the industry around the world. This initiative supports mining companies in managing environmental and social responsibilities essential to our transition to a green economy. The world needs critical

minerals; equally, the world needs mining to be greener. Our Liberal government remains committed to making Canada a world leader in both sustainability and the supply of critical minerals for clean technologies. The Mining Association of Canada has ambitious climate goals. I look forward to working with it and with these goals.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Liberal government came to power seven years ago, there has been a 32% increase in violent crime in Canada. There were 124,000 more violent crimes last year than when the Prime Minister first took office. That is not just a number. It is tens of thousands of families and women and children who have been harmed, most of all in our vulnerable communities.

Canadians deserve far better than the revolving door of criminals that terrorize our streets with assaults, stabbings, murders, car thefts and break and enters. Frankly, it is out of control, and the Liberal government is only making it worse.

However, there is hope on the horizon. The new Conservative leader, as prime minister, would restore peace and security in our communities. He would end years of soft-on-crime Liberal policies that have allowed dangerous criminals and gangs to run free in our communities. Only Conservatives will make sure the worst criminals are kept behind bars. Only we will put the safety of Canadian families, women and children first, just as Canadians deserve.

* * *

● (1410)

HOUSING

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, creating housing rapidly to address the housing crisis is a priority for the government. That is why I was pleased to hear that the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion has announced a third round of rapid housing funding that non-profit housing providers in my great city of Hamilton are eligible to apply for: in total, \$1.5 billion dollars for communities to address their housing and homelessness action plans. We know that RHI investments help vulnerable seniors, people living with disabilities, women and children fleeing family violence, and many more.

Statements by Members

As a former city councillor and past president of CityHousing Hamilton, I had the opportunity to work on the planning, design and construction of two rapid housing projects, including the city's first modular build. To date, we have funded over 120 new units in the city of Hamilton with \$34 million in support from our rapid housing fund. Local providers, like Indwell, the YWCA, Good Shepherd and CityHousing Hamilton, are anxious to build more, and there is more work to be done. The government will continue to provide the necessary resources to address our affordable housing needs.

* * *

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we all know that Canada is number one. Unfortunately, we are number one for the priciest cellphone bills, number one for the lack of acute health care beds and number one for taxes and tariffs to farmers. Canadians are paying more in taxes now than they do for food, shelter and clothing combined.

It is a fact that Canadians pay the highest cellphone bills in the world. Of the 128 priciest cellphone carriers in 48 countries in the world, Rogers, TELUS and Bell are number one, number two and number three for priciest cellphone carriers on the planet. Canadians pay over three times what Australians pay for their cellphones, and they pay almost double what Americans do.

With interest rates rising, prices at the grocery store 11% higher than last year and gas prices rising, the government has got it all wrong, and Canadians are out of money. The answer is simple: Cut excessive spending, stop taxing Canadians more, and create competition to lower the costliest cellphone bills on the entire planet.

* * *

HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning I was pleased to meet with members from the Hotel Association of Canada who travelled to Ottawa this week as part of their annual day of advocacy.

The contributions of the hotel sector to our tourism economy are significant, and I saw first-hand how badly this sector was devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic in my tourism community. This was unnecessarily prolonged by the government's disastrous ArriveCAN app. The required use of this app at our borders and airports could have been lifted this past spring or earlier. Instead, the federal government delayed its end and cost the tourism industry its chance at a recovery for the 2022 summer season.

The economic recovery of Canada's hotel sector is key to the rebound in growth of the Canadian tourism industry. Today, let us celebrate the Canadian hotel sector for the resilience it has demonstrated through the past two and a half years, and for the bright future it has ahead.

[Translation]

NATIONAL PAIN AWARENESS WEEK

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week was National Pain Awareness Week.

Chronic pain is often invisible, but it affects nearly eight million Canadians. This is physical pain, yet it has an impact on mental health, family life and communities.

This situation is unacceptable. As a country, we have to work even harder to make sure that care is personalized and that health professionals and people living with pain can make treatment decisions together.

That is why Health Canada recently established a chronic pain policy team to coordinate the federal response to the Canadian pain task force recommendations and to ensure that pain specialists and people with pain can continue to provide our government with valuable input about this problem.

* * *

[English]

WEST COAST FISHERY

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, commercial fisheries remain important for so many communities in coastal British Columbia, and while there are many perspectives on fisheries management, I believe there are some principles on which we can all agree. Commercial fishing licences should not be treated like a private stock market controlled by big corporations; the maximum value of the fish that get caught should go to the people who do the work, and B.C.'s catch should be processed in B.C. communities.

In 2007, Canada reformed its Atlantic fishery to ensure that the benefits of licences stay with the fish harvesters and the communities where they live. We need to do the same thing on the west coast. In 2019, the committee on fisheries and oceans put forward 20 recommendations to reform the west coast fishery, yet this government has not implemented a single one of them.

There is a huge opportunity here for people and for communities, and we need the political will to get this done.

* * *

● (1415)

[Translation]

SITUATION OF THE UIGHURS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, with a huge population and a ruthless apparatus of repression, the Chinese regime is deploying absolutely shocking policies: spying, intimidation, and interference in the electoral process, including illegal financing in 11 ridings here in Canada. More importantly, the Chinese Communist Party is literally wiping out an entire people, a thousand-year-old culture in a conquered province.

Oral Questions

The Bloc Québécois has made a firm commitment to the Uighur people. However, the Canadian government is showing a disturbing degree of cowardice. If the Liberal government wants to be respected, it must acknowledge, on the global stage, that the treatment of Uighurs amounts to genocide. That is the only correct word. It also needs to bring in sanctions similar to the ones imposed by the United States to counter forced labour and child labour in Xinjiang. Failing that, Canada will only continue to rant childish, sidelined by its own powerlessness.

* * *

*[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians were shocked to learn that the Government of China illegally funded candidates for office here in Canada, starting in at least 2019. How could this happen? How could the Government of China think it could get away with this? Perhaps it had something to do with the fact that a former Liberal cabinet minister and ambassador to China actually directly encouraged the Government of China to intervene in Canadian democracy in the very same year.

It is true. Liberal minister John McCallum encouraged the Chinese government to intervene in Canadian politics, so it did. Why have Liberals spent years ignoring foreign interference? It is because they benefit from it. Liberals' weak foreign policy and failure to stand up for justice and human rights have led human rights abusers to want Liberals to stay in power.

It is time for a new government that will end foreign interference and pursue a principled foreign policy, no matter which foreign powers it annoys. It is time for a government that will put the national interest ahead of political interest. It is time for a government that will stand up to dictators and put the people first.

* * *

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for so long, provinces and territories have been working to combat gender-based violence in their own respective ways. Now we have come to a shared vision of how to combat this devastating issue, an issue exacerbated by the pandemic.

Today I am proud to share the launch of Canada's first-ever national action plan to end gender-based violence, here in the House of Commons. The national action plan is informed by the advice and guidance of activists, academics and survivors. It is endorsed by every province and territory, and we are united in our approach.

When a woman fears for her safety at home, she does not have the opportunity to complete her studies, find the job of her dreams or even properly provide for her family. The national action plan to end gender-based violence is not just about helping women escape violence. It is about helping make sure violence does not happen in the first place.

ORAL QUESTIONS*[Translation]***TAXATION**

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, rural communities across the country are now in crisis while families try to plan out how to pay their bills once the cost of heating goes up. Acadian communities on the east coast or Franco-Ontarians from northern Ontario have heating systems that use diesel, for which the carbon tax is going to triple according to the wishes of the costly NDP-Liberal coalition.

Will the Liberals cancel this plan so that Canadians can keep their heat on?

• (1420)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our economic plan is both responsible and compassionate. I want to note some of the key elements of this plan. We have already doubled the GST, which will help 11 million Canadian households. We are sending \$500 to Canadians who are having a hard time paying their rent. We are paying for dental care for Canadian children. We are getting rid of the interest rate for all Canadian students.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister came out about a week ago saying that she makes a profit off the carbon tax because she lives in an upscale downtown Toronto neighbourhood where she can take a subway or ride her bike anywhere she needs to go. Most Canadians do not have a chauffeur. A suburban family that needs to take its kids to hockey or school needs a minivan. A rural family needs a pickup truck to fight through the snow and carry heavy equipment.

The Liberal-NDP coalition wants to triple the carbon tax. Will it cancel that plan so Canadians can afford to get where they are going?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying I think I have probably driven more pickup trucks than the Leader of the Opposition.

Since he wants to talk about the advice he has for Canadians on the economy and fighting inflation, let us talk about the advice he gave, which was that they could opt out of inflation by investing in crypto. If people had listened to him, and I fear some probably did, they would have lost at least 65% of their money, or maybe all of it. It is time for him to apologize.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister should talk to the people who live in rural Canada today. Those people are faced with \$3-a-litre diesel just to fill up their trucks. A similar fuel to heat homes in places such as northern Ontario and Atlantic Canada will cost families as much as \$6,000 to get through the winter.

The solution of the Liberal-NDP coalition is to triple the carbon tax that those families will pay. Canadians are worried about keeping the heat on. Will the government cancel the tax so they can do so?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have already talked about the Conservative leader's reckless advice to Canadians to invest in crypto. It is time for him to apologize.

Let us talk about the other elements of his plan. He wants to eviscerate the EI system that so many Canadians depend on. He wants to endanger seniors' pensions. He wants to make polluting free again. He wants to claw back climate cheques from Canadian families. He wants to deprive Canadian children of dental care. He wants to deprive low-income renters of the supports they get—

The Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is false, false, false, false and false.

Let us look at what the reality is regarding this carbon tax. The finance minister said she is going to send out cheques that make families like hers profit from the carbon tax. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who the Prime Minister appointed, in Alberta the average family will pay \$2,000 more in tax than they get back in cheques. In Ontario, it is \$1,461, and it is similarly true elsewhere. In many provinces, there is no rebate at all, even though the federal government is imposing this new triple tax. Will it cancel this tax so Canadians can pay their bills?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to be sure Canadians understand the blocking and delaying tactics of the Conservatives in our Parliament that are preventing Canadians from getting what they need right now.

The Conservatives are blocking and delaying our efforts to make housing more affordable with measures such as an anti-flipping tax and a tax-free first homes savings account. Who would be opposed to that? They are blocking our plan to permanently eliminate interest on Canada student loans. Why are they blocking that?

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they have a majority with their costly coalition with the NDP. They can pass anything they want. If they were really going to make housing affordable, they would have done it a long time ago. It has been seven years. During that time house prices have doubled and now home heating prices are doubling, with costs expected to rise to as much as \$6,000 for a single family to heat a home in oil-heated communities like northern Ontario and eastern Canada.

The government's plan with the NDP is to triple the tax. Why does it not stop the tax hike so Canadians can heat their homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do have a plan. We have a positive plan that is fiscally responsible and compassionate. It is a plan to create jobs and fight climate change at the same time.

Here are some key elements of our plan: We are going to permanently eliminate interest on Canada student and apprentice loans, and we are going to move the Canada workers benefit to advance payments. It supports people who work really hard but who are not being paid very much. A family can get up to \$2,400.

* * *

[*Translation*]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has been warning from the beginning that Bill C-13 is a way of helping companies that are anglicizing Quebec. It gives companies like Air Canada the option of abiding by the Charter of the French Language if they feel like it or continuing to show contempt for French without any consequences. Air Canada has confirmed that it has made its choice, and it comes as no surprise that it will continue to show contempt for French thanks to the Liberals. It will circumvent the Charter of the French Language thanks to the loophole created by the Liberals in Bill C-13.

Why are the Liberals encouraging companies like Air Canada to continue to anglicize Quebec?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously, I am an anglophone, but I want to assure my Bloc colleagues and all my francophone colleagues in our Liberal caucus that French is a priority for me and our government. We understand how difficult it is for the Quebec nation to continue speaking French in an anglophone continent. For that reason, our government will always support French.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden, the Liberals and the NDP are in such a big hurry to pass Bill C-13 that they are shutting down debate. That seems odd, until we remember that Quebec has given Air Canada and its ilk until December 1 to get on board with the Charter of the French Language. They have two weeks left, and, believe it or not, Air Canada, Via Rail and CN, which have perfected the art of not giving a fig about French, have not yet signed on. Why? Because Bill C-13 gives them an out. They are just waiting for it to pass.

Oral Questions

Is that why the NDP and the Liberals are in such a hurry to pass it?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been very clear with Air Canada about the importance of the French language and the use of French within the company. I have personally been very clear about this. I really want to assure all Canadian francophones, and Quebecers in particular, that we understand how hard it is to preserve French and to keep using this beautiful language. We will support all these efforts.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, emergency rooms are full across the country, and parents are afraid there is no room for their sick children. I spoke with a parent who had to wait 12 hours to see a doctor for their child who was having trouble breathing. The Liberal government is looking for someone to blame instead of taking action.

Why do the government and the Prime Minister want to let kids suffer rather than taking action to fix the problem?

• (1430)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that every one of us, every member of the House, understands how precious our Canadian children are. I want to assure all Canadian mothers and fathers that our children are a priority.

With regard to health care, I want to point out that federal support this year will amount to \$45.2 billion, which is an increase of 4.8%.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there has been a crisis brewing in our health care system for weeks and weeks, particularly when it comes to kids, and the government has not been there to protect kids.

We know that what is going on is terrifying for parents. We have heard really heartbreaking stories of parents rushing to the emergency rooms with kids who are struggling to breathe, children who have had to be resuscitated in emergency rooms, and parents wondering if there will be any space for their kids in the emergency room.

What does the government have to say? What does the Prime Minister have to say to parents who are worried that, if their kids are sick, there is not going to be a place for them in the emergency room?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the leader of the NDP for raising that really important question.

I just want to start by saying I am absolutely sure that every single MP in the House cares so much about Canada's children. We know they are the most precious people we have in this country.

I also want to say that our government understands the challenges our health care system is facing. Our Minister of Health did

some important work with his provincial and territorial colleagues last week. Let me just point out that the federal health transfer this year will be \$45.2 billion—

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

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the finance minister cancels her Disney+ subscription to miraculously save Canadians from going to food banks, her government continues to tax Canadians to infinity and beyond.

Proving how out of touch she really is, she goes on the Liberal-friendly CBC to say the carbon tax is helping Canadians. The reality is that emissions are up and the carbon tax is only helping her government's greed while the cost of heating homes is doubling.

Why will the costly coalition not axe the tax on home heating and give Canadians a break?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we know what is really out of touch.

What is out of touch is to advise Canadians, Canadians who are legitimately concerned about inflation, and say to them, "I have a magic solution to your problems", and advise those worried Canadians to invest in crypto. That is what the Leader of the Opposition did.

If a Canadian had listened to him, had listened to that advice, a \$10,000 investment would be worth just \$3,500 today. They should apologize.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that answer was almost as bad as the finance minister telling the one in five Canadians skipping meals to not worry, but to just cancel their Disney+ subscription and everything should be fine.

Canadians are crying out for help, pleading for the Liberals to stop the increases in taxes and inflation. The Liberals responded by calling them polluters and increasing the carbon tax. The only one getting rich off the carbon tax is her government.

The Liberals are out of touch. Canadians are out of money. Why would the Liberals not give some relief to Canadians cancel their plans to triple the carbon tax?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians need today is a government that is prepared to support them, is prepared to be compassionate and also fiscally responsible, and does not reach for easy populist advice, like investing in crypto. Canadians need a government that understands that people need real support today.

That is why we are going to stick with our plan. We are going to send those GST cheques to 11 million households. We are going to send the Canada workers benefit to hard-working Canadians. We are going to eliminate interest on Canada student loans.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yet again we have more Liberal waste.

Fortis, a billion-dollar corporation, was promised \$655 million for the Lake Erie connector project to get an electricity cable built. The Canada Infrastructure Bank, which is a taxpayer-funded bank, has never completed even one project. Now we discover, one and a half years later, that the Fortis deal has been cancelled due to financial volatility and inflation.

What happened to the \$655 million that the Liberals promised this failed project? How much did taxpayers lose?

• (1435)

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me begin by congratulating my colleague on her appointment as the infrastructure critic for the official opposition. I obviously look forward to working with her on these important issues.

We have a fundamental difference with respect to the Conservative Party. They did not believe there was a role for the Infrastructure Bank in helping bring access to private capital and institutional investments for things as important as investing in clean energy and greening our electricity grid.

We will continue to prioritize these important investments because we think Canadians are counting on us to do that.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough. That is not a good enough answer. The project was cancelled because of inflation, which the Liberal Party caused. While Canadians are struggling to put food on the table, the government cannot account for \$655 million.

It is wasteful spending like this \$35-billion Infrastructure Bank that is causing inflation, and the Liberals are financing it all on the backs of Canadians by tripling their carbon tax.

When will the government stop their reckless spending and cancel their plan to triple the tax on suffering Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a moment talking about inflation and our government's fiscally responsible approach.

I am going to quote The Globe and Mail. The Globe and Mail is not always that supportive of our government's policies, but here is what The Globe and Mail had to say—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Haldimand—Norfolk wants to hear the answer to her question.

I will let the Deputy Prime Minister continue, and hopefully we do not have to restart from the beginning, because we want to make sure we hear it.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, here is what The Globe and Mail had to say about the fall economic statement: "It is, broadly speaking, the right approach.... Canada [has] the slimmest government shortfall in the G7. In inflation-fighting terms, that has Liberal fiscal policy looking pretty good".

* * *

[*Translation*]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best way to help Canadian families deal with inflation is to leave more money in their pockets and, above all, not increase taxes. The Liberal government, however, wants to triple the carbon tax in just a few months.

I have a very simple question for the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday, at COP27, a report on the best performing countries in the fight against climate change was tabled. This report lists 63 countries. Can the Deputy Prime Minister tell us, after seven years of Liberal governance, where Canada is on the list of the 63 best performing countries in the fight against climate change?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague talks about leaving money in Canadians' pockets, but every time we introduce measures to give more money to Canadians, the Conservatives vote against them.

With respect to climate action, we return more money to the provinces where pollution pricing is in place.

The Speaker: I will ask the minister to start again.

I am sure the hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, who is sitting near me, did not hear the answer because of the background noise.

I ask the minister to start again.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows full well, over the past seven years, there have been several occasions when we brought in measures to keep more money in Canadians' pockets.

It is a shame, but the Conservatives voted against those measures every time, whether we are talking about climate-related cheques or benefits for Canadians.

There have been several occasions when they could have supported us and supported Canadians.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is quite amazing, they have had two opportunities to provide a number and they cannot even begin to give us an answer that might make sense.

She does not know the answer or is pretending not to know, but we do. Canada, after seven years of a Liberal government, ranks 58 out of 63 when it comes to fighting climate change.

This is the same gang that boasted seven years ago that Canada was back.

• (1440)

[English]

The truth is that Canada is way back.

[Translation]

That is the reality.

Maybe one day the Liberals will understand one thing: Taxes will not help cut pollution, but they will cut into Canadians' wallets.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a limit to how much a party can contradict itself. The Conservatives keep saying that we are doing too much, that we should not put a price on pollution, that we should not be so ambitious on the environment, but now they are telling us that we are not doing enough. The Conservatives have no credibility whatsoever when it comes to climate change. There are limits, even for them, when it comes to talking out of both sides of their mouths.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, pediatric emergency rooms in Quebec are overflowing as we speak. Children are being sent 150 kilometres from home because there is no room for them at the hospital. It is time the minister stopped saying that it is futile to ask for health care funding. Let us ask the parents of these children if it is futile. It is time for the federal government to stop it with its bureaucratic power trip, its arrogance and its bickering and to hand over the additional \$28 billion in health care transfers that Quebec and all the provinces are calling for. What will it take for the government to understand that this is urgent?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we share the concerns of parents and caregivers about their inability to find children's acetaminophen and ibuprofen. We have secured an additional foreign supply of children's acetaminophen that will be available for sale at retail and community pharmacies in the coming weeks to help address the immediate situation.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, sometimes the answer should actually match the question. That needs to be made clear to our colleague.

The federal government can clearly see that the health care system is underfunded. Everyone can see that the elastic is about to snap. People are at the end of their rope, but what the federal government fails to see is that it is the one that must do more. Quebec allocates 43% of its annual budget to health care. That is nearly

half. As for the federal government, not even 9% of its total budget goes to health transfers. There is flexibility on the federal front, but not in Quebec City. When will the Liberals finally and permanently increase health transfers?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has a long history of working with the provinces and territories not only to provide funding, but also to ensure a national vision for health care and systems that meets the needs of Canadians. During the pandemic, our government invested over \$72 billion to protect the health of Canadians. In addition to the additional 5% increase that has already been announced, we will increase Canada health transfers by 10% in March 2023.

* * *

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebecers want governments that work together, but the Liberals have opted to govern by taking hostages. When it comes to health care, the hostages are patients, victims of the feud between Quebec and Ottawa, which is withholding \$28 billion from us. As for infrastructure, the government is holding municipalities hostage by forcing them to get their project proposals in by March or miss out on \$2.7 billion. In both cases, that is Quebec taxpayers' money, not the Liberals' money. Why not just work with Quebec and the cities instead of starting fights?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we need a lecture about starting fights from the Bloc Québécois, which is always spoiling for a fight. I know that my colleague, the Minister of Canadian Heritage, has often pointed that out. I am ready to do so myself. I have good news for my Bloc colleague. A week ago, I had a really great meeting with the Mayor of Quebec City and the provincial infrastructure minister, who even came to Moncton. We had a really good conversation, and we are going to do good things for the people of Quebec.

* * *

• (1445)

[English]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has an opportunity to answer a question that I asked twice yesterday. This is a serious matter in the public interest that requires an answer.

Who are the 11 election candidates who received hundreds of thousands of dollars funnelled through Beijing's consulate in Toronto in the 2019 election?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind hon. members what the motivation of foreign interference is. It is not to advance any partisan interests. It is to sow chaos and destroy our democracy as we know it. Our government will never tolerate it. The RCMP and our intelligence agencies are investigating.

Canadians expect us to do the work that is required and take action, which is what we are doing.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): The government is right, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a partisan issue. Both Liberal and Conservative candidates are implicated in receiving these illegal funds, but we need public answers in the House so that investigations can be launched by parties on both sides of the aisle, by Elections Canada and by other relevant authorities.

Who are the 11 election candidates who received these illegal monies funnelled by Beijing through its Toronto consulate in the 2019 election campaign?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very appreciative of the focus of the Conservative Party on foreign interference in Canadian elections because it is something we have been concerned about for a long time. The Conservatives have recently decided that this is an important issue, and there is good news. Our government set up a critical incident election protocol, chaired by the Clerk of the Privy Council with the help of Canada's security and intelligence agencies, to monitor exactly the kind of situation that my friend has addressed. It worked very well and there was no change in the outcome of the election.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about an underground network of candidates in the 2019 election, agents infiltrating members' offices, pressure tactics on politicians and a campaign to punish Canadian politicians. This is not the trailer for the next James Bond movie; it is the sad reality in Canada. The last two elections were allegedly targeted by the Chinese communist regime.

The Prime Minister knew about it and did nothing. What does the Prime Minister know, and why does he want to hide it from Canadians?

[English]

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said previously, we will never tolerate foreign interference. The whole purpose of foreign interference is to destroy democracy as we know it. The agencies responsible, the RCMP and the intelligence agencies, are investigating. We are taking action.

We will always stand up for our democracy and we will never take it for granted. We know that foreign interference is aimed at destroying that democracy.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that the Chinese communist regime interfered in the 2021 election and that the Liberals did nothing, despite revelations show-

Oral Questions

ing that this regime had no qualms about interfering heavily in 2019. No one has been prosecuted or convicted for interfering in those two elections. Even Guy Saint-Jacques, Canada's former ambassador to China, has said that several Conservative candidates lost their elections because of Chinese intelligence services.

I am wondering about one thing. Is anyone in the Liberal benches one of the 11 candidates who received money from the Chinese communist regime?

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

National security concerns all parliamentarians. It is not a political matter, it is a matter of national interest. That is why we recently implemented restrictions to protect our scientists and research in Canada and, more recently, we blocked three transactions to protect Canada's critical minerals. We take national security very seriously, as all parliamentarians in the House should.

* * *

● (1450)

[English]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, first nations communities bear the brunt of the climate emergency. Today's report from the Auditor General confirms that the Liberal government continues to abandon first nations communities, including when preparing for forest fires and floods. This abandonment is costing lives.

Given the right resources, first nations communities can prevent disasters on their lands. When will the government invest in first nations' emergency preparedness so they have the tools they need to rebuild vibrant communities?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Auditor General for a very important report. In fact, what the Auditor General found was that the Government of Canada was spending extraordinary amounts of money helping people respond to climate change. In fact, the Auditor General has pointed out that the Government of Canada can save money in helping communities prepare better and have adaptability plans to withstand the onslaught of climate emergencies that all of us are facing.

First nations people are first in line to the detrimental effects of climate change and that is why we have to continue, all of us, to ensure we are ready, prepared and have adaptation strategies.

*Oral Questions***HOUSING**

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, that is not true. There are 112 projects that went unfunded.

According to the Auditor General, the Liberals have spent billions to build homes that Canadians cannot afford. What is worse is that they do not even know if this money is reducing homelessness in our communities. The level of incompetence is breathtaking. We are in a dire housing crisis. The cold, wet weather is upon us. People are dying on the streets. They are desperate, and the Liberals have turned their backs on them.

When will the government do its job so that everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, through our reaching home anti-homelessness strategy, we have ensured that tens of thousands of people were prevented from joining homelessness and others were actually housed permanently through our efforts. We welcome the Auditor General's audit of the chronic homelessness program, we accept all the recommendations and we are willing to implement them all.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the last nine weeks, we have watched the brutality that the Iranian regime has unleashed on its own citizens. So far, 15,000 courageous Iranians have been arrested and over 350 Iranians have been killed.

Yesterday, our government announced its latest concrete measures against the Iranian regime by designating Iran a country that commits terrorism against its own citizens. I would like to ask the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship what the significance of yesterday's announcement is.

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking the member for Willowdale for his relentless advocacy on behalf of the Iranian-Canadian community.

I have joined in the protests and participated in round tables with members of the Iranian community, and we have heard them. I want to be absolutely clear that Canada has now designated the Islamic Republic of Iran as a regime that has engaged in terrorism and gross human rights violations. Senior officials of the regime, including the IRGC, who are inadmissible under this policy, will be removed from Canada.

Our message to the Iranian regime and to its henchmen is unambiguous: Canada will not be a playground for bad actors, and they are not welcome in our country.

* * *

TAXATION

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford this costly coalition. The more the NDP-Liberals spend, the more expensive everything gets. Gas and diesel is over three bucks a litre. Families have to find over \$2,000 more for groceries this year; home heating will double this winter; and on food

bank users, one third are Canadians with jobs who cannot afford to eat.

When will the Liberals give Canadians a break and cancel their plan to triple their tax hike on gas, groceries and home heating?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer has pointed out, eight out of 10 families are better off after they received the climate action rebate. The other thing the Parliamentary Budget Officer points out is that there are costs to climate change, a \$20-billion impact to our GDP each and every year. For my home province of Manitoba, we have had two one-in-300-year floods, costing a billion dollars each. The Calgary flood was \$5 billion and 7,000 people were displaced from their homes.

Climate change has a cost; the Conservatives have no plan.

● (1455)

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, so it is clear from that answer that even though the Liberals have actually created this cost of living crisis, they are just going to make it even worse.

The finance minister actually said that Canadians should cut Disney+ to make ends meet. She bragged that she lived in downtown Toronto and did not have to drive anywhere. Even while she is chauffeured around in limos and private jets at taxpayers' expense, she scoffs while my neighbours have to drive to get around and have to choose between eating or heating their homes, barns and shops this week at -28°C.

The Liberals are out of touch and Canadians are out of money. Why will they not axe their cruel carbon tax?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to tell members what is cruel. What is cruel is saying to Canadians, who are genuinely anxious about inflation, "You know what, I have a magic idea that will let you opt out of that inflation" or saying to them "You know what, I think you should buy crypto", and that is what the current leader of the Conservative Party said to Canadians. If Canadians had listened to him, a \$10,000 investment would have shrunk by 65%. That is cruelty.

The Speaker: Before proceeding to the next question by the member for Foothills, I want to remind some of the gentlemen in the audience, who have these deep, strong voices that carry, that although they sound very nice, they are very disruptive when someone is trying to answer or even ask a question.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Oral Questions

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food inflation is at a 40-year high. Canadians are struggling to feed their families. The Liberals' response: "Let them eat cake." If they cannot afford food, they can cancel the Disney subscription. I cannot even buy a pack of bacon for \$13.

When fruit and vegetable prices are up 12%, bread 13% and pasta 30%, the Liberals are out of touch, and it is only going to get worse. If we think these prices are tough to swallow, thanks to the Liberals' escalator, the tax on beer, wine and spirits is going to triple.

Will the Prime Minister give a sober second thought to his new taxes on food?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is hard to stomach what the Conservatives are saying, because at every opportunity when they could have supported Canadians in need, they voted against it.

Our record on this side is that almost two million Canadians, including 450,000 children, have been lifted out of poverty over the last seven years. We have supported Canadians with the Canada child benefit, the Canada housing benefit, the Canada dental benefit and with the GST rebate that has been doubled for the next six months.

We continue to support Canadians. We just wish the Conservatives would do the same.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me get this straight. While 1.5 million Canadians go to a food bank in one month, the Liberals answer to that is to triple the carbon tax on food production.

We have farmers from across Canada in Ottawa this week begging the Liberals for some sort of sanity and to drop this tax. Thanks to the opposition, Canadian farmers will get some relief from the carbon tax on natural gas and propane, and they need it. Diesel is at \$3 a litre and input costs are crippling.

Liberal taxes are killing farms and forcing families to the food bank. Will the Prime Minister listen to farmers? Will he cancel his plan to triple the tax on food, fuel and farms?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of visiting farms in my own constituency, as a member who represents rural Nova Scotia, and the farmers in my community right now are telling me how expensive it is to deal with inaction on climate change, how expensive it is when severe weather events take down silos, how expensive it is when they lose more than six-figures worth of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Let me know when members are ready.

The hon. minister, from the top by special request.

• (1500)

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, it seems I may have struck a nerve.

The reality is that I have the privilege of representing dozens of dairy farms. Over the last number of weeks, when I have been visiting those farms, they have been telling me in rural Nova Scotia that the inaction they see coming from the Conservative Party on climate issues is leading to costs that are unimaginable. As the Conservatives continue to chide me because they cannot handle difficult truths, they do not understand that these farmers are dealing with six-figure losses, that they need to be buy feed for their cattle. They are dealing with damage to their infrastructure. They want us to take climate change seriously. The Conservatives need to stop trying to trick Canadians, because they know that the policy they campaigned on—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

* * *

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I talk about forced sterilization, I am not talking about the Prime Minister, who has once again demonstrated his lack of courage.

When I talk about forced sterilization, torture, arbitrary detention and political re-education, I am talking about the situation of the Uighurs and the Prime Minister's indifference.

There is a genocide occurring in China. The Chinese government is actively trying to wipe out a population. We know it, it is documented, and the Prime Minister is looking the other way so as not to offend Chinese authorities.

Will the government finally recognize that the Chinese regime is committing genocide against the Uighurs?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is extremely concerned about the treatment of Uighurs in Xinjiang, China. We are taking the allegations of genocide against the Uighurs very seriously.

[*English*]

We have condemned China at every opportunity with our Five Eyes partners, with G7 partners, at the UN Human Rights Council, at the UN and, most important, with Chinese officials directly. We will continue to stand with the Uighur people in their search for freedom and human rights.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons, France's National Assembly, the British Parliament, the U.S. Secretary of State and others have all characterized China's treatment of the Uighurs as genocide. The Prime Minister still refuses to get involved.

How can we help solve a problem if we are not prepared to acknowledge that the problem exists? That is the situation and this is exactly what is happening with this government and the Uighurs.

Can the Prime Minister grow a backbone, stand up, show courage, take responsibility and finally acknowledge that the Uighurs are being subjected to genocide and that Beijing is behind it?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we continue to urge China to respect its international human rights obligations and address the concerns raised in the Bachelet report.

[English]

We take that report seriously. It has raised the possibility of extreme crimes against humanity. We will continue to fight for human rights and the respect of minority rights for everybody in China and around the world.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals wasted \$54 million on their arrive scam and they waived the security clearance requirements for vendors and contractors who would deal with Canadians' biometric personal and health information. Now they are refusing to release the documents and covering up which Liberal insiders got rich.

Canadians cannot trust the Liberals and they cannot afford the costly Liberal-NDP coalition. Will the Liberals end their inflationary spending?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, ArriveCAN was an extraordinary measure in an extraordinary time. Canadians expect their government to act quickly and we did just that. CBSA is aware of errors included in public disclosure and has made the necessary corrections. We as a government are committed to the highest standards to ensure that Canadians get the highest value for their tax dollars.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians should judge a government by what it does, not what it says. What the government does is spend, spend, spend. Spending is up 30% versus pre-COVID levels and Canadians are paying the price. Inflation is at a 40-year high level. Next year, we are going to spend almost as much on servicing the debt as we do on health care transfers to the provinces.

Canadians cannot afford much more of this costly coalition. Will the government end its inflationary spending?

● (1505)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, the Globe and Mail wrote "Liberal fiscal policy looking pretty good", but let me give a few more proof points.

The day that I tabled our fall economic statement, Moody's, the rating agency, reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating with a stable outlook. It does not get better than that. Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. We have the lowest debt in the G7. We are a very fiscally responsible government.

* * *

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party saw the economic storm coming and often warned the Liberals. However, poor managers that they are, they continue to spend recklessly.

Just consider the ArriveCAN app, which gobbled up \$54 million, and the purchase of twice the number of medical ventilators required, which cost taxpayers \$403 million for nothing.

Families are struggling. Workers are going to food banks. Young people are camping out in their parents' basements.

Will the Liberals come to their senses and cancel tax increases?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that the Conservatives are wrong. Our economic plan is fiscally responsible.

The day that the economic statement was tabled, Moody's reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating. Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. Canada has the lowest debt in the G7. Our economy is strong and our plan is fiscally responsible.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in my riding, Kings—Hants, and across Canada, our supply-managed farmers are essential to our rural communities and for our food security.

Our government promised to ensure that our farmers would be compensated fairly after the conclusion of free trade agreements with Europe, the Pacific and the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement.

Can the Minister of Agriculture update the House on what our government has done to keep its promises?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that we have fully compensated every supply-managed sector.

Dairy farmers will share an additional \$1.2 billion, or roughly \$106,000 for an average farm of 80 cows. A new innovation program is being implemented with \$300 million for surpluses in non-fat dairy solids. Poultry and egg farmers will be sharing \$112 million in an investment program and processors are getting an investment program worth \$105 million.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families are having a very hard time dealing with inflation.

Some have had to make changes to their diets to save money on food, while others are skipping meals to make ends meet, and yet we clearly warned the government that racking up \$500 billion in deficits in two years would have repercussions.

The Prime Minister did not listen and, once again, did as he pleased. What is worse, he spent twice as much.

Will the Prime Minister at least listen to the distress signals Canadians are sending out and guarantee them that he will not raise taxes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to state the facts and talk about Canada's economic reality.

The reality is that our economic plan is fiscally responsible. Canada has the lowest deficit and the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

Canada's AAA credit rating was reaffirmed two weeks ago.

[English]

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, things just seem broken in Canada. Costs are skyrocketing, and everything from children's Tylenol to leafy green lettuce cannot be found on store shelves or in restaurants across Canada. We all know why: Producing, growing and manufacturing are getting harder and have never been more expensive.

Why will the Liberals not just give Canada a break and cancel their plan to triple taxes on gas, groceries and heating?

• (1510)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is from British Columbia, where we have seen the most dramatic impacts of climate change in the last year. It will

cost us \$9 billion because of the atmospheric river. Six hundred senior citizens died because of the heat dome. Speaking of the cost of lettuce, we had a major drought, which is why vegetables are getting so expensive.

We have a plan for climate change. We are going to build community resiliency. The Conservatives have no plan.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the costly coalition has made it a sin to eat, heat and drive. It has added a tax like that on alcohol and cigarettes that automatically increases every year. The taxes on fuel and fertilizer are making food unaffordable. The government's homegrown inflation is forcing children to miss meals.

When will the government give Canadians a break and end the triple tax on gas, groceries and home heating?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier, one Conservative member referred to COP27 where people from around the whole world are gathered. They are focused on climate change, what it means for our economies and what it means for future generations.

Do members know who is not there? The Conservatives are not there. They pulled members from their delegation, and that is not surprising because for 10 long years, they did absolutely nothing on climate change. Every time they went to an international meeting, they received the "fossil of the year" award.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many of my constituents in Surrey—Newton travel regularly to India to visit loved ones. Some of them are presently in Ottawa. The pandemic put a pause on many of these international trips. My constituents are now looking to reconnect with family and friends.

Would the minister update the House on what steps our government is taking to make it easier for Canadians to travel to India?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Surrey—Newton for his leadership and his advocacy on this issue. Yesterday, I announced that Canada is amending the Canada-India air transport agreement to move toward an unlimited number of weekly flights. This will increase the option for Canadian travellers who want to travel to India.

Oral Questions

My colleague and I agree that we would like to see a direct flight from Canada to Amritsar. I have raised this issue with my Indian counterpart. We will continue to advocate for this until we see more options for Canadians.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, nothing is more important to Canadians than the health of our kids, but right now children are being admitted to ERs because of a lack of pediatric medicines. Today, experts told the health committee that severe drug shortages are a long-standing problem in Canada with hundreds of medicines in dangerously low supply every year. This must change. New Democrats have long called for the Canadian government to create a public drug manufacturer to supply the medications people need and our kids need.

Will the Liberals finally act to produce life-saving medications here in Canada?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we share the concerns of my colleague from the NDP, of parents and caregivers about their inability to find infant and children's acetaminophen and ibuprofen. This has been a really tough cold and flu season for parents across this country and we acknowledge that.

Therefore, we secured an additional foreign supply of children's acetaminophen, which will be available for sale at retail and community pharmacies in the coming weeks, to help address this immediate situation. Our littlest neighbours and constituents are our top concern. I agree with my colleague from the NDP that a domestic solution is one that would last a lot longer.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, the government is making the littlest effort. This was a good question about establishing a public drug manufacturer in Canada. We just came through a pandemic where we saw the government scramble to secure a vaccine supply and only succeed at the expense of people in the global south, who never did get the vaccines that they needed.

Now we are witnessing a shortage of children's medicine. We are seeing Amazon charge over \$200 for four ounces of Tylenol on the Internet. There is something wrong with a system that allows that and does not allow the government to push back, which it could do with a public drug manufacturer to produce essential medications when the market fails.

When are the Liberals going to start the work?

● (1515)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems that my colleague was absent for a couple of months. There is nothing more important than ensuring the health and safety of Canadians. That is why we acted. We brought Moderna to Canada to produce vaccines. It was not for COVID-19 but for about 30 families of vaccines that Canadians would need, including for cancer. We have Sanofi investing in Toronto. We invested in Biovectra.

One thing we understand on this side of the aisle is that we did not choose the pandemic and we do not know if there is going to be another one, but we choose to be better prepared. That is what Canadians expect from us.

The Speaker: I am afraid that is all the time we have for question period today.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the COP27 document entitled "Climate Change Performance Index", which states that, after seven years of Liberal governance, Canada's ranks 58th out of 63 countries for its climate change performance.

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

Some hon. members: Nay.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations and I believe, if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent for the following motion that, given that, first, the mental health of Canadians has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; second, the toxic drug crisis has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic and continues to have a tragic impact on communities; third, too many Canadians are unable to access mental health or substance use supports in a timely manner and economic conditions are exacerbating financial barriers; and fourth, lack of timely access to community-based mental health and substance use services is adding to the immense strain facing our hospitals and primary care providers; the House call on the government to take the necessary steps to bring a comprehensive range of mental health and substance use services beyond physician and hospital settings into our universal public health care system.

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

An hon. member: Nay.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS AND CONDUCT OF EXTENDED PROCEEDINGS

MOTION THAT DEBATE BE NOT FURTHER ADJOURNED

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in relation to the consideration of Government Business No. 22, I move:

That the debate be not further adjourned.

● (1520)

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

[Translation]

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable for questions and comments.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, once again, we are being treated to an eloquent demonstration by the Liberal government, which, with the NDP coalition, has chosen to limit the ability of members from across the country to speak freely on issues that interest them. Not only are they trying to get a motion passed in the House, with the support of the NDP, that will give the Liberals even greater control over how the House works, but now they want to avoid debating the motion. This is totally inappropriate and unacceptable.

I wonder why the Liberals, who for months have been touting transparency, openness and consensus, are once again limiting debate in the House today, with the tacit support of the NDP. That is the reality. The Conservatives want to collaborate and contribute, while the Liberals want to impose their will. Why is that?

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, this seems so strange to me, because this motion is about extending the time for debate. The member opposite says that the government's objective is to prevent the opposition from speaking. Maybe the opposition member has not had a chance to read the text, because it actually provides the opportunity to speak more.

The problem here is the Conservative Party's obstructionist tactics, which it continues to use to block other parties from passing legislation at this critical time.

As for speaking freely, if there are more hours to speak, there are more opportunities for members on the other side to explain their position and have more debate.

That is why the member's question seems very strange to me.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to hear from the party across the way.

A recent meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, of which I am a member, was cancelled due to a lack of resources. That is the impact of the hybrid Parliament. That is the

S. O. 57

impact of extending sitting hours. This committee is unable to meet to deal with major issues that have consequences for women and girls.

As a mother, I am sincerely asking my colleagues if that is the message they want to be sending. I do not want to hear a single person across the way tell me that I am lazy. I was able to work. That is not the issue.

Can we send a message to women that having debates until midnight does not make sense? If we want Parliament to be more representative and more diverse, then we need to use a bit more common sense. We can debate during the day. There is no need to schedule debates until midnight until the end of the session.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the member's question covers two issues.

First, there is the issue of committees. That is the reason we can talk about the legislative agenda for Parliament and also for the committees. I am very aware of that. The 31 committees study some very important issues. There is also the legislative agenda here in Parliament, and it is vital that we have time for both.

Concerning the situation for mothers, I hope that the member opposite will support the hybrid system because it is a good solution, not just for mothers, but for anyone.

There are solutions. We must continue to talk.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is hard to imagine any member of Parliament objecting to working longer hours, particularly when we look at what Canadians are facing right now.

Canadians are struggling to put food on their tables and to keep a roof over their heads. We have an obligation as parliamentarians to work longer hours and to work harder to make sure that Canadians are supported.

I want to ask my colleague, the government House leader, what the real reason may be for the Conservative objection. Looking back two years ago, the Globe and Mail reported that Conservatives held the worst attendance record at the House of Commons COVID-19 committee, with only a 47% attendance rate. We can contrast that with the Bloc at 73%, Liberals at 76% and the NDP at 85%, with the NDP once again being the worker bees of Parliament. Is that not the real reason Conservatives are opposing extending hours and working harder on behalf of Canadians?

● (1525)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is 100% right that the times we are in right now demand that we put shoulder to wheel and do more.

S. O. 57

I do have to say that I cannot speak for the motivations of anybody else, but let me be very clear of the motivation we are coming to the table with and that, I believe, the hon. member is coming to the table with as well in asking his question, which is that every time we ask how many speakers there are going to be or how much time the party opposite needs in order to be able to adjudicate their arguments with respect to legislation, we are frustrated in that and given no answers. Even on the bills they support, the Conservatives will not tell us how many speakers they have. It is a never-ending cascade of obstruction.

Canadians do not expect for Parliament to have one party stand in the way of all the other parties being able to do their work when there is essential legislation that we must pass.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have just a small note, given the last statement by the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, but the worker bees of Parliament are quite often the Greens.

To the hon. government House leader, as Greens, we do not have access to the House leaders meetings. I know that cannot be discussed as they are in camera. However, I am at a loss to know why a procedural motion to allow this work to proceed was not able to be agreed upon without time allocation.

What also comes to mind, after an amendment was put forward and also after hearing the hon. member for Shefford from the Bloc, who spoke moments ago, is if there is an issue here that is a real issue or if this is gamesmanship. The real issue is whether the House can do its work and whether every committee can be properly staffed if we move in the direction of the motion before us.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the member's question gets to the core of a matter in front of us, which is that, if we are direct with each other, tell each other exactly how many speakers there are going to be and how much time is needed on a particular bill, then maybe we will need additional hours or maybe we will not. I will be very direct. Oftentimes, it has only been the Conservative Party from which I have not been able to get straight or clear answers on how much time is needed.

What does that mean? Let us look at Bill C-9, which was a technical bill that was supported by all parties, and for days we ended up debating this bill, with no clarity on when it was going to end. Then, when we had an issue with interpretation and lost 20 minutes, we asked for that 20 minutes back and the Conservatives said no, meaning that we had an entire other day of House business that was wasted. Every day of House business is critical, and it needs to be used for real issues.

We are saying we should focus on the real priorities that we have and, if and when we have unanimity, we do not need to chew up enormous House time.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, since the NDP and Liberals signed the coalition agreement, the two parties have voted together over 90% of the time. In that period, Conservatives brought eight motions to the House calling for tax relief, and the coalition defeated all of them.

The NDP is 60 for 60 on votes supporting government legislation. This is the 14th closure motion supported by the NDP to shut down debate, even though it used to call these motions undemocratic. Tonight, the hapless NDP is even prepared to vote for a motion that will further limit the resources of parliamentary committees doing very important business for Canadians.

Is there anything the NDP will not do for the Prime Minister?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, again I find it incredibly strange that the argument from the other side is that a motion to extend sitting hours and expand speaking time is somehow limiting debate.

An hon. member: There are committees.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I hear people yelling “committees”. The reality is that committees do incredibly important work and there are 31 of them, but the idea that the House, the legislature, should take a back seat to 31 other committees when there is essential legislation for us to deal with makes no sense. We need to look at what is on the agenda of those 31 committees and make sure that, where there is critical work, it is getting done.

As the Speaker and all members know, a lot of what the members on the other side are talking about is not looking into the issues facing Canadians or how they can make life more affordable. They are on a hunt that is partisan, trolling for things that they can put in newspaper headlines. That is not something that the House should be taking a back seat to. That is not something that the House should sit back and let them play partisan games on committees being a priority when there is essential legislation that needs to be adopted to help Canadians.

● (1530)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I reflect on the games that are being played in the House, the first thing that pops into my mind is with respect to Bill S-5. Bill S-5, ultimately, was unanimously adopted in the House, and in the process of getting to the point where we could finally vote on it, there were six Liberal members, four NDP members, five Bloc members and one Green member who spoke to the bill. How many Conservatives spoke to it? There were 27 Conservatives.

The best part about it for those who were in the House listening to what they were talking about on that legislation regarding environmental protection was that none of them even spoke to the bill. It was clear that what they were doing, on something they ultimately supported, was just to slow down the government agenda. Would the House leader not agree with me that the sole objective of the Conservatives is to slow down everything at any cost?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

S. O. 57

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the government House leader, I want to remind members of the opposition to hold onto their thoughts. The hon. parliamentary secretary does not have a low voice, and I had a hard time hearing him, so I would ask members to please hold onto their thoughts until they are recognized.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the hon. member, my colleague and friend, is 100% right. In fact, I can recall in the last session, when we had a bill that was being voted on unanimously, the Conservatives directly said to me that there was no way they were going to let it go through, and they were moving motions to hear themselves so they could force votes in the middle of the night. That meant that people who were trying to testify at the MAID committee about medical assistance in dying, who had flown from all over the country to speak and tell their stories, were displaced so they could play a game.

The reality is that, in each and every instance, they have a smirk on their face when they refuse to tell us how many speakers they have. They continue to tell us they have a bill, but that is the first number I have ever heard. They finally have one, and maybe that is proof that this motion is working. Maybe it is proof that now they will actually give us numbers because this is the first time I am hearing them and the House can adjudicate its business and do it.

They do not have the ability, as a single party in this place, to interrupt the business of everyone else and try to do obstruction by stealth, which is what they are doing. They are upset because they have been called on it. Now they have an opportunity. If they have speakers, they can go on into the night and talk. That does not limit debate. It expands it. They can make their points and they can do their speeches, and that means the House can still do its business.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a very serious question. I believe our colleague across the way is an hon. member of the House. It is a very serious question, and I would like a serious answer. It has to do with the Constitution of Canada, and I know the Liberals get very upset when they see other levels of government tinkering around the edges of the Constitution, yet the motion before us would take away the constitutionally required law that there be 20 members in the House at all times.

Why is the Liberal government so cavalier about simply ignoring the Constitution when it is convenient for them, but so adamant that it is a terrible thing when other orders of government see it the same way?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I do not know whether the member has had an opportunity to consider the application of constitutional law on this matter, but I can certainly say that the House is in absolutely no way, in its normal conduct of business, being interfered with. As is the normal procedure when we are talking about after 6:30 p.m., this motion would mean that there cannot be the opportunity to play all sorts of different procedural games.

The motion would allow, after 6:30 p.m., and after the normal conduct of business, for debate to continue and for that debate not to be interrupted with procedural tricks. I understand the Conservatives are disappointed about that. I understand they would like the

opportunity to be able, in the wee hours of the night, to play games and do different things because it is not their objective to actually give speeches or to have speakers put up. Their objective is to block legislation and block the other parties from being able to do the critical work that the government, and not just the government but also the House and every party in it, needs to do, which is to focus on the priorities of Canadians and make sure we adopt legislation.

• (1535)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is really unfortunate when members opposite suggest that somehow we are trying to be absolute obstructionists and that somehow members do not have the right to address pieces of legislation.

There are issues on which, when I go back home to home to my riding on a weekend, I will hear from constituents. They will say it is a really important piece that they hope I can signal in a bill, and that they would really like to have my voice on it. It may be something another one of my colleagues has brought up, but does that make it any less important that I bring it up on behalf of my constituents who have asked me to do so and who sent me here to be their voice in this chamber?

This is not me being here to be a spokesperson and a parrot of talking points and everything else. I am sent here to be a spokesperson for my constituents. I am here to bring their voices to this chamber, and the motion before us is absolutely hurting democracy. We deserve to have quorum. This is absolutely atrocious.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I have to confess that in all the time since I was elected in 2014, I have never heard such a passionate plea for quorum. I am very glad the member opposite is so passionate about quorum. It is available every single day in the normal operating hours of the House. It is available every single operating day.

The second point she made is a very important point, which is that every member in the House is elected to represent their constituents and to be able to voice their concerns, which is why I am also puzzled as to why she would be against extending the hours so she can do the thing she just said she wanted to do.

Moreover, if we want to talk about our constituents, let us take a bill like Bill S-5. My hon. colleague spoke to it earlier. We spent six days on a bill that has unanimous support. Every day, we would ask how much more time the Conservatives would need, and they would say, "Oh, we do not know. We will see."

The next day, we would ask how much more time they would need.

"We do not know. We will see."

The next day, we would ask how much time they would need.

"We do not know. We will see."

S. O. 57

Then we have to go to committee. Then we have third reading. We have report stage. This is done at every single stage, and this is for a bill they support.

I would ask the hon. member opposite how she goes back and explains to her constituents that she is wasting days and days of House time.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting when the Conservatives talk so much about efficiency and the resources of the House.

Maybe we could talk about how that balance is created, in terms of what we are trying to do today, in terms of passing some legislation and having that meaningful discussion, not hurting democracy but expanding democracy, having the conversations that are needed and doing so in a balanced way to ensure that we can be as efficient as possible and financially efficient as well.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the reality is that the resources of the House have to be brought to bear on that which is most important, which is adopting legislation to help Canadians and to make sure their needs are being met. The supremacy of the House must be recognized in that regard. It must be recognized that in terms of the legislation that is put in front of the House, Canadians have an expectation, and rightfully so, that the House will give it the appropriate attention and move it expeditiously, and that every member will be heard.

The bill does exactly that. There are 31 committees. The idea that all 31 committees can sit on top of the House and block it from conducting its business is simply inappropriate.

What is appropriate is that when we look at committees and their work, we make sure the resources of the House are managed in such a way that all the business of the House is conducted and done.

There are 31 committees. That means we need to have conversations about the matters that are most important, if there is any influence because of the fact that we are waiting for more translators and additional resources, so that we never face these kinds of issues and so that we can ensure that the House, which has the principal responsibility of adopting legislation, is not interfered with in that process.

• (1540)

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

I am astounded at what I am hearing here. Committees are integral to what we do here. What I am hearing from the government House leader is that democracy is just too inconvenient right now for them.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Then you are not listening.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I am listening. It is true. That is exactly what they are saying—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We cannot have cross debates. If the hon. member can get to his question, he will get his answer.

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, democracy, for the Liberal government, is proving just too inconvenient. That is what we are debating here today.

Why can we not have committees? Why can we not do things during the normal allotted sitting hours in a constitutionally compliant manner? It is the Liberals who are the first to complain about the use of section 33 of the charter, yet here they are now, taking these actions.

It is a shame that they are suppressing the very right to democracy that we were all elected to uphold.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the reason we cannot conduct our business in normal hours is that the party opposite refuses to allow that to occur. That is a tactic. It is called obstruction, and its objective is to block not only the government but also the House from conducting—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I just want to remind members that they had an opportunity to ask a question, and they were not disrupted in doing so. Well, they were a little, because I had to bring order, but I want to remind members that if they want to listen to the question so we can get to the answer and then to more questions, that would be great.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, when one spends six days debating legislation one supports and has no amendments for, it is very clear one's objective is to slow down the government's agenda. It is not just the government's agenda. It is the agenda of the House and the responsibility of the House to adopt legislation, and the idea that it would not be responded to is foolhardy.

If the idea that we have added time so there can be additional debate, so we can do less allocation of time and fewer motions that program, is somehow offensive, it goes against the very point the Conservatives are making. We are trying to find a way to give them additional time to speak.

Yes, absolutely, committees have incredible prominence and importance in our process. They feed our legislative process. However, when one uses committees to go trolling for partisan purposes and make newspaper headlines that have nothing to do with helping Canadians, and when one demonstrates that interest in trying to advance one's own partisan interest and troll for things one can put in newspapers, this has absolutely nothing to do with helping Canadians who need help right now. The idea that their partisan games should take supremacy over the needs and demands of this country is not responsible.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, in short, we are debating a closure motion about a gag order. That is how I see it.

Most of the arguments that I am hearing are as follows: that democracy takes time, that there will be procedures in place and that we need to move forward quickly at all costs. However, I think that we need to take the time to do things right. That takes time.

In times of crisis, like the one we just experienced with COVID-19, decisions were made in one day. That is normal in a time of crisis. However, we often noticed that there were a lot of negative effects because we did not follow the proper procedure.

We must not skip over the committee work. We must not speed up debate at all costs. We are capable of functioning and doing things properly.

Why do indirectly here what the government is not able to get done directly?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I would also like to thank the hon. whip of the Bloc Québécois, who is very responsible. At each stage, she clearly announces the number of speakers who will be rising and the amount of time the Bloc Québécois will need to pass a bill. I appreciate that.

Unfortunately, that is not the case with the Conservative Party. The Conservative Party is always filibustering.

This motion is so simple. We want to extend the hours of debate into the evening. This would give the Conservative Party, which is the only party in the House that has a problem with this, the opportunity to have more members speak. I find it odd that they would have a problem with that.

• (1545)

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am confused. I am hearing Conservatives talk about democracy and say they want to have an opportunity to speak. The whole premise of this is to ensure we sit later, so they all get a chance to get up and speak on a bill. We want to work later.

Mrs. Kelly Block: That's not true.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, it is true. That is exactly what we are doing here. We are trying to ensure that everybody gets an opportunity, by sitting to midnight. We want to work hard. We came here to work. I came 11 hours to get here from my door, from a riding that has 31 communities and is three time zones away. I am willing to sit here until midnight. I am willing to get the work done.

Maybe the government House leader can speak about how ludicrous it is that we would not be sitting until midnight, when we need to get business done. I came far, from Vancouver Island, to get work done here.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to thank all members for the sacrifices they make in their personal lives to represent their constituents.

Yes, it does strike me as bizarre. In every meeting I have with the Conservatives I am told they need more speakers and do not have enough time for speakers, so we create a mechanism whereby they can have more speakers, and then it is undemocratic and they say it is terrible that we are giving them more time to have speakers. It is a terrible affront to democracy that they are being given what they asked for. It is very strange to me.

What it cuts to, and what somebody who is reasonable might presume, is that the underlying issue is not how many speakers the

S. O. 57

Conservatives might have, but that we are taking away from them the ability to block every other party in the House from doing the business of this place. We are taking away their toy, which is obstruction. We are taking away their ability to not tell us how many speakers there are, and we are taking away their ability to block this House from doing its business.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, the House leader across the way mentioned just a couple of minutes ago the important business of the House, the important business that Canadians have asked us to be here for. This motion impacts one of those issues. I sit on the special joint committee for the invocation of the Emergencies Act. We lost multiple committee meetings in the last set before we broke for the summer because of exactly the same thing, because of night sittings.

The government talks about the important work that has to be done. It seems like this is a planned process. It does not want to be accountable for the invocation of the Emergencies Act, which should not have happened in the first place. By holding up our committee work, the truth never comes out. That is what the Liberal government thinks.

I would like the House leader to respond to the impact it has on important committee work that Canadians are depending on the House and its elected officials to look after.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, let me say at the outset that at the Board of Internal Economy it is our objective to make sure the House has every resource it needs to be able to conduct the full totality of its business, and that it is unacceptable that any committee or any procedure of the House be interrupted. That is an adjustment we are continuing to need to work at, because the number of committees has expanded greatly.

However, there is a fundamental difference, which I think the hon. colleague across the way would understand. Whether we are investigating the use of the Emergencies Act or any other matter, that matter can be continued the next day and the day after that, and members can have as many meetings as they want. I encourage the member to do exactly that. Members have the opportunity to be able to conduct that business.

If I could, because I think it is an important point, the difference is that when we are dealing with dental care, there are people waiting for that benefit. When we are dealing with housing, there are people waiting for that benefit. There are people who, if we delay those supports and services, are suffering. With respect to an inquiry, that can wait—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have time for a brief question. The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

S. O. 57

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, just so the government House leader can complete his answer in a more fulsome fashion, there is a substantial cost to the delay of legislation. I wonder if he could just expand on those costs.

• (1550)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague is 100% right. We have to think that when we block and delay legislation, we are blocking and delaying critical support to Canadians who need it.

Let us think of housing right now. When the party opposite talks about people who are struggling and need support, and then it obstructs and blocks legislation in this House that can give them support and relief, that is unacceptable. That is exactly what we saw on the bill on dental and housing, Bill C-31. Committees we can move to the next day, but support cannot wait.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[*Translation*]

The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be adopted on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

• (1635)

[*English*]

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 213)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Bradford
Brière	Cannings

Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	McDonald (Avalon)
McGuinty	McKay
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLeod
McPherson	Mendès
Miao	Miller
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petipas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Sahota	Sajjan
Saks	Samson
Sarai	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Singh
Sorbara	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koevorden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi— 171	

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Aboultayf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genius	Gill
Gladu	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Vuong

Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 147	

PAIRED

Nil

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 22 RESUMED

The House resumed from November 14 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling and need support. Members of Parliament should be stepping up to work harder for longer hours to make sure Canadians are getting the supports they need. That is why we support the idea of working longer and harder. We believe Canadians deserve no less.

In the debate just a few short minutes ago, I heard the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, whom I have a lot of respect for and think is a good guy, raised the Conservative objection that somehow MPs working evenings is against the Canadian Constitution. I cannot make this up. He actually said that the Constitution had to be respected, so I took the opportunity while we were voting to look at the Canadian Constitution, because I am sure he would not speak out of turn, to see if there was some prohibition on MPs working evenings somewhere in it. I looked at page after page, and I am pleased to report to the Conservative caucus that, no, there is no prohibition on MPs working evenings or working overtime in the Canadian Constitution. The Conservatives should therefore absolutely embrace the idea of working longer and harder.

However, I think—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order. I understand that everyone is excited about the hon. member's speech, but I hear heckling during his debate. I can understand that it happens during question period, but it should not happen now.

I want to compliment the hon. member for engaging everyone, but I want to remind everyone that we want to respect each other. Let the hon. member give his ideas and his speech, and do it in a respectful manner.

I ask the hon. member to please continue.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, what is in the Constitution, which I want to point out to my Conservative colleagues, is the right of Canadians to have representation and to join labour unions and the right of those unions to strike. This is what I wanted to tell my Conservative colleagues about.

Doug Ford's actions in Ontario were contrary to the Constitution. He used the notwithstanding clause when it had already been ruled out—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has a point of order.

Government Orders

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I rise on a question of relevance. What does Doug Ford's use of the Constitution Act have to do with anything?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member well knows that there is some latitude during the discussion. I am sure the hon. member will bring his conversation around to the debate before the House. I want to remind members that when they are in debate, they should be debating the issue before the House. I can remind members what that is, but I am sure the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby, who happens to be the House leader for the New Democratic Party, is well aware of it.

I would remind members to be mindful and not rise on a point of order when they know there is some latitude allowed within a speech.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, my point is this. If the Conservatives were really concerned about the Canadian Constitution, they should have stood up against Doug Ford. They should have stood up against what was happening in Ontario. However, to stand up on constitutional grounds for MPs working evenings is a bit rich.

I did a little more research as well. I wanted to see why the Conservatives were objecting to us working longer, harder hours. Certainly, this is something we should be doing at a time of crisis when Canadians need supports. This should be something that is pretty fundamental in nature. I went back to the times of the Harper government. We will recall how dismal that decade was of the Harper government, where we saw environmental protections shut down and social supports ripped apart. Unfortunately, there were things like the cutting of health care spending, which tragically the Liberals have continued.

The Liberals should have known better and the Liberals should have removed themselves from the legacy of the Harper government. Instead, they have chosen in many areas to continue on, except of course when the NDP pushes them to do things like dental care, rental supports and doubling the GST credit. There is a whole host of other areas where the NDP has made a difference in this Parliament, and we will continue to do that as the worker bees of this Parliament.

The Harper government actually put in place evening sessions. I was, as part of the NDP caucus, present and speaking on behalf of my constituents in those evening sessions. What was curious during that period of evening sessions is that Conservative MPs did not show up. There is a turn for each member of Parliament to speak on behalf of their constituents. It turned out Conservatives missed not 10, not 20, not 50, not 100, not 150, not 200, but more than 220 times the Conservatives failed to show up to work. They failed to show up for their turn to speak on behalf of their constituents. They did not show up to work 220 times. Imagine what would happen in a hospital if nurses and doctors failed to show up 220 times. Imagine what would happen in a factory or a small business if people just did not show up 220 times.

The reality is Canadians show up. They show up for our hospitals, they show up for our schools and they should up for our facto-

ries. That is why Canada is the place it is, because people show up for duty. They show up for work. Conservatives should learn a lesson from that. They should actually listen to Canadians and they should show up to work.

It is not just back in the Harper government days. With the crisis of COVID, we had an opportunity to establish a House of Commons. Unfortunately, we normally do not take attendance, which is too bad, because when we do, we see the importance of actually showing up to work. The Globe and Mail saw the tracking as we had the COVID committee after COVID hit on March 13 and we had to rise as the House of Commons and establish new guidelines and new frameworks.

The Globe and Mail reported on June 23 on what happened in terms of attendance over that period. This is a time of profound crisis as COVID struck right across our nation. Canadians were looking for leadership. They were looking for parliamentarians to show up for duty. The Globe and Mail reported on June 23:

The Conservatives have the worst attendance record of all five political parties at the House of Commons COVID-19 committee meetings.

This is shocking but it is important to put on the public record:

Of the 21 special sessions in which all MPs could participate, records show the Tories averaged a 47-percent attendance rate, placing them well behind the other parties.

At that time, the Bloc Québécois had a 73% attendance rate. The Liberals showed up three-quarters of the time, at 76%. The top, of course, among the recognized parties, was the NDP, at 85% attendance. The NDP, playing our role, as always, as the worker bees of Parliament, we show up to work. Canadians show up to work and the NDP shows up to work. The Conservatives continue with that legacy of holding the worst attendance record in the House of Commons.

• (1640)

We do not take that careful attendance now the way we did during that period; it is not something that is part of our Standing Orders. However, it does raise the question as to why Conservatives are so opposed to working evenings, why Conservatives are so opposed to working overtime.

The track record is that this has been chronic with the Conservatives for more than a decade. We saw this during the Harper government where they failed 220 times to show up for their speaking slots, for their opportunity to speak on behalf of their constituents. It is unbelievable. We saw this in the 47% attendance rate during COVID, a time when the country was in crisis and Canadians were looking for all parliamentarians to show leadership, to show up to work and to fight hard on behalf of their constituents. The Conservatives did not show up more than half of the time, contrasting with the NDP at 85%.

Government Orders

I think that when we look at this, this is the real reason that Conservatives have taken such objection. They are even throwing out the Constitution when it is not applicable at all. There is nothing in the Constitution that prohibits MPs from working overtime. There is nothing in the Constitution that prohibits Canadians from working evenings. What I think is really the crux of the matter is that they want to do a short working day. If they want to speak and, of course, they have the right to speak on behalf of their constituents, they want it to be during standard office hours. They do not want to be working evenings.

I disagree profoundly with the idea that somehow MPs should only be working a short day, and not be working evenings and not be working these other times. We are in a critical time for Canadians. We have seen food bank lineups increase. They are worse now than they were even during the Harper government. We have seen the housing crisis that has hit. The member for Carleton likes to say that housing prices have doubled, but what he leaves out is that housing prices doubled over the Harper dismal decade as well. We saw that the Conservatives put in place policies that clearly failed.

The reality is that with Canadians struggling to make ends meet, to put food on the table and to keep a roof over their head, now we have the opportunity to put in place new policies that would actually benefit Canadians. That is why the entire NDP caucus, including the members for Burnaby South, Vancouver Kingsway, Edmonton Strathcona and Hamilton Centre step up. We show up to work, because we believe that our role in the House is to force change, to bring in dental care, to ensure that we have housing—

• (1645)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but the hon. member's time is up. I did allow for a little more time, but it was my fault that I did not give the hon. member a signal.

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

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the House leader for the NDP really hit the nail on the head at the beginning of his comments when he specifically took aim at the issue that the Conservatives seem to have. They are repeatedly getting up and calling this motion undemocratic, but all it does really is extend the ability to debate in this House. I cannot even wrap my head around their argument. It is so incredibly weak. They are saying it is undemocratic what we are putting forward here today, which would add more time to have more debate.

I am at a loss for words trying to understand this argument. I wonder if the member for New Westminster—Burnaby is equally confused with the position that the Conservatives are taking by calling this undemocratic.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There seem to be other individuals who want to answer the question, but it is not their question to answer. I would ask them to hold on and ask their questions when it is time.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I took it at face value when they said that it is in the Constitution that MPs should not be working in the evenings. I took out the Constitution and looked through it, but unless there is one wacky Conservative constitution that only they can read and only they can consult, there is nothing.

I cannot stress enough that there is nothing in the Canadian Constitution that stops a member of Parliament from working in the evening. There is nothing at all. I implore them to get a legitimate copy of the Canadian Constitution so that they can do their own research and prove it to themselves.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I just want to remind members that when someone else has the floor, they should not be having side discussions and yelling at each other about what is in, what is not in, and being part of that discussion unless they are being recognized.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would draw the attention of the deputy House leader for the Liberal Party to the constitutional requirement for quorum in the House. Quorum is what is being suspended under this motion. That is the violation of the Constitution that would happen. That is what is undemocratic.

Would the member support the Conservative amendment that would ensure that the work of committees is protected, to ensure there is a guarantee by the Clerk of the House that the work of committees would be uninterrupted by the coalition's attempt to silence the work of the opposition that Canadians have sent here? Will he support that critical amendment?

• (1650)

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, first off, on the issue of dilatory motions, and I have said this before, there are two block parties in the House of Commons: the Bloc Québécois and the block everything party, which is of course the Conservative caucus.

Members will recall, and I remember this vividly because it was a piece of legislation that I felt was important to be debated, that last spring we had an evening session, and the Conservatives spent the entire evening with motions on who should be heard from among the Conservative caucus. They actually wasted the entire evening at a cost of tens of thousands of dollars. We sat and watched the Conservatives stand up and move dilatory motions that this member be now heard and that member be now heard, and we were supposed to vote on them. It was a complete and colossal waste of time.

This is why the Conservatives should really step up and be serious about the work that we do in the House.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague's speech was very interesting.

Government Orders

I liked that he talked a little about what it was like when COVID hit and we had those terrible attendance records. I have to say, as a relatively new member of Parliament in 2020, I assumed that we all did our job and went to work. I was quite shocked to find that in Alberta, I was the only member of Parliament in that hybrid session that came to Parliament 100% of the time.

The member does talk about committees, and we have heard the Conservatives' concerns with the committees. However, in my committee, the foreign affairs committee, I have had to listen for 16 hours to Conservatives talk about women's rights, Conservatives who in fact are not women. I wonder if the committees are just another tool that the Conservatives use to waste taxpayers' dollars and waste our time.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, this is actually the deal. As we know, we have an interpreter shortage. The interpreters do a fabulous job on our behalf. The NDP has offered important guidance in ensuring that we actually have the number of interpreters and to ensure they are safe and secure. This is something we would like the Conservatives to help with and support, to put in place the interpretation that is necessary.

I will say this. When a committee meeting is held and the Conservatives block it, and the CRTC chair is forced to wait while the Conservatives conduct a filibuster saying that the CRTC should come before the Canadian heritage committee, that is one of many examples of the Conservatives wasting everybody's time.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

In October, I went to Kigali to learn about how parliaments can be more representative and much more diverse and how they can attract more women.

International studies show that if we want to send the message that we want more young mothers, Parliament needs to stick to a more normal schedule. That means not forcing people to sit at night for unnecessary political debates.

I would like my colleague to comment on those recommendations. Again, political spats that have us sitting all night until midnight for purely partisan reasons do not send the right message if we want to attract more women.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, that is exactly why the NDP supports a hybrid Parliament. The Bloc Qu b cois does not support a hybrid Parliament. That is the issue—

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: In the evening, at home, with my daughter in my arms, in front of the camera.

Mr. Peter Julian: —a hybrid Parliament offers a lot more flexibility.

Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague's question, and I would like to be able to answer it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I was going to intervene, but the hon. member did a good job explaining the problem. I would like to remind members who ask questions that they should listen to the answer, even if they disagree.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

• (1655)

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, a hybrid Parliament and remote voting are two initiatives that the NDP has been pushing for and that are vastly improving the lives of fathers and mothers. I was a single dad, so it is extremely important to me that we provide that access.

I simply cannot understand why the Bloc Qu b cois members opposed those two measures, which are so important to work-life balance.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have tried to remember the context in which one hon. member from the Conservative Party talked about the Constitution. In fairness, it was not an effort to say that the Constitution said that MPs do not want to work late. The point was that our committee work is also important work in Parliament. On this issue I feel torn. I will certainly vote for the main motion that we should be prepared to work until midnight to get work done, but I am concerned. Committees do important work.

In all seriousness, because I respect the opinion of the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby a great deal, the committees do important work. Sometimes we have witnesses come who are refugees or who have been tortured, and this is a specific example, but they have been sent away because we do not have the resources to stretch. Could we not, in this place, get the resources we need to both work late and keep committees going?

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands that committees do important work. We have to ensure that we have in place, particularly with the interpreting staff, the number of interpreters that allows interpretation to take place both in the House and in committees safely and in a way that ensures that we have the resources available. We are certainly pushing the government, as members from all sides are, to ensure that we have those resources in place.

That being said, as the member knows, at committee level we have to also make sure that every witness is wearing only equipment authorized by the House of Commons. This was a problem in the Senate a couple of weeks ago when, sadly, an interpreter was sent to the hospital. Therefore, we have to make sure of the safety and make sure the resources are available. I completely agree that we can do both.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to read this into the record. This is section 48 of the Constitution Act, 1867. It says:

The Presence of at least Twenty Members of the House of Commons shall be necessary to constitute a Meeting of the House for the Exercise of its Powers, and for that Purpose the Speaker shall be reckoned as a Member.

Does the hon. member understand that he is advocating for the passage of a motion which is in direct conflict with the Constitution of Canada?

Government Orders

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, that is crazy disinformation. We saw Doug Ford after court cases had clearly indicated that he could not use the notwithstanding clause to impede labour rights in this country, and not a single Conservative stood up against that. Not a single Conservative stood up and said, “This is not something that we will tolerate or that we will abide by.”

Therefore, we have a situation where Conservatives throw the Constitution out the door whenever they want to, and they do not respect the right of Canadians to get representation from their MPs working in the evenings.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Trois-Rivières.

I will answer the question the Conservatives asked about having quorum in the House and it being in the Constitution. The unfortunate reality for the Conservative member who asked the question is that he should know that he has participated in unanimous consent motions in the House to waive that provision in the past. He has already set the precedent himself, so has the Conservative Party and, as a matter of fact, every single person in the House has set the precedent to waive the requirements for quorum.

We cannot be selective as to when we want to interpret the Constitution to our benefit, which is what the Conservatives are trying to do now. The reality is that there has been a long-standing precedent to waive the requirement for quorum under certain conditions, and that is exactly what we are seeing in this motion. There is the same consistency that comes with that.

However, I think what we really have to do with this motion is get to the heart of what is going on. At the heart is the Conservatives' partisan interest and allowing that to supersede the needs of Canadians. That is exactly what is going on here, and I will demonstrate in my speech today how they have routinely done that, not over the last seven years of my being in the House and watching it, although they have done it over the seven years, but five examples just in this fall session alone when they have done that. They have done it on multiple occasions using multiple different tools.

Any individual who has participated in or is well versed in how the Westminster parliamentary system works knows that the one tool the opposition has is to delay. That is its sole tool, and it is important for the opposition to exercise the use of that tool when it can to garner support, or whatever it might be, when they find those issues to be so important. When the opposition feels the issue is the hill it will die on, it will fight, delay and filibuster if it has to, because it feels something is not right.

That is the main tool opposition parties have in a parliamentary system like this. The problem is that Conservatives are using it all the time. They are using that tool for everything. They are saying absolutely every piece of legislation that comes before the House is a hill they will die on, and the problem is that this diminishes the value of the tool they have. It also affects directly, and this is what I do not understand, their credibility on the issue. When they stand up to delay things they are fully in support of, do they not understand that the public sees that? They are doing the same thing, and

their partisan interest in seeing the government fail is more important to them than actually providing supports for Canadians.

Let us review some of the legislation from this fall alone. With Bill C-29, the truth and reconciliation bill, the Conservative Party blocked a motion to sit late to try to pass the bill at second reading before the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which is what the government, and I think all Canadians, would have loved to have seen. It was not until pressure was mounted on them by the public that they backed down from that position.

Another one was Bill C-30, the GST tax credit. This is a bill that needed to be passed in a timely manner to get real supports to Canadians. They were real supports for Canadians that needed to be done in a timely fashion to line up with when the GST payments were made. The Conservatives, again, blocked a motion to sit late on the second reading of that important piece of legislation. They only backed down again and changed their minds on how they would vote on that particular piece of legislation based on public criticism and the public holding them accountable for playing the games they are playing. That is the reality of what we are seeing.

Bill C-31 is the bill that afforded very important measures regarding dental care and housing supports. The Conservative Party, again, blocked the adoption of the legislation to help the most vulnerable, forcing the government, with the help of the NDP, to have a programming motion to get it passed, and this is what we see time after time.

The next is Bill C-9, which would amend the Judges Act, and I will remind members this is all happened during this fall session alone.

● (1700)

We had technical issues with interpretation with that bill. The Conservatives are always standing up and using the interpreters as one of their arguments for making sure we have the best quality of debate in the House. When there was a problem with interpretation, which delayed the debate of the bill, the Conservatives refused to support a motion to add time to the debate that day.

The Conservatives say that they want more time to debate. We literally said that we lost 30 minutes of time because of a problem and we had to temporarily suspend, so how about we add that 30 minutes onto the end of the day. The Conservatives said no. This is the group that is now sitting before us saying that they are in favour of doing absolutely everything to increase democracy and that they want more speakers on every issue.

The one glaring example of this happening in this fall session was with Bill S-5. The bill is on environmental protections, and it is a bill everybody in the House supported. It was unanimously adopted. Conservatives put up 27 speakers on it. I want to provide a comparison for those who might be watching. Compared to that number, Liberals put up six speakers, the NDP put up four speakers, the Bloc put up five speakers and the Green Party put up one speaker.

What is even more telling is that, if someone goes back to look at Hansard or watch the videos—

Government Orders

• (1705)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I think it is rather ironic that we are here debating a motion that is going to limit much of our capacity here. I sit here in this chamber, and I believe we do not have quorum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If the hon. member is raising a point on quorum, she needs to raise that point and not be part of the debate.

I will double-check to see if we have quorum.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We currently have quorum in the House.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely remarkable that the Conservatives proved my point during my speech.

What do the Conservatives do? They play these games where suddenly they all leave the room and then ask for a quorum call. I am not referencing any particular member, but there were about 20 or 30 Conservatives sitting here when I began my speech, and right now that number has significantly reduced.

They are going to say they do not want to hear me speak, and that is fair enough, but we all know what they are up to. They are playing games to try to prevent the business of the House from occurring, and we see this routinely.

As I get back to Bill S-5, a bill that absolutely everybody in the House ended up voting in favour of, what did the Conservatives do? They did not even speak to the bill when it was on the floor. I encourage members to go back to look at Hansard and watch the videos. The Conservatives spoke about everything except Bill S-5. Why did they do that? It was because there was nothing to be critical of.

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We do not have quorum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member is calling for quorum. I will check with the clerks.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We do have quorum in the House at the moment.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, you can see what is happening. The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, my neighbour, is orchestrating all of this right now. He is standing right behind the door over there orchestrating it—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member cannot indicate who is in the House and who is not in the House.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): When I am speaking, the hon. member should not be interrupting me.

We have another point of order. The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I think it is shameful that not only did the member think that it was appropriate to mention who may or may not have been in the House, but also that he is imputing false motives on members.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is debate.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is rising on another point of order.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, with respect to the point of order raised by the member for Kingston and the Islands, my role at that time was simply—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did indicate that the member is not to indicate who is in the House and who is not in the House. Therefore, I am going to allow the debate to continue because the hon. member is raising a point of debate and not a point of order.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not even really need to say much more, other than that the people watching at home have witnessed what just happened in this House. They are seeing first-hand on their TV screens, or wherever they happen to be watching this, the games that Conservatives will play and, guess what, the Bloc Québécois is right there with them playing these games, too.

If anybody in this House really needs a reason as to why we need the motion that we are going to vote on later this evening, they need look no further than the games that the Conservatives and the Bloc are playing while I am speaking. That is the reality of the situation. They can laugh and chuckle and give me the thumbs-up like they are doing, but it is very clear what is going on.

I will go back to where I started, and that is this obtuse idea that the Conservatives are somehow trying to suggest that there is less democracy as a result of sitting late. I am sorry, but if Conservatives thought when they were elected that this was a nine-to-five job, they were mistaken. I would encourage—

• (1710)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There seem to be some discussions going back and forth. I do not have my speakers on, but the hon. member has a boisterous voice and I can still hear the heckling and discussions going on. I would remind members that if they want to have conversations, they should take them outside. If they want to heckle, I would ask them to wait until it is time for questions and comments. They will have a better opportunity to be heard at that time.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has one minute to finish his speech before we get to the interesting part of questions and comments.

Government Orders

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I was just going to conclude by saying that if Conservatives thought when they were elected that this was a nine-to-five job, they were mistaken. I am sure there are a lot of opportunities for them to have a nine-to-five job and contribute to society in a way other than being in the House, and perhaps they want to explore those opportunities, but the reality of the situation is that democracy does not end at five o'clock. This is not a nine-to-five job, and we have to be prepared to work later into the evening when it is going to directly benefit Canadians, which is the reality of a lot of the measures that have been brought forward this fall alone that the Conservatives have routinely held up.

I hope my Bloc friends, who sometimes can see the light, can come around on this issue, see the importance of this and vote in favour of it, because I know this is what Canadians and Quebeckers are expecting of them.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to correct the record, because the parliamentary secretary said a number of things that are not true.

First of all, I am certainly a hard-working individual, and I do not mind working as many hours as are needed to get the job done.

He said that the opposition has only one tool, and that is delay, when there is a bill that it feels is not going to be good for Canada, but there are just so many terrible pieces of legislation being brought forward. However, I would point out that Conservatives are not obstructing. In fact, we voted to move Bill C-30 quickly to committee. We voted to move the conversion therapy bill right through first, second and third reading. On truth and reconciliation, it is really rich, when the Prime Minister goes surfing on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, that Liberals could say we are trying to be obstructionist.

Would the member agree that he needs to correct the record?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, if I were to take the member at her word in what she is saying, that Conservatives are genuinely using that delay tool only for the purpose of bills they are in opposition to, she would then have to explain to me why they delayed Bill S-5 and forced the government to add more and more days so they could speak to Bill S-5 and never even scratch the surface of talking about the bill.

If the member wants to find one or two bills that they happened to move along a little more quickly to try to somehow justify their actions, it certainly does not sit well with those who are watching, looking at this holistically and realizing that what Conservatives have been doing routinely is delay, delay, delay.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I found it very amusing just now when this part of the House emptied out, and suddenly, we saw the other side of the House come in. Now we know what was needed to make the Liberals come to work in the House. All it took was a call for quorum. To me, it was like lifting up a rock. I think members will understand the image.

I find it a little insulting to hear the Bloc being called lazy. We are always ready to work. We are there for our constituents, and we come to work when we are asked to. If the House decides to extend

sitting hours to midnight certain evenings, we will be there and we will be there in person. I challenge my Liberal colleagues to also be there in person.

That said, I would like to ask the parliamentary secretary a question. Let us say that we could justify extending sitting hours until December 16. Why do they want to extend them until June, the end of the spring session? What reason could there be for applying this measure in February, March, April and May? I would really like to have a sensible answer to this question.

• (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am sorry if the member finds something insulting. What I find insulting, quite frankly, is that when we are trying to participate in debate, which is the reason we come to this House to represent Canadians, Conservatives and the Bloc, by the member's own admission a few moments ago, would decide that it is funny to stand up and walk out of the room in order to force a quorum call.

Is that why he thinks people elected him to come here, to play little games like that and skirt around procedural rules? Does he really think that is what his purpose in this House is?

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, on the subject of quorum calls, I was troubled to see the other night during a quorum call that it was clear there were members in the lobby who did not come out. I looked at the Standing Orders, and we have no standing order that requires a member of Parliament who is within a few steps of the chamber to show up when there is a quorum call.

Would the hon. member agree with me that PROC should have a look at this to see whether we should add to our Standing Orders that when there is a quorum call, the assumption when those rules were written was that any member who was ambulatory would get in and get to their seat, because there was a stronger sense of duty in those days? I wonder if we should have PROC look at it.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, we should certainly be looking at this issue. It is also important to reflect on the fact that the Conservatives are not just doing it to the Liberals. They are doing it to the Green member too. I was here that night, when they did the exact same thing to her in the middle of her speech.

Should we look at a way to try to resolve this issue? Yes, I think we should, or we could just expect everybody to be adults and not play those games.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for sharing his time with me. That was very kind of him.

Government Orders

Voters did not elect a majority government. Had they wanted to, they would have done so in 2019 or 2021, but they did not. They chose a minority government. However, the current false, hybrid, patchwork majority is an unholy alliance resulting from the NDP's renunciation of its fundamental values in exchange for a promise.

I have some advice for my NDP friends. They should be aware that all of the promises this government makes are for the future, which is understandable, but of course it makes them in the conditional form, never in the present tense. It is important to be aware of that because there is a good chance that many of these promises will end up in the graveyard of good intentions.

An intention is a promise that is not strong enough to be achieved. An intention is basically a false promise. When someone says that they had good intentions, their intentions were not good enough because they never resulted in action.

Government Business No. 22 is what I would describe as a rogue motion. It is a hold-up of democracy.

The motion shows that the current government does not like to govern with an involved Parliament. To avoid having to do so, it does not hesitate to violate the spirit of the rules of the House. Let us not forget that these rules are the culmination of the past wisdom of previous governments. Government Business No. 22 is detrimental to the legitimacy of the government.

Some claim that Parliament is currently ungovernable. Ungovernable, no, unpleasant maybe, but not ungovernable. The government has introduced 36 bills, 19 of which have gone through every stage, 16 of those received royal assent and three are at the Senate; seven bills are being studied at committee, 10 others are at second reading, and so on. Thirty-six bills is not bad. It is not ungovernable. Things might not be going at the pace that some would like. That may be unpleasant.

Why does the government want to muzzle the opposition? It claims this is urgent. Urgency is a convenient pretext. Philosophically speaking, urgency does not exist. It is simply a characteristic that individuals choose to assign to an event. Urgency does not exist.

Here, the person who chose to assign that characteristic to the event is the Leader of the Government. Urgency is subjective, not objective. Urgency is something that is decided, it is our own view. The Bloc Québécois does not agree with this subjectivity.

Subjectivity is about the subject, it is about the individual examining something. The thing I am examining is an object. It is said to be objective. Clearly, depending on where I am in relation to the object, it will have one hue rather than another. It is an interpretation, not the truth. Therefore, urgency does not exist. The only justification that I can see for Government Business No. 22 is an open devotion to ignoring the Standing Orders. The motion will prevent members from discussing issues together because not everyone will be there. Ultimately, having discussions together is the very essence of parliaments.

Government Business No. 22 will force us to give monologues and not have dialogue, and yet, dialogue is the only way to build an objective and not a subjective argument. I will repeat that this mo-

tion is a hold-up of the House and its activities. Why are they doing this? Why are they moving a motion such as this?

Everyone here knows that there is no point in asking "how" without asking "why", so I have to ask, why? The only valid answer I have found in my heart of hearts and in consultation with my eminent colleagues is that the government prefers to govern *in absentia*, as they say in Latin, leaving members to fill the void in the evenings, at the whims of the government House leader and another party's House leader, I might add. I cannot imagine who the leader of the other party will be, but that mystery should be solved soon.

Of course, as parliamentarians, it is our job to sit. I am not arguing that. Our work is planned so that we can put forward our respective points of view. Sittings cannot be improvised at the whim of the government House leader. In 1982, the House adopted the principle of a sessional calendar. It cannot be flouted at every sitting. Government Business No. 22 allows the government to do indirectly what it cannot do directly.

● (1720)

Those are very wise philosophical words. I do not remember who said that; it could have been Plato, Aristotle or Martin Champoux. I am sorry, I should have said the member for Drummond.

Anyway, Motion No. 22 is an unethical decision based on the interest of one, not all. Motion No. 22 disregards the public interest by cutting off debate rather than enabling dialogue. The purpose of a parliament is to bring people together, to foster dialogue, to be constructive. Motion No. 22 says no to all that.

I listened to the member for Kingston and the Islands' passionate speech, and I look forward to hearing members opposite defend the indefensible, because Motion No. 22 is indefensible.

I will end there. I am happy to answer questions.

[*English*]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I understand my colleague's concerns with moving time allocation and moving forward on this, but I am curious. It was not very long ago that the Bloc supported time allocation on Bill C-10, when we were debating that in the House, when we were seeing the Conservatives do everything they could to stop the important work that needed to be done for Canadians, to make sure that Canadian broadcasting was protected. We were updating our broadcasting legislation. At that point, the Bloc supported time allocation.

It seems like the Bloc members are saying it is a massive overreach but also that it is a massive overreach they can support when it is in their interests. I am wondering how the Bloc members square that circle.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that excellent question.

It is important to distinguish between an exception and a precedent.

Government Orders

An exception is something that happens only once and must not happen again. That is what happened with Bill C-10 because there was so much pressure from Quebec's cultural sector, and protecting that culture was the right thing to do.

A precedent is something that has already been set; it is there, we see it, and it will happen again. This practice should not be allowed to happen again, period.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech.

Is he concerned that committee work will be disrupted as a result of this motion?

• (1725)

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her excellent question.

We cannot immediately gauge all the negative effects that could arise, but we do know that there is a possibility that committee work will be disrupted, which would be unfortunate.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we should look at the core of what we are debating today and think about it. Opposition members often say that they want to have more time to debate legislation. If this motion passes, it will provide additional hours for members of Parliament to debate. The opposition is asking for more time and we are giving them exactly that, so that more MPs will be able to speak.

Can the member speculate as to why the Conservative Party would oppose such a motion?

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I cannot answer the member for Winnipeg North on behalf of the Conservative Party. However, I will respond on my own behalf and on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

We could be grateful for the amount of time we are allotted, but what we need in order to build the society we want is quality time. For me, here, quantity is not as important as quality.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be brief. I would like to ask for an apology from the member for Trois-Rivières, who made the mistake of referring to me by my name rather than by the name of my riding of Drummond. I was thinking of rising on a point of order, but I will let it go this time.

I wanted to raise the issue of our interpreters' schedules in the context of the decision that the government is preparing to make with the help of our NDP colleagues. There will definitely be repercussions on the work and the schedules that we need to organize with the House of Commons interpreters.

What is more, the government has decided to apply this measure until June 23, which includes all of the winter and spring months. I would like to hear what my colleague from Trois-Rivières has to say about that because, earlier, the member for Kingston and the Islands chose not to answer my question.

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Drummond for his question.

It seems excessive, unjustified and unjustifiable to apply this measure until June 23. One of the negative consequences that was mentioned earlier is the fact that the work of committees will be compromised, but there are others.

Members were elected to sit and that is what we will do. However, quite honestly, this measure places a pointless and unwarranted burden on other staff, such as the pages, interpreters and other House employees.

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Here we are again with another draconian motion by the Liberal government. I have been a member of Parliament for seven years, and I want to talk a bit about the history of the Liberal government trying to shut down debate and shut down scrutiny at committee. Let us start at the very beginning with Motion No. 6.

Motion No. 6 is the identical motion to the motion we have here, and in between, there was another motion that was very similar as well, Motion No. 11. If anyone gets the mathematical irony, Motion No. 22 is twice as bad as Motion No. 11.

In the short time I have, I want to rebut something the member for New Westminster—Burnaby said in his speech. He talked about how he is going to support this great motion and called out other parties. On May 19, 2016, the CBC reported that the member said the motion was fundamentally anti-democratic and showed a greater disrespect than we had seen developing for weeks. That is what the member for New Westminster—Burnaby said in 2016, so I am not sure when the moral compass was lost or what is different when the motions are so similar.

Let us go back in time to 2016 with Motion No. 6. I will set the stage. There was the MAID, medical assistance in dying, legislation and the courts had prescribed a date by which it was due. The government was very angry that numerous amendments had to be brought because the legislation was so terrible. We were there to vote on these multiple amendments. It was not starting as quickly as the Prime Minister wanted it to start and he became very angry. He came over and grabbed the late Gordon Brown and tried to shove him, but he accidentally “elbowgated” another member, Ruth Ellen Brosseau. That was the introduction of the first draconian motion, and we see that bad behaviour continues.

Then we get to Motion No. 11, forcing folks to sit until midnight, but not everybody. Nobody in the NDP or the Liberal Party had to show up. They could be in their PJs in their beds. They just wanted to keep the opposition busy talking without an audience until midnight night after night. Obviously, I do not have an issue talking until midnight. However, I am being told that I have to stop talking now.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

● (1730)

[English]

PANDEMIC PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS ACT

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.) moved that Bill C-293, An Act respecting pandemic prevention and preparedness, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, as of today, we have lost over 45,000 Canadians to COVID, and millions of people around the world have died as a result of COVID. It has upended our lives in so many different ways, from isolation to school closures. It has upended businesses and caused major economic disruptions, reverberations that we still feel with difficult inflation and interest rate hikes that are challenging many households. The global impact on poverty rates and the upending of education around the world will have long-lasting and negative effects.

There was the increasing debt that governments around the world rightly took on to address this crisis in many respects. Both public and private debt also come with consequences. Fifty-seven per cent of Canadians whose debt increased attributed the increase to COVID. As a parliamentary intern in my office put it, even having just lived it first-hand, it is hard to wrap our heads around what we just experienced.

What can and should we do about all of that? What lessons should we learn? We have to be specific and clear, and put a framework in place to make sure we do not lose these lessons. Simply put, the message of this bill is that we need to learn the lessons from this pandemic in order to prevent and prepare for the next one. No, we are not done with COVID, but we have also lived through enough to learn from our pandemic response across all levels of government, and those lessons should inform our plans going forward.

What does the pandemic prevention and preparedness bill do? It does three things. First, it establishes a review of our COVID response, not just from the federal government's perspective but across all levels of government. The goal is to be comprehensive. Just to comment briefly on the scope of the review, the bill notes:

In conducting its review, the advisory committee is, among other things, to

- (a) assess the capability of the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Department of Health to respond to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic before and during the pandemic;
- (b) in collaboration with provincial and municipal governments, assess the public health and pandemic response capabilities of those governments;
- (c) assess the effectiveness of the exercise of powers under any applicable federal laws before, during and after the pandemic and of the coordination of measures taken under those laws; and

Importantly, and this is the broad element to bring to bear on lessons learned:

- (d) analyse the health, economic and social factors relevant to the impact of the pandemic in Canada.

There has to be a review if we are going to learn the lessons of our government's response and the response of all governments.

How do we take those lessons and put them into a framework where we are going to see accountability, transparency and action on a going-forward basis? The second thing the bill does is it requires the Minister of Health to establish a pandemic prevention and preparedness plan. It is modelled on climate accountability legislation.

To my knowledge the first piece of climate accountability legislation that I reviewed was from a Conservative government in the U.K. in 2006, and we now have such a framework in place here in Canada. This bill takes a similar approach to say there has to be a transparent and accountable framework by which a government is obligated to table a plan to Parliament, to the Canadian public, and then update that plan on a regular basis. The bill suggests every three years. I went back and forth between three and five years. I think five years would be appropriate as well.

It obligates the Minister of the Health to establish a pandemic prevention and preparedness plan and to table a report. The bill sets out a long list of factors. This is where it was quite difficult actually, because I was drawing from a great amount of expertise out there, from the United Nations Environment Programme's report on preventing future pandemics, from IPBES, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and their workshop reports in relation to pandemic risk and how we prevent future pandemics, and certainly from the independent panel. It has a series of reports now on preparedness and response at the national level and also at the global level, and how we could strengthen those responses at all levels.

Taking those expert reports, and in consultation with some of the researchers behind those reports and certainly with Canadian health experts as well, the bill sets out a series of factors that the Minister of Health must consider in developing a plan. I am sure I missed some elements, which is partly why it is so important to get a bill like this to committee. The committee could, I hope in a non-partisan way, say what does not make sense or whether something was missed or how we could get it to the best place possible as a matter of what should be in or out of a plan as the health minister considers it.

As a starting point, obviously enough, what the health minister should do is identify the key drivers of pandemic risk and describe how Canadian activities, domestic and abroad, contribute to the risk.

● (1735)

We focus a lot in this House and, frankly, in the Canadian public around preparedness strategies, and that is part of what this bill would do as well. We do not talk enough about prevention, but we know that the costs of prevention are a small fraction of the significant human and economic costs of living through a pandemic. Therefore, there has to be a real strong focus on prevention.

Private Members' Business

There also has to be a commitment to ensure collaboration at all levels of government, because it is not enough in our federation for the federal government to take action on its own. Similar to climate action, and certainly with respect to mitigating pandemic risk and to preparing for pandemics, it cannot all be on the federal government, and we have learned that. It is unquestionably a lesson we have learned in the course of the response to COVID. Therefore, the bill would require the Minister of Health to ensure sustained collaboration between the Minister of Health, provincial governments and indigenous communities in the development of the plan, in order to align approaches and address any jurisdictional challenges.

Now, I probably could have been a little clearer with the language here, but the bill would also provide for training programs, including collaborative activities with other levels of government. What I had in mind there, and I think a committee could improve this, was simulation and table-talking exercises. It is not enough to have a piece of paper with a plan written down. We have to put that plan into action and learn where there are gaps in the plan. Where jurisdictional challenges arise, they can be addressed through a simulation exercise rather than as we live through a real-life pandemic.

Now, a critical element here, when we draw from the literature, is that the plan has to be based on a “one health” approach. For those who do not know what a “one health” approach is, it is a relatively simple idea, although it can be a challenge sometimes in how we apply it, because of how holistic it is. It is this idea that we cannot pull apart human health, animal health and environmental health, that these are interconnected ideas and we have to think of them as one health.

We know this, and if we read the literature from the United Nations Environment Programme, from IPBES or from any number of experts, including Canadian experts in zoonotic diseases, they will tell us that zoonosis presents the greatest risk in relation to pandemics. Taking deforestation as an example, the spillover risk that can occur when humans are obviously going to come into closer contact with animals as a result of that deforestation creates not only a challenge to the environment, as it is a question of environmental health, but also then a question of human health, because of that spillover risk. When we run down a list of factors, and there are different reports on this, overwhelmingly the focus has to be on a “one health” approach.

I will read from the United Nations Environment Programme, which states:

This report confirms and builds on the conclusions of the FAO-OIE-WHO Tripartite Alliance and many other expert groups that a One Health approach is the optimal method for preventing as well as responding to zoonotic disease outbreaks and pandemics.

Therefore, there has to be a focus on a “one health” approach.

There also, of course, has to be a whole-of-government approach. It is not enough for the Minister of Health to work up a plan. The Minister of Health has to work with other ministers, break down silos in the federal government and ensure that we are putting ourselves on the best footing we possibly can to prevent and respond to future pandemics. The Minister of Industry has a role to play in terms of ensuring that we have vaccine manufacturing ca-

capacity and manufacturing capacity for essential treatments and tests. There is a role for the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Transport to play with respect to border controls. There is obviously a role for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to play with respect to global health equity, which is an issue that, unfortunately, we have, as wealthier countries, utterly failed on in a serious way in the course of this pandemic. There also ought to be collaboration, and this is in keeping with that idea of a “one health” approach, with the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Environment.

Therefore, if we think of a framework that already exists within the Government of Canada, a “one health” approach with respect to antimicrobial resistance, it is a partnership between the Department and the Minister of Health and the Department and the Minister of Agriculture, because we know, certainly in other countries around the world, that the increase and overuse of antibiotics can create the risk of superbugs. There are researchers at McMaster who call it the “silent pandemic”, referring to the number of lives that have already been taken by AMR. As I have said, it is a whole-of-government approach.

● (1740)

I will say that this has to be a focus of the committee when it looks at the series of factors, ensuring that it gets sustained collaboration with the provinces, because we need to make sure, for example, that there are preparedness strategies for public health services, including the protection of vulnerable and marginalized populations. That will be as much a provincial question as it is a federal question. The working conditions of essential workers across all sectors is as much a provincial issue as it is a federal issue.

The availability management of relevant stockpiles, including testing equipment and PPE, is more of a federal issue, but we have seen challenges at times at the provincial level as well.

There is the search capacity of the human resources required for testing and contact tracing, because we cannot have the human resources at the ready at all times. We need to be able to stand them up to meet the surge, and again the provinces and the federal government will need to work hand in hand on this.

There are a series of other factors, and I will not go into all of them. I want to mention the seven key disease drivers identified by the United Nations Environment Programme.

First is an increasing demand for animal protein, because we understand the spillover risk and lack of biosecurity, especially with increased demand in low and middle-income countries. It is a real challenge that needs to be addressed.

Second is unsustainable agricultural intensification.

Private Members' Business

Third is the increased use and exploitation of wildlife. If we look at the live animal markets around the world, they have presented challenges, including likely in the course of the crisis we have just lived through.

Fourth is the unsustainable utilization of natural resources, accelerated by urbanization and land-use change.

Fifth is travel and transportation.

Sixth is changes in the food supply chains. Traceability challenges are the issue there.

Seventh is climate change.

These are major twin risks. Climate change is an existential risk in and of itself, but it also drives pandemic risk. That is not to say we can eliminate travel, and we are not going to eliminate agriculture, but how do we look at these industries to find best efforts to reduce and mitigate pandemic risk to prevent a future pandemic? How do we make sure there are regulations in place so we can prepare for future pandemics as well?

I suppose the last item that I want to close off with is that there needs to be accountability in any particular role here.

One, the bill establishes a review, the lessons learned.

Two, it requires some detail about what ought to be in that plan. I have gone into this in some detail, and there is greater detail in the bill. I hope it can be a collaborative exercise at committee, because I want this to be a non-partisan exercise in getting it right.

Three, we need to make sure that we appoint a national pandemic prevention and preparedness coordinator to oversee and implement the plans, so there is proper accountability and an office for seeing this through.

Lastly, I want to close with this idea, because I think it is a relevant one. We forget crises in politics. We deal with them and then forget about them. Over time we saw this with SARS. We cannot go through another situation where 20 years from now we look back at a debate like this one or a pandemic prevention and preparedness plan that we developed in the year 2022 or 2023 that has been sitting on a shelf and has not been updated or implemented. The idea here, very much as a matter of accountability, is to ensure that all future governments, regardless of political stripe, take this seriously, renew their focus on pandemic prevention and preparedness, and make sure we do not lose sight of the lessons learned and do not live through something like this ever again as a society. I cannot overemphasize this: The costs of a pandemic like the one we have just lived through are so incredibly significant, and the costs of prevention and preparedness are a very small fraction of that.

I hope there is all-party support for getting this to committee to improve it, to bring amendments to it and to see it through.

I appreciate being given this time today.

• (1745)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have read the bill carefully. I understand that there is a very proactive aspect

to the bill, that is, setting up committees to improve processes so that we can avoid what happened in the past.

The very sad reality is that the pandemic is not over. Hopefully we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, but we are still very much in it. The government has made some management errors that are potentially very serious. I am surprised to see a bill like this from the Liberal Party of Canada right now, when the Liberals are the only ones in the House who are still opposed to a public inquiry into how the federal government managed the pandemic.

Instead of looking 10 kilometres ahead, perhaps the Liberals should choose to look inward a bit.

[*English*]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Mr. Speaker, I think that question drives at something really important, which is that we cannot move ahead until we have learned the lessons of what is behind us. We are still living with COVID, but much of the government's response, at all levels, frankly, has been seen through in a serious way, so there are still serious public health conversations to be had. There are major crises in Ontario with respect to our health care capacity, as a result, in part, of the flu, but certainly still because of the pandemic. To that core question, though, of how we put ourselves on the best footing going forward, unquestionably we need to look at the past.

I would also emphasize, and I hope this holds true for all of us, that this should not be a points-scoring exercise. If there were missteps, if there were things that were done right or things that were done wrong, it is not a matter of us getting up and patting ourselves on the back or of those across the aisle scoring points. The goal of this bill is to say, in a very serious way, let us scrutinize what went right and what went wrong to inform what should come next.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first of all I just want to say how much I respect my hon. colleague and thank him for the bill, but with great respect I have to say there are some serious flaws with the bill. We in the New Democratic Party have, for a long time now, said there would come a day when we needed to have a public, comprehensive, searching and fearless review of the federal government's response, from both a preparation point of view and an execution point of view, with respect to COVID-19.

Private Members' Business

The bill before us, which purports to do that, would have the Minister of Health appoint an advisory committee, presumably to examine the behaviour of the Minister of Health, and it would have no power to order production of documents, summon witnesses or hold hearings in public. There would not even be a requirement to table a report in the House.

Does my hon. colleague not agree with the NDP that what we need is an inquiry under the Inquiries Act, chaired by an objective third party, to hold hearings in public with the full powers of an inquiry, so that all the questions can be asked and answered, so Canadians can have confidence in the review that is done, and so we can not only learn from the past and expose the errors that were made but also, more importantly, plan for the next pandemic and emergency that will come in the future?

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's work; we have always worked in a really collaborative way.

I would say I am open to a different approach in terms of how the review ought to be conducted and in terms of the powers of that review. Again, I started from a different perspective here. I looked at the SARS report, for example, from David Naylor, whom I consulted in the course of drafting this bill. When I looked at that report, the challenge was not the nature of the review; the challenge was the implementation of the lessons learned in the course of that review.

Therefore, if that SARS report, the Naylor report and the powers they had were greater than what an advisory committee would have here, then I entirely agree that there should be substantive powers to do that kind of review work and that kind of investigation to get at the right answer.

However, I think the core question we have to grapple with is not only how we learn the right lessons in the course of the review, but how we make sure this does not fall off the table, that it continues to be a serious political priority five years, 10 years and 30 years from now, and that we do not have a report like the SARS report that sits on the shelf, some of it implemented but most of it not, but a report that is significantly and substantively implemented. That was my core focus in putting this bill forward.

● (1750)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise in the House this evening.

This is an important topic, and I appreciate that the member for Beaches—East York has brought this legislation forward and prompted the discussion that we are having here today. I can certainly understand that after the past two years of COVID, there are those who feel we need to get something like this done immediately. Nobody wants COVID or something worse to hit Canadians. Our first priority as parliamentarians is the safety and security of our citizens. We have to take the time to properly reflect on and examine what we have just gone through to have a meaningful conversation about how to respond to a future pandemic.

The bill's proposal that the Minister of Health and other government ministers be the ones to put together or even make up the advisory committee to review their own response to the coronavirus

is, frankly, quite ridiculous. That is like having the fox guard the henhouse, because they all have a very vested interest in the outcome. Canadians will never get the answers they deserve if the ministers who perpetuated or promoted many of the failures, abuses and violations of charter rights that we have seen over the past two years are the same ones tasked with reviewing their own government's response.

Let us face it: Transparency, accountability and, frankly, honesty are hardly synonymous with the government. We have seen firsthand much of the misinformation propagated by these ministers. That is why I propose, before embarking on some of the elements contained in Bill C-293, that we need a full non-partisan national inquiry into how governments at all levels have handled the response to COVID-19, because as I reflect on the past two years, there are too many questions. These are questions that have never been answered by government, and in many cases, no one in government or the media has even had the courage to publicly ask them.

Herein we have the first major issue in the government's handling of COVID. It is the “my way or the highway, we know best and do not dare ask questions about what we are doing” approach that the governments across this country have taken. We kept hearing “follow the science” and “we are following the science”. It is the political science, yes, but the last time I checked, a big part of doing real science involved asking questions, analyzing data and doing so with rigorous skepticism. We make an observation, we research the topic, we form a hypothesis, we test the experiments, we analyze the data and we report the conclusions as objectively as we can based solely on the empirical data. That is the scientific method.

In the case of COVID, the government never really got beyond forming a hypothesis. The Liberals based their response on the assumptions that they and many in the medical field made in the early days of COVID, which led to selective and often misleading data being collected and used to back up those assumptions.

The media also failed in their objectivity to ask questions, choosing instead to parrot government talking points as truth, sowing fear and division as they quietly pocketed hundreds of millions of dollars in government subsidies. They refused to allow different points of view. They did not ask the tough questions, and they silenced or mocked anyone who did.

Private Members' Business

Canadians should not need to fear repercussions in their workplaces, their communities, their professional associations, online or by the media. However, that is what happened. Anyone who questioned anything related to the government's handling of COVID, at any level of government, got smeared, bullied and cancelled. In a free and democratic society, that should be deeply concerning to all of us. Governments made huge demands of Canadians, and it is incumbent on governments at all levels to provide empirical data to back up their actions. We owe that to Canadians.

I sat down the other night as I prepared to deliver this speech today and started to write down some of those nagging questions. They are questions that we cannot trust the government to ask because it has sought so diligently for two years to cover up the answers from Canadians for its own political purposes. I am going to take the remaining time here to ask some of those questions.

For a start, why did the government make the decision in 2019 to shut down our pandemic early warning system? We had SARS and H1N1, and we knew the potential of a Canadian epidemic. Who chose to shut it down? Who in the government was responsible for leaving Canadians defenceless?

Why was there so much conflicting information provided by government and public health officials? There were days when the WHO said one thing, Dr. Tam said another and, in my province of Manitoba, Dr. Roussin said something completely different, and all on the same issue.

• (1755)

This bred confusion, fear and mistrust. I think this is the type of issue the legislation, at least in part, may be trying to address, but again, we cannot address these issues until we know first-hand what took place and who was responsible, and we cannot trust the government to provide us with those answers.

We learned that the Public Health Agency of Canada, the same department responsible for the government's COVID response, allowed our national microbiology lab in Winnipeg, one of our nation's foremost secure facilities, to be infiltrated by Chinese spies with direct links to both the Wuhan lab and the bioweapons program of the People's Liberation Army. Why?

The government sued Parliament to cover it up. It refused to come clean. Then it turned around and made a deal with China to be the sole manufacturer of Canada's vaccine supply. The deal ultimately fell through, but there are a lot of questions here that require answers. Why does the government refuse to release procurement details, such as the price per dose, when other governments have been transparent?

There are still legitimate questions related to vaccine safety and efficacy. Why did the government agree to hide the safety data on Pfizer for 75 years? There are 51,714 Canadians who have suffered vaccine injuries to date as a result of their COVID shots, with 10,501 serious reactions, including 874 anaphylactic reactions, 1,342 cases of myocarditis, 140 thrombosis cases and 382 reports with an outcome of death following vaccination. Where does that information come from? It is from the government's own website. Anyone can look it up. There are also many reports of doctors re-

fusing to even file a VAERS report, which is a vaccine adverse event reaction report.

How many of those individuals have been compensated by the government's vaccine injury program to date? It is eight. Why is the media quiet about those things? Why is it that the Prime Minister was more interested in his political fortunes than in public health?

We saw this in the Prime Minister's decision to call an unnecessary election last fall. We have seen this in his unacceptable rhetoric demonizing those who chose not to be vaccinated and in his heavy-handed approach to dealing with vaccine mandate protests. One minute our truckers are essential workers and heroes who kept our country going, and the next they are villains so awful that the Emergencies Act was invoked to deal with them. The inquiry, and ultimately history, will show what an unjustified and politically motivated response that was.

There are also serious questions related to government spending. The Liberal government spent unprecedented amounts, hundreds of billions of dollars, to fight COVID, but its own Parliamentary Budget Officer shows that at least 40% of that money, or \$205 billion, never went to fighting COVID. Where did it go? We know that tens of millions of dollars have found their way into the pockets of Liberal cronies, as the government paid exponentially more for ventilators and other medical equipment that was never used and now sits collecting dust in warehouses.

Who got rich while Canadians suffered? Why did the government refuse to put any safeguards in place for CERB, resulting in three million people, including criminals in jail, receiving the CERB benefit? Why did the government send federal public servants home at a time when five million Canadians had lost their jobs and were forced into government programs and unable to access services? Why are they still at home?

My office has stayed open every day over the past two years to help Canadians. We did it safely and we had no issues with COVID. There is no reason that other government officials and agencies could not have done likewise. Canadians are paying their salaries, and public servants need to get back to the office and back to work full time for Canadians.

Private Members' Business

We could keep going on here all evening. We could talk about divisive and unscientific mandates. We could talk about the disastrous ArriveCAN app. We could talk about how the government's actions destroyed border communities and separated loved ones. We could talk about how Canadians were assaulted in quarantine hotels. We could talk about the provinces and their responses, and the draconian measures that in my view did far more long-term harm than good. The questions go on and on. Canadians deserve answers.

Over the past two years, governments have made big demands of Canadians. Canadians stepped up again and again, only to have their hopes dashed by government failures and broken promises as the goalposts were moved over and over again. Canadians deserve empirical justification for mandates. History will show that mandates were based on politics, not public health.

● (1800)

After two years of sickness, restrictions, divisions and fear, governments at all levels need to be held accountable for their actions. Bill C-293 is insufficient because the government, and any government, cannot and should not be trusted to investigate itself.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking my colleague from Beaches—East York for introducing this bill. I must say I have a great deal of respect for that colleague. I think he is a free thinker and a top-notch parliamentarian. I noticed that even before I joined Parliament. I was waiting for the right time to tell him, and now it has come.

Bill C-293 essentially seeks to ensure that the Government of Canada is better positioned, at least in theory, to deal with future health crises and pandemics and, in some way, to learn from them.

What is more, as I said earlier in my question, this bill is very proactive. It talks about establishing an advisory committee, developing a plan for the future and appointing officials to prepare contingency plans for future pandemics, although the bill provides a lot of room for that to potentially evolve in one way or another. This would also require major involvement from Health Canada, the Department of Health, and so on.

I feel somewhat uneasy about this bill. Although I believe that it is well intentioned, I think that the Government of Canada already has, and did have, a large number of tools at its disposal that were not used much, if at all. I seriously wonder if we are adding another layer of red tape, more committees and all sorts of things when the recent pandemic already exposed the significant flaws in the federal apparatus.

I believe that what we need at this time is a public inquiry. If we are unable to have a serious independent inquiry shed light on the serious flaws in the federal government's management of the pandemic over the past months and years, we will not be able to benefit from any new institutions, such as the ones presented in this bill.

We are in a rather odd situation. We have a minority government, and we are currently in a situation where the Conservatives have asked for an independent public inquiry and the Bloc Québécois is in favour of an independent public inquiry. I also heard my NDP

colleague, who asked a very good question earlier, reiterate that we should have an independent public inquiry.

What is the Minister of Health's response to that? The minister says it is important to have a mechanism to hold an inquiry, but he will not say how or when.

That is typical. It is like saying, someone is very sick, but I am not telling if or when I will call an ambulance; we will just hope for the best. It is like saying, we know illegal firearms are out there in Montreal, and we think that is a big deal, but we are not telling how we plan to get them off the streets or when. It is like saying, we know French is in danger in Montreal, and we think that is a big deal, but we are not telling what we plan to do to protect it or when. That is basically what the government and the Minister of Health are saying.

I know that it is not the fault of my colleague who is introducing the bill. However, as parliamentarians, this puts us in a tough spot. We know that they want us to sit until midnight, that this means we will have less time in committee, and that we need to carefully select the bills we send to committee because of the behaviour of the Liberals and their friends in the NDP. This basically forces us to vote against the bill. It forces us to vote against it and tell the government to use the tools that are already at its disposal. If it has nothing to hide, then it should come clean on how it managed the pandemic.

What is the solution? According to the first part of the bill, it is the creation of a committee. Actually, the solution is to immediately launch an independent public inquiry. Then there are the second and third parts, which I find problematic, particularly as a sovereigntist, as a Quebecker and as a Bloc Québécois member, because they talk about a prevention plan overseen by a national coordinator.

I am starting to spend a lot of time with the Standing Committee on Health, and I know that when something starts with “the federal government shall coordinate” or “the federal government shall use its leadership role”, it ends with federal legislation, spending power and conditions on our transfers. I know that if we do not do this or that, they are going to coordinate by tightening the purse strings and withholding the money. That is what coordination is, and that is what federal leadership is.

● (1805)

I know my colleague is well intentioned, but I have a hard time believing that the tools proposed in this bill will be put to good use. The priority should be to launch a public inquiry immediately.

Private Members' Business

With respect to jurisdictions, the bill states the following: “in collaboration with provincial and municipal governments, assess the public health and pandemic response capabilities of those governments”. Assessing the capabilities of provinces and municipal governments does not mean meddling in their affairs. This is complete interference. Since the Liberals have trouble looking inwards, they blame others and point fingers. This is minor interference.

A public inquiry is needed because 45,000 Canadians died and there were many failures on the part of the federal government. My colleague said the pandemic should not be used to score political points or to point fingers at others. He is right, but we have been asking for accountability for quite some time now, and we never see any. I do not understand how all these new committees and institutions will be used on a permanent basis.

My Conservative colleague spoke earlier about the Global Public Health Intelligence Network, an alert system that was modified in 2018, though we do not know how. It was changed by some official, and at some point in 2019, it shut down altogether, 400 days before the pandemic of the century. It is an alert network that gives us the opportunity to learn about global pandemics. The bill we are studying today proposes to establish a small committee to assess how provinces and municipalities have done their job.

My colleague from Beaches—East York said earlier that we need to be prepared for the next 10, 20 and 30 years. In 1950, the national emergency stockpile was established to store pharmaceuticals, supplies, pandemic stockpiles, and so on. However, that stockpile has been systematically neglected, and since 2015, N95 masks have even been destroyed because the government got tired of storing them. Now we would be planning for the future without knowing what happened with that.

We recently spoke about the infamous respirators. There were 27,148 in the stockpile, but the government ordered over 27,000. The Minister of Health told us that it was important to look out for people and plan ahead. I am getting good at imitating the health minister. In the worst-case scenario modelled by the federal government, we needed 13,500 respirators. A \$237-million contract was awarded to FTI Professional Grade, a shell company owned by a former Liberal MP. This company produced half of the surplus, or 10,000 respirators. We now have 13,000 too many, yet we need to set up small committees.

Let us talk about quarantine management. Montreal had to rush its own staff over to the airport because the federal government was too incompetent. What is more, 30% of the COVID-19 tests from screening locations at airports went missing. There was no automated quarantine registry. There was no follow-up with 59% of those who were flagged as priority cases. The federal government did not follow up with or contact 14% of those it knew had tested positive for COVID-19. Screening was not done in both official languages. I will not even talk about temporary foreign workers, because there were already major problems with that program and the federal government was unable to adapt it.

Then there is vaccine capacity. The government will say it ordered tons of vaccines, but as the 2003 Naylor report on what we learned from SARS revealed, Canada's production capacity is inad-

equately. We know we have to be more independent and capable of producing more. That report came out in 2003.

The government does not want a public inquiry, and the Minister of Health has nothing of substance to say. Moreover, the government does not want to give the provinces money, even though they are the ones who will be on the front lines if ever there is another pandemic.

Honestly, I respect my colleague. Truly, I do. However, I think introducing this bill at this point in time is inappropriate. The ball is in the government's court. I would like to see it use the law and the mechanisms it has to prove to us that it managed the pandemic properly. Once that is done, it might think twice before telling Quebec and the provinces how to manage things.

• (1810)

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in this House and speak on behalf of the great people of Vancouver Kingsway and as the health critic for the New Democratic Party of Canada.

Tonight, I speak to Bill C-293, which, in our view, represents an unacceptable attempt to provide the illusion of accountability and oversight with respect to Canada's response to the most severe pandemic in a century.

I am going to briefly review the measures the bill calls for. If enacted, it would require the Minister of Health to establish an advisory committee to review the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. It would require the Minister of Health to establish, in consultation with other ministers, a pandemic prevention and preparedness plan.

It would amend the Department of Health Act to provide that the Minister of Health must appoint a national pandemic prevention and preparedness coordinator from among the officials at the Public Health Agency of Canada to coordinate the activities called for under the act.

From the very inception of this pandemic back in early 2020, New Democrats have been calling for a root-to-branch, independent, penetrating and comprehensive review of Canada's COVID-19 preparedness and response. Unfortunately, the measures outlined in Bill C-293 fall far short of that standard.

By way of background, the National Advisory Committee on SARS and Public Health was established in May 2003 by the then minister of health, Anne McLellan, following the outbreak of SARS. The committee's mandate at that time was to provide a “third-party assessment of current public health efforts and lessons learned for ongoing and future infectious disease control.”

Private Members' Business

The next year, in 2004, the Public Health Agency of Canada was established in response to the advisory committee's recommendations. That agency was specifically mandated to be Canada's lead organization for planning and coordinating a national response to infectious diseases that pose a risk to public health.

Canadians expected that the federal government would build and maintain the capacity to protect them from future pandemic threats. Instead, both the Liberals and the Conservatives allowed that capacity to atrophy under successive governments.

Canadian officials first became aware of SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19, on December 31, 2019, yet PHAC did not assess the pandemic risk posed by COVID-19 or the potential impact were it to be introduced to Canada.

As a result, the agency underestimated the potential danger of COVID-19 and continued to assess the risk as low until March 15, 2020, nearly a week after the World Health Organization had declared a global pandemic. By then, Canada had already recorded over 400 confirmed cases and community spread was under way.

Even as the machinery of public health ground into action, deficiencies in the federal government's pandemic preparedness and response were glaring. Pandemic response evaluations conducted in Canada to date have documented serious deficiencies.

A scathing internal PHAC audit released in January 2021 found limited public health expertise at the agency, including a lack of epidemiologists, psychologists, behavioural scientists and physicians at senior levels. The audit also found a lack of emergency response management expertise and capacity within the agency, the very agency charged with preparing Canada for a pandemic.

PHAC communications were terrible. Internal auditors found that PHAC was missing sufficient skills and capacity for risk communications. Our chief public health officer is Dr. Theresa Tam. Her office noted that she often received information in the wrong format, with inaccuracies or in an inappropriate voice needed to convey information to the Canadian audience.

Canadians will remember the problems with Canada's so-called emergency stockpile. A May 2021 report, a full year after Canada declared a global pandemic, from the Auditor General confirmed that negligent management of Canada's emergency stockpile resulted in shortages of PPE for essential workers when COVID-19 hit.

Serious issues with the stockpile had been raised for more than a decade prior to that with nothing done. Canadians will remember we had to throw out millions of PPE in this country because they were out of date as PHAC was not accurately keeping track of them.

A March 2021 report from the Auditor General found that PHAC only verified compliance with quarantine orders for one-third of incoming travellers and did not consistently refer travellers for follow-up who risked not complying.

Later in that year, in December 2021, the Auditor General found that PHAC was either missing or unable to match 30% of COVID-19 test results to incoming travellers from February to June 2021.

• (1815)

In addition, because the agency did not have records of stay for 75% of travellers who flew into Canada, it did not even know whether those who were required to quarantine at government-authorized hotels had in fact complied.

As for long-term care, in May 2020, a report from the Canadian Armed Forces documented shocking and disturbing conditions in long-term care homes where approximately 1,600 trained military personnel had to be deployed. It highlighted serious concerns about shortages of personal protective equipment, staffing levels and failures to follow basic procedures of infection control to keep both residents and staff safe.

That is a sample of what we know to date. PHAC officials have said that they will address identified shortcomings by incorporating "learnings from the pandemic into its plans and test them as appropriate." In response to the Auditor General's report, PHAC has promised to update its plans within two years of the end of the pandemic.

I want to stop there for a moment. This bill would have the Minister of Health, who is in charge of PHAC, appoint an advisory committee, not even an independent committee with powers but an advisory committee, to assess his or her performance and the performance of PHAC, which is under the aegis of the health minister. Talk about a conflict of interest. That is like the defendant appointing the judge. That is completely unacceptable on its own.

In April 2021, the then Liberal health minister said that a full investigation into Canada's COVID-19 response is required at the "appropriate time". She noted:

We are still in a crisis and so our focus remains right now on getting Canadians...through this global health crisis...and when the time is right, our government will be very open to examining very thoroughly the response of this country to the COVID-19 crisis.

In September of this year, our current health minister said in an interview that there should be a broad-based review of how the COVID-19 pandemic was handled. He noted that a government decision could come "soon", without specifying when or what kind of formal review should be held. However, when asked if it should be independent of PHAC, he would only say a "strong" review is necessary.

Private Members' Business

To date, the Prime Minister has deferred all questions about an inquiry or review of the pandemic response, saying that there will be time for a “lessons learned” exercise but that it must wait until the pandemic is over.

New Democrats want the federal cabinet to launch an independent public inquiry into Canada's COVID-19 response under the Inquiries Act without delay. Throughout the pandemic, we have called for such an investigation and the time is now. We are past the emergency phase of the pandemic. We are approaching the third-year anniversary of COVID coming into this country. Now is the time for that root-to-branch inquiry.

Rather than providing a transparent, independent and comprehensive review of Canada's COVID-19 response, this bill would not do that. The measures do not meet the standard. Rather, this legislation represents an unacceptable attempt to provide the illusion of accountability and oversight with respect to Canada's response to the most severe pandemic we have ever faced.

The Inquiries Act would establish an independent chair of that inquiry. It would empower that inquiry to subpoena witnesses, to order the production of documents and to hold evidence in public and under oath. It would allow them to retain appropriate experts, including counsel and technical experts to advise them.

Most importantly, the inquiry would be done independently of the government and in public. Every Canadian was affected by all governments' pandemic response and Canadians have to have confidence that any inquiry that looks at the decisions that were made and the mistakes that were made is done in an honest way with integrity.

I note that experts across the country agree with the position of the NDP. Dr. David Naylor, chair of the federal COVID-19 Immunity Task Force and former chair of the federal review of the 2003 SARS epidemic, has called for an independent review. Richard Fadden, former national security adviser to the Prime Minister, has called for an independent review. Dr. Adrian Levy, Dr. David Walker and Dr. David Butler-Jones have all called for such an inquiry.

We do not need a citizens' inquiry that is called for by Preston Manning, because we do not want this to be a political circus. We do not want a Liberal bill that stickhandles this inquiry into safe waters for a whitewash. We do not want a political circus. We do not want a whitewash.

The NDP and Canadians want an independent, objective and searching root-to-branch inquiry into all aspects of the federal preparation and response to COVID-19 and we will not stop until Canadians get that.

• (1820)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first off, I want to acknowledge the efforts of the member for Beaches—East York.

We are somewhat losing the perspective of what we are debating today. It is almost as if the government presented legislation that it was proposing to pass. We need to put it in the perspective of private members' hour. An individual member of the House has

brought forward a bill that is reflective, no doubt, of the concerns of constituents, people and some stakeholders who the member himself met with, and he has come forward with a proposal. I had the opportunity to chat with the member and listened to what the member was saying when he introduced his bill. It is very much a private member's bill.

In no way does it put in the limitations that are being suggested by opposition members or anyone else in the House. I see it as a positive piece of legislation that, ultimately, would be nice to see go to committee. The member himself has indicated, if not directly, indirectly, that he is very much open to changes to the legislation and to other ideas that members might have. I suspect that the offer for changes goes beyond members from any one political party, but is open to members of all political parties. That point is being lost.

I know there is a huge expectation about where we go from here with respect to the pandemic. The pandemic is not behind us. There is still a need for governments to monitor and take actions where necessary. There are some governments at local levels raising the issue of masking again in the current pandemic, depending on the region of the country. There was a policy this year of a curfew in at least one province. There was mandatory masking. A great deal of variations have taken place.

What I see before us today is proposed legislation that would provide something very tangible for a standing committee could look at. It talks about a comprehensive study or report where we could start to itemize some of the things we could look at. We heard that in a number of speeches, including from the member who introduced the legislation. No one would question issues such as long-term care and the manner in which both provincial—

• (1825)

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order by the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: There is a quorum call, so we will do a count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We do have quorum.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, quorum does not necessarily reflect that on the entire other side of the House—

The Deputy Speaker: We are not going to do that again. We cannot say whether someone is here or not. We had a quorum call, and we have quorum. Therefore, the member has the floor.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I was just going to say there is only one person on the other side of the House. There is absolutely nothing wrong with indicating that there is only one on the other side of the House—

An hon. member: There is one Conservative.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, other members might say “one Conservative.” I will not say that. The bottom line is that we are in private members' hour and—

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, it is double.

An hon. member: We said “Conservatives”. That is two people.

The Deputy Speaker: There we go. Let us all just take a big, deep breath.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we have a private member's bill of substance. It is a private member's bill that would have a positive impact, and it reflects what has been taking place over the last two and a half years. I do not want to play games on the legislation. I want to recognize the legislation for what it is. It is something that reflects a very real and genuine need, and it gives specific direction as to what the government could actually do, not only the government but also the entire House of Commons.

To imply that this is in fact a government initiative is to do a disservice to private members. To try to play the quorum game on a private member's bill does a disservice to private members' hour. I really, truly believe that, and I would hope that we will at least put a pause on that game until we get through private members' hour.

There were issues such as border controls, supply issues, stockpile issues and supports for real people during pandemics. Let us think of the human resources that are necessary, not to mention outside stakeholders such as the Red Cross or our Canadian Forces. There are so many dynamics at play.

We have a piece of legislation that has been brought forward by a private member to try to have an answer going forward. Are there things that we can learn from the last two and a half years? Every member of the Liberal caucus will tell us that, yes, there are things that we can learn from this process. I would like to think that all members on all sides of the House would recognize that value.

Let us put partisanship to the side for a moment and say that it would be good to see this legislation go to a committee. Of the many times I have debated during private members' hour, it is not often that I would be so bold as to say, “Let us get this legislation to a committee” in private members' business. However, I believe this legislation is relevant to what we are experiencing today.

It would not prevent other forms of inquiries. It would not prevent other standing committees from looking at what has taken place. I am one of many members of Parliament who have recognized that we had to make decisions in a fairly quick fashion. I have acknowledged in the past, and I will continue to acknowledge, that it has not been perfect. There have been some mistakes. However, when governments spend literally billions of additional dollars and

create programs from virtually nothing, there are going to be mistakes. There were things that took place during the pandemic that we can all learn from.

It is not just Ottawa. Whether it is provincial governments, municipal governments, school boards, and indigenous community leaders and indigenous communities in general, all of us have played a role in making the decisions. Having that comprehensive study is the responsible thing to be doing, along with the idea of having a report on a three- or a five-year basis. The legislation says three years, and the member says he is open to changes in that.

I do not quite understand why other members would be opposing the legislation. I anxiously wait for a vote because I do believe that, if we were to consult with our constituents, this is the type of legislation they would want us to get behind unanimously.

• (1830)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS NO. 22—EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS AND CONDUCT OF EXTENDED PROCEEDINGS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the House that I will be splitting my time with the member for Saskatoon West.

Here we are again. I was in the process of recapping a bit of history on the draconian motions the Liberal government continues to bring. I had described Motion No. 6 in 2016. It was the same thing of wanting to extend the hours and basically obstruct, and that of course was where “elbowgate” came from. The Prime Minister was upset because there was legislation pending and many amendments were brought, so that evening turned into a fiasco.

The government then withdrew Motion No. 6. It realized it had pushed everyone too far and it was very undemocratic. In fact, I quoted the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, who said that the motion was fundamentally anti-democratic. The NDP seems to be supporting its costly coalition now, but at the time he said that it was fundamentally undemocratic.

Government Orders

Then the government came forward with Motion No. 11, which was about sitting until midnight, but not for everybody to be sitting until midnight. The Liberals and the NDP would have been able to be home in their pyjamas with Motion No. 11, because there would not need to be quorum. They would not need to have a certain number of people in the House, which is actually a constitutional requirement to have 20 in the House. They were recommending something that was not even constitutional back on Motion No. 11.

The irony is they have now brought Motion No. 22, which is twice as bad as Motion No. 11, and mathematically, people will see the irony there. On the one hand, we hear Liberal members say they are trying to give us more time to debate, but actually that would only happen when Liberal and NDP members would be here, and they would not need to be because we would not need to have quorum. It is a little insincere.

The other thing is that the government continually moves time allocation. It promised not to do that when it was first elected in 2015, back in the old sunny days. Its members said they would never move time allocation, and now they are moving it all the time.

Rushing things through the House can be disastrous. We saw that with Bill C-11, where all kinds of draconian measures were used. It was forced to committee, and it was time allocated at committee to get it over to the Senate. Now we can see there are so many flaws in the bill that the Senate is taking quite a bit of time with it and is likely to bring numerous amendments.

That is why we need to have time here in the House for reasonable debate. Debate means people need to not just speak but also be heard. For that to happen, one needs to have an audience, which of course Motion No. 22 would eliminate. The role of the opposition is to point out what is not good about legislation that comes before the House. It does no good at all for us to point it out if nobody is listening to what is being said.

I find it particularly awful that the Liberals talk about family balance and try to promote more women to come into politics. The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake and the member for Shefford, who are young mothers, have stood up and said that this motion is not good for family balance. It is not that people do not want to work, but if we want to encourage more women to come in, these kinds of measures are not encouraging them. There is a lot of hypocrisy for the government to talk on the one hand about getting more women in politics and promoting that and on the other hand putting draconian measures such as this in place, where mothers with young babies would need to be here at 11:30 at night debating legislation.

I am very concerned about committee resources, and so that is really the amendment the CPC has brought. We have seen there has been a lot of trouble at committees getting interpreters and committees not being able to extend their hours when there are important issues because there are just no resources. A valid concern brought by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was that we want a guarantee we are not going to be shortchanged at committee. Perhaps at the end of the day, that is what the government is trying to do, which is to escape the examination it gets at committee. In a minor-

ity government, we can actually try to get to the heart of the issues the government would like no transparency on.

• (1835)

The amendment that has been brought forward is a good one. Overall, I have seen an erosion of our democracy. I think this motion is fundamentally undemocratic, but I would add it to the list of attacks on our democratic rights and freedoms in this country.

We talk about freedom of speech, but we have seen a continual onslaught against it from the government through Bill C-10, Bill C-36 and Bill C-11, including when it comes to freedom of the media and freedom of the press. We have Bill C-18 at the heritage committee right now, and I have lots of concern about that bill. There is an erosion of freedom of religion in this country, from hiring a consultant who is an anti-Semite to advise the government on anti-racism, to having 15 Christian churches burn down in Canada, yet crickets are coming from the side opposite.

I am very concerned. I see the rise of Chinese influence in our elections. There are three police stations that China has claimed in Toronto. What is the government doing about any of this? Nothing.

This motion is just another in a long line of motions eroding our democracy, so I am certainly not going to support it. I cannot believe that the NDP is going to support the government when previously the New Democrats said this kind of motion was fundamentally undemocratic. I understand in no way why this costly coalition exists. The NDP got in bed with the Liberals to get 10 sick days, through legislation that was passed in December last year and was never enacted, and dental care for everybody, which they got for children under 12 and poor families who are mostly covered in other provincial programs, with nothing else coming until after the next election. On pharmacare, there are crickets.

Why is the NDP supporting the government on this draconian anti-democratic motion that is intended to take away the accountability of government? I have no idea. I am certainly not going to support it, and my Conservative colleagues will not either.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether the member can explain something to those following the debate. The Conservatives say they want to speak to legislation and are provided the opportunity to ensure there will be more time to speak to the legislation they want to speak to, but they are opposing the ability of their caucus colleagues to speak to legislation. It does not make any sense to me. Many would see it as being somewhat hypocritical.

Does the member believe that there might be some merit to that argument, given that the Conservatives are in opposition to a motion that would give them more time to speak?

Government Orders

• (1840)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, actually, we are not looking for more time to speak. We are looking for more time to debate. That means we bring up points about what is wrong with legislation, and the government hears them and negotiates with the various parties to come to agreements about how to fix bills that are bad. Speaking into the air when there are no members of the government here, because there is no quorum required per this motion, is not debate.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her speech.

I am going to ask her a question, because I felt she was talking to me when she mentioned me in her speech.

Both the Liberals and the NDP like to remind me that we have a virtual Parliament and that extended sitting hours are not a problem for a mother. However, from my experience, sitting in a virtual Parliament is still sitting in a Parliament. When I am at home in the evening, I will still have my baby in my arms in front of my monitor while sitting and taking part in debates, which will be extended for purely political reasons.

Once again, this measure shows that the Liberal government spews a lot of feminist rhetoric but is not feminist when it comes to taking concrete action. It has been shown in other places around the world that parliamentary schedules must be compatible with regular schedules to allow young women to serve. Once again, the Liberals are showing that they are all talk and no action.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I thank the Bloc member for her question.

Mothers work very hard and it is unacceptable to ask them to sit until midnight to give speeches. I believe we should look to other countries that have achieved work-life balance. It is the right thing to do, and that is what we should be striving for in this place.

[*English*]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask my colleague a question. I think she made some excellent points.

I wonder if the member would agree with this. The bottom line here is that the government's coalition partner does not like voting for time allocation or closure, so this is the draconian measure they are left with, and they are doing it under the guise of giving members more time to speak.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, absolutely I would agree with the member. I think the NDP has no credibility left whatsoever, because its position has always been that it is opposed to time allocation but it supports the government on time allocation. Its members try to call the government out for driving up the cost of home heating and gasoline, but on the other hand, they are supporting the government's tripling of the carbon tax.

There is nothing but hypocrisy there, and I think the people who were supporting the NDP are asking why they would ever vote NDP again, because they are going to get the Liberals anyway. I

think that is a real conundrum for them, and I would certainly say it is a problem.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House and speak on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon West.

Of course, we are debating a motion tonight, which is the latest attempt by the NDP-Liberal coalition to change the rules of Parliament to make up for its incredible incompetence when it comes to moving legislation through this House. As Jodi Taylor said, "Lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part." An even better quote comes from Peter Green, who said the marvellous thing about lack of planning is that failure comes as a complete and utter surprise. The Liberals constantly fail with the current parliamentary rules, so now they think that changing the rules will somehow make it better for them.

I could talk about this motion's effect on resources such as our interpreters, who do such a great job, and the great strain this will add to them. I could talk about this motion's effect on our committees and the likelihood that many meetings will be cancelled. However, rather than doing that, I think my time is better spent reminding the Liberals of the true priorities of Canadians, the things that they wish the Prime Minister was focused on instead of arcane parliamentary procedures.

All Canadians are aware of the carbon tax. The Prime Minister has imposed it on Canadians against their wishes. Yes, for some, those who cycle their bikes through the Toronto skyscrapers of Bay Street or have huge mansions in the Rosedale district, taxing people who drive cars seems like mana from heaven. For the people who live in the Liberal finance minister's riding, it is a curiosity to them that people in places like Saskatoon need to drive to work every day and struggle to pay their bills. That is because it is the people in Saskatoon who are paying the carbon tax that the finance minister gives to people living in downtown Toronto. It is therefore no wonder that she never meets a carbon tax that she does not embrace and impose on Canadians.

The newest version is the Liberals' so-called clean fuel standard. I say "so-called" because it is simply a second carbon tax in disguise. Just as Shakespeare wrote "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet", to the finance minister it is a nationwide carbon tax under another name that smells very sweet to her. Unfortunately, it is actually the stench of the carbon tax being tripled on all Canadians.

Between the planned tripling of the existing, federally imposed carbon tax in my province of Saskatchewan and the additional second carbon tax, residents of Saskatoon will be pushed to the breaking point. The odour of these carbon taxes is so overwhelming that it wafts all over the House from the finance minister. Not only does she promote it, but she wears it like a perfume. It is not a pleasant smell to the people in Saskatoon. They want the government to get rid of this carbon tax rather than wasting time on arcane parliamentary procedures like this motion does.

Government Orders

The Conservatives will continue holding the NDP-Liberal coalition to account for its endless tax increases on fuel and home heating. We welcome the opportunity to debate in this House because Canadians want us to fight for the things that matter to them, like the rising cost of living.

Christmas is not going to be a merry time of year for many Canadians. Record Liberal inflation has forced people to buckle down on their spending. This year, 30% of Canadians are expecting to cut down on gifts and dinner with their families to cope. Is it no surprise why. Thanks to the government's inflationary policies, the price of everything continues to skyrocket. Printing money to pay for excessive spending has gotten us to where we are today. More money chasing fewer goods equals higher prices. During Thanksgiving, we saw the impact of this when holiday staples like turkey were up 15%, and when bread was up 13% and potatoes were up 22%. These price increases were on top of the Liberals' plan to triple the carbon tax on everyday essentials such as groceries, gasoline and home heating.

The finance minister's solution of simply cancelling Disney+ subscriptions is not going to cut it this Christmas season for families barely scraping by. She does not get it. Canadians want action on the inflation crisis, not changes to the House of Commons procedures. One really has to wonder how much humbug the finance minister really has as Christmas approaches. Disney+ is about to launch the new Santa Claus franchise based on the beloved Tim Allen movies of a while back. Does she really want to strip Canadians of the joy that Tim Allen delivers, or is it because Tim Allen is a self-described conservative that she wants Disney+ cancelled?

Is it any wonder the Liberals have three Internet censorship bills they are trying to ram through Parliament? Canadians are getting clobbered by 40-year inflation highs and massive interest rate hikes while the Prime Minister tries to find more ways to skirt accountability. Today's motion comes as no shock. The Liberals are once again trying to avoid transparency. They want to ram through their plans to triple the carbon tax on fuel, groceries and home heating and limit the ability of committees to investigate the \$54-million arrive scam scandal and how Liberal friends got rich during the pandemic.

We have seen this before. When things do not go the Prime Minister's way, he tries to run down anything in his path. Remember the WE Charity scandal, where the Liberals tried to give half a billion dollars to the Prime Minister's friends? When they were caught, they shut down Parliament for more than five weeks. That cancelled all the work of Parliament, causing it to start again at square one. It was a huge waste of parliamentary resources.

• (1845)

What about the SNC-Lavalin scandal, where the Prime Minister fired Canada's first indigenous justice minister and attorney general because she would not give in to his demands?

Canadians remember and will not be fooled by Liberal corruption. They know that today's motion is an attempt by the Prime Minister to give himself a majority by stealth, and they know this motion is nothing more than a power grab that will limit the opposition's ability to hold the government to account. Conservatives will

continue to demand accountability from this government and fight its inflation-causing agenda.

I have to say that it is not an easy task to stand up to the Liberals day in and day out. Take this motion that we are debating today, for instance. We are only here because the Liberals have a lap dog in the NDP who does their every bidding. The government knows that it can bring forward any outrageous measure, skirt any ethical law, break any democratic norm and NDP members will wag their tails and bark on command. People used to have this mythical image of the NDP, the so-called conscience of Parliament. What a sorry lot these current NDP members are compared to Tommy Douglas, Ed Broadbent, Jack Layton and Tom Mulcair.

Canadians are frightened by the anticipated increases in home heating costs, which are expected to rise anywhere from 30% to 100% this winter. Some may count on the NDP to deliver more than time on Twitter in such a crisis. Sadly, all they are getting are retweets of Liberal policy.

In October, the Conservatives moved a motion to remove the carbon tax on home heating. What did NDP members do? They voted alongside their costly Liberal coalition partner to make heating even more expensive. Unfortunately, this pattern is all too familiar. We are seeing it first-hand today with the NDP's support of the government's motion to end accountability and fast-track its legislation without scrutiny. They may pretend to be opposed on Twitter, but when it is time to face the music, they vote to prop up this corrupt government at every turn. Canadians simply cannot afford more inaction from the NDP.

While the NDP continues to increase the cost of living, Conservatives will hold this government to account for their cruel tax hikes and wasteful spending. When we form government, we will axe the carbon tax and cap government spending so Canadians can finally get ahead. The NDP members are the Liberal government's enablers, as it is their complicity in the drive-by corruption, ethical lapses and general war on the Canadian taxpayer that is hurting people in this country. This is the real world, and the NDP-Liberals are hurting Canadians.

The finance minister seems to live in a fairy tale, in a land where Canadians do not need to drive their cars to work in the morning and can afford to live in million-dollar mansions in Toronto. To her, the carbon tax is actually helping us, never mind the millions of Canadians struggling to choose between putting three meals on the table or heating their homes. The finance minister and the Liberals believe their plan to triple the carbon tax is going to help us get ahead. They believe that printing more money to pay for their reckless spending and raising interest rates will be good for us. Unfortunately for them, they are in for a rude awakening. Canadians are on the brink.

While the Prime Minister stays in \$6,000-per-night hotels and jet-sets across the world, the carbon tax combined with NDP-Liberal money printing deficits has turned Canada into a country where mothers are putting water in their children's milk because they cannot afford the increases in food prices, where 1.5 million people are turning to food banks and thousands are skipping meals just to get by. This is not a fantasy either. These are real people across the country hurting, because of this government's refusal to listen to anyone besides the downtown elite class.

As we debate this motion, we see a stark contrast with the NDP-Liberals on one side of this Parliament. There is a vision of high taxes, high gas and food prices, rampant corruption and no accountability. They are ramming this very motion through the House to allow for more opportunities to impose their vision of carnage on the Canadian public. On this side of Parliament stands the Conservative Party led by our new leader.

Our new leader is a man who is singularly focused on delivering solutions to fix the cost of living crisis. He will cut taxes. He will allow newcomers to work in the jobs they were trained in, and he will make life more affordable for average, working Canadians.

• (1850)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member spent a lot of his time talking about budgetary measures, and I will pick up on that in the form of a question. The first major economic policy statement that really came out of the current leader of the Conservative Party was to recommend to Canadians that they should invest in cryptocurrency as a way to combat inflation. We all know that turned into a dud.

Now we hear again and again from members of the Conservative Party that they will abolish the price on pollution. However, the price on pollution that Ottawa has implemented does not cover the entire country as there are provinces that have their own price on pollution. Ours is a backstop. Is it the Conservative Party's position that it will mandate all provinces to get rid of any form of a price on pollution?

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, obviously the parliamentary secretary is not paying a lot of attention to the Conservative leader, and I guess I can understand that. Our party leader has a very clear, very simple message. He is concerned about the cost of living for Canadians. He is going to work very hard to undo some of the terrible Liberal policies that have caused inflation to go out of control and interest rates to go so high, and that are causing all the problems I mentioned in my speech. People are not able to afford the

Government Orders

daily necessities of life, and that is directly because of policies instituted by the government.

That is the message that my leader is talking about every single day and that is his singular focus.

• (1855)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic that I heard the hon. member talk about our time on social media. I want to welcome him to TikTok. Many of his comments in the House are very similar to his rhetoric online. He talks about the dumpster fire that is the economy, but he does not have the guts to talk about the arsonist.

While the Conservatives bemoan over and over about the cost of living and the high cost of food, why do they not have the courage to take on the fact that companies like Loblaw's take in \$1 million a day in profit? Why do the Conservatives not have the courage to go after the arsonists of this economy so that people in his constituency can afford to eat? The ultrawealthy in this country keep cashing in on this disgusting use of price gouging and corporate greed.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Speaker, that gives me a great opportunity to point out something I mentioned in my speech, and that is the fact that NDP members, whether it is on Twitter or even in the House, talk as if they oppose the government, as if they are unhappy with the government, yet they support the government when they vote every single time, regardless of what they say.

What is really important to remember is that it does not matter what people say; what matters is what they do. What the NDP members do every single day in this House is vote to support the corrupt Liberal government, every single time.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is a lot to be said in regard to what we have been witnessing over the last number of hours. We can contrast that to what we have seen from the official opposition over the last couple of years. For those who are following the debate, I am going to try to use the experience I have accumulated over the last 30 years as a parliamentarian to try to shed some light on what the Conservative Party is actually doing.

I do not come to this lightly. I served just over 20 years in opposition, so I understand what it is the opposition is attempting to do. I have also now had the privilege of being on the government benches for a number of years. When I reflect on what I have been witnessing over the last couple of years, the first thing that comes to my mind is the political agenda of the Conservative Party when it comes to the legislative process in the House of Commons. It is actually fairly simple and straightforward for them. It is to, if at all possible, prevent any type of legislation from passing through the House of Commons.

Government Orders

The only time we will see legislation pass through the House of Commons is if the Conservative Party is shamed into supporting the legislation, if it accidentally slips through because its members were not necessarily paying attention or if it is something they really want to see pass, and that is very rare. They use delay tactics to try to frustrate the government, because what they want to be able to say is that the government has no legislative agenda and that it was not able to get things passed. I suspect that, with very little research, we could find quotes where the Conservatives are critical of us for not being able to pass a legislative agenda.

It is almost like sitting on the sidewalk, watching people walk by and extending a leg to trip a person and then saying, “How come you fell?” The Conservatives are intentionally trying to prevent the government's legislative agenda from passing, and they come up with a wide variety of tools to do just that. Then, they get upset when the government says it is going to continue to push through legislation in the best way it can.

Today it is a minority government. That requires us to get at least one opposition party to assist us in passing legislation. If we cannot get the assistance of at least one political party, given the Conservative Party's approach to legislation, we would not be able to pass a legislative agenda. We have a very aggressive number of pieces of legislation that are so important for us to—

• (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Carleton Trail—Eagle Creek is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do not believe we have quorum.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will count the members present.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have 21 people in the House and we have one online, so we do have quorum.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order myself. My concern is that, if the Conservatives continue to stand up and call for quorum, I do not want that to take away from my cumulative time. I believe I am given 20 minutes, so whether members stand up on a point of order or they continue to want to call for quorum, they should be aware that it does not take away from my time. Am I not correct in that assessment?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The parliamentary secretary is correct. No time is taken.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, for the Conservative Party it is a game. The best way I can illustrate that game is to talk about the motion that is before the House. The Conservatives say they want to have more debate, and that is why they get all upset when the government is forced to bring in time allocation. If we bring in time allocation on a piece of legislation, they will stand up and scream and holler from their seats, saying they have more members who want to speak and how dare we bring in time allocation. That is what they will do. Then the government works with an

opposition party in order to try to get legislation passed, and we bring in time allocation. The Conservative Party will then almost collapse with its debate on that legislation.

If we want to get something through the House of Commons, we have to bring in time allocation, unless of course the Conservative Party is feeling very merciful or has been shamed into supporting something that does not require the government to bring in time allocation.

The Conservatives' excuse is that they have more people who want to speak to the legislation. What does the motion do? If the motion were to pass today, it would enable the government, not on its own but working with any other opposition party to form a majority inside the House, to say that it wants to sit an extended number of hours. In other words, it would allow for more time to debate legislation.

One would think that if the Conservative Party was so preoccupied about ensuring that more of its members get to speak on legislation, it would support that initiative. However, that is not the case. This is not the first time it has been done. Is it that the Conservative Party does not believe it should work late into the evening? Millions of Canadians work past six o'clock in the evening. Hundreds of thousands work past midnight.

Liberal and New Democrat members of this House are not scared to work. If it means we can pass legislation by working the extra hours, we will do that, because the legislation we are passing is of substance. It is there to support Canadians through the pandemic. It is there to provide national programs, such as the dental care program. It is budgetary measures that enable the government to do all sorts of wonderful things for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

There is a limited number of days for us to pass through all the measures that need to be passed, whether they be budgetary measures, legislative measures, or all different types or forms of debate that the government is ultimately responsible for bringing before the House. It does not take an incredible effort to prevent any piece of legislation from being passed if there is no time allocation. I could take 10 high school students from Sisler High School, Maples, R. B. Russell Vocational High School, Children of the Earth High School or St. John's High School, and I could prevent legislation from passing under the current rules.

If the Conservative Party genuinely wants to contribute to debate on legislation, that is being accommodated through this motion.

• (1905)

However, that is not the Conservatives' real reason. Their real reason is demonstrated by their behaviour. Imagine that members are working during the day and the Conservatives stand up and move to adjourn or shut down the House and our debate. They have done that on many occasions.

Government Orders

Imagine they have two Conservatives who want to speak to a bill; they both stand up and one moves that the other be heard. Why? It is to cause the bells to ring, not to facilitate debate. Why, whenever there is a concurrence motion from the opposition benches, is it always, without exception, during government business? It is to prevent debate on government bills.

These are all tactics that the opposition, the Conservatives, are so focused on. These are not normal times. We are going through a pandemic and there is extra legislation that is necessary. The government has been so focused on ensuring that we have an economy that works for all Canadians. We are a government that is focused on ensuring we have the backs of Canadians during a worldwide pandemic.

We now have worldwide inflation that is hitting Canadians too, even though our inflation rate is less than the inflation in the U.S.A. and many other countries in Europe. We are bringing forward legislation to provide real, tangible relief at a time when Canadians need that relief, but we have a Conservative Party that is more focused on political games and preventing legislation from passing. If only Canadians knew how the Conservative Party is behaving on the floor of the House of Commons. I do not say that lightly.

As I indicated at the beginning, I spent over 20 years in opposition. We do not have to be a destructive force. There are many positive ways to contribute and still be a strong official opposition. Members on this side of the House and other members are frustrated with the leadership of the Conservative Party, because we want to be there for Canadians in a real and tangible way, and the games that are being played indicate that it is not democratic.

That is a weird statement to make, when we are offering more time for debate. We are being accused of being anti-democratic because we want to give more time for debate. It is something they have been asking for, but it does not fit their agenda, because when they say they want more time for debate, what they are really talking about is that they do not want to work beyond the normal hours. If we work beyond the normal hours, that means they have to work a little harder to filibuster debate. It means they might have to sit past seven o'clock in the evening. They might have to go to midnight to continue to filibuster legislation.

The member for Kingston and the Islands, the government House leader and others in the House used Bill S-5 as an example. It is a wonderful example. Bill S-5 states that every Canadian has the right to a healthy environment. Do members remember the debate on it? Every member of the House supported that legislation. Everyone wanted to see it go to committee.

The Conservative Party could not get enough of debating that piece of legislation, even though they played some games. I have not done the research, but I suspect that if I did, I would find that they probably moved concurrence and they probably did what they could to kill time, even on legislation they supported and that was universally well accepted.

• (1910)

All we wanted to do was get it through committee and yet, they put up speaker after speaker after speaker. If we had approached them and suggested that in order for them to accommodate all their

speakers, why not continue it on into the evening, no, they would not want to do that.

Our microphones work after eight o'clock in the evening. It is now seven o'clock. If we sit until midnight, the wonderful thing about the House of Commons is we have a civil service, a wonderful group of people. We have our security, our Hansard and the Clerk and his officers, and the administration. They allow this House to operate. It is truly amazing. They do a fantastic job. They respond to the needs of this House so that when the Speaker allows an emergency debate, we are able to sit and have that emergency debate. When the government proposes a take-note debate, they are there to support us into the evening. When there is a need for us to sit later in the evening to facilitate more debate, they will be there for us in order to ensure that it takes place, as well it should. This is Canada's focal point on our democracy.

I do not need a lesson on democracy from the Conservative opposition. Believe me, there are opportunities for opposition parties to abuse the rules. We have been witnessing that. I sat in opposition when Stephen Harper brought in time allocation after time allocation well over 100 times when he was in a majority government situation. I even stood up and defended him on more than one occasion, saying that at times there is a need to bring in time allocation.

Unlike opposition parties, we do not have programmed legislation. On an opposition day, opposition members know that they bring in a motion and within 10 days there is going to be a vote on it and it moves on. The government does not have that. There is no programming. Some jurisdictions do have programming. Maybe that is what we need to be looking into.

I supported programming when I was in opposition in the Manitoba legislature. It is not an advantage to the government or a disadvantage to the opposition. There are all sorts of checks and balances that can be put into place. As I say, if they give me 10 students and never bring in time allocation or any sort of a closure, I could prevent anything from passing. The issue is that when there is a majority of the House that in essence says it is time to move on to some other debate and it is time that a piece of legislation went to committee, there is a need to recognize that fact and allow it to go to committee.

With respect to the legislative process, first reading does not really consume the time of the House, but second reading does, as does report stage, as does third reading. Often, there will be amendments that come from the Senate, which require more time. That is on one piece of legislation. Let us look at the substantial legislation that we have brought forward. I have a list, but because of limited time, I will not go through its entirety.

Government Orders

We are talking about dozens of pieces of legislation of substance. It is legislation that is putting money in people's pockets, that is protecting small businesses and that is modernizing legislation that has not been modernized for decades. It is a substantial legislative agenda. Is it any wonder that a majority of the House, not just the Liberals but a majority of the members of Parliament, are saying that one of the ways we can try to get some of this legislation through and allow for more debate opportunities is by extending the hours. Then we get the Conservatives. I am going to wait and see what the Bloc members actually do on this. At the end of the day, I would like to think the Bloc members would support the need.

It is nothing new. It is not like parliaments in democracies, whether at the provincial level or national level, have not brought in motions of this nature in the past. It is not uncommon.

• (1915)

The core issue of this motion is to say that, if there is a majority of members of Parliament on the floor of the House of Commons who want to see extended sitting hours, that can take place. We can sit more hours to accommodate debate. To me, that is a strong positive. I do not believe for a moment that members can say no to this and then criticize the government for not allowing debate on legislation.

That is how I would conclude my remarks to my Conservative friends. If they vote no to this motion, they are really saying that they do not need additional time to debate legislation. If they are not saying that, then they are really saying they do not want to sit extra hours. It has to be one of the two, unless it is because they do not want to pass any legislation whatsoever and want to continue playing games and frustrating the House. I will let the individuals who follow the debate determine which one they think it is. I am hoping the Conservatives will turn the page, realize its benefits and pass this motion.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I cannot imagine, should this bill pass, Canadians being subjected to the member speaking over and again in the House. He clearly has a very dysfunctional relationship with the truth about late sittings. One of the biggest problems we have with late sittings is a lack of resources. We do not have enough interpreters. We run the risk of losing our committees.

Right now, at the operations committee, we are studying the ineptness and possible corruption of the government with respect to the ArriveCAN app. At public accounts just today we heard the Auditor General noting that the billions spent on the homeless is not helping, yet we see the government selfishly trying to push through midnight sittings and falsely saying it is because we do not want to work. We need to work on these issues at committee as well.

Can the member guarantee that his government will ensure that every single committee would sit and that not a single minute at committee would be missed because of its shameful action to limit debate in the House?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I can assure the member that, if this motion passes, there will be more hours of debate to be able to cover a wide spectrum of different issues. I see that as a positive thing. In my history here on the Hill, and even when I was an MLA, there has never been a shortfall of supports to ensure the

chamber is able to fulfill the mandates of the fundamental democratic principles here on the floor of the House of Commons.

I have confidence in those individuals to ensure that. Whether they are those in security, the Hansard, the TV or at the table, or the Speaker or the translators, who do a fantastic job I must say, they will be here to support us. After all, this is the centre of democracy in Canada, and the member should not be concerned about the chamber not being able to have the proper resources in order for us sit.

• (1920)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, once again I am struggling with my colleague's arguments. Why?

First, he is not providing substantive arguments to justify the Liberal Party's position. Second, and most important, I find it disrespectful to call members and certain political parties lazy because they do not want to move forward with this plan.

That said, may I remind our very dear colleague that it was his government that decided to prorogue Parliament not so long ago? May I remind him that it was his government that called an election not so long ago?

All that time was wasted and now, suddenly, it is urgent that we pass these bills. Does the opposition not have cause to be a little suspicious of this supposed emergency?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member does not need to be suspicious. The motion is very straightforward. The question the member has to ask himself is whether he believes there might be a need for additional debate time on a wide spectrum of potential issues. If he believes the answer is yes and if a majority of MPs in the House of Commons today agree, then there will be additional time for members to debate.

That is what this motion does. Whether the member supports that, it is really not that much more complicated than what I just finished stating. If the member supports additional potential time for members to debate legislation, he should be supporting this motion.

Whatever the House leadership team of his political party is telling him, I can assure him that this is, in fact, the essence of what we are voting on.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could talk about hybrid Parliament and the opportunity to be able to actually engage in those debates. I find that, many times when I have been speaking in the House, it is an opportunity for more folks to be involved, because a lot of the time with what is happening right now with COVID, people are not able to attend the House every day.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member is right. When we look at the hybrid system, are there things we could do to modernize our Parliament that would, in fact, make it a better and friendlier environment, particularly for our constituents? If there are ways in which we could allow members of Parliament to serve their constituents, whether they are in British Columbia, Nova Scotia or my home province of Manitoba, by, for example, giving a speech through a hybrid system or being able to vote while they are in their constituency, I see that as a positive thing. I am very much open to that.

I anxiously await the report that is going to be coming from the procedure and House affairs committee, which is chaired by a very dear friend of mine. I am hoping that we will see certain aspects of what we have been able to put into place over the last couple of years put into our Standing Orders permanently, such as voting applications, which are wonderful things. There are other things we could look at.

I anxiously await the report coming from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

• (1925)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it was so nice to hear the member refer to the work that the procedure and House affairs committee is doing in order to ensure that more members can actually participate and also do the important work that we do within our constituencies.

I listened to the member with great interest. In a response he gave not too long ago, he said that the motion is about the potential of extending hours. It is about ensuring that if members want to participate in debate, that we actually have the hours available for them to do so.

Currently, tactics are used sometimes, such as a motion that a specific member be now heard. This way, if we have the ability to extend the hours until midnight, it would actually more allow more members to represent their constituencies.

Does this government motion mean that we have to extend hours every night? What is implied by the passage of such a motion?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is a good question. Let me give a very specific answer.

Bill S-5 had many hours of debate. If this motion had passed before we sent Bill S-5 to committee, we would have been able to say to the Conservative opposition or to any other political party, "Let us have an extra sitting in the evening so that more members are able to participate in the debate."

All that this motion does, if there is a desire from a majority of members in the House, is facilitate additional hours so that more debate can be had on a piece of legislation or another item that might be before the House. It is to accommodate more contributions.

It takes nothing away from a member's ability to contribute. That is why, as I say, it is something that every member of the House should be voting in favour of.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thought it was a little much when I heard the member for Winnipeg North lecturing the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles earlier on how to vote when a motion is moved or a bill is introduced. I thought that was a bit over the top.

That being said, we are being criticized and told that opposition members do not want to work. It feels as though insults have been flying this evening during the debate on this motion. When there are debates and members of the opposition ask the government questions, they get either the same old stock answers repeated over and over again or answers that have nothing to do with the question. That is the purpose of debate. If the government would give proper answers to the questions the opposition parties ask, then we likely would not need to extend the sitting hours because the work would get done efficiently.

Earlier, I asked the member for Kingston and the Islands a very easy question. It was not a trick question or a convoluted one. I asked him why Motion No. 22 does not just ask for hours to be extended until the end of the current period, until December 16. Why include the whole session right up until the end of spring, until June? Why include February, March, April and May in this motion? Why is the government side doing things differently? When will it learn how to answer questions properly and work more efficiently?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, whether it is until December or June, the thing to observe is that it provides the option for a majority of members in the House, which means it is more than just the government. It requires at least one other opposition party to say, yes, there is value in sitting in the evening to accommodate additional debate.

The member said maybe December 16 would be better. Why not June? Why do we need to revisit this debate on whether or not to allow for more debate? I appreciate the question—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We will resume debate with the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to the NDP-Liberal attack on parliamentary committees in the form of Government Business No. 22.

This undemocratic motion is a crass attempt at frustrating the work of committees by further limiting their resources. On the face of it, the motion allows the government House leader to extend the hours of any sitting of the House to midnight until June 2023. The Liberals say they are simply seeking more time to debate their legislation, but we must look at the broader implications of the adopting this motion.

Government Orders

With the persistence of virtual Parliament, workplace injuries for interpretation staff have increased ninefold. Since 2019, there has been a 25% decline in the number of interpreters employed by the translation bureau and nearly 40% fewer freelance interpreters available to the House. These unionized professionals work each day to ensure that our business is conducted in both official languages.

The Liberals and NDP dismiss the plight of these workers, demanding that our work continue in a hybrid fashion against the objections of interpretation staff. Due to the lack of interpreters, there is a strict limit on how many parliamentary activities the House administration can facilitate in any given sitting week. As a result, every time the hours are extended in the House, two committee meetings must be cancelled. Put simply, more time for the House equals less time for committees.

Let us keep in mind the government is in complete control of the House agenda. It determines the business each and every day, including which of its bills will be debated. It has tools at its disposal to cut off debate as it deems appropriate. It even designates which days will be allotted for opposition days. With the blind support of the hapless NDP, the Liberals have the votes to pass their legislation.

In other words, the Liberals are in complete control of the House, propped up by the NDP. However, they do not control committees in the same way. Conservatives have secured several committee investigations that are holding the Liberals accountable for their failures. For example, the government operations committee is digging into the \$54-million ArriveCAN app, including Liberal misinformation reported to the House that contractors were paid millions when they did not receive a dime. That committee is tasked with answering two key questions: Where is the money and who got rich?

The heritage committee is investigating the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion for providing funding to known racist and anti-Semite Laith Marouf. The procedure and House affairs committee is investigating the Prime Minister who has known for over a year about foreign interference in our elections and has yet to act. The public safety committee is investigating allegations made against the Minister of Emergency Preparedness for political interference in the investigation into the mass killings in Nova Scotia. It is shameful.

The veterans affairs committee is looking into allegations that a government employee recommended medically assisted suicide for a veteran struggling with mental health. The declaration of a public order emergency committee has heard considerable testimony that contradicts the Liberal rationale for invoking the Emergencies Act. The transport committee recommended the repeal of the Canada Infrastructure Bank, a Liberal-made organization that has failed to get any infrastructure built. Conservatives on the foreign affairs committee continue to advocate for the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist entity, so that this brutal regime about to execute 15,000 of its own citizens cannot fundraise and organize in Canada anymore.

These are just some examples of how Conservatives are making parliamentary committees work for Canadians. Under Government Business No. 22, this and all work of committees would be restrict-

ed and constrained. The motivation for this motion is clear, the Liberals want Parliament to serve only their purposes. To them, Parliament is only useful when they can control it.

Canadians expect Parliament to hold the government to account, and Conservatives will fight to maintain the dignity of this institution.

There was a time, if we can believe it, when Liberals believed that committee work was essential. In the 2015 election, they made the following promise:

We will strengthen Parliamentary committees so that they can better scrutinize legislation.

Better government starts with better ideas. We will ensure that Parliamentary committees are properly resourced to bring in expert witnesses, and are sufficiently staffed to continue to provide reliable, non-partisan research.

• (1930)

The Liberals made that promise when they still believed they were the party of sunny ways, but after seven years of corruption and cover-ups, the mirage of an open, transparent and accountable government has been exposed.

Last week, in mainstream media, the government House leader justified his motion, claiming that Conservatives were employing tactics that amounted to “parliamentary obstruction by stealth.” The irony of this claim is not lost on me. He is the one, under the pretext of expanding debate in the House, who is attacking committees by stealth. I will address his claim directly.

Conservatives do not obstruct for the sake of obstruction. In recent weeks, we have allowed several bills to proceed in a reasonable time frame. We supported the swift passage of Bill C-30, which provided GST tax relief for low-income Canadians. The government did not need to use time allocation to shepherd that legislation through the House.

On September 29, the Conservative member for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, with whom I am splitting my time, secured the unanimous consent of the House to pass the national council for reconciliation act at second reading and send it for study at the indigenous and northern affairs committee.

We allowed for Bill C-22, the disability benefit act, to be sent to the human resources committee after just two days of debate. Again, time allocation was not required.

Just before the last constituency week, Conservatives supported Bill S-5, which will strengthen environmental protection in Canada. No time allocation was required.

Government Orders

Conservatives can be counted on when the government brings forward proposals on which common ground can be found. The government House leader's accusation about obstruction is simply not true.

Having said that, Conservatives are openly opposed to the Liberal agenda. There is no "stealth" about it. We use every tool available in the parliamentary tool box to both expose Liberal failure and corruption and propose our ideas for Canadians to consider as an alternative.

If the government House leader had been paying attention, he would know that the new Conservative leader and our Conservative team are putting the people first: their paycheques, their savings, their homes and their country. We are against deficit-driven inflation. Instead, we demand that all new spending be matched with savings found somewhere else. We are opposed to payroll and carbon tax hikes in the middle of this cost of living crisis.

We defend energy workers against the Prime Minister's attacks on their livelihoods. We would repeal anti-energy laws like Bill C-69 and remove other Liberal-made barriers to producing our natural resources. We oppose the failed climate change plan of this government, which has not achieved a single emissions reduction target. We say no to the oppressive carbon tax and yes to technology in the fight against climate change.

We abhor \$6,000-a-night hotel stays for the Prime Minister while Canadians are visiting food banks in record numbers, like 1.5 million in one month. We oppose wasteful spending and the \$54-million "arrive scam" app that did not work. We did not need it, and it could have been designed over a weekend for about \$250,000.

We are vocal when the Prime Minister is silent about foreign actors interfering in our elections. We reject Liberal inaction while shelves that should be stocked with children's medication sit empty. We stand with victims, not criminals, as the rates of violent crime have spiked in our cities under this government's soft-on-crime policies, and we oppose this outrageous attempt at seizing control of parliamentary committees.

There is no "stealth" about our opposition to the NDP-Liberal government. We proudly oppose the costly coalition on all these fronts, in broad daylight, for all to see.

• (1935)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the member was to reflect on Bill S-5, which I will use as an example because it was cited earlier, there were well over two dozen members from the Conservative benches who spoke to the legislation. This was legislation that all of us inside the chamber, to the best of my knowledge, supported. If the same number of MPs were to speak at every reading, on all pieces of legislation, and remember that this is legislation Conservatives supported, it would be very difficult to pass anything.

Can the member tell the House why she feels that allowing for additional debate, such as on Bill S-5, is something she would oppose? Why would the Conservatives not support providing additional time for members even to speak on legislation they support?

• (1940)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, this actually is not about more time to debate. The Liberals brought up Bill S-5 several times. They did not like us debating it for so long.

It does not matter whether we oppose or support a bill. Every member in this House is elected to be a voice for their constituents. Every member in this House has the right to stand up and talk about if they support something or they do not support it, and why they support it or why they are against it. It is proper parliamentary procedure and part of our job here to be active in this House during debate and active in committees when we look over legislation. We do reviews. We do reports. This is the work of this House; all of it. We do it here in the House and in committees.

The Liberals want to extend debate on any given evening. Here we are right now talking late at night and voting late at night. It happens without Motion No. 22.

[*Translation*]

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

At first glance, the purpose of the motion is simply to make it easier to extend sitting hours until midnight, not to limit debate. However, as my colleague from Shefford said, children do not have their parents at home with them in the evening when sittings end at midnight. As lawmakers, we work a lot, our hours are fairly irregular, plus we do work until midnight sometimes.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that? What should we do?

[*English*]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I am the proud mother of four children. As a working mother, I managed, through perhaps both good fortune and bad parenting, to raise them all, and they made it. They are all working and they all have paycheques. It is a miracle.

This is a hard job for working parents; there is no doubt about it. It requires a lot. It requires time away from home. It requires long hours sometimes. Those long hours sometimes happen without notice.

The concern here with this motion is that the Liberals can trigger late-night sittings until midnight without quorum and without much consultation, other than with the NDP, and then we are stuck in it for as late as it is going to go, which is midnight. That is hard on parents.

Government Orders

When we were talking about hybrid Parliament and debating that, one of the reasons given for it was parenting responsibilities. That is apparently out the window with this.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, right now we are looking at Bill C-22 at committee. That is the bill around the Canada disability benefit. We know that many persons with disabilities and many people in Canada are struggling right now with the price of goods.

Can the member share if her party believes there is time, right now, to be able to get to Bill C-22 before we break for the end of the year?

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, frankly, I am worried about all committee work and all committee business. If we are tasked with being in the House until midnight on a given evening, as I said in my speech, it means we lose two committees on that evening. The government has moved of late to not consult us on which committees it will cancel for something else, because resources can only be stretched so far.

We have no confidence that any important bills, important legislation, even those we support, and important investigations, many of which I outlined in my remarks, will be able to finish before the Christmas break.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House to speak to yet another attempt by the Liberal government to curtail the rights of Parliament.

Government Business No. 22 includes a proposal to give the Liberals new powers to extend sitting hours in the House through to June 2023, to temporarily remove certain procedural tools from the opposition and for the Prime Minister to adjourn the House early at Christmas and in June without notice or all-party agreement, among other changes.

A few years ago, I stood in this chamber and spoke to the government's attempt, then through Government Business No. 18, to reduce the opportunity for members to hold the government to account by eliminating Friday sittings and automatically time-allocating bills, and to eliminate the effectiveness of committees by preventing opposition parties from triggering debates on reports and implementing closure changes to committees. That was back in the spring of 2017 when the Liberals were awarded a majority Parliament on the promise of sunnier ways. After five years of failed Liberal leadership, they are back at it, this time under a minority government and with the help of their NDP partner.

Make no mistake: Even after Canadians punished the Liberals with a minority mandate, they still want to rule like they have a majority, completely disregarding the role of the opposition and punishing this side of the House when we dare question their record. Committees play an important role in our democracy. They invest parliamentarians with the responsibility to examine legislation, to undertake studies on departmental spending and to hold the government to account for its actions.

This is really where the real problem lies. Whether it is SNC-Lavalin, the WE scandal, trips to the Aga Khan's villa in the tropics, the \$54-million ArriveCAN scandal or the use of the Emergen-

cies Act, the Liberals just do not want Canadians digging into their business.

Canadians might be wondering what my words here have to do with Government Business No. 22. It is simple. Every time the House sits longer, which the Liberals have the power to do unobstructed by parliamentary tradition and rules, committees get cancelled. Just this morning, the Auditor General released a damning report outlining the complete failure at Indigenous Services Canada to "provide the support First Nations communities needed to manage emergencies such as floods and wildfires, which are happening more often and with greater intensity."

The Auditor General found, "the department's actions were more reactive than preventative, despite First Nations communities identifying many infrastructure projects to mitigate the impact of emergencies. The department had a backlog of 112 of these infrastructure projects that it had determined were eligible but that it had not funded." The Auditor General also found the department is spending 3.5 times more money on responding to and recovering from emergencies, such as floods, than it would if it actually funded those communities to prepare and mitigate those effects. It is spending three and a half times more. It is unbelievable.

The revelations of the Auditor General uncovered exactly the kinds of things committees need to dig into, and it is exactly those kinds of things that the government is trying to avoid answering questions on. They are questions like why it provided funding for approximately 190 full-time or part-time emergency management coordinators without any clue whether that was enough capacity to manage those emergencies; why high-risk first nations communities were ignored and not prioritized for resources; or why Indigenous Services Canada failed to address issues identified after evacuations like "improving access to essential services like mental health supports and health care. The department also did not integrate the impact on marginalized groups, including Indigenous elders, women, and youth, into how emergency services were planned and delivered in First Nations communities." It is bad enough, but perhaps most damning is how Indigenous Services Canada officials simply passed the buck and blamed first nations for their problems in the name of self-governance.

● (1945)

The Auditor General found that Indigenous Services Canada did not use information about the risks faced by first nations and the capacity of first nations to respond to emergencies, reporting:

The department provides funding for First Nations communities to develop community vulnerability assessments and emergency management plans. These assessments and plans are important because they help First Nations prepare for and mitigate emergencies by identifying risks and outlining how they will be managed. Department officials told [the Auditor General] that, in the spirit of supporting First Nations self-governance, they did not require First Nations to provide this information to the department.

How the heck can the minister find that acceptable? According to the government's own 2019 emergency management strategy for Canada, for every \$1 invested in preparedness and mitigation, \$6 can be saved in emergency response and recovery costs, yet Indigenous Services Canada's total spending on response and recovery activities, at \$646 million, was 3.5 times more than its spending on preparedness and mitigation activities, which was \$182 million. This is yet another example of the Liberal government's complete disregard for indigenous people and its complete disregard for managing taxpayers' money.

In budget 2019, Indigenous Services Canada was allocated approximately \$1.4 million over three years to support first nations-led management and engagement on multilateral emergency management service agreements between Indigenous Services Canada, first nations communities and provinces or other service providers. Unsurprisingly, the Auditor General found that, as of April 2022, although the department had spent almost \$790,000, no multilateral agreements were established. Half the money is gone, and there is nothing to show for it. It really is unbelievable.

It was exactly six months ago when another parliamentary officer released a report on the mismanagement at Indigenous Services Canada. This time, it was the Parliamentary Budget Officer. That was in May. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's report detailed the Liberals' continued approach of pumping more money into a broken Ottawa-knows-best system that failed indigenous peoples. Rather than working with indigenous leaders to eliminate the inequalities inherent in the bureaucracy, barriers that are holding indigenous people back from achieving prosperity, the government just keeps on pushing its failed policies over and over again. The Parliamentary Budget Officer's report found that, instead of fixing the problem, the Liberals blew through their budget by \$863 million, a 48% increase, which only resulted in a significant decline in Indigenous Services Canada's ability to actually get the job done. They spend more and achieve less.

That is yet another example of a report that may never see the inside of a committee room if Motion No. 22 passes. The Liberals will promise the world. Then they will completely fail to deliver. Again, it is unbelievable.

Even more unbelievable is that Motion No. 22 will pass with the support, probably, of their NDP buddies. The New Democrats have said many times that they are committed to undertaking the work of reconciliation in good faith and in true and equal partnership with indigenous communities across the country. They say they are ready to make investments in indigenous communities to support infrastructure that improves basic emergency services and are against the broken promises and inaction of the Liberal government on those issues. If that sounds familiar to some of my colleagues, it should. It is on the front page of their website, yet they stand prepared to support this government to eliminate the right of parliamentarians to question and hold the government to account on life-

Government Orders

threatening issues, such as the ones identified today by the Auditor General.

By supporting the Liberals, the NDP will be condoning their continued "spend more, achieve less" results for Canadian taxpayers and indigenous peoples. In an interview during the last election, when asked if he would support the Liberals in Parliament, the leader of the NDP said, "I think it's clear with the evidence, another four years of [this Prime Minister] will make things worse. He has made things bad, and it is going to get worse. So people can't afford another four years of [this Prime Minister]." During that same election campaign, the NDP put out an ad that claimed that the Prime Minister talks and the leader of the NDP delivers. That said, I would like to know exactly what my NDP colleagues are delivering on by supporting Motion No. 22.

● (1950)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I guess I will thank the member for his speech, because I am sure he was up all night writing it word for word, and he delivered it with such conviction.

I was listening attentively and trying to understand if he was in support of this motion or against it, because part of his comments actually do justify the need for more time to debate, and then I listened to some of his comments in regard to committee. I am chairing the procedure and House affairs committee, and we meet every Tuesday and Thursday from 11 o'clock to one o'clock.

As a committee, we have agreed, because I agree we can find consensus and a way forward, that we would work on foreign election interference. We have already had two meetings with witnesses and we are working to find that way forward. However, this week, just coming out of Remembrance Day and Veterans' Week, we actually got a Standing Order 106(4) letter. For anybody listening, that means we had to add a meeting to procedure and House affairs, and the committee that could not have its time was veterans affairs. All parties agreed to that.

I would like to know what the member thinks about actually taking away time from other committees so that some committees can have an emergency meeting on an issue that has already been discussed.

● (1955)

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, obviously, we want committees to work in the full capacity they have. They need to sit, and they need to start asking questions and get answers from the government.

Government Orders

As I pointed out, I did not write that speech last night. Believe it or not, I wrote it this morning. The Auditor General's report referred to a whole slew of failures in Indigenous Services, and I will mention three. Number one is that Indigenous Services Canada did not provide the support first nations communities needed to manage emergencies, such as floods and wildfires. Number two is that the department did not identify the first nations communities at the highest risk. Number three is that the department spent 3.5 times higher on responding and recovering than on mitigation and prevention.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech by my Conservative colleague.

Earlier, I made the mistake of asking my colleague from Winnipeg North two questions at once and obviously got a partial answer to one of the questions. I do want to note that he made an effort to answer one question.

I wanted to ask my Conservative colleague the same question I asked the member for Winnipeg North earlier. If the Liberals actually answered the questions they are asked during periods for questions and comments during the debates, would they even need to ask to extend sitting hours in the House of Commons?

I think my colleague is ready to answer before I have even finished, so I will get out of the way. My question is pretty simple.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I do not know what that actually looks like or sounds like. I have been here for seven years, and the Liberals have not answered a question yet, so that would be absolutely new to me. We have tons of questions on this side of the House.

We know where the government is failing. The Auditor General came out today with a slew of failures that need to be addressed. We need to be asking questions. We need engagement by the government and to actually get answers to the questions we ask.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are here in this House. This is where the decisions are made: here in the House. I just wanted to ask the member how we can make sure Canadians get the support they need faster in these very uncertain and very expensive times.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, yes, these are very challenging times. I think members on all sides of this House are getting emails and telephone calls from Canadians who are struggling with a multitude of crises right now. This is why we need to be debating in the House. This is why we want more time to debate issues. Even with a simple bill that is proposed, there is always room for change and there is always room for improvement. We need to be able to get our discussion flowing here. This is the place to do it. This is the people's House where we are able to let ideas go back and forth and hopefully, at the end of the day, produce better pieces of legislation.

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise and participate in this debate. It has been quite a

fruitful conversation that has taken place today, and clearly there are a variety of opinions.

Following on the last commentary, I think it is really important that we have more time to debate. I know that when I was elected in the 2015 election, I committed to the constituents of the riding of Waterloo that I would listen to the diversity of their perspectives and have them represented in this place. There are many different ways to do that, and participating in the debate on the floor of the House of Commons is one such way.

In this chamber we have demonstrated time and again that we can work together; we can find ways forward. We saw that when the member for Fundy Royal moved a motion to ban conversion therapy in Canada and we were able to see it pass swiftly through this chamber and send it to the other place.

We saw just recently the advancement of Bill S-5, an act to amend the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, which received unanimous support.

Bill C-22 was referred to, an act to reduce poverty and to support the financial security of persons with disabilities. It establishes a disability tax credit, which has been long fought for, wanted and desired. We were able to get that legislation through second reading, and it is now at committee.

To show goodwill would mean seeing legislation move at a pace that delivers for more Canadians. I know it is important that we get to this vote, so I will not stop this House and this chamber from calling the question and making sure we can vote. However, I think something we have seen time and again is that most parties know where they stand on legislation, and they want to talk about it rather than call the question. This motion will provide them the opportunity to keep talking about it, but also to call the question.

With that, Madam Speaker, I hope you call the question really quickly, and if the opposition members want, they can save us the 30 minutes of bells and maybe see us walk in and get to a vote faster with the voting application, so we can all get to doing our constituency work and so forth. The Conservatives have options, should they wish to use them.

● (2000)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 8 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of Government Business No. 22 now before the House.

The question is on the motion.

The first vote is on the amendment.

[Translation]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the amendment be carried or carried on division, or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[English]

The hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Call in the members.

• (2045)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negatived on the following division:)

(Division No. 214)

YEAS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
DeBellefeuille	Deltell
d'Entremont	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Goodridge
Gourde	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater

Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Perkins	Perron
Plamondon	Poilievre
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer— 144

Government Orders

NAYS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badaway
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garrison
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Jaczek	Johns
Jowhari	Julian
Kayabaga	Kelloway

Government Orders

Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Miao	Miller
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petipas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Rayes	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Virani
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 170

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the amendment defeated.

The next question is on the main motion. May I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of motion to House*]

• (2050)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we would like a recorded vote, please.

• (2105)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 215)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Jaczek
Johns	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Miao	Miller
Morrissey	Murray
Naqvi	Noormohamed
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Petipas Taylor
Powlowski	Qualtrough
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado

Government Orders

Sahota	Sajjan	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Saks	Samson	Kurek	Kusie
Scarpaleggia	Schieffe	Lake	Lantsman
Serré	Sgro	Larouche	Lawrence
Shanahan	Sheehan	Lehoux	Lemire
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Singh	Sorbara	Liepert	Lloyd
St-Onge	Sudds	Lobb	MacKenzie
Tassi	Taylor Roy	Maguire	Martel
Thompson	Turnbull	Mazier	McCaughey (Edmonton West)
Valdez	Van Bynen	McLean	Melillo
van Koeverden	Vandal	Michaud	Moore
Vandenbeld	Virani	Morantz	Morrison
Weiler	Wilkinson	Motz	Muys
Yip	Zahid	Nater	Normandin
Zarrillo	Zuberi — 168	O'Toole	Patzer

NAYS

Members

Abouttaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Beaulieu	Benzen
Bergen	Bergeron
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	d'Entremont
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Goodridge	Gourde
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmic

Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	MacKenzie
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCaughey (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Normandin
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Shields	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Williamson	Zimmer — 144

PAIRED

Nil

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I declare the motion carried.

It being 9:05 p.m., the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 9:05 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Auditor General of Canada

The Speaker 9451

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux 9451

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2022

Bill C-32. Second reading 9451

Mr. Fillmore 9451

Mr. Williams 9452

Mr. Bachrach 9452

Mr. Lamoureux 9453

Mr. Samson 9453

Mr. Vis 9454

Mr. Villemure 9454

Mr. Desjarlais 9455

Ms. Lantsman 9455

Ms. Taylor Roy 9456

Mr. Trudel 9457

Ms. Idlout 9457

Mr. Vis 9457

Mr. Lamoureux 9459

Mr. Blanchette-Joncas 9459

Mr. Desjarlais 9459

Mrs. Shanahan 9459

Mr. Trudel 9461

Ms. Idlout 9461

Mr. MacGregor 9461

Ms. Taylor Roy 9463

Mr. McLean 9463

Mr. Trudel 9463

Mrs. Block 9464

Mr. Gerretsen 9465

Mr. Trudel 9465

Ms. Idlout 9465

Mr. Berthold 9466

Mr. Gerretsen 9467

Mr. Villemure 9467

Mr. MacGregor 9467

Mr. Tochor 9468

Mr. Duguid 9468

Mr. McLean 9469

Mr. Trudel 9470

Ms. Idlout 9470

Ms. Dzerowicz 9470

Mrs. Roberts 9472

Mr. Barsalou-Duval 9472

Ms. Idlout 9473

Ms. Larouche 9473

Mr. Lamoureux 9475

Ms. Ferreri 9475

Mr. Desjarlais 9475

Mr. Simard 9475

Mr. Garneau 9477

Mr. Kurek 9477

Ms. Idlout 9477

Mr. Bains 9478

Mr. Caputo 9479

Mr. Trudel 9479

Ms. Idlout 9480

Mr. Chahal 9480

Ms. Vandenberg 9480

Mrs. Roberts 9482

Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné 9482

Mr. Desjarlais 9482

Mr. Lawrence 9483

Mr. Fragiskatos 9484

Mr. Trudel 9484

Ms. Idlout 9484

Mr. Lamoureux 9484

Ms. Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk) 9484

Mr. Dong 9486

Ms. Blaney 9486

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

World Diabetes Day

Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South) 9486

Richard Ross Wilson

Mr. Doherty 9487

Coptic Orthodox Church

Mr. Arya 9487

Ambulance Simulator

Mr. Savard-Tremblay 9487

Labour

Mr. Kusmierczyk 9487

Recognition of Military Service

Mr. d'Entremont 9488

Lions Day on Parliament Hill

Mr. MacDonald 9488

Natural Resources

Mr. Oliphant 9488

Public Safety

Ms. Dancho 9488

Housing

Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) 9488

Cost of Living	
Mr. Williams	9489
Hotel Association of Canada	
Mr. Baldinelli	9489
National Pain Awareness Week	
Mrs. Brière	9489
West Coast Fishery	
Mr. Bachrach	9489
Situation of the Uighurs	
Mr. Blanchet	9489
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Genuis	9490
Gender-Based Violence	
Ms. Sudds	9490

ORAL QUESTIONS

Taxation	
Mr. Poilievre	9490
Ms. Freeland	9490
Mr. Poilievre	9490
Ms. Freeland	9490
Mr. Poilievre	9491
Ms. Freeland	9491
Mr. Poilievre	9491
Ms. Freeland	9491
Mr. Poilievre	9491
Ms. Freeland	9491
Official Languages	
Mr. Therrien	9491
Ms. Freeland	9491
Mr. Therrien	9491
Ms. Freeland	9492
Health	
Mr. Singh	9492
Ms. Freeland	9492
Mr. Singh	9492
Ms. Freeland	9492
Taxation	
Mr. Hallan	9492
Ms. Freeland	9492
Mr. Hallan	9492
Ms. Freeland	9492
Infrastructure	
Ms. Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	9493
Mr. LeBlanc	9493
Taxation	
Ms. Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	9493
Ms. Freeland	9493
Climate Change	
Mr. Deltell	9493

Ms. Gould	9493
Mr. Deltell	9494
Mr. Rodriguez	9494
Health	
Mr. Thériault	9494
Mr. van Koeverden	9494
Mr. Simard	9494
Mr. van Koeverden	9494
Infrastructure	
Mr. Simard	9494
Mr. LeBlanc	9494
Democratic Institutions	
Mr. Chong	9494
Ms. Damoff	9495
Mr. Chong	9495
Mr. LeBlanc	9495
Mr. Berthold	9495
Ms. Damoff	9495
Mr. Berthold	9495
Mr. Champagne	9495
Indigenous Affairs	
Ms. Idlout	9495
Ms. Hajdu	9495
Housing	
Ms. Kwan	9496
Mr. Hussen	9496
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Ehsassi	9496
Mr. Fraser	9496
Taxation	
Mrs. Stubbs	9496
Mr. Duguid	9496
Mrs. Stubbs	9496
Ms. Freeland	9496
Mr. Barlow	9497
Ms. Gould	9497
Mr. Barlow	9497
Mr. Fraser	9497
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	9497
Mr. Oliphant	9497
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	9498
Mr. Oliphant	9498
Public Services and Procurement	
Mr. Barrett	9498
Ms. Damoff	9498
Finance	
Mr. Chambers	9498
Ms. Freeland	9498
Taxation	
Mrs. Vien	9498
Ms. Freeland	9498

Agriculture and Agri-Food

Mr. Blois	9498
Ms. Bibeau	9499

Taxation

Mr. Martel	9499
Ms. Freeland	9499
Mr. Vis	9499
Mr. Duguid	9499
Mrs. Gallant	9499
Mr. Duguid	9499

Air Transportation

Mr. Dhaliwal	9499
Mr. Alghabra	9499

Health

Mr. Davies	9500
Mr. van Koeverden	9500
Mr. Blaikie	9500
Mr. Champagne	9500

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**Extension of Sitting Hours and Conduct of Extended Proceedings****Motion That Debate Be Not Further Adjourned**

Mr. Holland	9501
Motion	9501
Mr. Berthold	9501
Ms. Larouche	9501
Mr. Julian	9501
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9502
Ms. Findlay	9502
Mr. Gerretsen	9502
Mr. Morantz	9503
Mrs. Goodridge	9503
Ms. Mathysen	9504
Mr. Caputo	9504
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	9504
Mr. Johns	9505
Mr. Motz	9505
Mr. Lamoureux	9506
Motion agreed to	9507

Government Business No. 22 Resumed

Motion	9507
Mr. Julian	9507
Mr. Gerretsen	9509
Mr. Barrett	9509
Ms. McPherson	9509
Ms. Larouche	9510
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9510
Mr. Morantz	9510
Mr. Gerretsen	9511

Ms. Gladu	9513
Mr. Champoux	9513
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	9513
Mr. Villemure	9513
Ms. McPherson	9514
Ms. Gladu	9515
Mr. Lamoureux	9515
Mr. Champoux	9515
Ms. Gladu	9515

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**Pandemic Prevention and Preparedness Act**

Mr. Erskine-Smith	9516
Bill C-293. Second reading	9516
Mr. Garon	9518
Mr. Davies	9518
Mr. Falk (Provencher)	9519
Mr. Garon	9521
Mr. Davies	9522
Mr. Lamoureux	9524

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**Government Business No. 22—Extension of Sitting Hours and Conduct of Extended Proceedings**

Motion	9525
Ms. Gladu	9525
Mr. Lamoureux	9526
Ms. Larouche	9527
Mrs. Block	9527
Mr. Redekopp	9527
Mr. Lamoureux	9529
Mr. Green	9529
Mr. Lamoureux	9529
Mr. McCauley	9532
Mr. Desilets	9532
Ms. Zarrillo	9532
Ms. Chagger	9533
Mr. Champoux	9533
Ms. Findlay	9533
Mr. Lamoureux	9535
Ms. Bérubé	9535
Ms. Zarrillo	9536
Mr. Schmale	9536
Ms. Chagger	9537
Mr. Champoux	9538
Ms. Zarrillo	9538
Ms. Chagger	9538
Amendment negatived	9540
Motion agreed to	9541

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>