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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, November 17, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

The Speaker: It is my duty, pursuant to subsection 21(1) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, to lay upon the table a certified copy of the report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the province of Nova Scotia.

[*English*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

* * *

[*Translation*]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B), 2022-23

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (B) for the financial year ending March 31, 2023, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I now have the honour to table, in both official languages, supplementary estimates (B), 2022-23.

* * *

• (1005)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 10 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

STRENGTHENING THE PORT SYSTEM AND RAILWAY SAFETY IN CANADA ACT

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-33, An Act to amend the Customs Act, the Railway Safety Act, the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1992, the Marine Transportation Security Act, the Canada Transportation Act and the Canada Marine Act and to make a consequential amendment to another Act.

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

* * *

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in relation to Bill C-248, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada).

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House without amendment.

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, entitled "Canada's Environmental and Clean Technology Goods and Services: Selected International Trade Considerations".

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

* * *

NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP DAY ACT

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-306, An Act to establish National Women's Entrepreneurship Day.

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She said: Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that women entrepreneurs in every industry face systemic barriers when trying to start and grow their businesses. Supporting them is the right thing to do and the smart thing to do. Our government recognizes that fact and continues to look for ways to stand by these innovative leaders as they break down barriers.

I rise in the House today to introduce the bill entitled “an act to establish national women's entrepreneurship day”. As a former small business entrepreneur, I know it is important that we mark November 19 of each year as national women's entrepreneurship day.

[*Translation*]

This day is already celebrated in more than 140 countries and it is recognized by the United Nations.

[*English*]

I ask the members of the House to consider November 19 as national women's entrepreneurship day. Women are intelligent, creative and ambitious, and they already know how to achieve success. We will be there for them, and we will assist them as they need. We will work toward solving the problems of today to build a brighter tomorrow.

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

* * *

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

● (1010)

[*English*]

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House resumed from November 16 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.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really pleased this morning to stand and reference various areas in the fall economic statement. It was a very good statement that gave us an opportunity to see a focus on some of the areas that the government and all members of the House, I am sure, are concerned about and supportive of, especially for the residents of Humber River—Black Creek. The help for the cost of living, for dental care, for rent and for numerous other issues has been received very well by the residents of Humber River—Black Creek.

When the government released the 2022 fall economic statement, it talked about making life more affordable, which is something we hear a lot about and something we know is very important, and how we continue to grow an economy that works for absolutely everyone. The statement outlines a plan for continued support to help all Canadians with the cost of living and to build a Canada where no one is left behind. We are committed to continuing to help families cope with the increasing costs that we hear about every day and that we see every day when we go to the grocery store and to checkout counters.

Part of this is about making housing more affordable, which is another issue. Even in this morning's news, the top story was talking about housing affordability, and I believe the fall statement tries to address some of that. It also tries to strengthen and build a thriving net-zero economy with opportunities and jobs of the future. Amid global economic uncertainty and a reckless trickle-down economics approach pushed by some here in the House that benefits the wealthy, we are staying focused on making life more affordable for everyone and building an economy that will work for everyone.

We are investing in Canadians, including by eliminating interest on student loans and apprentice loans. I have been here long enough to have met many times with student unions from all universities across the country. They continually talk to us about how difficult it is to get student loans and how the interest continues to climb. Finally taking some action on that is extremely helpful and is very appreciated by that particular part of the community. Apprentice loans are another issue, and giving people time to get a job and additional time before they have to start repaying loans is important. With interest rates rising, eliminating the interest on those loans would be very much appreciated.

We are also talking in the economic statement about helping people buy their first home. I can say how important that is. We all know that. We all have grandkids or kids who are looking to buy their first home, and the fact that now they will have a \$40,000 tax-free first home savings plan will really be a boost for the housing industry. It will be very helpful for many young people who are trying to buy their first home. It will also continue to attract investment in our clean economy and help create good, solid jobs.

Everyone should have a safe and affordable place to call home, and this is one of the reasons that with the 2022 fall economic statement, our government would deliver \$500 in additional support to low-income renters. I have many renters in my riding, as others have, and the struggle to keep up with the increased cost of rental accommodation is very difficult. Some people will say that \$500 once is not enough, but \$500 is helpful as they move forward to try to deal with inflation, which hopefully is coming to an end, here in Canada at least.

The \$500 is additional support under the Canada housing benefit specifically for low-income renters. This federal benefit would be available to all Canadians with an adjusted net income below \$35,000 for families, so we are talking about families that are truly struggling to make ends meet, or below \$20,000 for single Canadians who pay at least 30% of their income toward rent. In Humber River—Black Creek, I know lots of families that are struggling in that situation.

• (1015)

We are also creating a new refundable multi-generational home renovation tax credit to provide up to \$7,500 in support for constructing a secondary suite, which will help families who take care of an aging grandparent at home or help parents afford to support a child with a disability moving back home, starting in January 2023. That is another step forward, when we talk about affordability and the lack of housing in so many different parts of our urban and rural centres. To be able to do some renovation of one's home that would allow one to have a second suite that would either provide rental income or enable an aging parent to age at home, is much appreciated.

The fall economic statement is also big news for students, as I mentioned earlier. It proposes to permanently eliminate interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprenticeship loans, including those currently being repaid, beginning on April 1, 2023. This would save the average borrower \$400 per year. Recent graduates could also wait until they make \$40,000 a year to start repaying their federal loans. These things seem like common-sense issues. If we are trying to encourage Canadians and our young people to take additional courses, whether it is apprenticeship or advancing their education, so that they can earn a better income and contribute better to moving Canada along, then we all want to see that they are not penalized at the end of the day, so helping them in a variety of different ways is quite helpful.

Our government is also doubling the GST tax credit to put hundreds of dollars in the pockets of those who need it the most. Starting November 4, 2022, so it is already moving forward, single Canadians without children will receive up to an extra \$234, and couples with two children will receive up to an extra \$467. Again, some people might say that is not enough, and ask why we bother. When we are stretching from one dollar to the next dollar to the next dollar, \$234 is a lot of money, as is \$467, to help feed the family and put the food on the table. Seniors, whom we talk about a lot and care immensely about, will also receive on average an extra \$225.

We are also delivering much-needed relief for parents who cannot afford dental care for their kids under 12. That is an issue we have talked about for many years that I never imagined we would actually deliver, so I am glad we have started a program that truly is going to help our young children, because there are many of them who do not have any kind of coverage, so they do not see a dentist until something starts to hurt and they are forced to.

A third of Canadians do not have dental insurance, and in 2018 more than one in five Canadians reported avoiding dental care because of the cost, because it is very expensive. Our job is to help parents who struggle financially, by investing in their children's

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health care. Canada's dental benefit will provide parents or guardians with direct upfront tax-free payments of up to \$1,300 over the next two years to cover dental expenses for their children under 12 years old.

Canada needs to also build the technology, the infrastructure and businesses to help reduce our carbon reliance, but this will not occur without rapidly increasing, and then sustaining, private investment in activities in sectors that will strengthen Canada's position as a leading low-carbon economy. That is why the 2022 fall economic statement launched the Canada growth fund, which will help bring billions of dollars in new private investment required to reduce our emissions, to grow the Canadian economy and to create well-paying jobs.

This fall economic statement also has support for hard-working Canadians, and that is in the new quarterly Canada workers benefit. We are moving this to an advance payment, because people who work really hard for really low pay cannot wait until the fiscal year is over to get a top-up. They need it while they are working, and they deserve it. We should be rewarding them for doing those hard jobs and encouraging them to continue.

I am very pleased to have had the opportunity this morning to speak to the fall economic statement, and I look forward to hearing comments from my colleagues in the House.

• (1020)

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand here this morning.

One comment that was made was, I guess, that the goal is to make life more affordable. I can tell members that in my constituency office and the emails I receive, that is not the case.

We always talk about how we are giving money back. That money is from the taxpayers to begin with.

Does the hon. member not think it would be better, as an example, to scrap the carbon tax, so that money is in their pocket each day, instead of having people waiting and wondering whether they will get some money back for help?

I guess that would be my question. Does the hon. member not think it would be better to help individuals today?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, let me tell members, my constituents are getting that money back every single day.

The carbon tax is refundable. Everybody is getting it back. Most importantly, we need that carbon tax because we need to start paying more attention to climate change.

We look at what happened this summer in the Maritimes. From coast to coast to coast there was a tremendous amount of damage. It will be years and years before it is ever corrected.

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All of this is talking about climate change and the changes we need to make for our children's and grandchildren's future.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her remarks and her speech.

We are going into what may well be a recession in 2023. One might have expected the government to implement slightly more aggressive measures to help Quebecers and Canadians weather a possible recession.

First of all, we have yet to see the EI reform that was promised. At this time, six out of every 10 workers who lose their jobs are not eligible for employment insurance, so reform is urgently needed.

I also heard my colleague talk about her unconditional love and affection for seniors, and how much the government wants to support them. To the best of my knowledge, the retirement age is still officially 65, but fewer and fewer Quebecers and Canadians can afford to retire because there is no support from this government for seniors aged 65 to 74.

The question I want to ask my colleague is this. What are people aged 65 to 74, who are seniors, supposed to do to get through the recession without help from the federal government?

[*English*]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the work the government has done since we came in in 2015. Seniors have been every bit as important as everyone else that we are trying to deal with.

We have increased funds to them through the OAS and the GIS. There has been a 10% increase in the pension, which was not an easy thing to accomplish.

We continue even in this economic statement. There is an additional \$234 for seniors.

We are trying to help a variety of people through a variety of different programs. It is part of the role of the government to see where those opportunities are and where we can make sure we are lifting people up, so that they can get through, no matter what their age is.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is a major shortfall in this fall economic statement. Over \$30 billion a year goes to overseas tax havens on behalf of the corporations that are benefiting the most from greedflation and the ultrarich. Of the \$30 billion, the federal Liberal government has decided to claw back about \$600 million, about 2% of the \$30 billion.

Of course, as we well know, that \$30 billion would be one of the top five expenditures of the federal government. It means that seniors, students, people with disabilities and families are short-changed, in terms of the benefits and supports that they could be getting.

Why are the Liberals refusing to crack down on massive tax evasions, tax loopholes and overseas tax havens that cost Canadians over \$30 billion a year?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, one of the things I neglected to mention is with regard to the Canada workers benefit, which I think is really important for all Canadians but especially for the residents of Humber River. I wanted to make sure to mention it.

The Canada workers benefit will provide up to \$1,428 for a single worker or up to \$2,461 for a family this spring through the existing tax return payment. That is a significant assistance to give people, to move forward as we go forward.

I am not answering my colleague's question because it is important for me to tell Canadians and people in Humber River about the extra money they are going to get.

• (1025)

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak this morning to Bill C-32, the fall economic statement implementation act. More specifically, I will be talking about a very exciting research institution that should have been mentioned in the fall economic statement but was not.

The Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment, or CIPSRT, is headquartered in my riding, at the University of Regina. However, before I get into the details of the vitally important work that CIPSRT is doing, I would like to invite my fellow MPs to imagine themselves as witnesses to a number of tragedies that recently occurred across our country.

On November 10, 2021, a cyclist was killed after being run over by a dump truck. He was the fifth cyclist in that city to be killed that year, on top of numerous other car crashes. This happened in Montreal, in the Prime Minister's riding of Papineau.

In May of this year, following severe thunder and lightning storms, a 59-year-old man was killed when a tree fell on him. This happened right here in Ottawa, in the official opposition leader's riding of Carleton.

In 2018, a driver heading westbound on a highway lost control of her vehicle, veered into the eastbound lanes and was struck by two other vehicles. The out-of-control driver was killed, and five others were injured, including a young child. This also happened in Montreal, in the Bloc Québécois leader's riding of Beloeil—Chambly.

In May of last year, a 23-year-old man was shot dead in a violent gang attack at a shopping centre that saw two other people wounded and sent patio diners ducking for cover and using tables as shields. That happened in the NDP leader's riding of Burnaby South.

Last but not least, there were the horrifying events from the Labour Day long weekend, in which an ex-convict armed with a knife went on a stabbing spree in his hometown and a neighbouring community, leaving 10 dead and 18 wounded. I am, of course, speaking of the events at the James Smith Cree Nation and the village of Weldon in my home province of Saskatchewan.

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I could go on for hours, citing tragedies in every single riding in this country, from coast to coast to coast. However, the question I would like members of the House to ask themselves is this: If they had witnessed even one of these events, which we all easily could have, how would they be affected? I bet we would all feel stressed out. Many of us would probably have nightmares. Some of us would even come away with a sort of PTSD that we would experience the next time we were driving down a highway, walking through a shopping mall, cycling past a dump truck or maybe even just walking by a tree during bad weather.

Keep in mind that I am speaking of the sorts of psychological scars that we would carry from just one single event, but our front-line public safety workers, including police, firefighters, paramedics, soldiers, border services, correctional services and many others face this type of trauma every single day, often multiple times per day. For our safety and well-being, frontline public safety workers not only face daily physical risks, but also live in a constant state of psychological siege that does not end when they punch the clock at the end of the day. It follows them home, affecting their health, sleep, relationships and more.

Several members of the House had the opportunity to meet and talk with representatives from CIPSRT at their breakfast reception here on Parliament Hill earlier this month. Dr. Nicholas Jones and Dr. Nicholas Carleton, affectionately known as “the two Dr. Nicks”, brought MPs up to speed on a number of shocking facts about the psychological fallout suffered by public safety workers. For example, studies have shown that fully one-quarter of all paramedics have had suicidal thoughts over the course of their careers, and the profession has a rate of suicide attempts roughly double that of the general population.

The two Dr. Nicks also told me that a significant part of the problem is the mental health culture within many of these professions. For police, firefighters, soldiers and others, there is often a tough, “suck it up” attitude about mental health that in the long run only serves to make the problem worse.

It can be difficult to break through this frame of mind. After all, the people in these professions are trained to be tough, to be authority figures. They are trained to be the people who remain calm and in control when others are panicking, and so one can easily imagine how very difficult it must be for these people in these professions to let their guard down, to allow themselves to be vulnerable and to ask for help when usually they are the ones providing help to others.

• (1030)

When speaking about social problems, advocates often like to use the word “epidemic” to describe them. This word most certainly applies to the mental health challenges faced by public safety workers, yet despite the growing extent of the problem, relatively few public resources have been invested. This is where CIPSRT comes in.

Founded in 2018, the institute was established as a knowledge hub, working in conjunction with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to investigate the treatment of post-traumatic stress injuries for the country's public safety workers. While CIPSRT may consist of a multidisciplinary research team, it does not merely con-

duct studies and gather reports. Instead, it is actively engaged in developing practical, real-world tools to assist public safety workers.

It is unfortunate that one of the rules of the House is that we are not allowed to use props, because I would love to demonstrate one of the very innovative solutions that CIPSRT has developed. One of these innovations, which the two Dr. Nicks demonstrated to me at the University of Regina earlier this year, is a daily stress monitoring device and app.

Essentially, the public safety worker uses a stress monitoring device once per day. This device collects data about the person's blood pressure, heart rate and other physiological signs. The device is sophisticated enough to distinguish between physiological changes brought on by stress and those brought on by, say, going for your morning jog. All of this data is then fed into an app that the public safety worker and his or her therapist can monitor over time. If those stress levels are starting to go off the charts, or off the app in this case, then those public safety workers can ask themselves what was happening at those times that triggered that stress. Likewise, the therapist can start to work on intervention strategies to bring down those stress levels before they get to dangerous levels.

CIPSRT has accomplished all of this and more through the frugal use of their initial funding of \$5 million plus a few project-specific grants along the way. Sadly, all of the good work that CIPSRT has done, and all of the good work that it could potentially do is in jeopardy. Its initial five-year funding commitment from the federal government expires on March 31 next year, just four short months from now. No federal funding has been committed after that date. Furthermore, due to the ethical code of conduct to which researchers are bound, they cannot begin research with new subjects unless there is enough time left for the subjects to also finish the program. That means CIPSRT will not accept any new public safety workers into their program after Christmas.

I was particularly disappointed that the finance minister did not mention this research institution in her 10-minute speech to the House on November 3. There was no mention of CIPSRT in the 96-page fall economic statement, or in the 172-page implementation act that we are debating this morning.

I would like to urge both the government and every member of the House to take a closer look at the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research and Treatment and the solutions it can provide to this country's public safety workers and their mental health challenges.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of things came to mind when the member made his presentation.

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One is the fact that never before have we seen a national government play such a prominent role in terms of mental health. We have allocated hundreds of millions of dollars toward the issue of mental health. We have reinforced Veterans Affairs with financial support for those individuals who need to have support in that whole area.

When it comes to research, as a government, I would challenge the member to find another national government in the last 20 to 30 years that has invested more money in research in science. I suspect that there are going to be many universities and other post-secondary facilities out there.

Is it the position of the Conservative Party that the Government of Canada should continue to look at post-secondary facilities and financially support research projects, even if it means having to use tax dollars?

• (1035)

Mr. Michael Kram: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party is in favour of a one-for-one policy when it comes to government spending. For every new dollar of government spending we should find one dollar of savings somewhere else. I do not think that is very difficult to do when one considers that the Canada Infrastructure Bank cost \$30 billion but has not delivered a single project, and when one looks at the ArriveCAN app that cost \$54 million.

I am sure, with a little effort, we could find savings elsewhere in government to fund a very worthwhile program like CIPSRT.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, discussions about investing in mental health, especially for first responders, always resonate with me. There are reasons why mental health deteriorates. It may be a lack of support, for example. Over the past 30 years, there has been a lack of support from the federal government. It is time to admit it and do something about it.

Health transfers have been inadequate and, as a result, governments across Canada have had to cut spending to ensure the sustainability of services, which has had an impact on first responders.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on the importance of health transfers and the fact that the federal government should not interfere in the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec and should look after its own affairs instead.

[English]

Mr. Michael Kram: Mr. Speaker, my view is that it is the role of provincial governments to deliver and implement a lot of these programs. The federal government's focus should be on research into new treatments and technologies that can be used across the country and across the world. That is where I think CIPSRT is in a unique position, in that it does not just talk about the problem, but it has actually developed solutions. It is asking for a rather modest funding allocation of several million dollars to scale up its research and make it available across the country to benefit first responders and everyone.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member focused a lot on rising crime. I was in the House, as were many members, when the former Harper government destroyed the network of national crime prevention centres.

That made no sense at all because, as we know, one dollar invested in crime prevention saves six dollars in policing costs, court costs and prison costs, yet the Harper government, reprehensibly, absolutely destroyed the network of national crime prevention centres that did such good work in preventing crime across the country.

The Conservatives would be right to criticize the Liberals for not re-establishing those crime prevention centres, but the reality is that Conservatives wear the fact that they destroyed the bulwark against crime in this country.

Why did the former Harper government and the Conservatives destroy the national crime prevention network that did such great work in preventing crime in our communities?

Mr. Michael Kram: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is quite a bit beyond the scope of my intervention. There will always be violent crime, sadly enough, and there will always be earthquakes and car crashes. I hope there will always be first responders to help people when they are suffering some sort of tragedy or crisis. The mental health challenges will always be there as long as we have first responders doing their jobs. It would be nice if we could provide some more support for our first responders, as I outlined in my intervention.

• (1040)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to speak in support of the fall economic statement. Let me begin by acknowledging we are all gathered here on the traditional unceded lands of the Algonquin people.

I want to acknowledge that yesterday the mayor of the city of Toronto appointed my municipal colleague, Dr. Jennifer McKelvie, as the deputy mayor for the city of Toronto. I want to congratulate her on this enormous responsibility she has. I have every confidence she will serve the people of Scarborough—Rouge Park as well as the people of the city of Toronto exceptionally. I look forward to working with her and the mayor as he starts his third term.

There are a number of things in the fall economic statement, but the most glaring issue I see is the current economic situation faced by Canadians. Inflation, although it has tapered down a bit from its high, is at 6.9% and has been persistent for the last couple of months. We had our constituency week last week, and many of us in the House were able to speak to families, individuals and students about some of the challenges they have. Many spoke to me about the increasing cost of living, the increasing cost of housing, transportation and gasoline. They talked about some of their anxieties, especially students who attend the U of T Scarborough in my riding, as well as Centennial College.

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Canadians have been struggling a great deal over the last several months, but I want to assure them that, as a government, we are here to support them. We are here to ensure affordability remains front and centre in the work we do and to make sure we are there for them every step of the way. In fact, this is the reason we brought forward several months ago, and the cheques went out two weeks ago, the doubling of the GST credit. This has a significant impact on millions of Canadians who need the support.

We have also adopted dental care for young people with family incomes of less than \$90,000. There is no question that it is a critical component of what is required for the health and well-being of Canada's youth. Unfortunately, many families simply are not able to afford it, and this is a very important step in ensuring young people have dental care.

We have been building supports for Canadians since 2015. The Canada child benefit, for example, supports young people and families across Canada. In my riding alone, it has had a significant impact on addressing the issue of poverty among our young people, and that is something we can all take pride in. As a government, we work very hard and diligently to make sure we target supports to those who need them and not give cheques to millionaires and those who really do not need them. It is a means-tested approach, one that is very smart and has had a significant impact on addressing the issue of poverty.

The adoption of \$10-a-day child care in Ontario is a game-changer for many families. Look at how we are supporting, for example, someone with two kids in child care. We are talking about thousands of dollars in savings on an annual basis. It is something that is going to change our workforce. More women will enter the workforce, and they will be supported by the government. With the introduction of \$10-a-day child care in Ontario, this year alone child care expenses will be reduced by 50%, with a goal of it being reduced to \$10 a day. That too is a very important aspect of addressing the issue of affordability.

● (1045)

The national housing strategy is another perfect example of how we are addressing a number of things, including chronic homelessness, the need for transitional housing as well as affordable housing within the market space. We know there are many different players.

In Scarborough—Rouge Park, for example, we have a number of initiatives, one that we just announced several months ago with Fred Victor. We have modular housing being built, which will be available, with the proper supports, for those who need it. In fact, that is being replicated across not just the city of Toronto, but across Canada. It is also supplemented. We have a project called 250 Brenyon Way, which the national housing strategy and the CMHC are intricately involved in providing those supports.

Given the limited time I have, I would like to speak to a key aspect of the fall economic statement, namely the elimination of interest on student loans, the Canada student loan program as well as the Canada apprenticeship loan program.

I have always said, and I have repeated it many times in the House, that education is the ultimate equalizer in society. If we look at it, whether through history, youth, people in the House, or my

personal lived experience, education has certainly given me the tools to do the things I do. Whether as a lawyer, someone who was previously in business or working with youth, it has given me those skills.

We know that the youth of today need that formal education. Whether they go to college, university or enrol in apprenticeship or trade programs, they need that education to compete in this world. We have seen some phenomenal successes whether in AI or health care. We have seen an enormous amount of young people rising to the challenge with respect to COVID-19 or developing state-of-the-art technologies.

I cannot tell members the number of times I have met people, whether during Christmastime or the summer, who have gone from Canada to the Silicon Valley or to other countries, such as Germany. Very recently I spoke with someone who went to Finland to work in a high-tech firm. However, oftentimes young people are very apprehensive of going forward with such a huge debt, if they or their families do not have the means to support it. We know that programs such as law and medicine, in particular, have a very high cost of tuition, with the assumption that once students finish the program they have the ability to earn a higher income.

The challenge, and this is very true for many racialized first generation or indigenous peoples, is that the burden of the high level of debt they would have to incur to pursue a specialized program, or any program, can be a deterrent to them being able to pursue post-secondary education or training. Therefore, the elimination of the federal interest portion on the student loan program is a game-changer.

I was able to drop by the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus, as well as Centennial College, to speak with some of the students. They are very happy about this elimination. I have also spoken with some people who have already graduated and are working. They also feel this is a very important measure that will allow them to be more secure and save some money over the next few months. I am really pleased to support that.

With that, I look forward to questions and comments from my friends.

● (1050)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer identified \$14.2 billion of new spending in the fall economic statement that had no details attached to it. Effectively, it is a blank cheque for \$14.2 billion that the government is asking parliamentarians to accept.

Why is that member supporting more inflationary spending when we know that Canadians are hurting? The right thing to do would be to not give a blank cheque for \$14.2 billion to the federal government?

Government Orders

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to a number of people who are well versed in economics, more so than myself, and I can assure members that the measures we have put in place are very measured. They would allow Canadians to have support without contributing to inflation.

I am very confident, as is the Minister of Finance, that this fall economic statement is prudent and is one that reflects the current needs as well as the current realities of inflation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that this morning I am feeling a bit frustrated. I am sick and tired of seeing the Liberal government drop their little announcements here and there to get positive media coverage.

The Liberals tell us that they are handing out \$500 for rent and then complain that the opposition parties think it is not enough.

Of course it is not enough. Of course we agree when they say that it is better than nothing. We will take the \$500, but that is a ridiculous amount when we consider the real cost of housing. What we need is a massive investment in social housing.

It is the same thing when they say that this year people will receive roughly \$400. Of course we will take it, but these are not meaningful measures. When I talk about meaningful measures, and I am sick of pointing this out every time I stand up, I am talking about an increase to old age security starting at 65.

I think this shows a serious lack of respect for our seniors, who are struggling to buy groceries. The Liberals merrily make their little announcements and then they will tell me they have helped seniors. I want a real answer.

When will they increase old age security starting at age 65?

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I find it hard to believe that the member opposite is suggesting we have not made structural changes.

I can assure members that the Canada child benefit is the single biggest contributor to the reduction of poverty among young people. I can assure him that the introduction of the \$10-a-day child care, although it has existed in Quebec for many years, will be a game changer in Ontario. The elimination of interest on the federal student loan program is critical. Dental care for young people is critical.

I would ask my friend opposite to rethink his perception of the things we have done.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to make an important comment in relation to labour, which I think would benefit all members of the House. There is no question that there is in fact a war on workers. We are seeing it in Ontario, and it is going to be happening soon in Alberta.

Labour was happy to see the government move on the demands of the New Democratic Party in relation to anti-scab legislation and to the UTIP program, which benefits training centres across union halls in the country. However, one area that is a massive deficiency

within this fall economic statement is EI reform. The labour movement has been pushing for this for a long time.

In the fall economic statement, we saw comments about an upcoming recession. Now is the most important time for Canadians who are contributing to EI. They need to see that working for them. That program needs to be enhanced. The government promised to do it; it has not done it yet. When will it?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for his hard work on a number of files.

I had the opportunity to meet with members of Unifor a couple of days ago, and many of the issues the member identified were brought up, including the anti-scab legislation, which is coming forward from the Minister of Labour, and the need for EI reform.

One thing we have to look at is that during the pandemic, during the worst economic crisis our country faced, our government was there for Canadians every step of the way. As we go forward, I can assure all members in the House, particularly my friend from the NDP, because there is consensus on how we need to support workers, that we will work with him and his party to achieve what is right for workers.

• (1055)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are here today to discuss the government's Bill C-32.

Regular people will probably have a better idea of what I am talking about if I refer to it as the economic update. For most people, "Bill C-32" does not mean much at all.

Typically, an economic update tweaks the budget tabled earlier that year. Early in the year, in March, the government announces measures for the coming year. Over time, it becomes clear some small adjustments are needed. That is why we get an economic update in November. We expect those announcements to be on a smaller scale than those in a budget.

The Bloc Québécois brought up three major priorities it wanted to see in the economic update. One of these priorities was an unconditional increase in health transfers; it is not there. Another priority was an increase in old age security for people aged 65 and over; it is not there. The third was a comprehensive reform of employment insurance because, as we know, people suffered immensely during the pandemic and because there were already problems with the program before COVID-19. That is not there, either, and yet we are slipping into a recession.

Government Orders

It is sad to see how the government was unable to hear these three major priorities put forward by the Bloc Québécois, priorities on which the vast majority of Quebecers agree. However, there is something else I will focus on. In the economic update we see yet another example of the federal level's contempt or arrogance in an area of infrastructure that is very important to Quebec.

I will give a brief overview. The federal budget announced last spring contained a little line of text that went virtually unnoticed. A budget often has 300, 400 or 600 pages. It takes a long time to read. When we need to comment on the document, we obviously focus on the key elements. Afterwards, we look at the details to see whether something was missed.

That may very well have been the government's intention. In fact, that little line in the budget has big consequences for Quebec. This part of the text essentially says that, under the investing in Canada infrastructure program, the deadline for submitting projects, initially March 31, 2025, is brought forward to March 31, 2023. That means two years less to submit important infrastructure projects that are a priority for Quebec and the other provinces—except that, in the case of Quebec, there is something more.

The federal government and the Government of Quebec signed a bilateral agreement. The parties negotiated how this money would be allocated, since 90% of infrastructure assets belong to Quebec and its municipalities. It is clearly a Quebec jurisdiction, and that is why an agreement had to be negotiated.

These few words in the budget made us realize that the federal government could decide not to honour the agreement it negotiated with Quebec. We then went fishing and talked to the Bloc Québécois's research department. We were told that it was probably not true, that the federal government would not do that, since it had a signed agreement with Quebec. We were told that it must apply to the other provinces, but that, since the federal government had a signed agreement with Quebec, it would surely honour it.

Despite everything, we still had concerns, and we wanted to know more. It is important to understand that this is an infrastructure agreement worth \$7.5 billion, which is a lot of money. When we found out about the deadline change, \$3.5 billion in the total envelope had not yet been spent, and we knew that an election was coming. With the fall election, we would end up in November, and there would be only a few months to submit billions of projects. That would be virtually impossible. It is a bit like having a gun to one's head.

Since the federal government and Quebec had an agreement, we figured that it must not be true. We asked the minister some questions in parliamentary committee. I asked the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities what the deal was. We were concerned.

● (1100)

He told us quite candidly that he would take the money back if it had not been spent and the projects were not submitted to the federal government by March 31, 2023. He said that, in any case, other provinces wanted the money and that they too had projects. If Quebec did not submit the documents on time, that would be too bad, it

would lose billions of dollars. That is what the minister told us in committee.

The worst part is that there was another component. There was still \$342 million unspent in phase 1 of the agreement. According to the agreement, if the money for public transit was not spent in phase 1, it could be used in subsequent phases. I asked the minister what would happen with the \$342 million, since the signed agreement says that we can use the phase 1 money in subsequent phases. He said that it would be returned to the consolidated fund.

The money was returned to the consolidated fund, and \$342 million was essentially stolen from Quebec, without a word. If we had not seen those few words hidden in a corner of the budget, no one would have ever known. Unbelievable. That is how the hypocrites across the aisle work.

When we learned of this, we were obviously livid. We contacted the Quebec office in Ottawa so that it could notify minister Sonia LeBel. We spoke to our mayors, who were very upset. I must say that they could not get over the fact that the federal government had done something so disgraceful. We also spoke to the Union des municipalités du Québec, or the UMQ. Everyone was angry, everyone said that it was outrageous. The UMQ made a public statement asking the federal government to honour its word, to honour its signed agreement with Quebec. I spoke about this to Sonia LeBel, who was then the minister responsible for government administration and chair of the Conseil du trésor. She told me that she would continue to negotiate with Ottawa. She was hopeful that we could reach an agreement by working together. She told us she would not back down.

The same thing is happening again with the economic update. Despite all that was said by the Union des municipalités du Québec, the Bloc Québécois, the Quebec government and our municipalities, which will lose billions of dollars for infrastructure projects, the federal government arrogantly says that it is going ahead and that the municipalities will lose the money.

That attitude is completely mind-boggling, and I do not understand the reasoning behind it. I am certainly eager to hear what explanation the government gives me in the question and answer period that is coming up later, because I really cannot imagine what it could be. The only possible explanation I can see is that the government is basically on a power trip.

It wants to prove that it is the boss. Everyone else can drop dead. They have to do what the federal government tells them to do. It is going to show them who is in charge and put them in the corner.

Government Orders

That attitude is simply disgusting. An agreement was signed. Two partners sat down at a table and made a commitment after hours or days of negotiations. They signed an agreement and shook hands to seal their commitment to that agreement. Then the federal government ditched the agreement and did as it pleased, because it is the boss. That is the message the federal government is sending. It takes the money that is paid by Quebec taxpayers and intended for Quebec infrastructure projects, and then it threatens to send the money elsewhere.

I am sorry, but Quebecers pay income tax like everyone else, so they are entitled to their share. This type of behaviour is totally unacceptable. In my eyes, it is theft. The federal government is acting like the mafia, like gangsters. There is a word for what it is doing, and that word is racketeering, meaning extortion through threats. That is what it amounts to.

The government told Quebecers that they had two years left to submit projects, but now they only have six months and they just have to deal with it, because the federal government is the boss. That is the message the federal government wants to send, despite the fact that municipal infrastructure falls under the jurisdiction of Quebec and its municipalities, and the federal government has nothing to do with it. Why does the federal government persist in sticking its nose where it does not belong? Why is it incapable of sticking to its own jurisdictions?

If we Quebecers cannot get our own money, the money that is due to us because we pay income tax like everyone else, the only way to get our money and our share is to control the funds ourselves, and that means forming our own country. I hope Quebecers will remember this. I hope the municipalities will remember this. I hope the federal government will finally listen to reason.

• (1105)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental flaw, which the member started to highlight at the very end, and that is the fact that the member is a separatist. He does not want Canada. He wants to see Quebec separate from the rest of Canada. He does not recognize that the national government does play a role, even though a majority of the people in Quebec, Manitoba and Canada believe that the federal government has a role in infrastructure, health care and many other areas in which we work alongside the stakeholders.

That is the difference. We recognize that to build a healthy, strong, united Canada, one needs a national government that reflects the interests of the population as a whole. That is why we continue to work, day in and day out, with provinces, indigenous communities, municipalities or other stakeholders in the best interest of all.

Does the member opposite not recognize that even his own constituents, a very large percentage of them, want federal participation in many of the programs that the member just spoke out against?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to hear the parliamentary secretary's comments. What he basically

said is that my speech, my opinion, my point of view are not valid because I am a separatist, some shady character who is dangerous. They refuse to listen. No matter what we say, it will be rejected.

Well, I say to him that his actions actually fuel separatism and the desire to be independent. My colleague asked what my constituents want. What they want is to get their money from Ottawa. That is what they want. What Ottawa is doing is unacceptable, and my constituents will not forget it.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as an Albertan, I agree with some of what the hon. member says. Many Quebecers and Albertans have the same problem with the federal government. The federal government thinks that it has all the good ideas and that no good ideas come from our provincial capitals.

With respect to health transfers, the provincial ministers of health and the federal Minister of Health are always fighting over who has control over our health systems. As an Albertan, I believe that my province is best equipped to manage our health care system.

I would like to hear more from the hon. member from Quebec.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his very pertinent question.

Basically, he is asking about health transfers. That is interesting, because my speech was about infrastructure and what the federal government is doing, sticking its fat nose in other people's business and blackmailing us with a gun to our head.

The exact same thing is happening with health transfers. It is exactly the same situation. It will undoubtedly be the same story in all sorts of other files, because the federal government wants a central government where it controls everything and where the provinces have no say. Quebec will end up being entirely sidelined, and that is exactly what we do not want.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, there are 16 Northern stores in northern Quebec. Northern showed profits of \$13.2 million, and it is subsidized by the nutrition north program.

I wonder if the member agrees that the Canada recovery dividend proposed in this bill needs to be extended to the profits of grocery stores, which are in the millions of dollars.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I heard my colleague's question, but I must say that it did not have much to do with my speech.

However, I know that my colleague is from the riding of Nunavut. It is useful to point that out, because we are jealous of the Canada-Nunavut infrastructure framework agreement. Interestingly, the earlier deadlines apply to the provinces, but not to the territories.

Perhaps a member from across the aisle can tell me why the government decided to push up the deadlines for the provinces and not for the territories. I am okay with the fact that it did not push up the deadlines for the territories, but why did it not do the same for the provinces?

• (1110)

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise to speak to Bill C-32, the fall economic statement implementation act.

At the outset, one of the things I find extremely confusing, and I heard the Bloc say it this morning, is that the government has not tried to help Canadians during such a difficult time to deal with inflation, the inflation we are seeing not just in Canada but indeed throughout the world.

I will speak to that, but before I do, I want to read a quote. It says, “government is ruining the Canadian dollar, so Canadians should have the freedom to use other money, such as Bitcoin.” Are there any guesses where that quote came from?

An hon. member: Is it Donald Trump?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, no, it was not Donald Trump, but his protegee in Canada. That would be the member for Carleton, the official Leader of the Opposition.

He actually said those words. He said Canadians do not have faith in the Canadian dollar, so they should be able to use other forms of money. From his position of leadership, he was encouraging people to not trust the Canadian dollar, but to instead trust cryptocurrency, such as Bitcoin. I do not have to tell anyone what has happened to Bitcoin, not just over the last several months but indeed what we have seen in the last week.

Not only have we seen the collapse of cryptocurrencies, but now there is the new revelation of FTX and the games it was up to in order to create liquidity within its business, the experiences of bank runs that occurred as a result of that, and the collapse of their coin, seeing as much as \$1 billion to \$2 billion go missing. We are seeing what happens when there is no government control or government-backed currencies. That is exactly what we are seeing with the collapse of cryptocurrency and the revelations that are coming about as a result of the businesses that were heavily involved in cryptocurrency and investing in it.

This is where we are today. The member for Carleton has his famous video of when he bought that shawarma and paid for it with cryptocurrency. Let us assume he bought that Bitcoin in order to make that purchase. Who knows what he bought that Bitcoin for. Did he buy \$10 worth of Bitcoin to make that purchase? What would that have cost him today? How much more Bitcoin would it have cost him to buy that shawarma today? It probably would have been about four or five times as much Bitcoin.

If we want to talk about inflation, the shawarma that he bought so famously and proudly using non-government-backed currency would cost him about four or five times as much today.

Government Orders

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, are we debating a Conservative fall economic statement or are we debating the Liberals' fall economic statement?

The Deputy Speaker: I believe that would fall under debate, but I would remind everyone of relevancy when we speak to bills in the House of Commons.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, about 20 minutes ago, a Conservative colleague from across the way spent 10 minutes talking about one particular business in his riding and why that was not mentioned in a 10-minute fall economic statement for the entire country. However, somehow I cannot be critical of the Leader of the Opposition and his position when it comes to cryptocurrency. My humble advice—

The Deputy Speaker: There is another point of order by the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, my friend from Kingston and the Islands sounds a bit hangry. Let us go get a shawarma.

The Deputy Speaker: Of course, that is not a point of order, but for those of us who like shawarma, I know it is difficult.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, my friend for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, who lives in the riding next to mine, should come visit me. I would be happy to take him out to lunch in Kingston any time. I will pay with Canadian cash, if he is okay with that.

However, what we are seeing is, unfortunately, that he and the Conservatives are up to their games again. Just the other night, he was up to the game of orchestrating quorum calls in the House. He was standing behind the door and would get all these Conservatives to leave the room, and then somebody would jump up and say, “Quorum, quorum.” This is what our official opposition is doing. These are childish games that I would not expect of my four-year-old in kindergarten.

They are elected as members of Parliament. The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes thinks that this place is a big joke, that the work we do here is supposed to be a big joke and that they can play these games. Do not let Bloc colleagues turn their heads from this, because they were equally responsible for that the other night too and playing these games. It is unfortunate. We have to do work for Canadians, but the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes would rather play games than do that. I would encourage him to get back to the business of Canadians, and if he wants to discuss it over lunch in Kingston, I would be happy to do that with him.

Government Orders

When we talk about the supports for Canadians, I will draw a comparison, and this is my whole point. I will draw a comparison between what this government has been doing to support Canadians versus the hyped-up rhetoric, division and sowing the seeds to plant doubt in Canadians when it comes to the financial institutions we have. The member for Carleton, the Leader of the Opposition, rather than working towards some of the measures contained in this bill, wants to get up in the House and tell Canadians to not believe in the Canadian dollar, effectively saying that it is worthless because it happens to be run by a bunch of people that he does not particularly like. Instead, he tells them they should go out and invest in bitcoin. What happened to bitcoin over the last six months? It absolutely plummeted, and anybody who took his advice would be in a pretty devastating position right now.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Berthier—Maskinongé on a point of order.

Mr. Yves Perron: Mr. Speaker, I will not often defend the leader of the Conservatives, but let us be serious about our work.

We must work on the measures that the government presented so we can help people face inflation, but the member has spent about eight minutes talking about cryptocurrencies.

People are watching us on television. Can we get to work?

The Deputy Speaker: I believe that is a matter of debate, but I repeat that members must speak to the bill at hand.

[*English*]

The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, that is incredibly rich coming from this Bloc member who happens to be sitting next to the member who, only two nights ago, made the point that, yes, it is fun to watch members run out of the room and do a quorum call. However, this member wants me to trust that the Bloc is taking this place seriously when his own colleague, sitting right next to him, was engaging in those activities just two nights ago.

If Bloc members want me to talk about them because they are feeling a little left out as I have been focusing on the Conservatives, I am happy to do that too. However, for the Bloc member, his colleague sitting next to him asked moments ago why the government was not focused on supports for Canadians during these difficult times. Is he living under a rock? That is my question to him, because we can look at the countless initiatives and things that are in this fall economic statement that are there specifically—

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Certainly, in light of the many things that the member is not able to do directly that he seems to be doing indirectly, I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that there is, in fact, quorum in this place to ensure Canadians know there are actually people here doing the work they expect us to do in this place.

The Deputy Speaker: There is a quorum call, and I believe I quickly have to count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: The Table says we do have quorum.

We will go back to the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, three times the other night while I was speaking, the Conservatives did the exact same thing. I would take this opportunity to encourage people to go to my Twitter feed right now, where I posted a really interesting video that shows how Conservatives were playing with that quorum game just two nights ago in the House. They did it again. What happened when they did a quorum call? The Speaker stood up, verified we had quorum, and then I continued. This happens to me; it happened to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. The Conservatives are doing it routinely, and I do not understand if they think that is the business of the House, because it is not.

I would like to get back to the Bloc, and I apologize to my Conservative friends that I have gone off topic from them, and I want to focus on the Bloc. I am back with the Bloc now. Its members say we are not doing any initiatives for Canadians and that there is nothing to help Canadians. They can look at the countless measures in here making life more affordable, like by taking the interest off students loans. They can go talk to students who have interest on their loans and ask them if that is going to help make life more affordable for them. We are lowering credit card transactions and doubling the GST tax credit for six months for certain Canadians. There is a \$500 top-up for the Canada housing benefit, the Canada dental benefit and a new quarterly Canada workers benefit.

Are Bloc members trying to tell me that those are not meaningful things that would impact people? Are they nodding? If they are nodding, that basically means they do not think that stuff would be impactful to Canadians and Quebeckers. Even if they are nodding, I doubt they would actually agree with that.

We can also look at some of the other stuff in here, like making housing more affordable. The housing top-up I mentioned is helping young Canadians afford a down payment faster. We are helping Canadians save on closing costs, introducing a new refundable multi-generational home renovation tax credit and cracking down on house flipping by ensuring profits from properties are held for less than 12 months. Do those members think these are initiatives that Canadians are not going to benefit from?

There is the Canada growth fund to help build technology, infrastructure and businesses. I could go on and on, and then the Bloc is going to get up, ask about the health transfers and say we are failing because they do not happen to agree with the manner in which we are distributing the health transfers.

Government Orders

This fall economic statement is about providing supports for Canadians. That is exactly what has been laid out in this document. It is exactly why I am very much in favour of supporting it, and I think the Canadian people will judge those who choose not to support these measures, and we will see how that comes to be when we get to vote for this. Hopefully Conservatives will let us vote on this some time in the fall, rather than waiting until June, like last year, but I will not hold my breath.

• (1120)

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, you might rule me out of order, because I wish to ask a question on the fall economic statement. Finally, I did hear a comment at the end of the speech that listed a few topics broadly that were listed.

In an earlier exchange with the member for Calgary Shepard, he asked a question of the previous member. One of those things the hon. member across the way did not list was the \$14.2-billion blank cheque. I have yet to hear what that is about. How is that not incendiary spending, as identified by the Parliamentary Budget Officer? I would like to know whether that is a measured response, which a previous speaker so described.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I have not asked a single question this morning. He might be referring to somebody else. I do not even know what he is talking about.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are talking about Bill C-32. The opposition's role is to point out what the bill is lacking. So far, it appears that the government's role is to boast a lot and not listen.

We are here to point out the flaws, the jurisdictional issues and the agreements that are not being honoured. Among those agreements is the one on infrastructure, which my colleague mentioned earlier, but there is another one that has not been respected for a very long time. It is the Constitution.

Strangely enough, in the last election, The New York Times said that the party that respected the Canadian Constitution the most was the Bloc Québécois, the separatist party. We are asking that the jurisdictions of Quebec and the Canadian provinces be respected in accordance with the Constitution.

Since I am talking about agreements we want the government to respect, I would like to point out that the 1867 Constitution, the only one that Quebec has signed, has yet to be translated, despite the 1982 agreement to translate it within six months.

When will this finally happen, and when will the government respect its own Constitution? It is about time it did.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, if I heard the member correctly, she said that The New York Times said that Quebec was the best at respecting the Constitution. I apologize if I am not willing to take advice from a foreign newspaper on Canada's Constitution and the way that various different parties contribute to it. I apologize, but I just cannot see how I can possibly answer a question that is

based on the premise of a foreign newspaper weighing in on our Constitution.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

An hon. member: I cannot believe you just called The New York Times fake news.

• (1125)

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. colleague for his important intervention holding the opposition members accountable. I believe as a member of the opposition that it is important to advance our program, the program that New Democrats fight for every single day in this place, which is to make the material conditions of Canadians better.

In my community of Edmonton Griesbach, I want to offer a respectful reflection of what they are experiencing. We know that across the country there is a housing crisis. People in my community cannot get ahead. We have 3,400 houseless folks across the city of Edmonton. We have nearly 470 people who died in the last two years of houselessness. These are folks I knew, real people who are affected. To give credit to the government, this fall economic statement does, in fact, help some of those folks with a \$500 housing benefit. I know that is going to help Canadians. New Democrats pushed for that and we agree with that.

However, it was clear that the national housing strategy detailed by the Auditor General earlier this week is damning. What the government was supposed to build for folks did not hit its targets. It also said that the government would fail to ensure that the proper amount of housing is established by 2027 and 2028.

When will the government take housing seriously and when will it increase the supply?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, that is a great question. I think it is a valid question. I want to thank the member for bringing it up. I would agree that there will always be more we need to do.

I want to thank the NDP for actually being adults in the room when it comes to the other parties. It is the NDP who can take credit for what is in this bill, which they do when they see it as appropriate. They saw a situation where it is a minority Parliament. Rather than just be obstructionist like the two other opposition parties, they decided to try working with the government to actually advance things for Canadians. They did exactly that.

If the member would like to continue talking about housing, I would be more than willing to do that because I think it is an important issue. I hope he keeps raising it.

Government Orders

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this fall economic statement arrived during one of the most difficult financial periods in many Canadians' living memory. For my constituents of Edmonton Mill Woods and for Canadians across the country, life has become increasingly difficult. We are witnessing an unparalleled affordability crisis, and too many Canadians are barely hanging on. My constituents are struggling to deal with inflation, which is at a 40-year high, and with interest rates that are increasing at the fastest rate in decades.

This crisis derives almost entirely from a government that, since being elected into office, has decided to spend more money than Canadians do not have on projects and initiatives that Canadians have not seen. After years of imprudent spending, the government has run out of Canadians' money. The Bank of Canada is working overtime, attempting to keep up with the government's fiscal irresponsibility.

This is why Canada finds itself in the position that it is in today. Our national debt has doubled, and the Prime Minister has created more debt than all other Canadian prime ministers combined. We have heard from the government benches that the Prime Minister had no choice but to double our debt, yet 40% of all the new spending measures have had nothing to do with COVID. That amounts to 205 billion dollars' worth of unnecessary and harmful debt that future generations of Canadians will have to account for.

Similarly, government spending is now up 30% from pre-pandemic levels. The cost that it takes for the government to service the debt that it has created, often needlessly, is as much as the Canada health transfer. This means that Canada can spend less and less money on crucial social expenditures like health care. Canadian tax dollars that could have gone toward hospitals and nurses are instead being squandered on the effort to keep up with the Prime Minister's debt.

This is just one example of how government spending is hurting Canadians. There are the real-world consequences to the Prime Minister's reckless decisions.

The Prime Minister is happy to spend \$6,000 a night on the most expensive hotel room in London while Canadians cannot even afford to pay their rent. As a consequence of this, we are now in a position where the cost of government is driving up the cost of living for Canadians. The Prime Minister's inflationary deficits, to the tune of half a trillion dollars, have created more dollars while Canada produces fewer goods. Worse still, inflation has increased the cost of producing and distributing these goods. This is how we have come to find ourselves in this very difficult position.

Canadians are having to skip meals and food banks were visited over 1.5 million times in a month, a 35% increase in comparison to just last year. Canadians across the country can no longer afford basic necessities like heating their homes and gas. Mothers are having to mix water into their babies' milk, and as we head into this holiday season, parents have less to spend on their children.

Nearly every single component of the Canadian economy is failing. Home prices have doubled, and a significant number of young Canadians simply cannot afford to purchase a home in the cities and towns they grew up in. There was once a time when being able

to afford a home was not a luxury reserved for the wealthiest. However, now in Canada, the second-largest country in the world with the second most space for housing developments, purchasing property is outside the realm of possibility for too many Canadians. The cities of Vancouver and Toronto have the third- and tenth-most overpriced housing markets in the world. This means that poor and working-class kids and new Canadians will never be able to afford a home.

Despite Canada having the most inflated housing bubble in the world, those who have been able to afford a home may lose it. Monthly payments on mortgages are rising even as house prices are starting to drop. Families that bought a typical home five years ago with a typical mortgage that is now up for renewal will pay \$7,000 more per year. This is clearly unsustainable for many Canadians.

● (1130)

Recently, a constituent of mine wrote to me about how they can no longer afford to pay their mortgage, which had increased significantly every single month. How can we expect Canadians to afford this? Despite this, the Bank of Canada has said that it will have to continue hiking interest rates just to keep up with the government's inflation. We now face a crisis where many Canadians can no longer afford to pay for their mortgages.

As the Prime Minister's inflation makes the cost of everything even more expensive, household debt has skyrocketed, as more Canadians are relying on credit cards instead of paycheques. Despite this, Canadians have never paid more in taxes to the government. The government goes on collecting taxes, further draining the pockets of Canadians. It has revealed no intent to slow down.

The government plans to triple the carbon tax, making vital goods like food and heating a home even more expensive than they are today. The Conservatives have consistently voiced our concerns for seniors and families unable to afford food or even heat their homes this winter. For some families in Mill Woods, this will be the toughest holiday season yet. However, the Prime Minister continues to carry on with his wasteful spending agenda on the backs of hard-working Canadians.

Canadians need a break. The government cannot go on spending like this while providing little to no support for Canadians who are struggling to keep their heads above water. This economic update does not come close to what Canadians are expecting and what they need to see. It fails to address the cost of living crisis spurred on by the government's out-of-control spending.

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Before the fall economic update, the Conservatives made two demands of the government: that it stop the tax increases and that it stop the spending. We urged the government to introduce no new taxes on the backs of my constituents and those who are struggling across Canada. This includes cancelling all planned tax hikes, like the tripling of the carbon tax. We need to work toward making life easier for Canadians. Instead, the government chooses to actively make life more expensive and much more difficult.

We also asked the government to stop the needless spending. A Conservative government would ensure that new spending is matched by equivalent savings. However, as we have seen from this economic update, the government will continue its wasteful spending and expanding its inflationary deficits, which will drive up the cost of everything.

Despite the government saying that it will now be fiscally prudent, it has refused to commit to any of our requests. This fall economic statement will keep Canada regressing down the path of economic hardship. Instead of creating more cash, the government should be supporting the creation of more of what cash buys. The Prime Minister should be looking at building more homes and developing our ethical natural resources. This would mean the production of cheaper food and other essential goods right here in Canada.

For this reason, we cannot support the government's inflationary update, and we will continue to represent Canadians who are struggling by holding the government to account. It is time for a government to address the cost of living crisis. It needs to plan to make energy more affordable.

That is why the Conservatives will repeal anti-energy laws and get Canadian energy out to market. We will remove government gatekeepers, get more homes built and make Canada the quickest place in the world to get a building permit. We will reform the tax and benefits system to ensure that whenever somebody works an extra hour, takes an extra shift or earns an extra bonus, they are always better off working.

Canada does have a future, and hope in the Canadian dream can be restored. However, first the government must control its wasteful spending and address the cost of living crisis that is affecting every Canadian.

• (1135)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians need to be concerned when Conservative after Conservative stands up to say that every dollar borrowed that was not directly attributed to the pandemic is harmful and unnecessary debt. That is what the member said.

Let us think about child care and the national child care program. Yes, there is a cost to it, but there is also a benefit to it that the Conservatives continue to not recognize. In fact, the Conservative Party of Canada wants to get rid of our national child care program. I have a tough time with that. Canadians have a tough time with that.

We had to borrow some money to support our national health care system. Given what the Conservatives are saying today, can we anticipate that the Conservative Party would also roll back the

investments we are putting into health care? Is that part of the hidden agenda from the Conservative Party? Do the Conservatives intend to roll back health care transfers?

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the member talks about having a tough time. Do members know who is having a tough time? It is Canadians who are having to visit the food bank to feed their families. About 1.5 million Canadians did so in one month. That is a record for Canada, a sad record. Do members know who else is having a tough time? It is Canadians who now have to choose to skip a meal.

What would the member say to parents who have to tell their kids they will not be able to provide a gift for them this Christmas? It is the Liberals' inflationary crisis that is putting this strain on Canadian families.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic to hear the Liberals talk about health transfers and about how the Conservatives will offer less, when the amount is already so small. In any case, we will give them a fair chance.

I thank my colleague for sticking to the topic of the day for his whole speech. I appreciate it. He talked a lot about housing. This is an essential and very important issue. Housing costs are a major challenge for nearly everyone at this time.

What does my colleague think about a major investment in social housing, and how does he propose we go about it? It would take some people out of the market and relieve the pressure on prices. This should be done quickly with a significant amount of money.

[*English*]

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned a couple of things there and I appreciate his question.

First, on health care, the fact is that right now the Liberals are spending as much as the health care transfer amount on servicing the debt they created. Right there is where we would find savings to support health care, not service debt.

The other thing the member talked about is the housing crisis. He is right that there is a housing crisis, so what we need to do is increase supply. In Canada, we have the space to build more homes. We just need to get to a point where we are actually building those homes.

We need faster building permits. Under a Conservative government, we would have the fastest building permits around the world, and not only to build houses but to build projects and get this country moving again.

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• (1140)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to continue on that theme of housing. If we listened to the Conservative leader, we would know that as long as there is this much capital in the market for bidding on new homes and new units of various kinds, we will have to build a lot of units to ever see the price of housing come down.

One thing in Bill C-32 is a pandemic dividend, or the Canada recovery dividend. It is really about going to the very same financial institutions that the Conservative leader has rightly complained about, which got a lot of liquidity support during the pandemic, and taking some of that money back into government coffers for it to be put out on things like the doubling of the GST rebate, the dental benefit and the Canada housing benefit.

I found it odd not to hear any support from the Conservative leader for the pandemic dividend, because it seems to me that it is very clearly an issue of justice, as we are talking about who should bear the cost of the moment we are in, in light of what has gone on in the pandemic. It also seems to be a pretty important tool for trying to right one of the structural problems in the housing market right now.

I wonder if the member might offer his thoughts on the pandemic recovery dividend.

Hon. Tim Uppal: Mr. Speaker, we have been very vocal that we want Canadians to pay less tax. We believe it is more effective for Canadians not to have to pay out that money and give it back to the government. We want Canadians to make a choice of where to spend that money, and many Canadians would spend it on housing. Then they would be able to afford their rent and get into houses.

The other thing to note is that, yes, the member is right that we need to build a lot more houses. In fact, the government has a plan to significantly increase immigration, so we need housing. We have a construction industry that is ready to build those homes. We just need to get the gatekeepers out of the way so we can get them built.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of the residents of Calgary Skyview.

Albertans and Canadians are feeling the squeeze due to the rising cost of living. I have had numerous conversations with my constituents of Calgary Skyview. I talked to workers, small business owners, families, newcomers, seniors and students. The message is crystal clear from them: An affordable cost of living is a top priority. That is why I am so proud to rise today to speak about the real actions our Liberal government is taking to support Canadians through the recently released fall economic statement.

Our government's plan outlines a responsible and fiscally prudent path to help the economy grow and prosper while making life more affordable for Canadians. We are doubling the GST tax credit for six months. This is important. This will provide an estimated 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians a much needed credit top-up. This means somebody living in Calgary would receive an additional \$234, and a family of four would receive an additional \$467 to assist with the rising cost of living.

I recently had the opportunity to talk to Raj, a university student. He told me about the challenges he faced as a post-secondary student due to the rising cost of living and how important it is for the government to support students. That is why I am proud to say the fall economic statement will make all Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans permanently interest-free, including those currently being repaid, so that we can continue to support young people during these turbulent times.

Half of all post-secondary students in Canada rely on student loans to help them afford the cost of tuition and essentials during their studies. By eliminating interest charges for student loans, we are helping ease the burden students face after graduating. Our government is committed to strong fiscal prudence. It is a promise we made to Canadians, and one we continue to uphold.

Canada has one of the lowest net debt and the lowest deficit-to-GDP ratios in the G7. Our economy had one of the fastest job recoveries in the G7, and we have a near record-low unemployment rate of 5.2%. Throughout the pandemic, we took quick and decisive action to support Canadian families with emergency payments. Through responsible investments in our communities, we are continuing to support Canadians by sustaining an economy that works for everybody.

We understand that through a responsible fiscal strategy, Canada's economy can continue to be resilient and well positioned to endure challenging and ever-changing global conditions. The transition to a greener economy requires significant investments. In the fall economic statement, our government has announced new initiatives to help support the economy through a green transition. These investments will ensure we build a globally competitive, sustainable economy that is fair and leaves nobody behind.

This includes a \$6.7-billion investment tax credit for clean technologies, which will provide a refundable tax credit of up to 30% for investments in various green technologies such as solar, electricity storage systems and heat pumps, so Calgarians and indeed all Canadians can afford the transition to greener technologies.

• (1145)

To further our commitment to support sustainable jobs, we created the Energy Transition Centre to help equip Canadian workers with the skills of the future. These key investments are necessary to ensure Canada becomes a world leader in the net-zero transition. We are focused on supporting businesses and creating high-paying jobs. This is why, similar to the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act, we are taxing stock buybacks to make sure businesses pay their fair share and to incentivize the reinvestment of their profits in Canadian workers.

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From the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic to the recent cost of living crisis, our government is committed to helping Canadians through tough times. While we take strong action and provide tangible results for Canadians, the only ideas we hear from the Conservatives include cutting essential government programs and providing financially illiterate advice to Canadians to purchase cryptocurrency to opt out of inflation.

I am proud of the government's work. I know it will help my constituents in Calgary and Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the riding of Calgary Skyview is one I know well as I am often there. According to Statistics Canada, the median income in that riding after tax is about \$87,000. That is not a lot of income for Calgary, and it puts people directly into the middle class. They will be paying thousands more because of the inflationary spending that the current government keeps supporting.

I will ask him the same question I did this morning to a different member. The Parliamentary Budget Officer identified \$14.2 billion that does not relate to anything. There are no specifics on how that money will be spent. It is a blank cheque. That is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer essentially said.

Can the member explain where this money is going and why he thinks the current federal government deserves another \$14.2-billion blank cheque?

• (1150)

Mr. George Chahal: Mr. Speaker, the residents of Calgary Skyview have been working tremendously hard and have been feeling the impacts of inflation. They worked on the front lines during the pandemic. We were accused of spreading the pandemic, yet we have the highest rates of vaccinations in the province of Alberta. They are the folks who drive our buses, clean the snow off our streets, work in the nursing homes or work in the airport that many of my colleagues in southern Alberta use to get here. They are the frontline heroes from my community who are helping to keep our city functioning and our economy moving forward.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, despite differences of opinion on certain aspects, I believe that we can agree that Bill C-32 dusts off some old legislation and also proposes new measures.

That said, our role is also to highlight the bill's shortcomings, and one of these shortcomings is the money for people aged 65 to 74. The hon. member opposite said that seniors would soon get an extra \$220 or so. However, I have questions about this “extra”, seeing as pensions have not kept pace with rising consumer prices. I wonder why this amount is considered “extra” when the government created two classes of seniors. I wonder how this amount can be “extra” when more than 70,000 seniors who applied for their pension on time are still not receiving their money.

It is good that the government is implementing measures, but it needs to think of seniors, because they are the ones who built Canada and Quebec as we know them today, and they deserve our full consideration and support.

When will seniors aged 65 to 74 get this consideration and get proper financial support?

[*English*]

Mr. George Chahal: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou for her advocacy on behalf of seniors. Our government increased the OAS top-up by 10%. I regularly engage with seniors at various seniors centres. In my constituency of Calgary Skyview, I was at a seniors centre last week and the seniors were happy with it. That has supported them and provided additional supports for them to pay their bills.

It is important that we do more, and we continue to work together across party lines to support seniors during this difficult time to make sure they have more resources to help support them in the future.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will briefly reiterate the question that was posed, which had to do with seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 getting access to the OAS increase that the government often talks about as if it is an increase for all seniors. However, I did not hear an answer about when that increase is coming for seniors 65 to 74.

In case the member missed it the first time, I want to make sure that he has an opportunity to actually answer the question. We had the preamble. Now let us have the answer.

Mr. George Chahal: Mr. Speaker, it is important that we find new measures to support seniors as quickly as possible, but we are supporting them with additional investments. We can see in the fall economic statement that there are many ways we are doing that. The rental support is another support that we provided seniors. Low-income Canadians will have the \$500 rental top-up, which will support them through this difficult time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week, I spoke a bit about the shortcomings of the government's economic statement.

Today, I will speak about a particular measure found in Bill C-32 that I think is very important, because it is a matter of justice in the current economy. I am referring to the Canada recovery dividend.

We know that at the start of the pandemic, the big banks and financial institutions received a lot of support from the government. However, in light of the consequences of the pandemic and how well those same financial institutions performed during the pandemic, we can see that they did not need that assistance, or at least not as much as they were offered. The amount of assistance they got may even have put added pressure on the housing market.

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• (1155)

[English]

Over the course of the pandemic, we saw financial institutions get a lot of liquidity support very quickly. We can see, if we look at their record of performance over the pandemic, that this help really was not necessary or certainly not to the extent it was delivered to them, because they made record profits. When most Canadians were worried about losing their homes and experiencing a significant decrease in their own household revenue, financial institutions were making even more profit than they did before the pandemic began.

There is some evidence, sometimes it is exaggerated to some extent, that this help did increase inflationary pressure within the housing market. There are other important factors, when we look at the housing market, that are driving that inflation. If we look only at the assistance that was provided to financial institutions and banks during the pandemic, we miss a very important part of the story about inflation in housing, which was happening at breakneck speed even before the pandemic. I do not want to minimize the impact of that, but at the same time, if we exaggerate that impact, we do not put ourselves in a good position to address the real structural challenges within the housing market that preceded the pandemic and continue even today.

One measure in the bill that is really important from a point of view of addressing that problem, which is also a problem of fundamental economic justice, is the pandemic recovery dividend. This is about assessing a one-time tax on the profits of banks and financial institutions in excess of one billion dollars. Before anyone freaks out about how this is a tax and that it will hurt the economy and everything else, it is only being applied to banks and financial institutions just on their profits over a billion dollars.

I think most Canadian business owners, if they are listening, would think that if they had a year where they had revenue over a billion dollars to tax at an exceptionable rate, that would be a pretty good year. If banks and financial institutions want to object that some kind of unfairness is going on, that is a sign of how out of touch they are with the real lives of Canadians and the people they are supposed to serve. I would also say that any politician in this place who wants to pretend that somehow this is an unfair tax, some kind of horrible socialism or some act of tyranny, is likewise out of touch.

I will talk a bit in a moment about how some of these measures, like the permanent increase on the corporate tax rate, are well warranted, and certain measures like the pandemic recovery dividend ought to be expanded to other industries through a windfall tax.

What has surprised me about the debate around the pandemic dividend is that I have not heard that term out of the mouth of a Conservative in the debate so far. It could just be that I missed it, so I apologize to any Conservative member who did talk about it. However, I have listened to a number of Conservative speeches now and it certainly is not a common theme. I find it strange that the Conservatives are not talking about it, because for a long time all their leader wanted to talk about was the role big financial institutions were playing in jacking up the prices in the housing market,

because they had received too much accumulated capital from government during the pandemic, as he said.

Here is a measure that would actually address, specifically, undoing the harm that the leader of the Conservative Party has made the key plank of his leadership campaign, and now a central plank of his party's strategy in critiquing the government, and he has nothing to say about it.

This is an example of doing something to go after gatekeepers in the financial industry, who are jacking up prices for Canadian working families that are thinking about getting their first home or are trying to figure out getting another home to move to, if they cannot afford their current home, and all the chaos we know is happening for Canadians within the housing market. This is a way of rectifying that and helping to pay for certain things. The Conservatives often ask where we will get the money to pay for this, that money does not grow on trees. It does for the big banks and financial institutions apparently.

The leader of the Conservative Party is willing to talk about that as a problem, but when we get to talking about solutions, suddenly we cannot find him. Maybe he is under his desk right now or hanging out in the lobby. I do not know where he is but he is not talking about a potential solution. This is at least a beginning, to say that a perversion of the pandemic was that these large banks and financial institutions, which already make a ton of money, made even more money.

Assessing a one-time 15% tax on that extra profit above \$1 billion, and this is not a low threshold by any measure, is a perfectly reasonable way of trying to get some of the money that we need to pay for things, like the doubling of the GST tax credit, when people are trying to figure out if inflation will mean they cannot buy food for their families or cannot make rent.

The banks and financial institutions are not going to miss that extra money. They may on their balance sheets, and I am sure they will shed a few tears around the boardroom table. I wish them well in their journey for catharsis, but I do not think it is a reason not to do it. They have the money to spare and that money is very much needed to accomplish things for Canadians, who really are in dire straits. They cannot just worry about whether they will post \$2 billion in profit or \$1.85 billion in profit in their next shareholder report at the end of the quarter.

This is a significant reason why New Democrats are supporting Bill C-32. We think that it is about time we start talking about the people who are making incredible money in this moment of extraordinary challenge for Canadians. Where we think the government has fallen short on this, and we have talked about this a lot on many opportunities, is that outside of financial institutions and banks, other companies are doing very well and posting record profits.

We have talked about Loblaws. This is an example within the grocery world where companies are making huge profits. We know that oil and gas companies are making huge profits in this moment when Canadians are struggling with the rising cost of energy. Those profits would not be growing if they were only increasing their prices to account for their increase in costs. They are not only passing the cost onto consumers, which would mean their profits would stay the same, all things being equal. They are raising prices that go above and beyond the increase in cost. That is how they are achieving record profits in a time of serious strife.

That is why we believe there should be a windfall tax, like the pandemic dividend, along the same structure, that applies to oil and gas companies, grocery retailers and big box stores, which also did very well during the pandemic while mom and pop businesses struggled because they could not offer the same level of service to people in extraordinary times. This has meant that some of those businesses have closed their doors and they are not necessarily coming back. There has been a permanent structural change in certain industries that has favoured larger companies. It makes sense that they would pay more tax on that extraordinary profit.

I am thankful for the opportunity to highlight what I think is a central issue with respect to Bill C-32, one that has not received enough attention to date.

• (1200)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would agree with the member in his assessment of the unfortunate reality of corporations using the opportunity of inflation to further expedite the problem by adding more inflation and trying to profit off of it.

It is one thing to do this by putting a special tax on it, but how do we do that? He talked about profits of over a billion dollars. How does he see that being implemented practically and the results of that, and how that will be received?

• (1205)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, the way it works in the pandemic dividend in the legislation the government has crafted is that it establishes a baseline profit in advance of the pandemic. Then it looks at the pandemic window and how much more profit was made during the pandemic compared to baseline. That is how it comes up with a threshold. It then applies a tax for profits over that threshold.

There is a reasonable method already in place that could be applied to other industries. It would capture industry sensitive differences with respect to the level of profit. We do not like the words “cookie cutter”, but the way this works could be applied to other industries. The level of sensitivity that would be needed and expected is already in the mechanism.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would like to hear him talk about housing. We know that the housing crisis is one of the very important factors of the inflationary situation that we are experiencing at the moment. At the Bloc

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Québécois, we believe that we should invest massively in social housing. We even believe that we should make a permanent commitment to invest 1% of the budget in social housing every year to reduce the pressure on the market and remove a certain number of tenants from the market. We believe that this could be an effective solution. Of course, it would require a great deal of construction.

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

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Of course, the New Democratic Party believes that we need to invest in social housing. The Conservatives propose facilitating the construction of houses on the private market. However, without real investment and without the construction of social housing, many Canadians will not be able to buy these homes and will not have access to housing that they can afford.

Yearly, recurring investments are really important. Non-profit organizations need to know whether they will receive an amount every year to make their own investments in the initial stages of a social housing project. If they do not know when these investments will be made by the government, it is really difficult for them to plan—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[*English*]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am going to ask a question about something my hon. friend from Elmwood—Transcona, whose speeches are always thoughtful and well-informed, did not touch on.

In today's debate, we have heard a lot, particularly from the Liberals, about their commitments to net zero by 2050. I wonder if the member happened to see recent news coverage about our former minister of environment, Catherine McKenna, being part of a United Nations high-level expert panel that looked at the green washing, to put it mildly, around net zero by 2050 commitments.

The criteria set out by that expert body and former minister Catherine McKenna makes it clear that most of these promises by non-state actors are not measurable, not realistic and are simply empty promises. Canada's commitments do not measure up to the expert panel's criteria.

Does the hon. member have any thoughts on that?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I think it is pretty clear that if Canada wants to get serious about meeting its emission reduction targets in the timeline, even in the inadequate timeline, that has been promised by the government, we have to see more projects getting built. The proof is in the pudding.

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The investments are not there, and the construction is not happening. We are not going to see infrastructure that reduces greenhouse gas emissions if it is not getting built. Announcing it does not do the job, and so far all we have are announcements.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to speak to the fall economic statement, which is reflected in Bill C-32.

Let me go on record just quickly about the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Nova Scotia. The report was released today. I want to applaud the commission, particularly on its focus on reinstating all of Hants County as part of Kings—Hants. There was a lot of community backlash or engagement on this issue, and I certainly want to applaud the commission for its work. I know it is not an easy job, but as it relates to the boundaries in Kings—Hants, I do think objectively that it is fair and reasonable.

I am going to use my time this morning to talk about the fall economic statement and how what this government is putting forward is going to matter to my constituents. I am then going to talk about a few things that are going to be extremely important in the days ahead as we move into 2023 and start to focus on budget 2023.

This has been talked about a lot in the House. Right now, we know that times are challenging, particularly for those Canadians who are vulnerable and have lower incomes. I want to applaud the government for trying to strike the balance between fiscal discipline and making sure that there are targeted measures to help those Canadians who do need extra help right now.

First of all, there is a doubling of the GST rebate for the next six months. This is a targeted measure. Eleven million Canadians would receive it. It is something that is around \$2 billion to the treasury, but it is something that matters to those families and those individuals who need a bit of extra help right now. It was approved by the House, and I certainly appreciate that it is there.

Along with that is a doubling of the Canada housing benefit. This is to about 1.1 million renters across the country who have lower incomes. I had the opportunity to speak to one of my constituents last week who was really struggling to be able to pay the bills. My riding is rural. It is outside of Halifax, but she was trying to pay a rental bill of about \$1,500. That has increased significantly, even since I was elected in 2019. We know the challenges around housing, and this is a really important measure to help those who are needing the extra help.

By working together here in Parliament, we have been able to move forward on dental care support for children under 12. I believe that has actually passed the Senate. It is another important measure for children in households with incomes under \$90,000 that do not have any private insurance. We are making sure those children have access to dental care. I was disappointed to see that the official opposition, the Conservatives, voted against this. I did not hear much of a rationale as to why they would not support something like this, which matters to constituents from Newfoundland and Labrador and all the way to British Columbia. However, I am pleased to see that it is going to move forward. I know it is going to make a difference for families in my riding of Kings—Hants.

Speaking as one of the youngest members of Parliament in the House, who does still indeed have student debt, albeit not federal, one of the big measures is to remove interest from the federal portion of student loans. This is something that matters. On average, it would save those who hold debt almost \$400 a year, and it would make sure that we are not piling on interest at a time when students are trying to recover. This is in addition to the fact that we moved the student-loan repayment schedule from an income of \$25,000 up to \$40,000 before someone would have to start repaying. These are really important measures. I had the chance to be with the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth at Acadia University last week. We spoke to students, and we know how important this measure is.

The Canada workers benefit is a benefit that would be brought forward on a quarterly basis. It will be automatically available to workers. Workers will not have to apply for this. This will come as part of the benefits from the government, and it is for workers who have family income below \$42,000, so it is very targeted to help those who are working hard but are struggling to stay ahead. This is another affordability measure that I certainly support.

With respect to the tax-free home savings account and the doubling of the first-time homeowners tax credit, again, as a younger member of Parliament with a number of friends and people I know looking to get into the housing market, I know these are really important measures to make sure that they have tools to help purchase their first home. I applaud the government for moving forward on them.

● (1210)

In my riding, there is the most concentrated group of farms east of Quebec, and there is a number of supply-managed farms. Of course, this government made a promise to make sure supply-managed farms would be compensated, and I am pleased to see the government is moving forward with that. The Minister of Agriculture had the opportunity to announce that in Quebec on Monday. I know it is going to make a difference across the country, particularly for farmers in my riding. We know how important their work is, especially during the pandemic.

I have two other quick points before I transition to something else. There is the launch of the growth fund. This is a \$15-billion capitalization of funds to try to draw private capital. For energy transition and opportunities for Canadian leadership on food and energy, this is a really good thing. I am pleased to see the Minister of Finance moving forward with it, along with the tax credit for the hydrogen and critical minerals sector.

Government Orders

I was particularly pleased with the Minister of Finance's candour about the challenges we could face in the days ahead, particularly with the prospect that we could be facing a global recession in 2023. When I look at some of the challenges, such as health care, I was disappointed to see provincial health ministers not take federal money that was on the table in British Columbia on the guise that somehow a national sharing of data was a step too far for them to be able to work together.

We are seeing challenges across the country. We want to make sure that, if we are going to put federal money on the table, it is actually going to health care and it is going to deliver on results. I was quite disappointed, but it is going to be a significant spend. The Government of Canada has made sure there will be more money coming ahead. This is one element, when we look at the fiscal discipline and the fiscal ability for the government, that will be a challenge.

Next is reducing emissions and fighting climate change, and of course Canada's position in the world. I am going to take my remaining time to talk about things I think we need to be really focused on as a Parliament in the days ahead. First of all, concerning regulatory reform modernization and non-cost measures, we need to really start talking about things that do not cost money that can help us to achieve the results and outcomes that we, as parliamentarians, or the government, may wish to see because there is going to be a real challenge on the fiscal position in the days ahead. This could include interprovincial trade.

A Senate report suggest that 2% to 4% of GDP is being left on the table. If premiers want more money for health care, that is fine. First of all, they need to stop the fakery around the idea of national sharing of data and having the results, and get out of the way to make sure we can grow the economy so we can have a sustainable way to pay for it.

I would like to see us move away from command and control regulations. We are one of the worst in the OECD in this regard. That is really important. As well, I would like to see things like a presumptive health approval, and I have said this in the House before. If an applicant comes to Health Canada and already has approvals from a jurisdiction such as the United States, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, jurisdictions that we trust their processes, why would we not give them a presumptive approval to operate in Canada until such time that Health Canada either can approve them outright or found a reason as to why they could not operate in the country?

I want to ask my colleagues if we have given thought to how we are going to double or triple energy generation in the country. As we move to EV vehicles, and as we try to move to a low-carbon economy, we need to have serious conversations on how we are actually going to generate that electricity. I submit to the House that nuclear energy needs to be a big part of that conversation. We have a tremendous opportunity in Canada to be a global leader, and we already are. We are recognized as being one of the best as it relates to nuclear energy. When we look at a zero-emission opportunity to generate electricity, we need to get more serious on it. I would like to see the government introduce nuclear as part of its green bonds initiative.

I hear too much of colleagues in the House who talk about net-neutral and getting to our 2050 goals, but that are not talking seriously about the technologies that are available before us right now and how we get there.

I would be remiss to not talk about the Atlantic loop. I hope to see in budget 2023 a firm commitment from the government to make sure there is money on the table to drive this initiative. I will go on record saying I am disappointed in Premier Houston's government and the fact that Bill 212 at the Nova Scotia Legislature is creating real challenges for Nova Scotia Power and Emera to actually raise the equity to make this happen. It is unfortunate, and I really hope he can get to the table with our provincial utility to make sure we do not squander this historic opportunity to help get Atlantic Canada off coal.

I look forward to taking questions from my colleagues, and I appreciate having this opportunity to speak today.

• (1215)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Madam Speaker, I found it remarkable that, in the last year, we have seen a change in the Liberal Party on nuclear energy. I agree with the member that it is critical for any industrialized country to meet their climate change reduction targets to have, as baseload power generation, support for nuclear. The issue is that Catherine McKenna, when she was the minister of climate change and environment, did not support that technology. In fact, in all of the discussions of our Paris targets, it was never mentioned. That technology was not included in the green bonds program, as the member discussed. He has the opportunity in the Liberal caucus to make it clear that they should have included that technology, as well as the investments in small modular reactors.

These are all positive steps. Maybe the member could tell the House what has changed within the government after six years of inaction on nuclear? Are they now going to pursue this as a part of their strategy?

• (1220)

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, as I look at the lights in this building right now, I know 60% of the generation of the electricity here in Ontario is done by nuclear power, so I would agree with the member opposite. As I made it very clear in my speech, we need to become more serious on this.

I would encourage the government on this. I hope the Minister of Finance will make sure that, in the next offering around green bonds, nuclear is included.

I look at the Canadian oil and gas industry. As we try to decarbonize its process to ensure that it can be competitive in the days ahead, nuclear and SMR technology have to be a part of that. I do not speak for the executive. I stand here as a member of Parliament proudly saying that this is something that I will be encouraging the government on, both in the House and in our conversations in caucus, and to continue to pursue in earnest because I think it is extremely important if we are actually serious about meeting our climate target goals.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, what I see in the House are members of Parliament who work hard, who are honest and who represent their fellow citizens well. The member for Kings—Hants is one of those people. Frankly, I hold him in high regard. He is an honest person and I know that he will answer my question honestly, without partisanship.

At my constituency office, I hear a lot of talk from seniors aged 65 to 74 who do not receive the same treatment by the federal government as senior who are aged 75 and over. I seriously receive a lot of calls at my office about this. I am asked why they are treated differently from other pensioners.

In Bill C-32, there is nothing to correct the situation, namely this two-tiered approach to dealing with seniors under the age of 75.

Can my colleague answer me and tell me why?

[English]

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I want to make sure that it is well known that I appreciate how the government increased it. The government has put forward \$3 billion a year in spending for those 75 and over for old age security. Like the member opposite, I have heard a number of questions and concerns about those who are 65 and older, not 75, particularly from lower incomes, who were not necessarily pleased with that decision.

I think in hindsight a better approach would have actually been to take that \$3 billion and make it for those 65 and up, but have it set on a certain income scale. That is not what happened. That is fine. We still want to appreciate the fact that the government has moved significantly in this direction on investing in seniors.

I will remind the member opposite that there is a platform commitment from the government to increase the GIS for 65 and up by \$500. I think that is an important measure. It is something that I know a number of folks on this side of the House pushed for. I look forward to making it happen in this Parliament.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji.* I would like to thank the member for his platform on prevention. I think that he has clearly outlined one of the concerns that the Conservatives have said. The Conservatives this morning have been talking about how Canada is sending out a blank cheque. I completely disagree with that. The government has provided some very great measures in this bill that would make sure more Canadians can keep money in their pockets. I also appreciated the measures that he thinks need to happen for the future.

Does the member agree that there needs to be a comprehensive EI reform, something that his party started campaigning on seven years ago?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I agree, and this is something the minister has committed to doing. I will give an example in Atlantic Canada. On the basis of Ms. Gail Shea, I believe it was, and part of her work in the last Conservative government, there are what are called dividers. For example, in Prince Edward Island, the EI requirements in Charlottetown are vastly different from what they may be even 15 kilometres away. That is one example of

where we have to create more uniformity and modernize the system. It makes a lot of sense, and I look forward to working with the government to make that happen.

• (1225)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise and represent my constituents of Foothills on this important discussion today on the fall economic statement.

We have heard from the government since this statement was released, and we have certainly heard in many of the speeches over the last few days, that the Liberals are bragging about being fiscally responsible and having fiscal discipline when it comes to this statement. I do not know too many Canadian families, or Canadian businesses for that matter, that would define fiscal responsibility and fiscal discipline, in a time of economic crisis, as increasing spending and going further and further into debt. That is not the right definition of fiscal discipline.

Canadian families across the country are struggling to heat their homes, struggling to feed their families and struggling to operate their businesses and their farms, and the Liberals' response to that is to continue inflationary spending at a record pace. We have seen inflation at a 40-year high, with many Canadians having to make difficult choices when it comes to their food choices at the dinner table and in their everyday lives.

When the Liberal government talks about making difficult choices, I do not think it really understands what the average Canadian is having to endure when it comes to those difficult choices. A difficult choice for an average Canadian family is not the difference between cancelling one's Disney+ subscription or having a decision to make on which \$7,000-a-night room they stay in when they are in London. The difficult choices Canadian families are having to make right now are about whether they are going to be able to put their child in sports, whether they are going to be able to pay the grocery bill this month, or what sacrifices they are going to put into their family budget so they can afford to pay their mortgage this month and not lose their home.

It just shows the contrast in how out of touch the government is when it talks about difficult choices being only \$40 billion in new spending to add to the \$200 billion in additional debt that had nothing to do with COVID, in comparison to the tragic choices Canadians are having to make every single day just to try to get by.

Like, I would hope, many colleagues in this House, I found it quite tragic when I heard 1.5 million Canadians had to rely on a food bank in the month of March alone. That is a 35% increase over that same month prior to COVID and a record number of Canadians relying on a food bank. Those are the difficult choices Canadians are having to make, so when the Liberal government says it is practising fiscal responsibility and fiscal discipline by adding record debt to further spur record inflation and higher interest rates, those actions are having real consequences for real Canadians.

Government Orders

For example, I am now hearing from farmers across the country who, because of these higher interest rates, are unable to manage the debt on their farms. It was already at a record high, and these interest rates are making that situation much worse. Certainly I have heard from constituents who are saying their mortgage has gone up \$500 a month and is crippling. My colleague, who I do respect, from Kings—Hants mentioned his conversation with his constituent, who said her rent is now at \$1,500 a month. He said he is hopeful she will get the \$500 rent relief. More than 60% of Canadians will not actually qualify for that rent relief program, and I would ask my colleague, if his constituent does qualify for that \$500 a month one-time rent relief cheque, what she is going to do in January, February, March or April, when she is no longer getting that government cheque.

Canadians need long-term solutions, not a little band-aid for the hemorrhaging of their financial futures.

As a result of this, the Liberals have not been able to offer the most basic services, despite these massive increases in spending. Canadians are not seeing any bang for their buck, as we see an inability to get passports and a 2.4-million backlog in immigration applications. We have seen the veterans affairs minister under fire for the backlog in veterans' benefits. Zero infrastructure projects have been completed from the infrastructure bank. All of these things are having an impact on Canadians, who do not see the benefit of these increases in spending.

• (1230)

I want to get back to the impact this is having on the average Canadian and talk about Canadian agriculture as well. We talk about food inflation being at a 40-year high and the impact it is having on Canadians' everyday ability to buy groceries and put healthy food on the table. Considering that Canada is one of the countries that exports 80% of what it produces when it comes to food, it is frustrating to see these record-high prices. The cost of bread is up 17%; flour is up 24%; a head of lettuce is up 21%; potatoes are up 17% and pasta is up 30%.

As I have said before, these are not luxury items that one would get at a Liberal cocktail party. These are the staples that Canadians rely on every single day to feed their families, and they are no longer able to afford those critical staples. Inflationary spending, a tripling of the carbon tax and a fertilizer tariff are driving up the price of food, because they impact every aspect of the supply chain.

Those prices are difficult to swallow, but because of Liberal policy they are going to get worse. The fall economic statement did not say anything about listening to Conservatives and putting a cap on tax increases. The Liberals are moving ahead with tripling the carbon tax. That is only going to further drive up the cost of food.

The Liberals' undemocratic escalator tax is going to increase the tax on beer, wine and spirits by 30%. When the Liberals put in the escalator tax, they said they would index it to inflation. This tax is undemocratic because it does not come back to the House of Commons for debate and automatically goes up every single year, but when the Liberals put in the escalator tax, inflation was around 2%. They felt the industry would be able to absorb that, but no one could foresee what was going to happen this fall, when inflation was in excess of 10%. As a result of that, the escalator tax is going

up more than 6%. That is significantly higher than what the industry was able to absorb year after year.

When our restaurant and hotel industry is struggling as a result of coming out of COVID, this puts a further burden on cost. This is going to severely impact our wine and beer industry, certainly craft brewers, who bring incredible economic development to rural communities, but also to farmers, who grow the barley and grapes for those products. This is going to impact them as well. This is a 30% increase on their costs, which they are going to have to pass on to the consumer. This is an undemocratic tax that is now going to further cripple our agriculture industry and have a massive impact on Canadians and consumers alike.

Conservatives asked the Liberals to put no new taxes in the fall economic statement. We are facing a financial economic crisis and for them to continue to pursue the tripling of the carbon tax is nonsensical, especially when food security is probably the number one issue we are facing, not only here in Canada but around the world. When we need our agriculture sector firing on all cylinders in order to reach its full potential to meet the needs here in Canada and around the world, putting these further burdens on Canadian farmers makes zero sense.

We already know that the carbon tax costs the average farmer about \$45,000 a year. I have a propane bill from a farm family in St. Thomas, Ontario, for one month, and the carbon tax was more than \$11,000. In one month, it was \$11,000. Thanks to the opposition, the Conservatives, with the support of the NDP and the Bloc, Bill C-234, which will be a carbon tax exemption on propane and natural gas, got through committee, so farmers will get some relief. We need that bill to pass.

We desperately needed the Liberals to put resources aside to establish a vaccine bank here in Canada for Canadian agriculture. We will no longer be allowed to rely on the United States for vaccines for livestock. We have seen the impact the avian flu has had on the Canadian agriculture economy. Foot-and-mouth disease and African swine fever will have more than a \$45-billion impact on our industries if we do not have the resources in place in Canada to address them. Conservatives are asking for \$4 million to establish that vaccine bank, which was not in the fall economic statement but which I know every stakeholder has pushed the government to do. We need these critical resources to protect our food supply, food sovereignty and our agriculture industry in Canada.

Government Orders

• (1235)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have respect for the member opposite as well, but I can understand why Canadians would be confused about what Conservatives stand for.

I just listened to the member opposite talk about the housing benefit not having a wide enough scope, immediately after he said the government was spending too much money. He talked about carbon pricing, yet he ran on a platform just over 12 months ago to do exactly that, to put a price on carbon. He also ran on a platform that would propose to outspend what we were planning to spend as a government.

What would the member have to say to his constituents? He comes in the House and talks about carbon pricing being bad, yet he ran on it just months ago. He talks about the government spending too much money, yet he stands in the House and says the government is not providing enough support. Where is the principle in what he is saying here today? What does he actually stand for?

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, that seems to be the answer for every Liberal problem that they create themselves. They just want to throw more money at it to solve the problem. They have not solved any problems. In fact, despite record levels of spending, the problems have gotten worse. The Liberals have broken Canada. This is a government, as any Canadian can tell you, that cannot offer the most basic services, despite adding tens of thousands of public sector workers and despite adding \$200 billion of additional debt. What has it accomplished?

Canadians cannot get a passport. Our airports are not functioning. We have a 2.4-million backlog in immigration applications. That is what this additional money has accomplished. Nothing.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. In the government's fall economic statement, the word "inflation" appears 108 times.

However, when we look at the measures announced in the economic statement, we see that it is essentially implementing the measures that were in the last budget. Apart from rhetoric, the government is not contributing to the response to current inflation and the risk of recession.

We at the Bloc Québécois had asked the government to refocus on its core missions to better support the most vulnerable, namely by increasing old age security from age 65 on, increasing health care funding and reforming EI.

This government seems to identify the current economic crises, but does not appear to propose any new measures. What does my colleague think of that?

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I would agree. I do not believe the fall economic statement added any new measures to try to curb inflation and end higher interest rates. In fact, I think the fall economic statement is doing everything it possibly can to accelerate inflation and raise interest rates by continuing inflationary spending, by continuing to go further and further in debt, and by tripling the carbon tax.

It is unfortunate that the Liberal government did not listen to the opposition parties, which put forward very concrete and realistic potential solutions to try to curb inflation with no new taxes and no new spending. As I said, the solution for any Canadian business or any Canadian family, when faced with a financial crisis, would not be to rack up the credit card. Their solution would be to get their budget in order.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, as the member would know, health care in Alberta is at a crisis level. Children are going without it. Some hospitals, particularly in Calgary, have wait times of almost 20 hours for children. These are real people. I know the member cares deeply about our province and about the people in it.

It has been the position of New Democrats for a long time that when health care, something so critical to Canada, is at risk, we must defend it and we must protect it. Publicly administered, publicly accessible health care was the promise that began in Alberta and went into Saskatchewan and is now across Canada.

Will the member defend publicly accessible health care that is publicly administered, which the founders of our province were able to secure?

• (1240)

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, my colleague is right. I do care about my constituents, and all Albertans, passionately.

It is frustrating to see what is happening, not only in Alberta but across the country, in terms of the condition of our health care system.

Over the last few weeks, we saw the inability to purchase children's Tylenol, acetaminophen products, for example, and how it took the Liberal government weeks to try to address that. I am proud of the fact that then prime minister Stephen Harper increased health care spending and made it accountable every single year, by making sure that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Halifax West.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of my constituents in Halifax West.

[*English*]

Today, I do so to speak to the fall economic statement, the so-called mini-budget, which updates Canadians on the state of our economy and announces new measures to drive growth and make life more affordable.

[*Translation*]

I think it is important that my constituents and Canadians hear some of the key points, and I want to talk a bit more about some of the measures set out in the statement that I think are particularly welcome.

[English]

Let me start with the broader economic context.

After one of the most significant economic disruptions of our lifetime, we have come roaring back. We have experienced stronger economic growth in 2022 than the rest of the G7 countries. In October, our unemployment rate was 5.2%, close to the record lows we observed earlier this year.

[Translation]

There are 400,000 more Canadians working today than before the pandemic.

[English]

We are now forecasting a deficit of \$36 billion this year, down 30% from what was projected in budget 2022. Among the provinces, Nova Scotia has had the third-highest change in employment relative to prepandemic levels.

However, high global inflation and rising interest rates are making life more expensive. We only need to look at the prices at the grocery stores or when filling our cars with gas. Believe me, I have done both, so I know.

Our challenge now is to provide relief to Canadians without adding fuel to the inflationary fire. That is why our government is taking prudent, targeted action to grow the economy, support those who need it most and ensure that Canada has room to respond to a potential global economic slowdown. If the forecasts are to be believed, we need to protect our fiscal capacity.

[Translation]

That is the path we are taking.

[English]

• (1245)

In this year's fall economic statement, the following measures spoke to me.

We are launching the Canada growth fund to make key strategic investments in our economy that will attract substantial private sector investment and accelerate our net-zero transition and the adoption of clean technologies.

We are automatically issuing advance payments of the enhanced Canada workers benefit, which puts up to \$1,200 back into the pockets of Canada's lowest-paid workers each year.

We are providing up to \$1 billion through the disaster financial assistance arrangements to support the recovery from hurricane Fiona in my region.

We are making it easier to enter the housing market by creating the new tax-free first home savings account, doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, introducing a new multi-generational home renovation tax credit and fully taxing the profits from flipping properties that are held less than 12 months, with some exceptions.

We are creating a competitive clean technology tax credit to empower our companies to compete internationally, create jobs and reduce their emissions.

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We are putting \$250 million toward the training and upskilling of Canadian workers to equip them for sustainable, good-paying jobs in the lower-carbon economy we are building.

These important measures are on top of the affordability plan we have already introduced, the GST credit payment we just delivered to some 33,000 recipients in Halifax West and the dental and rental benefits that are working their way through the Senate.

I want to zero in on a few issues I have heard about most in my riding.

The first is our move to permanently eliminate interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprenticeship loans, including on those that are currently being repaid. This is significant support for our students and will put money back into their pockets. Through the repayment assistance plan, borrowers can now pause their repayments until they make at least \$40,000 a year.

It was so encouraging for me to hear the response from my community when this measure was unveiled. In fact, after the fall economic statement came out, I went back to my riding and attended the installation ceremony of Dr. Joël Dickinson as president and vice-chancellor of Mount Saint Vincent University. She was so excited by the change and what it will mean for students that she mentioned it in her speech. She also talked about her personal experience as a student.

Just the other day, my assistant pulled me aside to share a message he received from a friend whose partner was thrilled to hear about the measure. I will quote him: "He literally did a happy dance...and once I qualify for loans again it might make it less scary for me to consider going back to school."

• (1250)

This is what it looks like to have the backs of Canadians as they pursue the education they need to succeed.

The fall economic statement delivers for our small businesses, which is another top priority of mine. It outlines our approach to lower credit card transaction fees for our small businesses without adversely affecting other businesses or consumers.

In conversations with community members after the statement came out, I heard about how our minister's "fix this or we'll fix it for you" message was resonating with small business owners. That was echoed loud and clear when I stopped by at the Atlantic Convenience Expo and the Convenience Industry Council of Canada's retail awards last week. Halifax West has so many incredible small businesses and iconic convenience stores. One example is Fairview's Super Mike's, and I know that this change will benefit it and many more.

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What is also included is significant support for youth employment. I spent a lot of time this summer, as I am sure most members did, connecting with employers and employees benefiting from the Canada summer jobs program in Halifax West. The response was incredible. There were jobs for coaches, yard clerks, lifeguards and camp counsellors. Over 450 jobs were created by the program in my riding alone this year, boosting local businesses and non-profits and providing youth with valuable work experience. Suffice to say, I was thrilled to see the fall economic statement include over \$800 million to support youth employment through job placements, wraparound support and, of course, the Canada summer jobs program.

I am seeing first-hand the benefit of a whole lot more in my community. The fee reductions for parents that our child care agreement is delivering is another great example. I was out door knocking last week in my riding, and a woman on Forestside Crescent stopped me. She has twins who are 17 months old, and she told me that the 25% cut in fees that we delivered has made a world of difference to her.

For families like hers, fees are scheduled to be reduced further, and I look forward to the commitment on child care for all families. That is vital, because we have a significant labour shortage across sectors and we have to address it. I have heard that loud and clear from builders, from the Canadian Construction Association and from many corners.

[*Translation*]

Canadians understand that immigration must be part of the solution.

[*English*]

We need more skilled immigrants, more construction workers and more health care providers, among many others. Fortunately, we have a new immigration levels plan that sets us on the path to do just that so we can welcome those who can help us get more homes built, reinforce our struggling health care workforce and drive our economic growth. We need to hit our bold target of 500,000 new permanent residents by 2025, and we need to ensure that those people can settle in regions where housing is available, can have their foreign credentials recognized and can work productively in their fields.

The labour shortage is also why we recently announced the lifting of the 20-hour-per-week cap on hours that our international students can work off campus while studying in Canada. This helps students ease the financial strain of paying for school, supports our businesses and leaves them with more valuable Canadian work experience.

That is why I was thrilled yesterday when I heard that 16 new occupations are eligible for PR through express entry. I know there is a lot more to be done on processing the backlogs, and I am very pleased to have heard the announcements on that as well.

I can also tell members how excited I am to have seen first-hand the benefit of the \$500-million cities stream of our extended rapid housing initiative. Halifax was one of the cities announced for that. One good example there is the Adsum for Women and Children's sunflower project in Lakeside, which is also funded by that money,

and the 28-bed crisis shelter for indigenous women that we are supporting in Hammonds Plains through the shelter enhancement program.

I believe we have hit the right balance between positioning ourselves for economic and demographic growth and providing targeted relief for the Canadians who need it.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, like so many Liberals, the hon. member was very excited to list off all the spending that the government is doing.

I want to ask a question about the Trudeau legacy. There is a lot of economic disaster in the Trudeau legacy, which gets confusing at times, but back in the 1970s and 1980s—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I think the hon. member is referring to the former prime minister.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, just so it is clear, I caught the gist of where the member might be going, but that does not necessarily guarantee that he would have gone in that direction. He would have been far better off making his reference earlier, prior to making the statement.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, the hon. member for Edmonton—Wetaskiwin should do so to ensure that he does not break the rules.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I understand the Liberals' confusion when I mention "economic disaster". They have a hard time understanding which Liberal government we are talking about, but—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member is trying to do something indirectly that he cannot do directly. He is trying to talk about a former Trudeau government and suggest that it is equal to this one—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member just referred to a Liberal government, so we will let him pursue that.

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, we can debate all day which Liberal government was more of an economic disaster, but right now I am talking about the former Trudeau government of the 1970s that ran deficits 14 out of 15 years, and then a generation later had to slash tens of billions of dollars, \$35 billion in fact, in health care, education and social services funding. It also had the lowest level of international development spending in Canadian history.

I am wondering if the hon. member wants to tell me whether anybody on her side in the Liberal caucus ever reflects on the potential for that situation to reoccur.

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Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I believe this fall economic statement has hit the right balance between fiscal responsibility and protecting Canadians who need to be protected. That is what we stand for on this side in government.

Now, as we are talking about being fiscally responsible, I will remind the member that Canada is the third-largest AAA-rated economy in the world, only after the United States and Germany. Moody's has just reaffirmed our AAA rating, and with a deficit of 1.3% of our GDP, we have the lowest deficit among G7 countries—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I commend my colleague from Nova Scotia on her speech. Her ears must have been burning yesterday. I was having a bite to eat with a friend who rents a house in Nova Scotia every summer, and we spent about an hour raving about how wonderful Nova Scotia is. We hope that hurricane Fiona did not cause too much damage.

I know that Nova Scotia's health care system must have had a hard time coping with the additional burden placed on it as the remnants of the hurricane passed through.

I am sure my colleague is in contact with Premier Houston, who is one of the provincial premiers unanimously calling on the federal government to provide an unconditional increase in health transfers to help the health care systems of the provinces and Quebec get back on their feet and restructure in order to respond to the growing demand resulting from situations like the one that occurred in Nova Scotia.

What does she say to Premier Houston when he tells her that the provinces want unconditional health care transfers?

I would like to hear her comments on that.

• (1255)

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his great question.

I am a proud Nova Scotian. I was also a parliamentarian in Nova Scotia, and I understand very well the real challenges facing health care and the issue of health transfers.

Health care systems across Canada and around the world are facing significant challenges. It is important that we work together to help Canadians, at both the provincial and federal levels—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqagittitji*, as I have mentioned before, food bank usage is up and grocery store profits are up. It is good to see that in the bill the Liberals have created the Canada recovery dividend, but it will not do enough. I wonder if the member can explain why the government has not extended the Canada recovery dividend to big box stores that are clearly contributing to the hardship that people are facing?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that there is always more to be done. It is a mini-budget. However, as I said in my speech, we are eliminating interest on Canada student loans, we are lowering credit card transaction fees, doubling the GST rebate for six months and providing a \$500 one-time Canada top-up. There are a lot of good things in this mini-budget—

[*Translation*]

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

The hon. member for Joliette.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, as we know, Bill C-32 contains 25 tax measures and about 10 non-tax measures. There are two kinds: minor legislative amendments and measures announced in the budget in the spring of 2022, last spring, that had not been included in the first implementation bill passed last June.

This means that this bill does not contain any measures to address the new economic reality of a high cost of living and a possible recession. As with the economic statement presented two weeks ago, there is nothing new, it is a rehash. The government thinks its measures are like shepherd's pie, better served as leftovers.

This is a bill with no point or certainty. It does not deserve to be applauded, but contains nothing to justify opposing it. Given current inflation and the risk of recession, the Bloc Québécois had asked the government to focus on its fundamental responsibilities toward vulnerable individuals, namely to increase health transfers, adequately support those aged 65 and over, and urgently reform employment insurance. Since the government chose to reject those proposals, we denounce this missed opportunity to help Quebecers deal with the difficult times they are already experiencing or that are expected in the coming months.

The Bloc Québécois had asked the government to agree to the unanimous request by Quebec and the other provinces to immediately, sustainably, and unconditionally increase health transfers. The health care system is stretched thin.

While emergency physicians warn us that our hospitals have reached their breaking point, the federal government is failing to act. The government clearly prefers its strategy of prolonging the health funding crisis in the hope of breaking the consensus among the provinces to convince them to agree to dilute their funding requests. That is exactly what the Liberal health minister said in the Quebec National Assembly: It is called predatory federalism.

We know too well that the fixed incomes of seniors do not allow them to cope with what are currently such pronounced increases in the cost of living. Seniors are those who are most likely to have to make difficult choices, such as groceries, medication or housing.

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Madam Speaker, I am told that I must share my time with me esteemed colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

• (1300)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member does not have to share his time. Members get 10 minutes for speeches.

The hon. member for Joliette may continue.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, seniors are the ones most likely to have to make tough choices at the grocery store or the pharmacy, not to mention housing, yet this government is deliberately choosing not to give people aged 65 to 74 the old age security increase even though they need it now more than ever.

That is not an inconsequential choice. Hypocritically, the government is trying to raise the retirement age. It has sneakily decided to force the less fortunate to work until they turn 75. The Liberals are well aware that inflation makes it impossible for people to make do with what the state provides. What we are witnessing is the creation of a two-tier retirement system. Got money? Enjoy retirement at 65. No private pension plan? Work until age 75. The government is choosing to increase inequality, and it is targeting women first and foremost. This is Liberal-style feminism. The Sheriff of Nottingham could not have done better himself.

While there is a serious risk of a recession in 2023, the Government of Canada is abandoning the comprehensive EI reform it promised last summer. There will be no EI reform. We know that the system has been essentially dismantled over the years and six out of 10 workers who lose their jobs are currently not eligible for EI. That is the situation seven years after the government promised reform. Time is of the essence. Clearly, Liberal promises are only binding on those who choose to believe in them.

On a more serious note, we must absolutely avoid being forced to improvise a new CERB to offset the system's shortcomings if a recession hits. As was seen during the pandemic, improvised programs cost more and are not as effective. Employment insurance is an excellent economic stabilizer in the event of a recession. However, the government's financial forecasts show that it does not anticipate many more claims, and that is a problem. In fact, the government predicts a surplus of \$25 billion in the EI fund by 2028, and that amount will be paid into the consolidated fund rather than being used to improve the plan's coverage. That is unacceptable.

As for the 26 weeks of EI sickness benefits, that is a measure that was already in a bill passed a year and a half ago, even before the last election. All that is missing is a decree by the government to implement it, but the sick are still waiting. The House had even ordered the government to extend sickness leave to 52 weeks, and they are not even implementing the 26 weeks.

To summarize, this government is pointing to the problem of a rising cost of living, but is happy just talking 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. They repeat what has already been done in the past,

what they already announced in last April's budget, but do nothing else.

Let us consider the supply chains, whose vulnerabilities became apparent during the pandemic. Last spring's budget mentioned the problem 114 times. The statement two weeks ago mentioned it 45 more times, but neither provided any measures to resolve the problem. There is nothing in Bill C-32, either.

As we know, all too often, the government buries harmful measures in its mammoth budget implementation bills, hoping that they will go unnoticed. This time, the bill contains no surprises, unless they are well hidden and have not been found yet.

Bill C-32 even contains a number of interesting measures that were announced in the last budget. For instance, there is an anti-flipping tax on residential properties to limit real estate speculation, and a multi-generational home renovation tax credit for those who renovate their homes to accommodate an aging or disabled parent. The Bloc has been calling for such a measure since 2015. We welcome 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. 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 its share.

In addition, a tax measure that supports oil extraction has been eliminated. No more flow-through shares. It is just one drop in the ocean of subsidies, but it is a start. There is a tax measure to promote mining development for the critical minerals that are essential to the energy transition, as well as an amendment to the excise tax to prevent cannabis producers from having to pay it on their unsold stock, which is causing them major cash flow problems.

• (1305)

As we know, the government gave licences to its friends. Now that they are having problems, the government is proposing a solution.

Other than that, Bill C-32 consists of minor legislative amendments. For instance, there is an adjustment to the Income Tax Act to reflect the new accounting standards for financial institutions. There are a lot of very technical pages about that.

There is also an amendment to the Income Tax Act to plug some of the loopholes that financial planners were trying to use to help their clients avoid taxes. We welcome that clarification. There are always people who try their luck. Obviously, the government must do much more to combat fraud, tax evasion and tax avoidance.

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Finally, I am certain that my next point will be of great interest to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), who is currently standing in the House chatting with another colleague and not listening to a word I say. I salute him. It is the implementation of a Canada-United States agreement on the salaries of government employees who go to the moon, like Tintin in *Destination Moon*.

To sum up, Bill C-32 sidesteps the big challenges facing our society, but there is nothing bad in it. It proposes a few good measures and does some legislative housekeeping.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member was quite eloquent, covering the moon and back. He spoke on a wide spectrum of issues. The one I want to pick up on is the issue of employment insurance. The current Minister of Employment has been very clear. As we went through the pandemic, there were all kinds of modifications. She has recognized that there is a need to modernize the EI system and has put in place some actions to ensure we will see some changes.

The member somewhat gives the impression that the government is not looking at EI reforms, when we know quite factually that the Minister of Employment is very much dedicated to modernizing EI.

I wonder if he can provide his thoughts or other specific things he would like to see in that modernization.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, for seven years now, since 2015, the government has been saying it is looking into what it can do to reform EI.

The hon. parliamentary secretary tells us that the minister just said that she will take care of it and is still looking into it. Last year, she told us that she would present her reform this summer. Two seasons later, we are still waiting.

The government says that we are in an inflation crisis and that we may be heading into a recession. The Bloc is saying that the government needs to hurry up and ensure that EI is reformed before a potential recession hits, so that we have an automatic stabilizer and a social safety net in place. We do not want to end up with another CERB.

The Liberal minister promised us she would amend EI, but a Liberal promise is only worth something to those who want to believe the Liberals. We no longer believe them.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Joliette is right. I think that the best part of his speech was when he referred to the moon. *The Adventures of Tintin* is one of the best comic strips I have ever read in my life.

Indeed, “lunacy” is the word that comes to mind when I think of this government and its budget. Since the last budget, it has spent another \$20 billion. In this update, which we could refer to as budget number two or another draft, the Liberals are once again lost in space, because the Parliamentary Budget Officer has shown that \$14.2 billion of this spending is not assigned to specific pro-

grams. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that is like writing a cheque without saying how the money is to be spent.

I would like my colleague to tell us more about the fact that the government is lost in space.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, if that was the government's goal, it has been achieved. I thank the hon. member for Calgary Shepard for his question in French. I commend him.

At this uncertain time, what we are asking the government to do is to focus on its core duties, such as EI and health care funding. It needs to stop introducing new programs, projects and policies that intrude on areas of provincial jurisdiction.

The government is not even doing well at handling its own affairs, such as issuing passports, controlling the borders and funding health care, yet it wants to get involved in areas that do not concern it. We see it happening again in this budget.

As the Parliamentary Budget Officer said, there is a lot of money going to unspecified programs. He also noted that, over the long term, the concern is how the finances of the provinces will be affected, because Ottawa is not funding health care as it should.

● (1310)

[*English*]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for his focus on the need for EI reform. He has been asked a few times about what his party would like to see. I wonder if he could elaborate for us the types of reform his party would like to see to EI in this legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Nunavut for her question and for all the work she is doing to defend her nation, which certainly needs a voice like hers in the House.

Since 2015, the government has been saying that it will reform EI. Consultations were held across the country and went on interminably, but we all know what is needed. What we do not want is the current Axworthy system, which does not work. We want a system that protects workers properly. Currently, six in 10 workers who lose their jobs do not qualify for EI.

In particular, all the non-standard forms of employment must be included. The issue of self-employed workers is also a problem, along with the waiting period, the seasonal gap and everything else.

Points of Order

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

AMENDMENT TO BILL C-228 AT COMMITTEE STAGE

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to raise this point of order. What I would like to do is just give a brief summary of the issue and give a couple of examples of parliamentary precedent that I think bear on the case and then propose a remedy.

This is with respect to Bill C-228. At committee, an amendment was moved to not only protect the pensions of workers when companies went bankrupt, but to also protect their termination and severance pay. It was an amendment that was agreed to by the bill's sponsor in advance of the second reading vote. It was ruled out of order by the committee chair. That was overturned by the committee itself. Subsequently, in response to a point of order by the member for Winnipeg North, that amendment protecting termination and severance pay was removed by the Speaker as being out of order.

There are a few examples in parliamentary history where amendments that were removed for the very same reason, which was that it was determined it was outside the scope of the bill, have been put back in with the unanimous consent of the House of Commons.

I refer specifically to June 17, 1986, when Speaker Bosley ruled three government motions in amendment at report stage of Bill C-106, at that time, were out of order because they went beyond the scope of the bill. The parliamentary secretary to the president of the Privy Council at that time asked Speaker Bosley whether the motions could be put to the House for unanimous consent. The Speaker agreed, and the amendment motions were reintroduced in the bill with the unanimous consent of the House.

Similarly, on April 28, 1992, the House was about to begin consideration at report stage of Bill C-54. The admissibility of three amendments to the bill, which had been adopted in committee, were called into question on a point of order. The three amendments were ruled out of order by the chairman of the committee, as two of the amendments sought to amend the parent act and a third, like these, went beyond the scope of the bill, but the chairman's decisions were overturned by the committee.

After hearing comments from other members, Speaker Fraser ruled immediately that the inadmissible amendments adopted by the committee to Bill C-54 be declared null and void and no longer form part of the bill as reported to the House. Right after the ruling, the amendments in question were agreed to by the House, once again, by unanimous consent.

I submitted these amendments again for report stage of the bill, which will begin tomorrow, so it is timely that I am raising this point of order now, with report stage of that bill pending for tomorrow, and—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: But what is the point of order?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I am getting heckled on a point of order now by the member for Winnipeg North, who is very clearly keen to remove protection for termination and severance pay from Canadian workers.

However, the point I am coming to is that the remedy is to seek unanimous consent. When I presented those amendments for report stage, in accordance with Standing Order 76.1(2), the table decided not to put those amendments on notice. Therefore, the only remedy now is to seek unanimous consent of the House.

In the context I have laid out, I would now like to seek unanimous consent of the House to reintroduce the amendment that would create subclause 4.1 to the bill, which would protect the termination and severance pay that a bankrupt company owes to various categories of its employees. I would ask that you unanimous consent of the House now, Madam Speaker, to do that very thing.

• (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This point of order is about the conduct of the member for Winnipeg North, who, it is no mystery to people in the House, speaks a lot, both on the record and off the record. When he said “no” to that request for unanimous consent, was that just part of his normal chit-chat on the benches that maybe the Speaker heard, because it happened to be very loud, or did he intend to say “no” to removing the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are getting into debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on the same point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member for Elmwood—Transcona is trying to be a little tricky. I was not the only person who said “no”. When unanimous consent is requested, it is not appropriate for members to stand in the chamber and start pin-pointing who said “no”. I was not the only member—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are clear on that, and we will not debate the issue. There was no unanimous consent.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Joliette is also rising on a point of order.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the work done by my hon. colleague from Elmwood—Transcona and I would like to endorse the overall comments he made on his first point of order. The Speaker's ruling may have been handed down, but I would like to remind the Chair that, over the years, the Chair has consistently taken a stricter and stricter view of the amendments that can be moved in committee. It is the same thing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member. I think he would agree that challenging the Speaker's ruling is a bit of a slippery slope. I believe the House has spoken: There is no unanimous consent.

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

* * *

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House resumed 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. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would be remiss, given the hyper-inflationary context, if I did not mention those without whom my region would not be what it is today, the seniors who literally and figuratively built everything we have, who cleared the way.

Since becoming the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue, I have heard from many seniors in my riding who are frustrated about their financially precarious situation. They just cannot afford to pay their bills because of the higher price of goods and services.

We are heading for some very tough times. Everyone's purchasing power will suffer. Some people can find ways to improve their situation, but other more vulnerable people, such as seniors, have fewer options.

I wish I could have told them that their government was proactive this past year, but it was not. Like it or not, the population is aging and people are living longer and longer. I think the government is underestimating the consequences of not increasing seniors' income.

Many of us were hoping for meaningful measures to kick-start this period where people will have to compromise and make some choices. I think everyone is prepared to tighten their belts to make ends meet. However, I do not see how maintaining the status quo helps the most vulnerable. It feels like one step forward and two steps back.

People who are hungry and worried about having a roof over their head cannot remain indifferent to some of the speeches we are hearing. The government needs to focus on doing better in areas under its jurisdiction.

Who is more likely to live on a low income? Among people aged 75 and over, women, single people and renters are more likely to live in poverty.

Living on a low income can present significant challenges for seniors. Consider, for example, transportation costs due to reduced mobility, home maintenance and heating, and additional health costs.

Our seniors spent their entire lives working hard, saving and paying for a system that was supposed to support them. Now, that future is beyond their reach. As most seniors are on a fixed income, increases in interest rates, taxes, groceries and heating hit them hard. It means that many seniors must continue to work or return to work. The fact that the government reduced the retirement age from

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67 to 65 is inconsequential because people must make decisions based on their bank accounts and not their preferences with respect to quality of life.

This is on top of the problems that many seniors are dealing with in my riding. In rural areas, many of them are dealing with isolation and the lack of support for health services, transportation and federal services, which results in further isolation and health problems.

We must also recognize that this inflationary period has coincided with one of the worst housing crises in 15 years. For people on a fixed income, such as seniors, it is an unavoidable catastrophe.

With the increase in the price of energy, taxes and groceries, and the Bank of Canada's increased interest rate, people are having trouble keeping a roof over their head. We know that we need to try to stop the economy from getting out of control, but there are currently people who are having to sell their home, skip meals or take another job to survive.

The government needs to be aware of that so that it can offer more than just compassion and useful advice, such as cancelling a Disney+ subscription to save money. That kind of measure is useful for those who are privileged and have a steady income. It is not useful for those living paycheque to paycheque or on a fixed income. These people already know how demanding this situation is on their budget and they do not need any suggestions from the government on how to stop spending money.

Even though seniors have more wealth, there should be a financial model that helps them save more of the money they worked so hard for their entire lives.

When my colleague from Joliette spoke two weeks ago in response to the economic statement presented by the Minister of Finance, he pointed out that, for a government that claims to be feminist, it is doing a remarkable job of neglecting low-income women aged 65 to 75. They have no pension, because they spent their lives as caregivers supporting their families rather than maintaining their professional networks and pursuing their careers. This invisible work, which is not recognized as real work because it is not paid, is not menial and must not be ignored.

● (1320)

The problems senior women are facing are only made worse by the gender wage gap.

That means that, if a woman decides to work during her lifetime, she will face bigger challenges as a retiree than a retired man will. A retired man would have had more opportunities to save because he was paid more for the same work or because he was promoted at the expense of women. Those are the types of systematic injustices that the government needs to remedy if, as it claims, it really wants to defend and help these women who need its assistance.

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Let us now talk about single seniors. The current tax system is a traditional model built for a nuclear family from the 1950s or before, which generally consists of a couple with two or three children who own their own home. That old model no longer applies. Whether it be because of separation, divorce, the growing number of women in the labour market, the emergence of sexual choice, the death of a partner or simply preference, more and more people are living alone. In fact, one-person households are growing more rapidly than any other type of household in Canada, according to the Statistics Canada figures from 2016. In the coming years, this number will only continue to grow. It is therefore not logical for the government to continue to reward couples and ignore single people when determining how to spread out the tax burden.

Society has always marginalized single people. Nowhere is this more evident than in politicians' speeches, where families are the centerpiece and single people are ignored, unless they are in long-term care. Life can be bleak if you are a single senior, another often marginalized group. Then, throw in financial concerns that were deliberately engineered by the government through unfair tax practices. It does not take long for a comfortable middle-class existence to become impossible in one's senior years.

Few of us will reach the end of our lives without being single at some point. A partner dies, a couple breaks up, or the right life partner is never found, and those people are alone. Such a situation brings with it a variety of challenges, not the least of which is mental stress and loneliness. The added stress of income insecurity can be overwhelming. That is why we need change now.

I also want to point out that this budget statement does not include anything for those who are in the most precarious situations, those who are on fixed incomes and do not have the ability to go out and make more money.

I sent a householder with a petition to the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue. The petition calls for an OAS increase of \$110 per month for all seniors 65 and up so as to permanently improve their quality of life.

That petition was tabled after the latest budget. We expected the government to be more responsive to seniors in its economic statement. Over 5,000 people signed the petition. In other words, 5,000 people who received the document at home felt that seniors' predicament deserved their attention, and they signed the petition to say that it is time for a big change.

I sincerely hope the government gets this message. I will be giving the Minister of Seniors seven of the big green boxes we all have in our offices so that she understands how urgent it is to take action in the next budget. This particular economic statement may not have resulted in much, but the next budget has to do a lot more for seniors. Let us not forget that these people are not able to increase their income because their income is fixed.

Perhaps we should be considering measures in the context of the labour shortage. Seniors who work need more robust tax measures so the money they earn by working does not get clawed back. That could be a very important measure for our seniors.

People know that I care about seniors. That is why I created an advisory committee for seniors in my riding, with members recruit-

ed from the four Abitibi—Témiscamingue RCMs. It was one of my election promises. One of the main things we want to do is conduct research so we can propose solutions that will improve seniors' quality of life. They are very concerned about income and also health care.

I am asking the House to listen to our seniors' message. More than 5,000 people in Abitibi—Témiscamingue showed that they are interested in this issue, and I believe it is urgent that the government take action to increase our seniors' purchasing power.

The \$110-a-month increase is the bare minimum, and that is what we were asking for before this hyperinflation started. If there is a recession looming, it is all the more urgent to support the most vulnerable people in our society.

• (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my understanding is that the Bloc will be voting in favour of the legislation, and for good reason. There are many initiatives within this legislation and the fall economic statement that would help literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians, going into the millions.

One of the things I take great pride in is that we are getting rid of the interest on student loans. Students would not have to pay interest, and I see that as a very strong, positive way in which the national government would ultimately be enabling more students to be fully engaged in post-secondary activities. It would give them more money in the long run. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on how important it is that we support our students, especially given the fact that we are going through inflation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear that coming from the parliamentary secretary. I spent all 10 minutes of my speech talking about seniors and the most vulnerable, and he wants to talk about young people, who have their entire life ahead of them to build their future. Nevertheless, this is a worthwhile measure; unfortunately, it does not apply to Quebec.

There are some good measures in this document, such as lowering credit card interest rates for small businesses. The Bloc Québécois has been calling for that for a long time. If we are talking about people who have been forgotten, I would mention farmers. Input costs and inflation have had a devastating impact on their income.

I would have liked to see the government propose a program similar to the emergency account or the RRRF program that was created during the pandemic. It could have offered low-interest loans, along with subsidies to reward those who pay off their loans, because there is a tremendous need for cash flow in agriculture. That is what we hear about most back home.

• (1330)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue on his speech. He talked a lot about seniors who would normally retire at 65 but, given the current context, will likely retire at 75.

He talked a little bit about the labour shortage at the end of his speech. I wonder if he could elaborate a bit more on his perspective on how to help solve at least part of the labour shortage problem, perhaps by changing certain aspects of how seniors are currently taxed.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his sensitivity.

With regard to the labour shortage, seniors are clearly not the cure-all, but, according to studies, they could have a 5% impact on the labour shortage. That is rather significant. The approach to take is very simple. The answer is not extremely complex cross programs where seniors get money from one place but lose it from another. That is what is happening right now if seniors work. We first need to do something about the tax situation and ensure that income earned by seniors aged 65 and over remains in their pockets. We could set a limit of \$5,000 to \$10,000, but it needs to be worthwhile for a senior to work. Right now, whatever seniors earn is going in one pocket and out the other.

Here is why it is important that seniors work. All the contractors in my region tell me that if someone can come in for one, two or three days a week, it makes a big difference. These experienced workers have a lot of knowledge. They can help with training and knowledge transfer. This is absolutely priceless in an organization. It is about freeing up on-site managers and entrepreneurs so that they can concentrate on marketing and development while having trusted people in the field who will bring pride to their businesses.

We need seniors. I do not understand why we are not tapping into this group right now.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to thank the member for focusing his intervention on the needs of seniors. I think we share the same respect and admiration for seniors, and I really appreciate that.

I wonder if the member agrees that the OAS also needs to add a supplement for seniors who live in the Arctic to recognize the higher cost of living there, including for seniors in the 14 Nunavik communities in Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Madam Speaker, I would like to refer to the petition: \$110 a month in old age security for all seniors 65 years of age and older. This obviously includes those in Nunavut and everywhere else. We need to think especially about those who

Government Orders

do not have the means to increase their income. I am sensitive to those issues. At the same time, we also have to provide answers. Given the severe labour shortage in my region, Abitibi—Témiscamingue may need to be recognized as a more northern and remote region. In order for us to be able to answer these questions and move forward, we will have to be given special status.

[English]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to speak to Bill C-32, the fall economic statement implementation act for 2022.

The year 2022 has been very eventful. We came out of two and a half years of a pandemic. Canada faced the pandemic in a good state compared to many other countries. We listened to the opinions and recommendations of health care professionals and experts, and we came out of it better than many other countries.

The Canadian economy also came roaring back after the pandemic. We have recovered all the jobs that were lost during the pandemic. If members recall, we had lost around 8.9 million jobs. We have not just recovered all the jobs that we lost, but we have even added more. We are at about 117% of the jobs we had prepandemic.

The unemployment rate was at historic highs during the pandemic and now it is at a historic low. In fact, we have maintained that historic low unemployment rate for the last several months.

Our economic growth has been the strongest. Canadian economic growth is enviable amongst the G7 countries. We are doing better than many of our G7 partners, including the U.S., U.K., France, Japan and Italy.

We have the lowest deficit amongst the G7 countries. In fact, if members recall this year's budget, we had forecasted around a \$56 billion deficit, and it is now predicted to be about 30% lower than what was projected a few months back. The budget deficit has also gone down about 3% from what was estimated. I think it is going down to about 1.3%. This is the best amongst all G7 countries.

Before the pandemic, we had the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio amongst all the G7 countries, and we continue to have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio amongst all G7 countries. The fall economic statement also projects that we will reach a balanced budget in the foreseeable future. However, we are not making a big deal about that right now.

Government Orders

The problems created by the pandemic continue to exist today. The supply chain issues that we saw during the pandemic have continued during the postpandemic period too. The pandemic affected production worldwide. Now one of the biggest manufacturers of various goods in the world, China, is continuing with zero COVID policies, and that adds to the problems we are seeing in the supply chains. This has increased the price of numerous products across the board.

Also this year, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has created its own major problems. There are huge security problems in Europe with repercussions beyond Europe. This has created problems in energy supply, raising the prices of fuel. It has created problems in the food grain supply. Ukraine, as we know, was one of the major suppliers of wheat to the world.

All these factor in supply chain issues. Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, resulting in higher fuel costs and the spike in food grain prices, has resulted in inflation. Canadians are feeling the pinch when they go to the grocery stores for their essential purchases or when they go to the gas station to fill up their tanks with gas.

October inflation is at 6.9%. A few months back it was higher. From that high it has come down. It was 6.9% in September. It has stayed at 6.9% in October, which is a good trend. The interesting thing is that this number is much lower than what the private sector economists were forecasting. I think they were forecasting between 7.1% and 7.4% inflation, but it has stayed at 6.9%, which is a good thing.

• (1335)

Again, the inflation we are seeing in Canada today is lower than that in the U.S., the U.K. or the eurozone. The inflation pain that Canada is experiencing today is not limited to Canadians. This is something that is being faced by people all across the world, in developed countries, developing countries and everybody else.

To combat this inflation, the Bank of Canada started raising its rates some time ago. I think it has raised the rates dramatically. There is no pattern to the rising interest rates in the history of the Bank of Canada, if I am not mistaken, but it has to stay to its mandate of bringing down inflation to the targeted rate of around 2%. With the increase in interest rates and higher inflation, it does not require brains to forecast that the economy is going to slow down in 2023. It is expected.

To help Canadians today, the vulnerable Canadians who are facing the problem of inflation and the forecasted economic slowdown next year, we have already taken numerous measures. While we are taking numerous measures, which have been explained in the last few months in the budget and also in this fall economic statement, we are continuing to restrain the deficit, because we do not want to add fuel to the fire of inflation.

Canada is better placed today than any other country in the developed world to face this oncoming economic slowdown. However, because of the pain faced by Canadians today, it is natural for Canadians to worry about the current status and the future. Canada's prosperity and standard of living have been quite high compared to any other country in the world. That is because of the natural resources we have, such as oil, gas, minerals, metals and

forestry products, and the hard work of several generations of Canadians.

We have good prosperity and a good standard of living, but the current status and possible slowdown has Canadians worried about the future prospects for our children and grandchildren. They are naturally worried about whether we can pass on the prosperity that we enjoyed in the past to our future generation. However, in spite of the inflation that we are facing today, in spite of the pain we are seeing today, we should not forget the big picture. There are huge economic opportunities ahead of us in Canada, and I will come to that in a minute.

The globalization and global trade that we knew before the pandemic is almost on its way out among the developed countries, even with our biggest trading partner, the United States. Its Secretary of the Treasury has stated that what they call "friend-shoring" is going to be a big issue going forward. The U.S. brought in the Inflation Reduction Act, which brought in the U.S. CHIPS and Science Act, and basically that is creating a new industrial policy.

We have to see what opportunities are available for us. One of the biggest opportunities I foresee for us in Canada is the critical minerals that are required to power the next generation of vehicles and energy storage batteries. We have the critical minerals, and we have already stated in the previous budget the support for the critical mineral sector.

Recently, the federal government signed an agreement with Ontario for the Ontario regional energy and resource tables to develop the natural resources sector, specifically the clean electricity grid, critical minerals, nuclear technology, clean hydrogen and sustainable forestry. The federal government is taking a team Canada approach in working with the provinces so that we can work together to align the resources, timelines and regulatory approaches to develop the critical minerals, forestry sector, nuclear energy and clean electricity. There are a lot of opportunities ahead.

We have also set up the Canada growth fund through which we want to bring in billions of dollars in private sector investment to achieve our economic objectives.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

He talked about ways to fight inflation. A basic and very important way would be to significantly boost residential housing starts, which would reduce pressure on the housing market, and on social housing in particular. Social housing would remove low-income people from the current market and would reduce that pressure.

Government Orders

I would like my colleague to expand on that and on the Parti Québécois's proposal to allocate 1% of the annual budget to social housing going forward.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would like to remind the hon. member that the Parti Québécois does not sit in the House.

The hon. member for Nepean.

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, housing is a real issue. We have problems with affordable housing and housing affordability. Every dollar we invest in affordable housing saves multiple dollars in other social costs, so it makes a business case for investment in affordable housing.

I am proud to be part of a government that has committed a huge amount of money toward housing. Through the national housing strategy, we have committed \$55 billion. Every single day, we are announcing new housing projects wherever possible. In fact, recently, the Minister of Housing announced the new stream of the rapid housing initiative and other things.

When people talk about affordable housing I ask them to bring in a proposal. Money is not the constraint. The constraint is getting the proposal, which we can fund.

• (1345)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, will the hon. member be able to tell us what the interest payment will be on just the \$38-billion deficit we are carrying this year?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, that is an important question, because interest payments are a significant amount for most deficits throughout the history of Canada. However, the member may remember when the pandemic started and the long-term interest rates were close to 0%, we changed the composition of the Canadian federal debt from about 12%, if I am not wrong. We took the long-term debt close to 0% to about 46% of the debt.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I respect my colleague a lot, but in the fall economic update, we have this incredibly irresponsible approach by the Liberal government. As members know, \$30 billion every year goes to overseas tax havens and tax evasion. Large corporations, some of the ones that have profited the most from greedflation, and the ultrarich benefit enormously. What the Liberals did in the fall economic statement was close, of that \$30 billion, a scant 2%. They are continuing to allow 98% of it to go offshore and to go to tax evasion.

I want a comment from my colleague, whom I have a lot of respect for. How can he tolerate, as a Liberal member of Parliament, the Liberals giving 98% freedom to take money overseas through tax loopholes and overseas tax havens?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, tax evasion is bad. Tax avoidance, under the rules, is okay, but tax evasion is bad. We have invested an enormous amount, I think close to \$400 million, in the CRA to target the tax evasion tactics of various corporations. For every dollar invested in this, I think the return is more than five dol-

lars in normal circumstances, but it can go as high as \$20 for every dollar invested to control tax evasion.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Don Valley East for providing me with the privilege of speaking in the House.

My riding is a remarkable community. It is very diverse culturally, in education and in professions. There are so many differences in my community, but despite all of these differences, we have the same set of values. We believe in values that unite us, like that hard work pays off; that education is and should be a top priority; that if people are sick, we come together and pool our resources to make sure they get the help they need; and making sure that our country remains clean and our environment is protected. The most important value I have picked up over the years is that, when we stick together, we are stronger and better for it. These are the values that make Canada and my community work.

I have the opportunity, due to my community's support, to come into this chamber through the democratic process and reflect those values in the House. We put those values into action by making decisions. Each of us has a choice we can make every single day. It is about choice. When we really cut away everything else, at the end of the day we are sent here to make decisions and choices for our communities. The word "choice" is important when it comes to democracy. It is an important word in the House, and every day those actions we take and choices we make eventually set a tone and become government policy and law.

We are here to make decisions and choices, and when our choice is not aligned with our communities, we know what happens. Communities eventually boot us out of office. We have an opportunity here to align with our communities. I can tell members that when it comes to the fall economic statement, I am very aligned with where my community is, and my community is aligned with the position I am taking in the House.

I am proud to support Bill C-32. I grew up in a community where, despite all of the big differences, people worked together and stuck together. It is a community that has many different types of housing: low-rent and subsidized housing, Toronto Community Housing and low-cost condominiums. There is an array of different styles of homes, and we all live together.

Government Orders

Some people are struggling in my community. I grew up in a neighbourhood where young people went to school without lunches. Growing up, I saw young people not getting the support I did at my house. I saw and picked up on these things. I come from a neighbourhood where many of the young men I grew up with did not graduate high school. By the time I was 21, I must have known at least a dozen young men who were murdered in my community due to street violence. I picked up on these things and took note. It was for these reasons I originally ran to be a school board trustee when I was almost 30 years old. I saw inequity in society and I wanted to take the values that were instilled in my community and look for ways to bring them into forums like this.

I saw many young people with limited opportunities. We are able, in assemblies like this, to create opportunities for people by the decisions and choices we make. I was pretty lucky. I had my mother and father, aunts and uncles, cousins and lots of friends. My lunch was packed for me when I went to school and when I went home, there was a warm meal. I was a lucky person. I did not have to think about the next meal or being safe at night. I did not have to think about those things, so I was able to look for opportunity.

It was because of government programs like student assistance that I got to go to university. I was the first person in my family to go. On whole my street, there were two guys who went to university, and I was one of them. I was lucky to have that opportunity, and it was because of government programming. Once, when I was growing up, my family was threatened with being thrown out on the street by the landlord. We went to the legal aid clinic, and because of the government programs, my family was safe.

• (1350)

One of the first jobs I ever had was subsidized by the government, like the student summer jobs program. I could go and get some experience and take that experience and grow. It is because of those programs that I was able to go off to university and serve my community as an MPP and then as a member of Parliament here in the House of Commons.

At the end of the day, we are opportunity-makers. What we do in this House is create opportunities for people. We create opportunities to make life better for people, and we make opportunities more abundant to them. We have choices. Eventually, with the decisions we make here and the tone we set, there is a tipping point at which it becomes government policy, so I am proud to stand in the House of Commons and support Bill C-32, because I know it is going to create more opportunities for the people who need them.

We just came out of a pretty rough financial situation and COVID. The financial sector on this planet was shocked. COVID changed the entire trajectory of how we do many things. Economically, it has been very challenging for Canadians and for the Canadian government.

Back in 2009, when we went through an economic challenge here in Canada, the Conservatives were in power, and Stephen Harper had choices to make. They decided to take a different route from the one we are taking today. The route they took was to cut programs. They sent out a blanket statement to the ministries, telling them to cut 10% to 15%, or whatever they could, from the departments. They cut literacy programs that were aimed at adult

learners, and they did something that shocked Canadians during that time period, changing the rules of eligibility for seniors to receive their pension and moving the age from 65 to 67.

Here we are today in the House of Commons, and a bill is being put forward by this government and the finance minister to look at ways to strengthen people by providing more opportunity. The Conservatives have a choice. They have a choice to support people. I would say without question that the greatest resource we have as Canadians are the people who make up this great country, yet we see the Conservatives voting against things like dental care. Members can imagine having a \$1,200 per family dental care program for the kinds of kids I grew up with. I would have been eligible for that program when I was a kid. The way the Conservatives have been talking, I can only presume they are going to vote against Bill C-32.

There is a \$500 subsidy for some of the people who rent apartments and need help. The Conservatives are going to vote against that.

We talk about programs like child care, which can save families \$10,000 a year. The Conservatives will vote against that.

In this bill is the elimination of interest on student loans. I had a student loan. The only way I could get to Carleton University was to take out a loan, which ended up costing me \$57,000. I paid it back, and I was proud to pay it back, because it provided me with an opportunity to eventually be in a place like this with my fellow colleagues, representing my community. We all have choices.

When I was a very young man, I got to hear Nelson Mandela speak in the House of Commons. Yesterday I was learning a bit more about choice and politics in general, and I came across this great quote by him: “May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.”

The Conservatives need to stand up and align themselves by choice with their communities, stop using fear as the motivator to separate people and use hope, as I think Bill C-32 does, to bring people together. We should create opportunity and hope, so the next generation of young Canadians, and Canadians today, have the opportunity to build a better country.

• (1355)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the government's economic policies, one thing I find very troubling is the fact that the government always spends and spends, but the results are not there for Canadians. That is very true when it comes to indigenous services. The government has increased spending by over 100% for Indigenous Services Canada since it took office, but reports from the Parliamentary Budget Officer show that this spending has not led to a commensurate increase in positive results for indigenous people.

Statements by Members

I wonder if the member can expand on what has gone wrong in the indigenous services department and maybe provide some suggestions on how the government can ensure that the dollars it is spending are getting to the programs they are destined for.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be part of a government that is prepared to invest in indigenous communities and to work as partners to build a better country. In fact, I would suggest that we should probably spend more money supporting indigenous communities, rather than looking at ways to make cuts like the Conservatives have done in the past.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

WHITBY SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise in the House today to highlight an exceptional individual from our community in Whitby, who was recently inducted into the Whitby Sports Hall of Fame.

She has been a dedicated coach for ringette teams in Whitby for over 30 years. Starting in 1991, she began her ringette journey by volunteering to help coach her daughter's team.

For those who do not know, ringette is a fast-paced team sport played on ice, similar to hockey, but with a rubber ring and stick, and lots of passing.

Since 1991, this individual has dedicated countless hours on and off the ice in support of the Whitby Ringette Association, mentoring generations of ringette players, predominantly young girls in our community.

When not coaching her own team, Carolyn can be found around the rinks in Whitby, talking to parents, helping other coaches and checking in with players. We know that great coaches have a profound impact on children's lives and their health and development through sport, where many young people learn countless skills and lessons, make memories and form lasting relationships.

We salute Carolyn Mountjoy today for her immeasurable contributions to our community, and for all she has given to make Whitby ringette what it is today.

Go Whitby Wild.

* * *

● (1400)

QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE MEDAL RECIPIENT

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have wonderful Canadians in every part of the country who work every day to make our communities an even better place to call home.

That is why, like many of my colleagues, I have been pleased to present a Queen's Platinum Jubilee medallion to outstanding local Canadians who are making a difference in the name of service. In our service clubs, in our faith communities, in arts and culture and

in our local events and festivals, these leaders often work quietly behind the scenes without seeking recognition.

I want to pay tribute to one medallion recipient specifically today, my friend and Cornwall's number one ambassador, David Murphy, who lost his battle with cancer at the age of 50 this past week. I was honoured to present him last month with the well-deserved medallion, joining several other groups who recognized Murph for his service to Cornwall throughout his life.

Simply put, David Murphy was a great man and a great Canadian. I ask that my colleagues join me in recognizing all medallion recipients. From my community, I want to say thanks and well done to these great Canadians.

* * *

CANCER CARE

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, cancer is a disease that affects the lives of countless individuals and their families. In Canada, two out of five are diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. Due to increasing numbers of patients, staffing shortages in health care and lengthy wait times, too many people living with cancer worry that they might not get the care they need at the right time.

I began to understand the gravity of the situation upon meeting a truly inspirational constituent of mine, Ms. Jag Kaur Takhar, a single mother who, at the young age of 37, was diagnosed with breast cancer. In Jag's recent book, entitled *Now's the Time*, we can read about the struggles she went through with our health care system.

It is also important to point out that Jag is not alone. Breast cancer peaks in Black and Asian women much earlier, and these racial disparities are still not taken into account in Canada today. These women are 30% to 40% more likely to die of breast cancer, simply because we fail to diagnose them in time.

The journey with cancer can be a very difficult one, and it is on all of us to work with all levels of government in taking concrete action so Canadians can get the care they need and deserve.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

SOCIÉTÉ DE GÉNÉALOGIE ET D'HISTOIRE DE SAINT-EUSTACHE

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, since 1997, this organization has been helping the people of Saint-Eustache and Deux-Montagnes retrace the history of their ancestors, their place of origin, their date of arrival in the country, their occupation, the descendants, and so forth. It offers different workshops on things such as mastering research tools for paleography, where you learn to read notarized documents of the time. Every month, it organizes conferences and outings to historic sites. Although it had far more members before the pandemic, today the society is 200 members strong and remains one of Quebec's most dynamic.

As activist Marcus Garvey famously said, “A people without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots”.

In Saint-Eustache and Deux-Montagnes, our roots run deep and if we have any knowledge of our roots it is thanks to the Société de généalogie et d'histoire de Saint-Eustache.

I thank them and wish them a happy 25th anniversary.

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[English]

CANADA-PHILIPPINES RELATIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, noting that Canada has over one million people of Filipino heritage, I had an opportunity to recognize the very special relationship between Canada and the Philippines. Last week, I was able to travel to the Philippines with my local MLA, who happens to be my daughter, and it was a wonderful trip.

We had numerous planned meetings related to helping people come to Canada. We met with the local embassy officials on a wide variety of issues, which included aid, trade and, of course, immigration. I appreciated the discussions and the support from the Philippines embassy here in Canada, the department of foreign affairs at the embassy and, in particular, former ambassador Robles.

I would like to give a special thanks to Mayor Honey Lacuna. She was wonderful, as were her talks, and I appreciated her recognition of the nine Canadians who lost their lives in servicing the Pacific theatre during World War II. We had a special celebration on the grounds of Manila's city hall.

* * *

● (1405)

COAL MINING IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker,

“Get up!” the caller calls, “Get up!”
And in the dead of night,
To win the bairns their bite and sup,
I rise a weary wight.

My flannel dudden donn'd, thrice o'er

My birds are kiss'd, and then
I with a whistle shut the door,
I may not ope again.

This was, of course, written by the pitman poet, Joseph Skipsey.

As the snow has begun in Canada, I thought it appropriate to highlight the “blood on the coal” tartan. It commemorates the coal miners who lived, worked and died in the designer's hometown of Springhill, Nova Scotia, in my riding of Cumberland—Colchester. Coal has been mined in Canada since 1639, and most of the mines in Nova Scotia have been since abandoned.

Miners Memorial Day is also known as Davis Day in honour of William Davis. Davis was killed in a riot in New Waterford, Nova Scotia, in 1925 during a confrontation with company police. There was a targeted campaign to break the miners' union.

There are four colours on this tartan: black is for the coal and the darkness of the mine; yellow is for the miner's lamp; red represents the blood on the coal of the miners' lives lost; and white represents the remembrance of their lives. Miners Memorial Day is an occasion to remember and mourn all miners killed in provincial coal mines.

* * *

DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, November is Diabetes Awareness Month, and I want to highlight the amazing work that is being done to help children who are diagnosed and live with type 1 diabetes, particularly the work done by the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation of Canada and its Kids For a Cure advocacy programs.

This week, I met with two incredible youth in my Ottawa office who have lived with type 1 diabetes for much of their lives: Max and Molly. They both gave fantastic PowerPoint presentations in which they explained their diagnosis, how it impacts their day-to-day lives and how they continue to thrive with the resources they have available to them, including how supportive their families and their puppies are in their journeys.

Blue is the colour to flaunt this November to show our support for kids who live with juvenile diabetes and to support their campaign to look forward. The theme for the month is to reflect on the mission to cure, prevent and treat type 1 diabetes and its complications.

* * *

PAULINA JOCELYN BALISI CORPUZ

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to honour the life and legacy of Paulina Jocelyn Balisi Corpuz, a devoted and tireless Toronto-based community leader and advocate for the Filipino community. Paulina arrived in Canada in 1993 and was a champion for advancing community causes. She co-founded Philippine Advancement Through Arts and Culture and worked with many organizations, such as the Filipino Workers Network and the Canadian Cancer Society.

Paulina is best known for her advocacy to have the City of Toronto recognize the month of June as Filipino Heritage Month. Her work and efforts at the city level paved the way for provincial and federal legislation bodies to follow suit.

Paulina was an inspiration to all of us, leaving a legacy behind her in the community. Paulina was a devoted wife to Ben and loving mother to Belinda, Isabella and Benson. I extend my deepest condolences to her family, friends and the entire community.

* * *

ENERGY INDUSTRY IN GERMANY

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this past week, Germany inaugurated its first liquefied natural gas terminal. Germany started construction after the war in Ukraine began on February 24 to get off Russian gas. Before Russia's war on Ukraine, Germany had no LNG terminals. It took Germany 194 days to approve and build this new LNG terminal in the North Sea port of Wilhelmshaven. It took 194 days, and four more are on the way shortly.

Germany has a stronger set of environmental standards than Canada, and Germany has reduced greenhouse gas emissions more than Canada. Germany is also led by a left of centre Social Democratic chancellor, and its minister of economic affairs and climate action is a Green Party minister. Our government needs to ask itself how Germany can approve and build a new LNG terminal in 194 days, while it takes a decade or more to approve and build a single LNG terminal in this country.

* * *

● (1410)

PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, British Columbia will be welcoming David Eby as our province's next premier on November 18. During this time of transition, I want to recognize and thank Premier John Horgan, who has served British Columbia since 2017.

Premier Horgan has been an advocate for the environment and an ally to our government on this important issue. Our governments have also found common ground on child care, with our government providing \$3.2 billion to create more child care spaces to implement the \$10-a-day child care in British Columbia.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, our governments have worked together to ensure all British Columbians have access to vaccines. Premier Horgan has done well in advancing relationships with indigenous peoples based on respect and with the recognition of indigenous rights.

Recently, our governments partnered up by announcing improvements to the Glover Road crossing. This Highway 1 widening project is valued at \$345 million, with \$96 million coming from the federal government.

I want to wish Premier Horgan all the best in his future endeavors, and I want to extend my congratulations to David Eby on becoming B.C.'s next premier.

Statements by Members

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here are some sobering numbers to show how much Canada has been broken financially by these Liberals.

Government debt in Canada has doubled since 2015 to \$1.13 trillion in 2022, meaning the Prime Minister has spent more than all previous prime ministers combined. The total cost of servicing that debt is roughly \$42 billion per year and growing, exceeding the cost of yearly health transfers to the provinces.

Each man, woman and child in Canada owes \$56,000 as their part of the national debt, and it is having an impact. Inflation is at a 40-year high and affordability anxiety is a major problem. There are 1.5 million Canadians who visited a food bank in September. Half of Canadians are \$200 away from not being able to meet their monthly obligations, and 30% say they cannot meet their monthly obligations.

These Liberals, aided and abetted by the NDP, are causing Canadians to lose their jobs, their hopes, their dreams and their dignity. It is time to stop wasteful spending, eliminate the carbon tax and give Canadians a break, which is what they need the most.

* * *

BILL C-11

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians who have been shut out by Canada's traditional media gatekeepers are finding their voices on places like TikTok, Spotify and YouTube. It is amazing. I am talking about creators like Oorbee Roy, a South Asian mother from Toronto who shares her skill in and her love for skateboarding on TikTok. I am talking about Vanessa Brousseau, an indigenous woman who shares her artistry and her passion as she advocates for missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada.

These creators leverage digital platforms to share their uniquely Canadian stories with the world. Despite this, the government wants to kill their success and actually silence their voices. Through Bill C-11, the government would pick winners and losers by determining which content gets to be seen and which content has to be hidden.

As for everyday Canadian users, we are out of luck too, because whatever we post online, see online or hear online would be censored by the government. Hello, state censorship, and goodbye freedom. It is time for the government to read its notifications, because if it did, it would see there is a massive thumbs-down.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

ANNIVERSARIES IN CHÂTEAUGUAY—LACOLLE

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, organizations and their volunteers are the heart of community life across Canada. They help to make our lives better, ensure a social safety net and strengthen community ties.

Today, I want to mark the anniversaries of two wonderful organizations in my riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle.

First, I want to wish a happy 20th anniversary to Les toits d'Émile, which was named in honour of poet Émile Nelligan. This organization has spent two decades providing people with mental illness with supervised apartments and activities to break their isolation.

Next, I want to wish a happy 30th anniversary to Club des ornithologues de Châteauguay. In addition to birdwatching, members of this group also support biodiversity, rally together to protect natural environments, and set up birdhouses for nesting.

I hope these organizations will be around for many years to come.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

LABELLING OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have the right to know the health risks of what they are consuming, yet when looking at the bottle, one would never know that alcohol is a class one carcinogen.

Last week, constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith gathered to talk about this exact issue. Many were shocked to learn that alcohol is linked to cancers, including breast, colon, larynx and liver, as well as other health impacts, such as dementia. Despite all this, alcoholic beverages still do not have warning labels.

This is a health and safety issue. It should not be left to rich CEOs to decide what information Canadians deserve to have access to. We need a national strategy, similar to those for cannabis and cigarettes, to ensure the risks are clearly communicated.

The Liberal government needs to take federal leadership today and support the motion I tabled to implement a national warning label strategy for alcoholic beverages, ensuring all Canadians have the information they need to make informed decisions.

* * *

[Translation]

TABLE ITINÉRANCE RIVE-SUD

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in 2020, according to a report on homelessness in Quebec, nearly 600,000 people, or 7% of Quebec's population, experienced hidden homelessness at some point in their lives. The census identified 6,000 individuals experiencing visible homelessness.

Members can see why I would want to highlight the essential, monumental work of a vital player in my riding, the Table

itinérance Rive-Sud, which is marking its 20th anniversary today, November 17, 2022.

Table itinérance Rive-Sud's mission is to bring together organizations that address homelessness. These organizations work both upstream and downstream of the issue to create a continuum of services that support the dignity of people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

Again, I am deeply grateful to the Table itinérance Rive-Sud, and I wish the organization a happy 20th anniversary.

* * *

[English]

HOUSING

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, CMHC, the federal government's housing agency, has spent \$4.5 billion and committed another \$9 billion to tackle homelessness, but it has no idea if anyone is benefiting from their work.

It has no idea. How can there be no accountability for billions of dollars when more Canadians are living in tents or cars and inflation is skyrocketing? This is absurd. If any member in the House takes a walk through their downtown, they will see the homeless crisis is getting worse every single day.

Lynn, a senior in her mid-60s, is homeless because she cannot afford rent in Toronto. She lived in her car for seven weeks before finding a place in a shelter system. Sage lives in a tent. She is 23 years old, from Portage la Prairie, and has been homeless for two years. These are not data points on a graph. They are people.

The Liberals plan to announce large amounts of funding that no one can access with zero accountability is not working. Canada needs leadership. It needs a plan. It needs accountability. It needs housing.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION LITERARY CONTEST WINNER

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, we honoured our veterans, who served proudly to preserve those freedoms. The responsibility of remembrance falls on all of us, and we recognize and appreciate the peace that we have today.

Each year the Royal Canadian Legion holds a literary contest to engage our youth in acts of remembrance. Julia Mederak, a student at John Sweeney Catholic Elementary School in Kitchener submitted a poem entitled “Remembrance Day” and won first place. She shared her poem on Kitchener’s CBC morning radio show, and I would like to read the last stanza of her award-winning work.

We celebrate Remembrance Day
We honour the vet
Our heads bowed in silence
Lest We Forget.

I send my congratulations to Julia. We thank her for her contributions in guiding our next generation as we continue to remember.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 10 months ago, our security and intelligence services informed the Prime Minister of allegations that a foreign government had interfered in our elections through illegal donations. The Prime Minister should have informed the Commissioner of Canada Elections so that the matter could be investigated.

[English]

Did the Prime Minister inform the commissioner of Canada Elections to instigate an investigation after he became aware, almost 10 months ago, of allegations of illegal foreign funding?

[Translation]

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government understands that some of the world's dictatorships are actively trying to undermine democracies around the world.

As a university student, I lived and studied in an authoritarian communist regime, the Soviet Union. I have no illusions about the nature of that political system. Our national security agencies have stepped up their efforts to counter threats from foreign actors.

* * *

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as the world's wealthy gather for the COP conference, burning massive amounts of jet fuel to get there, what is becoming clear is that the government does not have a climate plan; it has a tax plan. Its plan has failed to reach a single solidarity greenhouse gas emissions target and Canada now ranks 58th out of 64 countries on climate performance. This is after it has hit Canadians with high taxes. It plans to triple the tax, tripling down on failure.

Will the Liberals cancel the carbon tax and come up with a real environmental plan?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians know that the Conservative leader does not have a plan to tackle climate change, and that means he does not have a plan to grow the Canadian economy.

The reality today is that our most important trading partners, the U.S. and the EU, are all taking serious climate action. These are our allies and these are our customers. That is why in the fall economic statement, we invested heavily in the green transition, and we are going to continue to do that.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, these are our allies and these are our customers, and all of them have better climate change performance than the government has in Canada.

What it has done in Canada is raise taxes on people's energy use, energy that they must use. People do need to heat their homes if they live in rural Newfoundland, and they need to use oil to do it because that is all there is. The cost is already up 77% year over year and likely to go up further. Some families will pay as much as \$6,000 to heat their homes.

Is the government really going to tell them that they have to pay more for the government's failures on the environment?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand that putting a price on pollution is the most effective way to fight climate change. In fact, one of the Canadians who was early to advocate this economically effective approach was none other than Preston Manning.

It is also worth pointing out that our price on pollution is revenue neutral. All the money goes back to Canadian families. A family in Alberta is getting back more than \$1,000. That is true for a family in Saskatchewan as well.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Revenue-neutral, Mr. Speaker? It is not neutral for taxpayers who will pay thousands of dollars more in the tax than they get back in any rebates, according to the government's own Parliamentary Budget Officer.

If the government really wanted to fight greenhouse gas emissions, it would approve projects that do that. For example, there were 15 LNG projects proposed when the government took office. Not a single one has been built. The only one that is under construction was approved by the previous Conservative government and it required subsequent governments to exempt it from the carbon tax in order for it to be economical and to speed up its approval by ignoring Bill C-69.

Oral Questions

Will the government get out of the way and let our projects go ahead to protect the earth?

• (1425)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government bought and will complete the building of the Trans Mountain pipeline. Our government absolutely understands that LNG is an important transition fuel and plays a valuable role for Canada and the world.

I do want to point out that we understand that for projects to work, they have to meet environmental standards and indigenous people have to be consulted. That is how we are going to get projects in Canada built, including necessary renewable energy projects.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is true that they have to meet environmental standards. We had real environmental standards under the previous Conservative government. In fact, the only way that the LNG Canada project in western Canada went ahead was by exempting it from the new anti-development, Bill C-69.

She is right also that first nations have to be consulted. One person is an indigenous grandmother from the Haisla first nation who told me that LNG Canada and projects like it meant that her autistic grandchild would have the resources for treatment. That means help for first nations, paycheques for people and clean energy for the world.

Why will the Liberals not get out of the way and let it happen?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know better than to listen to the economic advice of the Conservative leader. Let me tell the House about Robert Breedlove. He is a bitcoin trader who posted "Central banking is an institution of slavery. Burn. It....Down." After that was posted, the Conservative leader appeared on Mr. Breedlove's YouTube channel and said that he found it extremely informative.

The Conservative leader needs to publicly disavow those inflammatory comments and apologize to Canadians for his own reckless advice.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the shortfall in health care funding for Quebec is around \$6 billion. Stretchers are piling up in emergency rooms. Surgery waiting lists are suffering a similar effect, with all the anguish that goes along with that. There is also a national mental health crisis, with its prescriptions and fears of suicide attempts. At this rate, we will not be sending help abroad; we will be receiving it here.

The government claimed it wanted to work hand in hand with Quebec, but now it is being unbelievably arrogant. How can the government justify that arrogance?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that we all need to invest in our health care system and that we need to work closely with the provinces and territories. Yesterday evening, I discussed this subject with my Quebec counterpart, Eric Girard.

The Canada health transfer will provide the provinces and territories with \$45.2 billion in support this year, an increase of 4.8%.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, rather than talking about what the government is giving, let us talk about what is missing.

In general, the government has begun to treat Quebecers and health system managers as though they are no good. The Prime Minister and his ministers think they are better than everyone. The only thing the federal government has that the Quebec government does not is money. No one in the federal government has any knowledge, experience or skill in emergency room management, mental health or the hiring of doctors and nurses. The government does not have those skills and it is creating delays at the expense of the most vulnerable people.

Can we get a decent transfer now?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this year, Quebec received \$10.1 billion through the Canada health transfers. That is a 4.8% increase. Add to that \$450 million to help the province clear backlogs in procedures and surgeries.

Canada was there for Quebec and Quebecers during the pandemic. We will continue to be there for them.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, across the country, access to pediatric health care is in crisis. Children's hospitals are overwhelmed.

In Quebec, sick kids have had to be transferred 150 kilometres away from their home to get care. In Saskatchewan, a four-year old girl with cancer had to wait 20 hours in the emergency room for a bed to free up in the hospital's pediatric unit.

When will the Liberals take action to get care for our children who desperately need it? Are they going to do something for Christ's sake?

• (1430)

The Speaker: Order.

I want to remind the member that he is to use parliamentary language in the House. That includes not using language that inflames people, especially when it involves a religious reference. It may offend many people.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we all know that our health care system is facing real challenges, and we will continue to work to help and support our health care system.

Oral Questions

My colleague, the Minister of Health, was clear: Increasing funding for our health care system must translate into better results for Canadians and health care workers.

[English]

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, they are simply not listening. This is not about one province, and it is not about a second province. It is about all the provinces, and maybe they should be taking offence at some of these responses, because I know the constituents in my riding are.

Parents in London are living in fear of their kids getting sick. They know there is a crisis in London's children's hospital and they face a record influx of patients and high emergency wait times. London's health officials are warning that it is not getting better; they are expecting significant pressure for the upcoming weeks.

Families and their children cannot afford to wait for this help, and this government continues—

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians cannot wait, and that is why the federal government is there right now. That is why the Canada health transfer will provide the provinces and territories with \$45.2 billion in support, which is an increase of 4.8%. We all know our health care system is facing real challenges and our health care workers are facing real challenges.

My colleague, the Minister of Health, has been clear: Increasing funding for our health care system must result in improved results for the Canadians who depend on it.

* * *

TAXATION

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government's refusal to address inflation shows how out of touch it really is.

As families struggle to pay for gas, food and home heating, they are also being hit with higher mortgage costs. The Bank of Canada raised interest rates to fight Liberal inflation, and now mortgage interest costs are up 11.4%. This is the largest increase in 30 years.

Canadians are out of money and this government just does not care. Will the Liberals end their inflationary spending and cancel their plans to triple taxes on groceries, home heating and gas?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, inflation in Canada has now fallen or remained flat for four months in a row. That is good news for Canadians.

Now, we also know that many Canadians are facing real challenges, and that is why we put forward a compassionate and fiscally responsible plan. That is why we are doubling the GST credit. That is why we are providing \$500 to Canadians struggling to pay their rent. That is why we are providing dental care for kids under 12.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's Mickey Mouse advice to cancel Disney+ subscriptions to magically save Canadians this winter from freezing will not help anybody. While the out-of-touch finance minister sits

in her ivory tower in downtown Toronto lecturing Canadians, more and more people are hit with Liberal inflation and rising taxes. Food inflation is up 11%; gas is up 17.8%, and home heating will double. When will she show some compassion, end the inflationary spending and cancel her plans to triple the carbon tax?

● (1435)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, reckless advice was offered to Canadians by the Conservative leader, who urged Canadians to use crypto as a way to opt out of inflation. Anyone who did that would have lost at least 65% of their savings.

I have to ask the member opposite: Does he agree with Robert Breedlove, whose YouTube channel the Conservative leader found “extremely informative” and who said, “Central banking is an institution of slavery.” Is that the Conservative position?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of living continues to increase for Canadians under the Liberal government. Food was up 10% in October; shelter is up close to 7% and gas almost 18%, and that is because the government has a problem with inflationary spending: \$36.4 billion in this fiscal year alone.

When will the government stop its inflationary spending and cancel its plan to triple the tax on gas, groceries and home heating?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government's approach is absolutely compassionate. We have provided targeted support to the most vulnerable, but we have done it in a fiscally responsible way. The proof of that comes from Moody's, the ratings agency, which reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating just a few hours after I tabled our fall economic statement.

Canada today is the third-largest AAA-rated economy in the world. We have the lowest deficit in the G7, and we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. That is fiscal responsibility.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government needs to rein in all of its reckless spending. The Prime Minister spent \$420,000 on a weekend to London in 2021. Global Affairs Canada lost \$7,000 in petty cash, if members can believe it. What does the government need to do? It needs to stop its inflationary spending and cancel its plan to triple the tax on gas, groceries and home heating.

Oral Questions

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what the hon. member calls reckless spending is what we used to support Canadians during their time of need. We have helped nine million Canadians keep food on the table through the pandemic. We have helped millions of Canadians remain on the payroll with the Canada emergency wage subsidy and helped hundreds of thousands of Canadian businesses keep their doors open.

Now the Conservatives continue to argue in the House that this spring we should undermine the integrity—

The Speaker: Order. We were doing so well. I am going to ask everyone to listen to the answer and the questions as well. That is all I am asking, and to not make any comments. If members want to talk to each other, that is okay, but they should do it outside in the lobby or somewhere other than the chamber, or they can whisper.

I would ask the hon. Minister of Immigration to start from the top, so we can all hear the answer.

Hon. Sean Fraser: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, the Conservatives have a very difficult time with hard truths. Canadians need support. It is our government that has been here to support them since 2015, and it is our government that will be here to support them going forward.

What the Conservatives call reckless spending are the supports we extended to keep nine million Canadian households fed, to keep millions of workers on the payroll, and to make sure small businesses could keep their doors open. Now they are arguing in this chamber that this spring we should undermine the integrity of the EI system and the Canada pension plan. It is ridiculous that they pretend to be heroes for the working class. They jeer because they know it is true, and they cannot handle the truth in this instance.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, food insecurity means worrying every day about not being able to pay for food. It means a mother or father skipping a meal to feed their child.

We should not even be talking about this in an industrialized country like Canada, but according to the numbers that were released just yesterday, 16% of Quebeckers are suffering from severe food insecurity. The research is clear: The main reasons are inflation and rising food prices.

Will the government stop impoverishing Canadian families and guarantee that it will not increase taxes?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is there for our families and will always be there for our families. We understand their challenges and their needs.

It is somewhat strange to hear the Conservatives talk about this. Let us not forget that when they were in government, they made cuts to culture, veterans' funding, employment insurance and just about everything else.

They are a little self-conscious today, but if they were being honest, perhaps they would tell us where they would cut.

Would their cuts impact our children, our seniors, our families, employment insurance, workers or health care? Where would they cut?

* * *

● (1440)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one thing is for sure, anyway. I do not know where they are getting their numbers from when they say they are lifting people out of poverty, but right now, in 2022, 671,000 Quebeckers are using food banks, and one-third of those people are children.

Minister of Families is not just a title, actually. It comes with responsibilities, such as making sure families do not have to water down their babies' formula because they cannot afford to pay 20% more.

Will the government stop its inflationary spending so that Canadians can afford food, housing and heating?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have lifted 450,000 children out of poverty. That is not some random number. These are children, human beings. The Government of Canada is taking concrete steps to shape Canada's future, whereas the Conservatives have never set goals or even expressed the intention to do anything to fight poverty.

I spent seven years on the opposition benches watching them cut program after program.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is embarrassing for Quebeckers to be represented by Canada at COP27.

On Monday, the climate change performance index ranked 60 countries based on their greenhouse gas emissions, climate policy and energy use.

Do members know where Canada ranked out of 60 countries? It is 58th. Canada is even worse than China.

Will the Liberals stop lying to themselves and realize that, under their reign, Canada is one of the most dangerous countries for the planet?

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just to point out to the hon. member, the report did not take into account some of our most recent actions, but I agree. All of us on this side of the House do. We need to do more.

Oral Questions

That is why we are investing \$9.1 billion in our emissions reduction plan. We will be capping oil and gas emissions. We will be eliminating fossil fuel subsidies, and we will be challenging the energy sector to invest in reducing pollution and creating the clean economy of tomorrow and the goods jobs of today.

* * *

*[Translation]***NATURAL RESOURCES**

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, who should we listen to, the feel-good Liberals or international experts who ranked Canada 58 out of 60?

The feel-good Liberals approved Bay du Nord and, as we speak, they are authorizing five oil companies to excavate the seabed off Newfoundland to find even more oil. They own a \$21-billion pipeline and are oil developers. That is why Canada ranked 58 out of 60.

Do the feel-good Liberals not think it may be time to stop all the oil development?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a net-zero world will always need oil for non-fuel purposes. We are talking about oil for the bicycle that I ride in town. We will always use it and there will always be a need for it.

However, when it comes to exploration, the tendering process does not in itself authorize production activities in the offshore area. We are talking about exploration only, not a proposal for production.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the World Cup of soccer begins Sunday in Qatar, a country whose new stadiums may have cost as many as 6,500 workers their lives. We will never know the exact number, because Qatar is a dictatorship that silences journalists, imprisons gay people and tramples on women's rights.

Let us be clear. This has nothing to do with the athletes. They have every right to go. However, diplomatically, Canada has no business being there. The tournament begins Sunday, three days from now, but the government still does not have a clear position. Will it finally take a stand and confirm today that it will not send a diplomatic delegation to Qatar?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It is a good question, on a very important issue.

I am proud of our men's soccer team and their historic qualification for the 2022 World Cup. We are aware of the concerns surrounding the decision to hold the 2022 FIFA tournament in Qatar, and we are focused on finding constructive solutions that promote unity, because in a divisive world, we need to work together with our partners.

• (1445)

*[English]***DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last January the Prime Minister was briefed by CSIS that at least 11 candidates in the 2019 election received hundreds of thousands of dollars, directed and funnelled through Beijing's Toronto consulate.

Given that this violates multiple sections of the Canada Elections Act, upon learning of this illegal activity, did the Prime Minister report it to Elections Canada?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. Canada's fair and free election process was never compromised, and this was determined by an independent panel of national security experts. The only ones who benefit from foreign interference are enemies of democracy. These attacks are an attack on all members of Parliament, and we cannot afford to play partisan games on this issue.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, hundreds of thousands of dollars were directed and funnelled by Beijing to 11 candidates. If that is not foreign interference, I do not know what is.

Talk about a non-answer. I asked a specific question about whether the Prime Minister acted or failed to act.

Again, upon being briefed by CSIS, did the Prime Minister report this illegal activity to Elections Canada, yes or no?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, protecting Canada's democracy is something we take very seriously. On this side of the House and on that side of the House, we should all condemn foreign interference, because the ones who benefit are not in the House. They are enemies of democracy who are trying to damage our democratic process here in Canada. We will always stand up for democracy, and I invite all members of the House to stand with us.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am.

[Translation]

I am standing up for democracy, as should members on both sides of the House. In January, the Prime Minister was informed that 11 election campaigns had illegally received money from a foreign country. The revelations are clear: The interventions were targeted, and the funding was illegal. Elections are the foundation of our democracy. We all agree on that. That is why we are asking the Liberal government a simple question.

Did the government report these allegations to the Chief Electoral Officer, and, if so, when?

Oral Questions

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. This hon. colleague and everyone in the House should stand up for democracy. That is what we do every day by answering their questions.

Politics have no place in a discussion about national security, protecting democracy and protecting our institutions. Every member of the House has the same responsibility to defend Canadian democracy every day.

That is what we will continue to do on our side of the House.

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[English]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, climate change is here. Extreme weather events are more often and more severe, affecting people's access to food and medicine and putting their lives at risk. The Liberal government is missing in action. Rural and urban communities are being left to fend for themselves. This needs to change now. Communities need long-term stable funding for climate-resilient infrastructure that will withstand extreme weather events.

Will the Liberals finally invest the needed funding municipalities have been asking for?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I definitely commiserate. There was a \$9-billion impact from the atmospheric river, and 600 people died under the heat dome. We need to build community resiliency. We have invested \$4 billion in climate change adaptation to date, and we will be tabling a climate adaptation plan in the coming months.

* * *

• (1450)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to know when the government will finally return our coastal waters back to wild salmon. Polluting, open-net fish farms destroy ecosystems and livelihoods, but Liberals and Conservatives keep putting profits before communities.

This week, Washington state said no to fish farms. Now the B.C. shíshálh Nation said no to fish farms, but Liberals keep saying yes to rich CEOs.

When will the Liberals get fish farms out of the water with a transition for workers?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the member that protecting wild salmon and their habitat is my top priority. This transition is already under way. We have already removed fish farms from the Discovery Islands. There are others that indigenous communities have asked to be moved and have been moved away, so this transition is under way. We will have a plan by June 2023 as to how we will proceed further in protecting our very precious wild salmon.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we continue to recover from the pandemic, employers are actively looking to fill many thousands of vacant positions in sectors across the country. In my riding of Richmond Centre, hospitals like the Richmond Hospital are searching for more workers to meet the increasing demand for health care services.

Could the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship give us an update on how the government could help Richmond Hospital and other hospitals across Canada get the people they need to better serve Canadians?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Richmond Centre, who put together a round table with employers in his community when I had the chance to visit him. They told us very clearly that employers needed access to labour if they were going to meet the needs of their clients and customers.

I am pleased to share with the House that yesterday a new national occupation classification system was put in place that will allow 16 new occupations to take part in federal immigration streams. They include nurse aids and orderlies, truck drivers and others in the transportation sector, heavy equipment operators, chefs and many more. We are going to continue to advance measures to bring workers into jobs so we can grow our economy and support communities.

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TRANSPORTATION

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, whether delivering gravel, groceries or lumber, our Canadian truckers are an essential part of our supply chain and Canadian economy.

However, because of the Liberals' inflation crisis, the cost of operating those trucks has skyrocketed to the point where some companies are having to park their trucks. They are actually losing money by working.

What is the Liberal solution to this supply chain crisis? They are going to triple the carbon tax. How does that even make sense?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that over the last couple of years, with economic disruptions around the world, our supply chains at home and around the world have been impacted.

Our government is taking action. I have been meeting with truck companies and truck drivers, helping them to find new truck drivers and making sure they have the support they need. They were telling me that those occupiers in Ottawa and at the borders did not represent the trucking industry, and they were disappointed that the Conservatives were supporting them in their illegal actions.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is something seriously wrong in our country when working more actually makes people lose money.

To fight inflation, we need to reduce the cost of transporting goods. However, when the Liberals triple the carbon tax, that will make everything more expensive to deliver, which will make goods more expensive.

I am going to ask this again. When will the Liberals stop their tax hikes and stop beating up on our truckers?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are out of touch. They are out of touch with what is happening in the global economy. They are out of touch with what is happening here at home. They are out of touch with what is happening with climate change.

Our government, however, is focused on helping Canadians, on helping Canadian businesses and on helping truck drivers. We remain focused on doing the right thing to support our economy and to support Canadians during this difficult and challenging time.

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FINANCE

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, time and again Liberals stand in this place and point to other countries as an excuse for the cost of living crisis in Canada. Future leader of the Liberal of Party, Mark Carney, disagrees with them.

This is now a made-in-Canada problem. Contrary to what the Prime Minister and his deputy believe, they cannot get out of the mess they have made by borrowing more money.

With \$170,000 added to the debt every minute, every minute counts. When will the Liberals cancel their out-of-control inflationary spending?

• (1455)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government will never apologize for the compassionate support that we are providing to the most vulnerable Canadians.

We have found a balance between that targeted compassionate support and fiscal responsibility. I am going to give some data points. Moody's has reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating with a stable outlook. That means that Canada is the third-largest AAA rated economy in the world. Let me also remind the House that we have the lowest deficit in the G7 and the lowest debt-to-GDP.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is what the government should be apologizing for, and it is the wasteful spending record: \$54 million on the arrive scam app; \$400,000 for the Prime Minister's delegation to London,

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including a \$6,000-a-night suite; CERB cheques to prisoners and organized crime; a \$237-million contract for ventilators to a Liberal insider; and we now know it has paid more than half a billion dollars in damages for its mismanagement of the Phoenix pay system.

When will the Liberal government stop its wasteful inflationary spending?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if people actually tune into this place over a couple of months, they will realize that the economic argument the Conservatives have been making is self-defeating. On the one hand, the Conservatives say that people are in need of more help and at every opportunity they oppose measures that will give more help to people.

From the very beginning of my time in office in 2015, they have opposed measures that actually deliver cash supports to households. The Conservatives opposed the tax cut for the middle class. They opposed investments in the Canada child benefit. They are now arguing against protecting the Canada pension plan and strengthening EI.

During the pandemic, the Conservatives did not just oppose some of our measures, their new leader held a press conference to say that he would not support big fat government programs that kept my neighbours fed and a roof over their heads.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is right there in the economic update. The federal government decided that Quebec municipalities may lose \$2.7 billion in infrastructure funding if they do not submit their proposals in 2023 instead of 2025, as originally planned.

In a public statement today, the Union des municipalités du Québec asked the federal government to change its mind so they do not lose the infrastructure dollars they need.

Will the federal government listen to Quebec's municipalities and reinstate the 2025 deadline set out in the agreement it signed with Quebec?

[English]

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, several provinces and territories have successfully allocated the vast majority of their available funding, but some provinces have yet to allocate over 50% of the federal funding earmarked for their jurisdictions. Canadians from coast to coast have benefited from the significant infrastructure investments that our government continues to make.

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Since 2016, we have invested in over 81,000 infrastructure projects. I am happy to say that most recently we made an investment in the Burnside Transit Centre eco-rebuild project of \$20.8 million in Nova Scotia.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite was reading from the wrong notes again. Maybe he did not understand that the Government of Quebec and the federal government signed an agreement stating that municipalities have until 2025 to submit proposals. We are talking \$2.7 billion—

The Speaker: I will ask the member to start over. I myself had trouble hearing him, so I imagine the person who is supposed to answer did too.

I see there is also a problem with the interpretation.

Now that everything is working, I invite the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères to start over.

• (1500)

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that I hope the next time the member opposite will use the right talking points when answering me.

I was saying that the Quebec government cannot believe it. The government opposite has decided to rip up a signed agreement stating that cities had until 2025 to submit projects. Now, \$2.7 billion is at stake. We are being told that we are in the wrong. We are in the wrong because we thought the agreement would be respected. That is rich, is it not? The Union des municipalités du Québec has just said that they will be severely penalized by this.

Will the government reconsider its position, respect our cities, stop its bullying and reinstate the 2025 deadline?

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time that my colleague has used inappropriate language. I invite him to be cautious when using certain words.

We work very well with Quebec. With regard to infrastructure, we are making progress on many projects. We have made progress on day care, health, housing, high-speed Internet and the fight against homelessness. We will continue to work with Quebec. We will continue to support Quebec, no matter what the Bloc Québécois thinks. Even if he does not like it, we will continue to work with Quebec.

* * *

[*English*]

JUSTICE

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberals violent crime is up 32% and the devastating opioid crisis is claiming 21 lives per day. Despite these facts, the out-of-touch Liberals are pushing their soft-on-crime Bill C-5 through the Senate today. This bill puts drug traffickers and serious firearms offenders back on the street to continue to harm Canadians.

Will the minister take this opportunity to withdraw his soft-on-crime Bill C-5?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indeed, I think today will be a historic day in which we turn the page on failed Conservative so-called tough-on-crime policies that have only served to overincarcerate indigenous and Black peoples in our criminal justice system and have clogged up the criminal justice system.

We are making changes in order to focus on more serious crime in order to make sure that serious crimes get serious punishments. Bill C-5 is a first and historic step.

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister acts as if these are victimless crimes. The fact of the matter is that the communities that are being victimized by violent criminals and drug traffickers deserve justice. They deserve to feel safe. The minister ignores the fact that just two weeks ago the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the constitutionality and the appropriateness of these very penalties.

In light of that fact, and in light of the constitutionality of making sure that violent offenders and drug traffickers serve time in jail and not from the comfort of their own homes, will he withdraw this soft-on-crime bill?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is indeed correct to point out that the return of conditional sentence orders is a critically important part of this bill. It will allow us not only to focus on serious sentences for people who deserve serious sentences, but also to allow flexibility for those people who do not pose a threat to public security and order. Those people can be better served, and their victims and communities can be better served, through other forms of punishment. That is what Bill C-5 will allow us to do once again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the violent crime rate in Canada was 1,070 per 100,000 inhabitants.

After seven long years under this Liberal government, the rate has increased by 32%. Things will only get worse when Bill C-5, which is backed by the NDP and even the Bloc Québécois, abolishes minimum sentences for illegally importing firearms. What message are we sending to people who live in at-risk communities? We are simply telling them good luck.

Can the Prime Minister do the right thing and scrap this bill?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is indeed an historic day for Canada, because we are turning the page on the completely failed policies of the former Conservative government. These tough-on-crime policies did not work, clogged up the system and disproportionately punished indigenous and black people in the justice system.

We are putting the emphasis on serious crimes with serious sentences. We will continue to do so with this historic bill.

* * *

• (1505)

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the world gathers in Tunisia this weekend for the Sommet de la Francophonie, it is important to reflect on how our government is protecting the French language and culture here in Canada.

Since 2015, the government has been making historic investments to support official language minority communities, and it is the first government to recognize its obligation to protect and promote French across the country.

Could the Minister of Official Languages tell us how the government continues to ensure the future of the French language across Canada?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend and colleague from Halifax West for her excellent question.

Our government understands that we have an obligation to protect and promote French across the country, including in Quebec. That is why we are increasing support for French-language education across the country and why we introduced Bill C-13. We are working to ensure that francophones in Quebec and other regions with a strong francophone presence can live, work and be served in French.

As a proud Acadian, I am very happy with the work our government is doing in that regard.

* * *

[English]

HEALTH

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada is facing a children's medication crisis. Health Canada admitted on Tuesday that it has known about this shortage since April, yet the Liberals did nothing for months, leaving parents to struggle and kids to suffer. Our shelves are bare, despite fully stocked shelves in the U.S., Australia and other countries. The Liberals now claim that we will see help within the coming weeks, but the answer is vague.

On what date will Canadians feel relief and see these products on Canadian shelves?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr.

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Speaker, we share the concerns of parents and caregivers across this country, whose inability to find infant and children's acetaminophen and ibuprofen has been so difficult. This has been a really tough cold and flu season for parents and kids. I want to acknowledge that, first and foremost.

Health Canada recently approved the exceptional importation of infant and children's ibuprofen and acetaminophen to supply pediatric hospitals across Canada. Just this week, we have secured an additional foreign supply of children's acetaminophen, which will be for sale for consumers at retail stores and in community pharmacies in the coming weeks.

* * *

SENIORS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Kay is 71 years old. She lives in a seniors' lodge, and the lodge just raised her rent because of inflation. Her OAS and GIS are now \$100 short of what her monthly rent is. She has moved up several flights of stairs just to save \$300 a month, but that deal is going to end soon. She volunteers at the lodge because she gets, as a reward, a glass of cranberry juice, which she needs for nourishment. She orders meals on wheels every second day for \$6 because that is all she can afford.

When will the Liberals end their inflationary spending and cancel their cruel tax increases so Kay can once again afford to live in the country she helped build?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the challenges seniors are facing, and our government has been there for them, unlike the party opposite, which has opposed every single measure we have put forward to help seniors.

We are delivering for seniors by doubling the GST credit, which will help 11 million people. We are providing rental and dental support. We permanently increased the OAS for seniors aged 75, which is \$800 for a full pensioner.

On this side of the House, we will continue to deliver for seniors.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

TAXATION

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal inflation hurts. We learned that the proportion of Quebecers experiencing food insecurity has doubled. It is currently 15%. These are people who have jobs but are worried about not being able to afford groceries at the end of the week, people who are skipping meals and using food banks. That is happening here in Canada, a G7 country.

All of my Conservative colleagues have been asking the same question for a long time. Will the Liberal government cancel its plan to raise taxes? It is a simple question.

• (1510)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there are some things that are natural, some things that go without saying and some things that just go together, like the words “Conservative” and “cuts”, “Conservative” and “austerity”, and even “Conservative” and “lack of compassion”.

However, putting the words “Conservative” and “fight against poverty” together takes some doing. It is a bit of a stretch. It is like picturing a member of the Bloc Québécois getting up in the morning and singing *O Canada* while ironing the clothes they tore in a fit of outrage the day before. We can imagine it, but we do not believe it is possible.

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[English]

MARINE TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the west coast is home to the country's two largest ports, in Vancouver and Prince Rupert, which are crucial to keeping our economy strong, and reducing congestion at our ports is central to ensuring our supply chains remain resilient.

Could the Minister of Transport please inform the House what our government is doing to strengthen our supply chains?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his advocacy.

Ports are important to keeping our supply chain moving, and I am happy to share with the House that yesterday I announced a nearly \$75-million investment to increase capacity and reduce congestion at the port of Prince Rupert. Also, this morning, we tabled a new bill entitled “strengthening the port system and railway safety in Canada act”. This bill would create a stronger, more competitive supply chain.

Our government is taking action to ease pressure on our supply chain, which is great news for Canadians and Canadian businesses.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, several communities in northwest B.C. are struggling with increased rates of crime, and, sadly, a lot of folks are not feeling safe in their own communities. Now, we need to see an increased

investment in housing, mental health supports and treatment services for those people who are struggling. Local leaders are also calling on this government to ensure that Canada's public safety approach is effective.

Last month, B.C.'s attorney general met with the justice minister and pressed him for reforms to Canada's bail system. Will he be introducing those reforms in this place to ensure our communities are safe?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I previously reported in the House, my counterpart in British Columbia and I did discuss this matter along with other ministers of the provinces and territories at an FPT about a month ago. We have delegated the question to our deputy ministers and their subcommittee. They will report back to us.

We understand how important this issue is, not only in British Columbia but across Canada. As always, we are open to good ideas.

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[Translation]

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, the minister and parliamentarians are currently working on a bill to modernize the act governing the two official languages. For years, every francophone advocacy group in this country has been making two essential requests of the government of the day: first, centralize the power to implement and enforce the act within the Treasury Board; and second, strengthen the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

My question for the minister is simple. Will she act on these two essential demands that are being made by all stakeholders across the country?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

Protecting and promoting French are top priorities for our government. That is why we are moving forward with Bill C-13.

What is disappointing is that the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party are playing political games. We are debating a very important bill here. As my colleague said, stakeholders across the country want to see the bill passed as soon as possible. However, what we are actually seeing are political games being played on the other side of the House. It is completely unacceptable.

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise with respect to the Thursday question, where I get to ask the government House leader about the business of the House.

Given the news that Canada has come in 58 out of 63 countries, falling behind countries like China and Indonesia, as it relates to its action on reducing global emissions, and since it is clear now that the government's carbon tax is not lowering emissions, will he accept the science and introduce legislation to repeal the carbon tax or, at the very least, freeze the carbon tax and not triple it in the months ahead? As inflation continues to hit almost 7%, will we see any legislation that will repeal some of the wasteful inflationary spending that is causing so much suffering for Canadians? Can we expect either of those two pieces of legislation in the days ahead?

• (1515)

The Speaker: That is more than the Thursday question, but I will let the government House leader answer it.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to see a vigorous Thursday question, one that contains many different questions. I will be happy to answer some that are outside the usual order for the Thursday question.

Let me start with the good news. The member opposite actually ran on a price on pollution. He believed and campaigned on this, that it was a good idea that could help reduce emissions and make our planet cleaner. I am a little confused because he ran on that and now he says that he does not like the idea. That is something he may want to take up with his constituents. However, we will not cease in our actions to reduce—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order, please. I will let the hon. government House leader continue in a second. I would ask everyone to listen to both sides. We had the question and it just seems to be getting louder.

The hon. government House leader may continue.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that we will absolutely not cease in taking action on climate change. It is an existential crisis. The reality is that it will not be in the billions of dollars, but in the trillions of dollars. I see the number 58. Add about seven zeroes after that. That is how much it is going to cost this planet. The fact that the Conservatives ran on a price on pollution and now want to make it free is something they have to explain to their constituents.

With respect to the question on inflation, notwithstanding the fact that we have a lower inflation rate than the EU, than the combination of the G7 countries, notwithstanding the fact that it is less than Germany, the U.S. and the U.K., and that we have one of the lowest inflation rates in the world, it is cold comfort to Canadians who are trying to get through these globally difficult times. Inflation, which is a challenge that is affecting the cost of living and people being able to afford basic necessities in every corner of the planet, is existential. However, there is something the opposition

Business of the House

House leader can do, and it is good news. We have a series of measures that we have introduced to help Canadians with affordability. I am confused as to why the Conservatives have voted against dental for families, against supports for low-income housing and many other measures that we have put forward to try to make life more affordable for Canadians. If they are interested—

[Translation]

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the government House leader. The hon. member for La Prairie on a point of order.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, the opposition leader usually asks the government leader a question about the calendar and what is on the agenda, but this is debate. It has been going on for a few minutes now, and I do not see what it has to do with anything.

What we need to know right now is what to expect. That is why the opposition leader and the government leader are having this discussion.

Would they please get to the point?

The Speaker: The hon. member is right.

The question is usually very concise, but they went off on a tangent, and I want to make sure the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle gets an answer to his question. I do not want to waste everyone's time, so I will ask the government leader to answer the member's question later outside the House.

At this point, can he tell us what to expect for next week?

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. Bloc Québécois colleague, who is a very reasonable person. He is right, but when someone asks me a question, it is my job to answer. Every time I am asked the Thursday question, I try to answer as clearly and directly as possible.

[English]

Moving back to the calendar, as I know the hon. House leader for the opposition is keenly awaiting this information, this afternoon and tomorrow we will continue with the debate on Bill C-32, concerning the fall economic statement. Of course, we look forward to that hon. colleague's support for this.

Next week, we will be focusing on the second reading debate of Bill C-20, the public complaints and review commission act; Bill S-4, COVID-19 measures; and Bill C-27, the digital charter implementation act, 2022.

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

• (1520)

[English]

**FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT,
2022**

The House resumed 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.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I take a walk through this country, I cannot help feeling like everything is broken.

Inflation is at a 40-year high. In a single month, 1.5 million Canadians visited a food bank. In the GTA, the greater Toronto area, that number was 180,000, in one general metropolitan area. One in five Canadians is skipping meals, because they cannot afford their groceries. About half of Canadians are \$200 or less away from insolvency. The number of insolvencies is up by a fifth compared to a year ago, the biggest increase in 13 years. One in six businesses is considering closing their doors.

Households now face the prospect of 15% of their income going to debt servicing alone, a recent record. Mortgage interest costs for the average family are up 11%. Year over year that is the biggest increase since 1991. If someone renewed their mortgage today, after having secured it five years ago, they would be paying about \$7,000 more per year for the very same house they lived in last year.

If people think home ownership is expensive, they should be careful about renting. That now costs \$2,000 a month in the average Canadian city. Vancouver has the world's third most inflated housing market. Toronto has the 10th. In fact, Vancouver is more expensive than New York, Singapore, London, England, and countless others of the world's most famous cities where they have more people, more money and less land.

If we took a walk out of our homes onto the street, we would find ourselves 32% more in danger of being attacked. That is the increase in the violent crime rate since the Prime Minister took office. In fact, there were 124,000 more crimes committed this year than in 2015, when the Prime Minister came to office. There were 788 homicides in Canada last year. That is up from 611 back in 2015, which is another 29% increase. There has been a 92% increase in gang-related homicide and a 61% increase in the reports of sexual assaults since 2015. Police have reported hate crimes are up 72% over the last two years alone. After the government tells us it is investing so much of its rhetoric and its money in fighting racism, we see hatred and hate-based violence has increased by three-quarters.

Some 31,000 Canadians have lost their lives to overdoses. If we take a walk down streets like East Hastings in Vancouver, we will see tent cities where adults are lying face-first on the pavement, having just completed their most recent dose, not sure whether they

will actually awaken. Police and social workers literally have to scour the streets 24-7 to check pulses of people lying on the pavement, not as extraordinary circumstances or one-time emergencies, but as daily events. In fact, there were 71,069 Canadians who died of overdoses in 2021. Twenty-one people are dying of overdoses every single day. That is up from 11 per day.

More than six million Canadians do not have access to a family doctor. The most simple expectations that we have for our health, like going into a pharmacy and getting painkillers for our children have now become out of reach. Canadians are now forced to drive south of the border to get the same medications that are not available on this side of the border. In fact, according to an association of pharmaceutical wholesalers that represents businesses in 19 countries, only Canada is suffering from these shortages.

• (1525)

Meanwhile, speaking of the rest of the world, there are still people who want to come here, and we hope they do, but 2.6 million of them are waiting in immigration queues. Over a million have been waiting longer than the acceptable wait time. When they arrive, they would arrive at Pearson, one of the worst-ranked airports on planet Earth. Montreal is not far behind when it comes to records for delays. The port of Vancouver is now ranked 376th out of 380 ports around the world. Speaking of getting people into the country, 10,000 Canadians were sent wrongly into quarantine by a \$54-million app that we did not need, that did not work and that could have been procured for \$250,000.

Speaking of building stuff, whether it is apps or anything else, our country is now ranked the second slowest for the time it takes to get a building permit. The average building permit takes over 250 days in Canada, but only 28 days in South Korea. It is no wonder we cannot build the factories, the pipelines and, most important of all, the houses that give people homes. We import 130,000 barrels of overseas oil every day even though we have the third-biggest supply on planet Earth.

All of these things are broken. What is most interesting about them is that they all happened under the Prime Minister's watch, while he refuses to take responsibility for any of them. Any one of these things in isolation would be considered a catastrophic embarrassment, but together they show the story of a country that cannot get anything done and that has accepted dramatic reductions in its quality of life and its expectation for what a person can receive living in this country of ours. The Prime Minister, who is in charge of the central government, ought to take some responsibility, but he takes none.

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He says that a 40-year high in inflation has something to do with the war between Russia and Ukraine, even though inflation was already two and a half times the target before the war even began and less than 0.3% of our trade is with Russia and Ukraine combined. As for the stuff they produce, the stuff we already have here, he is not responsible for the massive increases in cost.

The Prime Minister is not responsible, he says, for the doubling of house prices or the fact that rental costs are out of reach. He is not responsible for the skyrocketing crime rates in our streets, even though his government oversees the Criminal Code and the national police force and border security. He is not responsible for the overdose deaths of so many Canadians. He is not responsible for the fact that so many people are going to food banks. He is not responsible for the fact that our children cannot get medication.

He says he is not responsible and he is right: He is not responsible. He is not responsible, even though he has the power to affect all of these things and, in many cases, he is the one who caused them in the first place.

I have never seen a prime minister who is so desperate to have more power with less responsibility. He wants to take over what we see and say on the Internet. He wants to control a greater share of the money that Canadians earn by constantly increasing spending faster than the economy grows. He wants to have more power over dental and pharmaceutical and child care, rather than allowing Canadians to control those things for themselves. He wants to have more control over health care by dictating terms to our provinces on how they should run their hospitals, even while he does not want to be responsible for any of the health outcomes that we see in our emergency rooms across the country. He wants more power, but he does not want more responsibility.

When we ask him about these failures, his constant refrain is that he is spending more money, and on that count he is right. There is no question that the government is the all-time heavyweight champion of spending. It has increased spending by 30% over pre-COVID levels even though COVID programs have now ended, but the results, as I have just listed, speak for themselves.

• (1530)

It is not a consolation prize that we are spending more to achieve these failures. The only thing worse than failing is failing expensively, and that is what the Prime Minister is doing.

Only in government, by the way, would politicians think that it is acceptable to measure their success by how expensive they can be. For example, this week, the Auditor General came out and said that the Liberals have spent an extra \$1 billion-plus specifically on homelessness. Well, that sounds good, but they cannot keep track of how many homeless people there are in Canada. They have no idea what the results are. They have an overall housing program of \$40 billion, which is supposed to make housing more affordable, but all the while house prices have doubled. The more they spend, the more things cost and the worse the results.

In the real world, people judge things by the outcome. For example, if I go to the grocery store, come back home, pull out a receipt and say to my wife, "I spent \$700 on groceries" while I am holding two bags of groceries, she is going to say, "Where did all the mon-

ey go?" I would say she has to give me a high-five because they were really expensive and that whatever I have in those bags must be terrific because it cost more than when she goes grocery shopping.

The reality is that nobody in the real world judges their success that way. We do not have restaurants that say, "Come dine with us. It is \$500 a night to be in our dining room. We will not tell you anything about the service, the ambience or what ends up on the plate. What is most important is that our meals are the most expensive and therefore must be the best." Only in politics do people think it is appropriate to judge success by how expensive government can be. What if instead of judging our success by how much we spend, we judged it by how much we delivered and the results that we actually achieve?

Everything feels broken in the lives of everyday Canadians, but the good news is that we can fix it. We live in the greatest country in the world. Our country has overcome these difficulties before and has rebuilt and given new hope where before there was hurt. There is a very clear path to achieving that result, and that is to start with the issue of money. Instead of spending more, let us achieve more.

How do we do that? Why do we not cap government spending and cut waste, and bring in a dollar-for-dollar law that requires the government to find a dollar of savings for every new dollar of spending measures? That would force politicians to make the same either-or trade-offs when they spend our money that everyday Canadians make in their lives.

When a local mechanic decides he is going to spend a little more on advertising, he has to spend a little more somewhere else in order to free up that money. When a family decides they are going to build a new porch, they might decide not to go on vacation or might try to find a bargain on both. They might get a deal on a vacation and go to the local construction yard to get some discarded lumber in order to build a porch more affordably.

Politicians and bureaucrats do not make those kinds of calculations because they do not have to. There is always more in the pot. They can tax more, borrow more or print more.

That scarcity gets passed on to the taxpayer. Every creature in the universe has to live with scarcity. The great economist Thomas Sowell once said that the first law of economics is scarcity. There is always more demand than there is supply. The first law of politics, however, is to ignore the first law of economics. That is what politicians do by simply putting scarcity onto other people by driving up their costs and externalizing the consequences of spending decisions.

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If instead we forced politicians by law to live with the same laws of scarcity as every other business, consumer or taxpayer, we would force better results. Politicians would need to go into their departments and ask themselves, "If I want to increase spending on this initiative, where can I find savings somewhere else?" They would be incentivized to go line by line, year after year, to find low-priority items in order to redirect the money to high-priority results for Canadians.

Let us get the Bank of Canada back to its core mandate of 2% inflation rather than printing money to pay for political spending. Let us also get rid of the obvious examples of wasteful spending. We could cancel the ArriveCAN app and get rid of the multi-billion dollar Infrastructure Bank, which has achieved no projects but has guaranteed the profits of large multinationals and the bonuses of executives. Getting rid of this waste would allow us to save money and free up more resources for things that could achieve results for our people.

• (1535)

Instead of creating more cash, why do we not create more of what cash buys in this country? Why do we not grow more food, build more houses and generate more Canadian energy?

Speaking of energy, I had the privilege of visiting the single largest infrastructure project in Canadian history, LNG Canada, a \$40-billion private sector investment approved by the previous Conservative government. It could only come to pass because the Government of British Columbia agreed to exempt the project from the carbon tax. Otherwise, it would not have been economical. What result will actually be achieved by this project? The answer is that it will cut 60 million tonnes of carbon out of the atmosphere by replacing overseas coal-fired plants with clean Canadian natural gas.

Is it not interesting that this project had to be exempt from both Bill C-69, the government's environmental law, and the carbon tax in order for it to go ahead and reduce emissions? In other words, for this environmentally friendly project to occur, the government's environmental policies had to be ignored. That proves how backwards they are.

If the carbon tax had been in place, the project would not have been economical. If Bill C-69, the anti-energy law, had been in place, there is no way it would have been approved. What would have happened? About 60 million more tonnes of greenhouse gases would have gone into the global atmosphere because there would not have been clean Canadian natural gas to replace the dirty coal in Asia.

We have an enormous advantage reaching Asia. B.C. is the shortest North American shipping distance to Asia. We also have the shortest North American shipping distance to Europe from the east coast of Canada. Speaking of the east coast, when the Prime Minister visited there, he was asked about approving natural gas projects in Canada's east coast. He said there might not be a business case. He was standing next to the German Chancellor when he said that.

Ironically, the Germans just announced that they completed a new natural gas import terminal in 194 days. Do members know what they will not be importing there? It is Canadian natural gas.

Why? It is because we do not export any natural gas overseas. We do not have any terminals completed. Despite 15 of them having been proposed when the Prime Minister took office, not one of them has been completed. Only one is under construction, the aforementioned LNG Canada. The rest are in limbo.

We could be sending the Germans our natural gas to break European dependence on Putin and to transform dollars for dictators into paycheques for our people in this country. Why do we not do that?

Let us think of the human benefit that would bring. When I was in northern British Columbia, I spoke to a Haisla Nation grandmother who broke down into tears when she said that her granddaughter had been diagnosed with autism. After decades of federal promises that these kinds of conditions would be met with services and treatment, there is no treatment in her region of rural, remote northern British Columbia. She said that if natural gas projects like LNG Canada were allowed to go ahead, and if her nation could sign agreements to share in the benefits of those programs, there would be local resources under the control of first nations communities to provide children like her granddaughter with autism treatment and countless other things. Why do we not empower first nations to do more things like that by allowing these projects to go ahead?

We need to get the government out of the way so these opportunities can occur. We need, for example, to incentivize more home building by requiring our large municipalities with overpriced markets to approve fast and affordable building permits so that we could build the millions of new homes that are required for our existing population and for those who have yet to come to our country. We need to require that every federally funded transit station be pre-approved for high-density housing around it so that our young people do not even need to own a car to live in an affordable house.

• (1540)

We also need to sell off 15% of the 37,000 underutilized federal buildings so they can be made into affordable housing for our young people. We need to get government out of the way so that our projects can get completed and our people can have homes and energy.

Finally, we need to get government out of the way and off the backs of our farmers so they can produce more nutritious food in this country. Is it not an outrage that Canada has the sixth-biggest supply of farmland per capita on earth, but in one in five households, people are actually skipping meals because of the excessive cost of food?

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We should not only be able to feed our own families but be the breadbasket of the world by cancelling the carbon tax, not just on primary farming but on drying food and transporting it. We need to cancel the carbon tax on our truckers so they can bring that food affordably to our supermarkets. We also need to remove the ridiculous fertilizer tariffs and taxes the government is bringing in so we can produce more food on every acre of land in order to have greater output and reduce the amount of fuel that has to be burned to produce that prodigious output. Let us unleash the fierce power of our farmers to feed us again.

Let us also make it possible for our people to walk safely in the streets once again, something we used to take for granted. The answer is clear: The vast majority of crime is committed by a tiny minority of criminals. A recent letter from the Union of B.C. Municipalities demonstrated the number of instances of crime and criminality that are generated by a tiny minority. For example, in Vancouver, 40 individuals were responsible for 6,000 negative interactions with the police, most of them arrests. Let us think about that. The same 40 people were arrested 6,000 times in a year. That is like 150 arrests per person per year.

We all agree that if a young person makes a mistake, we should invest in rehabilitating them to get them back on the street once they are ready and into a job as productive members of society. However, when someone commits 60, 70, 80 or 100 violent offences and we consistently and automatically release them early on bail and even after they are convicted, that is contributing to the criminality that has grown by one-third since the Prime Minister took office. Let us target that small minority of criminals with serious consequences to get them off the streets and keep the streets safe.

It is not out of hatred for the criminal that we take these actions. It is out of love for the victims, the people who desperately want to live safely in our neighbourhoods. Instead of investing money in going after the lawful, licensed, trained and tested hunters and sport shooters, we should put that money into bolstering our borders to keep the smuggled drugs and guns that are terrorizing our communities out of our country altogether.

Finally, we need to come to the rescue of the people living in these all-too-common tent cities, whether they are in Vancouver, Toronto or Montreal, or in smaller centres like Peterborough, where this phenomenon is growing out of control. We see people who could be our brothers, sisters or, God forbid, sons or daughters who have lost their homes, are living on the streets and are playing Russian roulette with their lives. Every single time they ingest these poisons, they risk stopping their hearts, and we can change that.

We know that the government's current approach is to liberalize access to the most dangerous opioids and, in fact, use taxpayer funding and public resources for so-called safe supply to make them even more abundant. There is no such thing as safe poison; it is all deadly. We know what we can do to save these people's lives, because they are doing it in Alberta today.

• (1545)

Alberta has redirected the resources away from a so-called "safe", taxpayer-funded supply of drugs over to recovery and treatment, getting addicts off the street and into a recovery centre, where

they are first given detox, which cleans the poison out of their system, and then given 60 to 90 days of treatment, in-patient care, building up the habits of a clean, drug-free life. They are then gently reintroduced into society in jobs and opportunities, during which time they have counselling that keeps them on the right track. What is the result of that approach? It has cut overdoses in half and they are saving lives, proving there is always hope. It is possible to save these people.

Everything feels broken in this country, but it is our role in the House to turn all of that hurt into hope. It is our job to come forward with the practical, common-sense solutions that have made this the best country on earth. It is our job to take responsibility for the suffering that exists in this country today and replace it with opportunity, to give people back control of their lives here in Canada, the freest country on earth, where people can chart their own destinies and be masters of their own fate.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start by reading this quote: "[G]overnment is ruining the Canadian dollar, so Canadians should have the freedom to use other money, such as Bitcoin." This is what was said by the Leader of the Opposition about six or seven months ago.

We know that since he made those comments, Bitcoin is now down by 65%, and the reality is that when we look at scandals like the FTX scandal, it is very obvious that the decentralization of currency is not a stable form and will never compare to something like the Canadian dollar.

I am wondering, since he made that comment, if the Leader of the Opposition has had the opportunity to reflect on his position, and if he has since then adjusted his position on Bitcoin and cryptocurrency.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Mr. Speaker, people should have the freedom to invest in whatever they want, as in the quote, as long as they follow the law and pay their taxes, just like everyone else. What is illegal in fiat currency should be illegal using digital or cryptographic or blockchain assets as well. If it is illegal to evade taxes using fiat currency, it should be illegal to evade taxes using any other type of asset. The rule should be simple, consistent and clear.

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However, one thing is also clear. Only the Canadian dollar will be legal tender in this country, regardless. I believe there is only one legal tender, and it is the Canadian dollar. The government has been ruining the purchasing power of that dollar by printing half a trillion dollars of it. It went from \$1.8 trillion to \$2.3 trillion in M2 money supply. That gave us the worst inflation in 40 years. It was entirely predictable. I predicted it: I warned the Liberals, and I wish they had listened.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am having difficulty following the speech by the leader of the Conservative Party. First, he spoke about cutting spending. Then he talked about providing a family doctor for every Canadian who does not have one. That does not make sense.

Yesterday, there was a CBC story about CHU Sainte-Justine, a children's hospital in Montreal. A child was in respiratory arrest, and they did not know if they could save him. Even though he was swamped and there were a lot of people in the emergency room, one ER doctor agreed to speak on camera and said that it is ridiculous, investments need to be made, people are tired and there is a shortage of ER staff. Clearly, the health system is on the verge of collapsing.

On the other side of the House, they have made their decision. They are not going to invest in health. They have said no several times. They even repeated it during question period today.

My question for the leader of the Conservative Party is the following. As much as we would not want it to happen, if the Conservatives were to take power tomorrow morning, would they increase the health transfer from 22% to 35%, as every province in the country has requested, without imposing any conditions? Yes or no?

• (1550)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, first of all, it is important to recognize the Conservative Party's record. We increased health transfers by 6% per year when we were in government.

This government has reduced the annual escalator for health transfers. Our party's policy is to continue to provide stable transfers that increase from year to year.

My colleague criticized me for saying that the government was spending too much. He just mentioned the failures in the health care system. Has the \$500 billion in additional spending that the federal government racked up over the last two years solved these problems? Obviously not.

Just because we have a more costly government in Ottawa does not mean we will have better health care systems in our provinces.

[*English*]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, week after week we hear the leader of the official opposition stand in this House and outline point by point the economic violence of capitalist corporate greed, yet he never has the courage to name the real cause of high inflation, which is the Conservatives' endless appetite for obscene corporate profits while everyday Canadians struggle to put food on their tables.

Does the leader of the official opposition not have the guts to take on the corporate greed of Bay Street, or is he simply happy to continue to serve them?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I suspect corporations were just as greedy seven years ago as they are today, so why is it that inflation is three times as high? The reality is that we have a government that has facilitated the so-called "greedflation" we have.

When governments print money and pump it into the financial system, those who first touch that money are the ones who profit from it. That is why, when we see these massive money-printing deficits anywhere in the world that it has been tried, it has not only caused inflation but caused a massive increase in the wealth gap. The richest people, who have stuff, benefit when that stuff goes up in price. The poorest people, who need stuff, suffer because they have less purchasing power with which to buy it.

It is the money printers and the big government state capitalism of the Liberal government that are allowing this outrage and injustice to occur, and it is the member, by being part of this costly coalition, who is serving that government greed and corporate greed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, for several weeks now, day after day, we have been illustrating how rising taxes and inflation are affecting Canadian families. Every time, all the government ministers duck the issue, pointing fingers at everyone else in the world and refusing to talk about their own culpability.

In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition said that the Prime Minister was responsible for inflation. Can he confirm that the Prime Minister is indeed responsible for the inflation we are experiencing here in Canada?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister is definitely responsible for it.

We now know that every excuse the government has come up with does not hold water. For example, it says that COVID-19 caused inflation. However, it has now been more than a year since we stopped shutting down large swaths of the economy because of COVID-19, and yet the rate of inflation keeps going up. The government says that inflation is due to the war in Ukraine, but our inflation rate was already double the target before the war even began. The government also says that it is due to the high price of oil, but the price of oil was the same when the Harper government was in place, and we never had an inflation rate over 4%. Finally, there were wars in the Middle East, in Iraq, in Syria and in Afghanistan when the Harper government was in place, and we did not have inflation like we are seeing now.

What we have today is \$500 billion of inflationary deficit that is driving up the cost of everything we buy and all the interest we pay. It is just inflation, and the Prime Minister is indeed responsible for it.

• (1555)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, let us go to some very basic economic theory. The leader talks about economics and productivity. One of the ways we can increase productivity for a nation is by increasing the size of the workforce. The national child care program is going to increase the size of Canada's workforce.

Why would the Conservative Party of Canada oppose a national child care program, when we know for a fact that it will contribute to increasing the productivity of our nation? Why would you want to get rid of it if you form government?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is to talk directly to the Chair, and I want to remind the leader of the official opposition to be careful when he is talking about inflation and putting the Prime Minister's name in front of it.

The hon. leader of the official opposition has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, with regard to the member's question, the Liberals have been making these promises now since 1993. That was the first Liberal red book. They promised there would be a national day care program. Every single child would have access to an affordable day care space, they said, way back then, and still they have not kept the promise. To this day there are wait-lists right across the country for affordable day care.

We believe that if the government is going to promise these sorts of things, it should deliver. We also believe that the money should go directly into the pockets of parents, and that is why we originally created the child care benefit that exists today. It was to put the dollars right in the hands of parents, so they could make their own child care decisions.

Trickle-down government, where Liberals make promise after promise but then fail to deliver results, is exactly the problem to which I was pointing in my original speech. Yes, it is easy for them to make big promises, and yes, it is easy for them to spend big dollars, but it is much harder to achieve results. When we are in government, we will achieve those results.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are here talking about the Minister of Finance's fall economic update. It is really just an update on how government spending is going in relation to the budget from some months earlier this spring.

The bottom line is that we are going further and further into debt. Inflation is at a 40-year high, and interest rates, inevitably, are going up to combat out-of-control inflation and spending. The Liberals say they had no choice. We were in a crisis, and we had to avoid a financial crisis around the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, we have learned now from the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer that a large amount of that spending was not even COVID-related. This is the Liberal government, with the support of its NDP cousins, saying that it just wants more government spending, and that government should be involved in a bigger piece

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of the economic pie. It is saying, "Down with free enterprise, and up with big government".

Our leader, the member for Carleton who just spoke, has been warning for a long time that this type of reckless fiscal policy is going to lead us into trouble. We are seeing that now. There are real-world consequences. We are seeing signs of these pressures on everyday Canadians. Almost half of Canadians are less than \$200 away from not being able to pay their bills. Twenty per cent, one out of five, are skipping meals, and 1.5 million Canadians have used food banks within the last month.

I received an email from a constituent. I am sure every member in the House receives these types of emails. Cory wrote to me recently. He said:

Me and my wife have a high cost of living like everyone else. With the cost of living increasing at an insane rate, we're not sure what to do... We've done the following: driven to the United States to get our child medication...cut down on our spending, including buying less meat. We don't want to go to a food bank, so we are eating cheaper food on a regular basis.... We have both started driving on our extra time with Uber Eats but we find we are making less than minimum wage.

Cory sums up with this, and I could not have said it better myself, "I honestly don't know what to do from here. This is ridiculous and the government has [messed] up our lives." There are many Canadians who feel that way.

When we are talking about the economic statement, we need to talk about the flip side of the government's happy-go-lucky "spend, spend" attitude. The Bank of Canada's driving up interest rates is the response. That is the consequence, the only tool it has available to react to the government's reckless fiscal policy.

Other than bond holders, no one is happy with high inflation. Let me talk about a young family who reached out to my office just recently. They bought their dream house two years ago. They tied down their mortgage rate for two years. They have just recently received a letter from their bank saying that, unfortunately, interest rates are up, so their mortgage payments are going up \$700 a month. That is \$8,400 a year. They get nothing extra for that. They do not get a new car. They do not get a trip to Disneyland with their kids. All they get is more money from their hard-earned paycheques going to people who are already wealthy, investors who can afford to lend out mortgage money.

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As the member of Parliament for Langley—Aldergrove, I speak to many small and medium-sized businesses in my communities, including a woman who runs a small retail business in the business district of Langley. She told me about what inflation is doing to make running her business much more difficult. She was talking about what interest rates are doing. She is paying more money on her operating line of credit with the bank right now. Profit margins are already very tight, and they are just becoming tighter. She thinks that maybe she is going to have to cut costs by laying off workers. Nobody is happy with that except, of course, the Bank of Canada governor, Tiff Macklem, who is signalling that, in order to tackle inflation, we have to kill jobs.

● (1600)

I heard our leader, the member for Carleton, ask earlier this week if the government's position agrees with the Bank of Canada governor that we need to kill jobs in order to tackle inflation. Is that the government's position? I do not think we have heard an answer to that yet. Maybe we will get some comments on that.

I want to mention a meeting that took place in Vancouver just recently with the ministers of health of the provinces and territories. They met with our federal Minister of Health. It was a disaster, quite frankly. Everybody was pointing fingers at everybody else, saying it is everybody else's fault that this meeting fell apart. The provinces want more money for health care, with no strings attached. They say the federal Minister of Health just is not listening.

On the other hand, the Minister of Health is finally feeling the reality of scarce resources. He says the provinces just do not understand his dilemma. On the one hand, he is having to work with his government's inflationary spending, and that it is never enough for the provinces. On the other hand, he knows that inflationary spending is driving up inflation and driving up interest rates.

We are now in a position where just the interest cost to service the national debt is going to be roughly equivalent to the amount of money the federal government pays to provinces in health transfers. The Bank of Canada's posted interest rate of 3.75%, times \$1.3 trillion, if my math is correct, works out to roughly \$40 billion. The federal government pays \$45 billion in health transfers. These are the pressures we are facing. This is the result of the government's reckless inflationary spending. This is the legacy the current government is going to have to carry with it.

What will the Conservative Party do when we form government? When I listen to my constituents, that day cannot come early enough. As our leader has said on many occasions, instead of creating more cash, we will create more of what cash buys: more homes, more food and more resources here at home. We will remove government gatekeepers, get more homes built and make Canada the quickest place in the world to get building permits.

I was talking to marine operators in the Port of Vancouver, and they were telling me how long it takes to get an approval for any kind of project. One who also operates in the United States told us that within 18 months of applying for the approval, they actually had shovels in the ground. We can compare that to what happens in Vancouver, in Canada, and it is no wonder our productivity is so low. Everything gets bogged down with government gatekeepers.

We will make energy more affordable by approving projects more quickly. We will tackle climate change by making alternative energy cheaper, not by making Canadian energy more expensive.

We will reform tax and benefit systems to ensure that whenever anybody works and puts in some extra hours, it will pay off for them. The message I want to give to Cory in my riding is that a Conservative government will ensure that hard-working Canadians will be able to keep more of their paycheques to feed their families.

We will be voting against the fall economic statement because it did not respond to the demands we put forward, which I believe Canadians think are very reasonable.

First of all, we had asked that there be no new taxes. This includes cancelling all planned tax hikes, including the payroll tax increase that businesses in my community are fearing is going to make business even more difficult. We are asking for no new spending: a dollar for a dollar. If the government wants to spend an extra dollar, it needs to find a dollar somewhere else, pay-as-you-go style. This, I think, is completely reasonable.

Canadians are expecting the government to manage its finances properly. Under the current government, our economy is not being managed well.

● (1605)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing our government did was believe in students. We believe, in particular, in university and post-secondary students, and we have done many things to help those students. We have doubled the Canada summer jobs. We have doubled the Canada student grant, and in this last fall economic statement, we have raised the threshold of repayment from \$25,000 to \$40,000. It is key that we have also eliminated interest on Canada student loans, which the party opposite has said was a bad decision and wasteful.

I am wondering if the member agrees with his party's position on our elimination of interest for the Canada student loans.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, a good idea would be to have a government that manages its fiscal responsibilities. That would keep taxes lower and would bring inflation down so that the prices of houses and other assets do not go through the roof.

What would be really helpful to university students I speak to is to have a hope that they might actually be able to buy a home one day. Under the Liberal government, house prices have more than doubled. Many young people feel that they are never going to be able to get into a home, a dream that all Canadians have had until now. That would be a good solution.

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[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's speech. He seems concerned about the well-being of his constituents, and that is very commendable.

He talked about the cost of living and the cost of housing. We know that things are not easy right now in that regard. I talked about it earlier in the member's statement that I made. In Quebec alone, 600,000 people will experience hidden homelessness at some point in their lives. That is 7% of the population. Right now, there are 6,000 homeless people in Quebec alone. Those numbers grew during the pandemic.

What we need to do is build housing. I was talking to an economist from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation recently who said that, if we allow market forces to run their course for the next 10 years, 500,000 housing units will be built in Quebec alone. However, 1.1 million housing units are needed.

Our Conservative friends are always saying that we need to cut spending, but somewhere along the way, the government needs to intervene to build 600,000 housing units if we want to address the issues of affordability and availability.

How do we do that?

• (1610)

[*English*]

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the way to get more houses built is to unleash the entrepreneurial spirit of Canadian business people and to bring interest rates down so that housing is more affordable.

I was talking a home builder in my riding who wanted to put up a large project of 400 or so units of affordable housing within the definition of CMHC's rules about affordable housing. He cannot afford to do it. It just does not work out with high interest rates.

We are not looking for the government to spend more money. We are looking for the government to get out of the way as gatekeepers so that private enterprise could build more houses, 1.5 million across Canada, including in Quebec, and also in my province. That is what is required.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, there was some interesting news out of the United Kingdom today.

It does have a Conservative government in power, and it is the Labour opposition that is tackling them for the exact same issues, complaining about the high cost of living and the fact that the Conservative government is not doing enough.

To the U.K. Conservative Party's credit, it announced today that it was going to increase the windfall tax on oil and gas companies up to 35% because the people of Britain are tired of the way those oil and gas companies are making out like bandits.

Why do the U.K. Conservatives have the courage to do the right thing, while it is so lacking in Canada's Conservatives?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, of course Conservatives are always very concerned about fairer taxation, and the natural resources of our nation should be for the benefit of the nation.

That does not mean that we get in the way of what private enterprise wants to do. We also want to attract investors to invest in our natural resources and to build our big projects. That is what is going to make Canada strong.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to address the fall economic statement.

Recently, I had the honour and privilege to go to Washington with the defence committee. My friend from Calgary Rocky Ridge was also on the trip. I want to thank the ambassador publicly for her contributions to the utility of our trip. We could not have been treated better. We went to the Wilson Center, the Pentagon, the Atlantic Institute, and other places. With respect to defence contacts, Washington is, frankly, the centre of the geopolitical universe.

In addition to chairing the defence committee, I also co-chair the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, which harkens back to the times of Roosevelt and Mackenzie King. I want to assure hon. members that I was not chairing the board at that time, but can expect some push-back from the member for Kingston and the Islands on that. It is an opportunity, on an annual basis, for our respective militaries to exchange public policy issues, in particular, to update their own military policies. The American government has just updated its military policy and the Canadian government is about to update its "Strong, Secure, Engaged" policy, because, frankly, the threat environment has changed dramatically in the last 12 months.

Members may wonder why I would start a speech about the fall economic statement by referring to defence. Over the course of these many meetings, I started to joke that we really should rename the defence committee to the defence, trade and commerce committee, because the threats that Canada and other western nations are facing are not merely threats that relate to what we would describe as security and military threats. Rather, they are societal, economic and business threats, which are in fact far more insidious and multi-faceted than stand-alone military and security threats.

It was clear when we arrived in Washington that the Americans regard China as what is called a pacing threat. A pacing threat is a threat to which we have to maintain our technological military superiority. They clearly regard Russia as an acute threat, one that can literally do damage, but it does not penetrate into the threat analysis in the same way as does China. The pacing threat that China is creating is a grey zone of conflict. This is where it relates to our fall economic statement, because in the grey zone of conflict, there is an economics challenge, a business challenge, a democracy challenge, an intellectual property challenge, a rule of law challenge, and we could isolate many more.

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The PRC uses all of these areas of access points to undermine the very fabric of our society, to steal when it is appropriate to steal, to loot when it is appropriate to loot, to sow disinformation when it is appropriate to sow disinformation. Anything of any value gets returned to Beijing one way or another, which in turn takes those intellectual, scientific and technological advantages that we currently enjoy and uses them against our western society.

Those who briefed us expressed a real worry that we need to keep ahead. A cold war mentality is setting in, but unlike the Cold War mentality of the mutually assured destruction that existed between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. in times past, it is a top-to-bottom, layer-by-layer contest over anything of any value in western societies. There is a huge advantage for the Communist Party of China, because it is a closed society. Ours are relatively open societies, and the contest is heavily weighted in favour of a closed society that has a unitary view of dominance at all costs and wishes to turn us all into vassal states.

• (1615)

In sharing our intellectual resources, we will see our universities are relatively open. The concept in western society is that we share knowledge with a view to building knowledge, and the real question is whether we can actually continue that. The argument, if one was looking at this from a threat analysis standpoint, is that we cannot.

We have a patent regime that exists to protect investor and property rights. Again, a society that routinely abuses the patents that exist and takes no responsibility to compensate the creator is a system that may not continue to be able to exist.

Further, we have open real estate markets. We have heard a lot about the cost of living. What is, in part, driving the cost of living are massive infusions of monies from abroad, somewhat from China in particular, which drives up the prices of housing. In turn, that makes housing unaffordable to our own population and distorts our entire market system. That cannot continue.

We have an open investor system in mines and minerals. Again, we cannot allow state-owned enterprises to own critical minerals and critical mines.

We have an open democracy. We cannot continue with the misinformation and voter influence campaigns that are run from the People's Republic of China. When we hear the threat analysis from the people in the Pentagon and leading thinkers in all of these institutions, we realize all these layers of threat are significant to our way of life and significant to the prosperity that, frankly, is reflected in our fall economic statement.

These are just a few examples of the layered threats that go from a traditional military threat right through to abuse of our democracy.

I looked at the fall economic statement and compared it to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's view of the same set of numbers. Frankly, there is not a great deal of difference between the two. Occasionally the government is a bit more optimistic than the PBO and on occasion the PBO is a bit more optimistic than the govern-

ment, but on several layers we are necessarily simply going to need to adjust.

Capital flows from the PRC are going to need to be restricted, and these capital flows will need to be replaced internally or from abroad, probably primarily from the U.S. In fact, the United States military has set up a fund, where it is available to invest in various technologies but also various mines and minerals that will be needed to keep ahead of a pacing threat.

I have a relative, for instance, who works at a leading research company, and the Department of Defense is actually one of the significant investors in that company. Rare earth minerals require a lot of capital and are critical to the 21st century economy. They are also critical to weapons technology.

Canada is treated as a domestic supplier for defence procurement. We will start to draw down on that status much more vigorously as we reshore, we nearshore and friend-shore critical investments.

I see that Madam Speaker is hinting that my time might be finished, so I will end here.

• (1620)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was following along with the member's speech with the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge and we have just one observation to make. According to the government's own fall economic statement, within seven years we will pay more in debt interest payments than we pay right now for the defence department's annual budget.

If the member is as concerned as we are with the national security of Canada and ensuring that we can protect our country into the future, should the government not get control of debt interest payments and make sure it is not taking on even more debt, thus assuring that entire government departments will be gobbled up by debt interest payments to the big banks?

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I would like to note that the government has actually handled its debt management quite shrewdly by buying, when the interest rates were low, long-term bonds. That has actually brought our management of debt into line.

I also encourage the hon. member to look at comparators with other nations. If there is any other nation that wishes to have the debt-to-GDP ratio that Canada has, I would be interested in the hon. member telling me who it might be.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will try to take no offence in the fact that my hon. colleague forgot to mention that I, too, was on that trip. I did get quite a lot out of it, of course. It was fascinating.

One of the things that our defence committee is studying is Arctic sovereignty and how Canada is investing into NORAD and its modernization and our role in that. We have heard a lot about how we can continue to be that partner in NORAD to help with the security that is at threat through the Arctic, to the Arctic and in the Arctic. While we are focusing as the defence committee on “through” and Canada’s role in that, maybe the member could talk about some of the investments his government needs to make and has not made in the Arctic.

• (1625)

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, I offer to my colleague an insincere apology for not seeing her down at the other end of the chamber hiding behind her mask, but that is another thing altogether. I do appreciate her contribution to the defence committee.

The investments in the Arctic are necessarily going to be massive. As climate change takes hold, the reality is that the Arctic is opening up. Canadians need to get their heads around the notion that we are going to, not only as a defence initiative, invest heavily in the Arctic; but we also need to build ports and we need to use the facilities that we have. It is going to be extremely expensive to build the new early warning system, a massive technological enterprise.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned resource extraction and expansion of that. Alongside that critical mineral expansion, is there a plan from the Liberal government to protect indigenous women and girls from exploitation and man camps and all of those things that come alongside resource extraction that have never been considered by the government in the past?

Hon. John McKay: Madam Speaker, one of the unique advantages that Canada has is the way in which particularly the Canadian military has integrated indigenous people into the Rangers and into the larger military. They, in effect, create our sovereignty presence in the north. There has been a great deal of conversation about how to do it appropriately. As the Arctic opens up, I see this as a unique opportunity to get it right with indigenous folks. Frankly, the testimony before the defence committee to date has been that we are starting to get it right and the consultations are real and meaningful, and I would like to be optimistic about it.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before the Minister of Finance introduced Bill C-32, the fall economic statement implementation act, on November 3, the Conservative leader made two clear demands on behalf of our party.

First, we wanted the Liberal government to stop the taxes. This included cancelling the planned tax hikes and the tripling of the carbon tax. Second, we wanted the Liberal government to stop the spending. Any new spending by Liberal ministers in the government must be matched by an equivalent saving to cut wasteful spending and stop the inflationary deficits that drive up the cost of everything for Canadians.

Unfortunately, neither of our demands was met by the government and, for that reason, I will be voting against this bill.

Simply put, the fall economic statement does not address the cost of living crisis facing Canadians right now. In fact, it makes the crisis worse. After seven years of the Liberal government, we pay

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more today for goods and services and get less. Groceries, gas, home heating and more are getting more and more expensive by the day because of the Liberals’ reckless spending habits, the same reckless spending habits that have played a big role in driving up inflation.

Many of the inflationary issues and concerns we face are of the government’s own making. For months we have been warning the Liberals that their out-of-control spending would lead to an increase in interest rates. The government responded by telling Canadians not to worry and to go ahead and take out big loans and mortgages, because interest rates would remain low for a long time and there would not be any negative consequences.

Well, fast-forward to now, and interest rates are increasing at the fastest rate in decades. Families that bought a home five years ago with a typical mortgage that is now up for renewal will pay \$7,000 more a year. The Bank of Canada has signalled that interest rates will have to rise even higher to tackle inflation. Many Canadians will not be able to afford their mortgages and will risk losing their homes.

Through the government’s bad spending habits, as inflation soars, so does our national debt. Since they were elected in 2015, the Liberal government has doubled our national debt, spending more than all previous governments combined since Confederation in 1867. Let that resonate for a moment.

Here are some recent examples of reckless Liberal spending contributing to inflation and our national debt.

The government wasted \$54 million on the disastrous Arrive-CAN app, yet it refuses to tell us who got rich off those massively excessive contracts.

The federal government paid out generous bonuses to Destination Canada executives when the tourism industry badly needs to recover.

The Liberal government recklessly spent \$400 million on random testing at our borders, when medical experts said this policy was no longer needed.

Just last month, the Prime Minister spent \$6,000 to stay for one night in a luxurious European hotel room.

Despite all the reckless and record Liberal spending, Canadians have less to show for it and are worse off because of it. Is it any wonder, then, that Canadians are struggling? The cost of groceries is up almost 11%. The cost of transportation is up over 10%. Gas is up over 22%. Next April, the excise tax on alcohol will increase by nearly 7%.

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Under these deteriorating conditions, people work harder to try to get ahead, but they take less home because of the higher cost of the things they buy and the higher cost of punishing taxes to afford all this reckless Liberal spending. As a result of the Liberal government's incompetence, goods and services are more expensive and we have less money to pay for them.

How are Canadians reacting to this new reality? Families are downgrading their diets to cover the jump in food prices. Food bank usage is at an all-time high. Seniors are delaying their retirement and watching their life savings evaporate with inflation. Younger adults who did everything right are now trapped in 400-square-foot apartments or living in their parents' basements. No wonder Canadians feel like they have lost control. Many are falling behind, and others are struggling to get ahead.

The fall economic update shows that federal government revenues have increased by \$40.1 billion this year alone. As Canadians suffer financially, the Liberal government is actually profiting from increased inflation that it generates and Canadians pay for.

How did it do that? Well, when Canadians pay higher prices on goods and services, they are also paying higher taxes. When they pay higher taxes, the government makes more money.

My NDP colleagues in this place have a history and reputation for taking issue with big corporate greed, yet when it comes to big government greed, apparently it is different and they turn a blind eye.

• (1630)

Rather than rein in the spending to begin slowing down the vicious cycle of spend and inflate, the Liberals drive the cycle of inflation even faster by spending more money at every opportunity they get. In addition to driving inflation, the federal government is also incurring tremendous amounts of debt. In fact, debt interest payment costs will have doubled this year. Next year, interest payments will be nearly as much as the Canada health transfer, and it is projected to be larger than what the government spends on the budget for the Department of National Defence.

Let us think about that. This is not good governance. It is dangerous governance. Anyone with a stake or interest in the good governance of our country should be alarmed and concerned.

Today, the federal government spends more money than any federal government before it. It is bigger, in terms of workforce, than ever before, yet what are the results? Millions of immigration applications are backlogged. Passport applications are severely delayed. New NEXUS and FAST applications are far behind schedule. The Phoenix pay system disaster continues. Government transparency is all but gone as journalists, researchers and Canadians cannot access federal information because the access to information system is broken in many federal departments.

Another irony I will point out is that despite the record number of federal employees and a track record of nothing working, this big-spending Liberal government spent \$14.6 billion last year on outsourcing contracts to businesses outside of the public service to do public service work. This is yet another indication that the federal government is too big, which is causing it to break down.

Canadians are paying for reckless Liberal spending. We are not benefiting from it. In fact, future Canadian generations are at risk because of that and the debt the Liberal government has incurred. Canadians must realize that as the Liberals make more promises for a better tomorrow to detract us from the issues of today, none of the problems they have created, which Canadians now face, are getting fixed. After seven years of Liberal government incompetence in Ottawa, Canadians are realizing they are worse off today compared to when the Liberals first took office in 2015. We need real solutions to these real problems that Canadians are facing right now.

Instead of creating more cash, the Conservatives would create more of what cash buys. Enough with the talking, we need to get more homes built. We need to make energy more affordable, and to do so we would repeal anti-energy laws and get Canadian energy out to market. We would cut corporate welfare and axe the carbon tax. We would tackle climate change by making alternative energy cheaper, not by making Canadian energy more expensive. We would reform the tax system to ensure that whenever people work an extra hour, take an extra shift or earn an extra bonus they are always better off and would keep more of that dollar for themselves and their needs, not for the government's political agenda.

Conservatives have an ambitious vision and plan for when we form government after the next election, but for now, I am going to do my part by voting against Bill C-32.

• (1635)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have heard many of the member's comments several times before from members opposite.

The member mentioned that spending has not come down at all. There was an article on Global News recently about budget 2022 and Canada's incredible disappearing deficit, and that the deficit has been reduced significantly. It has shrunk by \$275 billion in just two years.

I am wondering where you are getting your facts from when you say the deficit has not shrunk at all.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member that she should not use the word "you" or "your".

The hon. member for Niagara Falls

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Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, looking at the government's own financial document, the recent statement, it shows the actual service levels for the debt it has created. Let us remember that Mark Carney, the former governor of the Bank of Canada, and Tiff Macklem, the current Governor of the Bank of Canada, said that inflation was caused by that extra \$200 billion that was not related to COVID spending, which the Liberal government decided to make. It caused the inflationary pressures we are facing today.

Let us think about this. In the next several years, we are going to be spending more on servicing the debt than we will be on health transfers, which is \$45 billion now. The Province of Ontario is spending \$74 billion right now on health care services and the federal government only spends \$45 billion. It is going to be spending more to service the debt on top of that in the coming years, more than on national defence. That is ludicrous and it needs to be fixed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to be sure I understand what our colleague said. He talked about spending and spending. I understand that the Conservatives do not like spending and they see it as the source of inflation, which is not entirely untrue, but it is more complicated than they often present. This issue certainly deserves better than a childish campaign of hashtags with silly wordplay using the Prime Minister's name, even though it is not necessarily false. This could be in the middle of a discussion. However, we are living in a time when we also need spending. He talked about health spending.

Would the Conservatives respond favourably to Quebec's request for \$28 billion in ongoing funding?

[*English*]

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, I mentioned what we are supporting. If governments are looking to spend, the policy we would be putting forward is this: For every dollar spent in new spending, one has to find a dollar in savings from other departments and other types of spending. That is to be used for the programs people deserve.

Let us think about this. We are spending almost \$45 billion on interest to service the debt. That could be used for programs Canadians deserve and need right now, yet it is going to service the debt. That helps no Canadian.

We have to fix that. We have to get our economic conditions in a better state. The government has failed to do that.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I was surprised the member did not mention wine, which is one of the industries both his riding and mine share. We do not make as much as the Niagara region, but we make better wine, of course.

I wanted to perhaps give him some time to expand on what we were hoping to see in this fall economic statement about support for the wine industry.

• (1640)

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, we can debate whose wine is better. One concern I mentioned in my remarks just now

was the excise tax. In April it will be going up almost 7%. That will be hitting our wineries and our producers and hurting them tremendously.

Another thing happening at the end of March is that the two-year replacement program for the ending of the excise exemption will end. That was \$166 million provided over two years for our wineries, and there is no certainty on what is there to replace it.

The government has to work and come forward with suggestions and ideas on how it is going to support our growers in the future.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Regina—Wascana, Agriculture and Agri-Food; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Health.

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to add my voice to the debate on the fall economic statement.

The bill is a disappointing but unsurprising continuation of the high-tax, high-inflation policy that we have come to expect from the Liberal government. The bill offers Canadians more debt, more taxes, more spending and the prospect of more inflation and higher interest rates in the months and years ahead. I say that Canadians have come to expect this kind of bill because this is consistent with what these Liberals have delivered for the last seven years.

Back in 2015, these Liberals promised three years of what they called “modest deficits” that would be incurred entirely for the purpose of a transformational infrastructure construction program, which would lead to the budget balancing itself by 2019. It was obvious right from the start that this solemn election promise was a lie told to Canadian voters. They immediately started piling on new spending without any fiscal restraint and drove Canada straight into deficit, and they have never talked about a balanced budget since.

It was as if no Liberal MP had ever heard the promise they made to millions of Canadians on doorsteps that, if Liberals were elected, they would get short, modest deficits offset by gleaming new productivity-improving infrastructure. Instead, we have structural deficits and industries struggling under the weight of ever-increasing regulation. I would remind members of the House, and Canadians watching or reading this, that this government's track record is how its credibility should be measured.

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After ignoring their promise by pretending they never made it, Bill Morneau assured Canadians that what really mattered was not deficits but that the debt-to-GDP ratio would constantly shrink. Then, when his own departments' projections looked like this so-called fiscal anchor was in jeopardy, he suddenly said that, no, what really mattered was Canada's AAA credit rating. Then, at the moment when one agency downgraded Canada's credit rating, when Canada was paralyzed by rail blockades, when Canada's lack of pipeline capacity was helping drive Canadian energy prices below zero, when the economy was teetering on the brink of recession, and when this government was about to table a massive deficit budget, COVID struck. It is critical for Canadians to remember this important point. This government squandered four years of a booming world economy by creating new taxes and regulations that decimated Canadian industries and racked up \$100 billion in new debt before the pandemic. All of this happened before the pandemic.

Conservatives warned this government throughout the first four years that it was grossly irresponsible to run large deficits and fail to build promised infrastructure while times were relatively good. Conservatives repeatedly warned the government that it was leaving Canadians vulnerable by leaving the cupboard bare during good times. The Conservative leader certainly did not predict the COVID pandemic, but he did warn the government that it had a responsibility to act prudently to maximize Canada's capability to manage an economic downturn.

Now, nearly three years later, according to the fall economic statement, Canada's debt is nearly \$1.2 trillion, more than half of which was piled on by this government alone, and the majority of the new debt this government has added had nothing to do with COVID response measures, as \$100 billion of it came before COVID, and \$205 billion was added to the debt after the pandemic for spending that had nothing to do with the pandemic.

While the current and previous finance ministers were running these huge deficits, they assured Canadians that this was all okay. They said that interest rates were low and would remain low for the foreseeable future. They even said that rates were so low that they could run a deficit while lowering the debt-to-GDP ratio.

While the finance ministers were racking up the debt, the Bank of Canada was cranking up the printing press. The Department of Finance issued new debt, and the Bank of Canada bought it with cash created out of thin air. Current and previous governors of the Bank of Canada assured Canadians that this was fine, that there was nothing to be concerned about.

In fact, I asked the Governor of the Bank of Canada if buying up all this debt with newly conjured money would eventually trigger inflation, and he said no. He dismissed the concerns that I raised two and half years ago about inflation. He said that there would be no inflation, and even if there was, they had plenty of tools to deal with that. Our Conservative leader also raised these concerns consistently over the past two and a half years.

• (1645)

The finance minister dismissed these Conservative concerns about inflation and said that any inflation was simply transitory and nothing to worry about. Now here we are. We are in a full-blown cost of living crisis. Canadians are increasingly unable to afford ba-

sic necessities of life such as food, groceries, gasoline, housing and home heating.

Inflation has been called the cruellest tax of all. It destroys the life savings of seniors. It destroys the purchasing power of workers whose wages do not keep up with the cost of the goods they need to live. Canada now has the highest inflation in 40 years, yet there is absolutely nothing in the fall economic statement that would meaningfully address this crisis.

Milton Friedman said, "Inflation is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon in the sense that it is and can be produced only by a more rapid increase in the quantity of money than in output."

As the Conservative leader has put it, there is too much money chasing too few goods. The cost of government is driving up the cost of living. We must stop printing cash and start producing more of the things that cash buys, such as food, houses and affordable energy. Now that inflation is out of control and wreaking havoc on Canadians' ability to feed, house, and transport themselves, and heat their homes, the Bank of Canada is raising interest rates faster than at any point in decades.

This has two important consequences for Canadians. First, it means that thousands, perhaps even millions, of Canadians are going to see their monthly mortgage payments shoot up drastically in the months and years to come. Second, it means that the interest on Canada's debts will soon approach \$50 billion per year, according to the fall economic statement. The Canadian government will soon spend more on interest than it does on health transfers or national defence.

On top of all that, this bill offers no meaningful tax relief for Canadians. The government is proceeding to triple the carbon tax on home heating, gasoline and groceries, again breaking a previous Liberal election promise to not raise the carbon tax above \$50 per megatonne. This is in addition to the payroll tax, which is set to increase in just a few weeks. Canadians cannot pay a higher carbon tax with a smaller paycheque. They cannot afford higher food prices, higher home heating costs or higher gasoline and transportation costs. As the interest rates rise and house prices remain out of reach, Canadians despair that an entire generation has given up on the dream of home ownership.

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However, the problems with the government go way beyond this terrible bill and deeply flawed and disappointing fall economic statement. It is a government that has failed Canadians so thoroughly that it is almost incomprehensible. The government is so hopelessly incompetent that Canadians cannot get a passport. The government cannot ensure access to basic children's medication. There are nearly two and a half million people waiting for an immigration decision, and 10,000 people who were ordered into quarantine and threatened by a useless and dubiously acquired phone application.

The government's payroll systems cannot pay, and its procurement systems cannot procure. Our Arctic is inadequately defended. Public officials have denied and defied democratic orders of Parliament. Emergency powers have been declared under false pretense. Cabinet ministers interfere with police investigations. Basic information is routinely denied to members of the public and to journalists. Our energy resources remain in the ground while Europe freezes and Putin laughs. Canadians cannot afford food. They cannot heat their homes. The finance minister continues to jeopardize Canada's future with reckless spending and punishing taxes, while mocking desperate, suffering Canadians by having them believe that she shares their hardships and can relate to them because she cancelled her Disney+ subscription.

I have no confidence in the government. I oppose this bill, and I oppose the government. It is time for a Conservative government and hope for Canadians.

• (1650)

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my friend opposite's speech was impassioned. I have to admit that for a while there I was feeling kind of bad, but then I remembered that the members of the party opposite live in an alternative reality where they are the fiscal managers and fiscal stewards of this country.

Let me remind Canadians that this is the party that ran nine straight deficits. It drove the Canadian economy into the ground. It tried to balance the budget in its 10th year by throwing in the sale of GE stocks and the rainy day EI fund and whatever else, but the economy was a mess. When challenged on that, the Conservatives said, "We had hard times." They forget that we have just been through a worldwide pandemic. Would the member opposite not agree that he does not have a leg to stand on with respect to fiscal stewardship?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, it pains me to so thoroughly disagree with my friend from Saint John—Rothesay. I thank him for putting on a tie and participating in the debate today, but he is completely wrong.

The financial crisis that existed when the Conservatives were in office was at the time the greatest financial crash since the Great Depression. Canada came out of that firing on all cylinders with the strongest economy in the G7. They did not resort to quantitative easing and printing funny money like so many other countries did, and like the Liberal government is doing now.

We will take no lessons from the Liberal government on financial management.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, let me start with a special mention for the member, as I believe he is the first Conservative to say "triple" just once. That is very good for the mental health of everyone in the House, so I thank him warmly. Triple thanks to him, and so the trend continues.

I have two very simple questions and I invite him to give clear answers. It requires a simple yes or no. I believe that our colleagues are just as irritated as we are when we get no answers from the government.

First question: What do we do about the governor of the central bank? Second question: What do we do about cryptocurrency?

[*English*]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, I am sorry I did not catch a third question there with all his talk about tripling the carbon tax.

With respect to the Governor of the Bank of Canada, I would hope that all Canadians would expect him to return to the core mandate of limiting inflation to 2% and not devalue Canadian currency. We are very frustrated. I share his frustrations with the lack of responses from the government. We do not get answers.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am thinking about the resource extraction in our country and the lack of value added to some of the extraction that happens.

Does the member support the need for protections for indigenous communities, including of course indigenous women and girls, as we look at the expansion of resource extraction in Canada?

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, I think resource extraction offers some of the best opportunities for remote indigenous communities to have access to jobs and the core services that the revenues these projects produce.

We heard that earlier in the leader's speech. It is very important for indigenous communities, and indeed all northern and remote communities, that resource extraction can happen in Canada. Canada has a role to play in the world.

Europe is risking freezing this winter and fuelling Putin's war because of our inability to get energy resources to Europe, where they are needed. It is a shame. The government carries tremendous responsibility for this failure of global energy security.

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• (1655)

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed bill C-31, an act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing.

* * *

FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House resumed 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.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to speak to the fall economic statement implementation act.

As the member of Parliament for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, I know the people I represent expect at least two things from me. One is to show compassion and the other, responsibility, and I know, by extension, it is what they expect of our government. That is why, when I saw the fall economic statement that was presented by our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, I was so pleased. I think it struck the right balance between compassion and responsibility.

We know Canadians are going through a tough time right now. Global inflation, the post-COVID economy and supply chain disruptions exacerbated by the war in Ukraine have caused economic challenges for every country around the world. We know that Canadians are among those who are facing challenging times. As such, in the fall economic statement, we have introduced a number of programs to help Canadians who are struggling the most.

What programs did we introduce and how are they helping? The GST rebate, for one, will be doubling the GST tax credit for six months. There is the elimination of interest on student loans and the top-up to the Canada housing benefit of \$500. We are changing the Canada workers benefit so that hard-working families and people who are often making minimum wage but want to continue working get a top-up to their earnings. That is now going to be paid quarterly and in advance.

We are expanding the health care program by including dental care. We are providing funding for children's dental care for families that may not have enough money to pay for it and have to make a choice between dental care or food and clothing. Last is the Canada early learning and child care program. We have managed to reach agreement on that with all 10 provinces and three territories. It is program the Liberal government has worked on for over 50 years. It is finally being implemented with the agreement of the provinces and territories. This program is going to see parents receive 50% rebates, in the province of Ontario where my constituents live, this December, either as rebates to themselves or as

credits on future payments. That is real money in the pockets of families that are struggling right now with inflationary pressures.

These are examples of investing in social infrastructure. We have heard many comments from across the aisle about how we should stop spending. They are mostly based on the doctrines of Milton Friedman, whom the previous speaker mentioned and of whom the current Leader of the Opposition is a great disciple, but we know these failed economic theories of trickle-down economics have been disproven many times. The best way to help Canadians is not to hope that money trickles down from the rich, but rather to give direct assistance.

These programs, such as the investment in early learning and child care, will increase productivity in the Canadian labour force, not only for women, but for both parents by having affordable reliable child care. The uptake in Ontario is 92%. Ninety-two per cent of licensed child care facilities will be participating in this amazing program.

There are so many other things we are doing. We know, though, that we cannot continue the widespread supports that were provided to Canadians during the COVID pandemic, because we are facing inflationary pressures. This is where responsible government comes in. As much as we would like to help every Canadian who is struggling, we know we have to have targeted measures and be responsible.

Spending has been reduced in this past budget and the fall economic statement. It has come down significantly from where it was during the COVID year benefit programs. These were programs, I will remind members opposite, that they voted for, under another leader however, knowing full well that Canadians needed that support and that it would benefit our economy.

We now have a deficit of 1.3% of our GDP. We have received a AAA rating from Moody's, and we have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. In addition, we have increased selected taxes to make sure everyone pays their fair share. We are not increasing broad-based taxes, as the members opposite like to say. We are only increasing taxes, such as the Canada recovery dividend, on banks and insurance companies that have made excess profits during this period. We are being responsible. We are also being responsible with other important social programs we have in place and in continuing the fight against climate change.

• (1700)

We know that climate change is one of the most existential threats facing not only our country, but the planet. We are committed to stay the course, to follow the program we have put in place to combat this threat. Unlike the members on the other side of the House, who have gone back and forth as often as their leader has changed, on whether they support the price on pollution or not, we are following through on what we told businesses and Canadians we were going to be doing. This is important because the kind of uncertainty that the threat the Conservatives make about this program discourages investment in our clean economy and works against a just transition. We know that the cost of doing nothing is far greater than the cost of doing something. We also know, and the members opposite know, that all the money that is raised from this price on pollution, all the money taken in, is returned to Canadians. It is a net-neutral program. It is not an additional tax.

I talked about the cost of climate change. Since 1983, the cost of climate change impacts has risen from \$0.4 billion to \$1.9 billion annually. In addition is the cost of the health impacts. A recent article in *The Lancet* talked about the global impact, but the monetary value of global heat-related mortality was estimated to be \$144 billion in 2021. These are significant impacts that cannot be overlooked. The responsible thing to do is to keep on a steady path to fight climate change, and we are doing that.

We are also investing in our economy, in businesses, and ensuring that we are putting in the incentives to attract investment in Canada. We know that the recent changes under the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States have brought about some challenging programs that we have to respond to. The tax credits under the clean tech program and the green hydrogen program have been put in place to try to keep Canada competitive with the United States in this.

We need to be responsible and we have to be sure that we are not putting out irresponsible messages. On this point I would like to say that the disinformation and misinformation that is being spread with half-truths, cute phrases and slogans is really increasing fear and anxiety in Canadians.

Just now, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned that everything in Canada is broken. I do not agree. Things in Canada are going fairly well. We have challenges we have to get through and we know it. There are real challenges due to these global inflationary pressures, due to the COVID pandemic and due to the supply chain disruptions that we have experienced, but those challenges are being experienced worldwide. We are taking responsible, targeted measures to help those who need help the most. This is the responsible thing to do.

What is irresponsible is quoting partial pieces of Tiff Macklem's or Mark Carney's statements, just using little quotes and pieces, or saying that things are happening that are not happening. Do members not realize that the price on pollution has not increased since April of last year? It cannot be the cause of these inflationary pressures. It is not due to increase again until April of next year. How is it accountable for the inflation that is happening right now? There are many countries around the world that do not have a price on pollution and they are experiencing greater inflation than we are.

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We are responsible for taking care of Canadians, for addressing the challenges that Canadians are facing due to this inflation and we are taking that responsibility seriously and with compassion.

Let me end by saying that we have to also let Canadians know that our economy is strong. Not only were our results during the COVID-19 pandemic strong with respect to our health results, but also with respect to our economy. We have over 500,000 more new jobs now than we had before the pandemic. Our economy had the largest growth of any in the G7. As we have heard, our deficits are the lowest and the only thing that has tripled is our AAA credit rating.

• (1705)

We are in a good position. We are facing challenges. Our government recognizes this and is taking action to address it, but we should not be increasing Canadians' anxiety. We should focus rather on sharing the values of compassion and responsibility and all work together to make this an even better—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Edmonton Manning.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is very concerning when the government is living on a completely different planet than reality.

Usually with math and the economy, good formulas deliver good numbers. If the numbers are wrong, that means the method is wrong and the plan is wrong. The plan which the government is trying to say is working and there is nothing to be concerned about is not working.

The government needs to rethink this. It is okay to take a step back and think about doing something else and trying another method to get Canadians a better life and better opportunities so that they do not suffer the way they are suffering. I would like to know if the government is willing to do that. The first step is to cut down the triple, triple, triple tax on groceries, gas and home heating.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I will try to address this properly this time.

I do not really understand what the member was talking about when he said “triple, triple, triple”, and so I do not know how to answer that, quite frankly. We are not tripling any tax right now. We have not increased the tax. I am not sure what he is talking about.

I would say that, when it comes to economic theories, by following the failed economic theories of Milton Friedman that came out in the 1970s and have been refuted time and time again, how can the member stand there and criticize us?

I am sorry, but I think you have to look at your plan, if you even have one.

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I cannot tell the member what my plan is. However, I do want to remind the member not to use the words “you” or “your”. That way she would not be called on it.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am always amazed at the fact that the Liberal members on the other side of the House are still wearing rose-coloured glasses when it comes to fighting climate change. Again, the member bragged about her government's record. It makes absolutely no sense.

Canada is one of the worst countries in the world. It came up in question period. We are ranked 58th out of 60, according to the COP27 criteria. That is outrageous. Canada has invested \$8.5 billion U.S. a year in fossil fuels. That is outrageous.

We are the worst country in the G20 in terms of average per capita greenhouse gas emissions, and the only G7 country whose emissions have increased since the Liberals came to power. Yes, I said Liberals, not Conservatives. This is not a joke: Environmentalists miss the Conservatives. That is saying something.

What is the Liberal plan to deal with these challenges?

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, yes, we agree that we need to do more on climate change. However, I would say that while the frames on my glasses are red, the lenses are not rose-coloured. I am citing facts today, but I am happy to hear that the Bloc supports us in continuing with the price on pollution and fighting climate change.

We have to do more, but I would point out that our emissions intensity has declined. We would like to say that our emissions have not gone up, and we have met some of the targets, but our economy has also grown significantly over this same time. We have a natural resource-based country, and we are taking action to address that in going to net zero in the oil and gas sector as well as doing other measures. We have to do more, but I am glad to hear that the Bloc is with us on keeping the price on pollution and doing even more.

• (1710)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, there are a couple things in the fall economic statement that merit support, but what stands out for New Democrats is not necessarily what is in the statement but what is not in the statement.

While the Deputy Prime Minister signals tough times and a recession, there is no comprehensive EI reform. Can the member please explain what the Liberals' plan is for workers who, through no fault of their own, may lose their job as a consequence of the economic policies geared towards numbers and not people while their government has failed to tend to the social safety net that they were counting on to catch them?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, we are focused on workers. We have many programs in place that are addressing the affordability crisis right now. We know that employment insurance is important, which is why we are continuing to fund it and to see

increases in premiums. Workers are our utmost concern in this fall economic statement, and we will continue to work to support them going forward.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC):

For one true measure of a nation is its success in fulfilling the promise of a better life for each of its members. Let this be the measure of our nation.

Madam Speaker, as I was listening to the fall economic statement, I thought of the words of President John F. Kennedy in his message to Congress in February 1962. I thought it was important to measure this fall economic statement against whether it has in fact improved the lives of Canadians. It is important to think about the layers of hype and peel all that back over the last seven years of the government to see what the results are.

Has the government been good value for money for the Canadians who pay for it? We know that seven years ago the Prime Minister promised annual deficits, but said they would be very small, not too big, and not to worry about it. Of course we know that did not really work.

COVID-19 came along, and the Prime Minister promised to have Canadians' backs. All of us in the House came together and we had Canadians' backs. We had to borrow money to do it, but the \$200 billion extra that the government borrowed was not necessary. That was not having Canadians' backs. Thanks to the words of the former Bank of Canada governor, Mark Carney, we now know that this extra borrowing, this extra abuse of the national credit card, is exacerbating inflation and making things more expensive. It is in fact quite the opposite of having Canadians' backs. It is taking the shirts right off Canadians' backs. It is causing inflation to get worse.

On top of that we have the Liberal government promising that its carbon tax would reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and that most Canadians would get more money back than they pay in carbon taxes. Now we know from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the carbon tax will in fact cost Canadians more than they get back, and the carbon tax has done almost nothing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

However, people should not worry. The Liberals are coming to the rescue. For those who are struggling to heat their homes and feed their families, the Liberal government is going to save them by now tripling the carbon tax. Members can just imagine what it will cost people to heat their homes and buy food once the government triples the carbon tax.

Government Orders

For some Canadians, the Liberals plan to send them \$500 for things that now cost thousands more. The price of food is up 11%, and food bank visits are at record highs in Canada. The price to heat our homes has doubled, particularly in eastern Canada and northern Ontario, where too many Canadians are facing energy poverty. Are they getting value for money? I do not think so.

Nowhere has the Liberal failure been more horrifying than on the topic of housing. We know that in 2017 the Prime Minister launched to great fanfare his national housing strategy. He was in Toronto, standing right in front of the mayor of the city. He was going to have this first-ever national plan. He promised \$40 billion, and then he upped it to \$70 billion. He called it a once-in-a-generation vision that would protect current affordable housing stock, build four times as many units as in the decade past, repair three times as many units as were repaired in the decade past, and reduce chronic homelessness by 50%.

The Prime Minister called it a robust, comprehensive, life-changing plan that would help Canadians get into homes and stay there. How has that worked? Have Canadians received value for the money they have paid the government on housing?

Let us look at the facts. The headline number was \$70 billion. We know that in fact it was not really \$70 billion. When we pull away from that the existing federal spending commitment and then pull away from that the matching provincial dollars that were required, which they were already spending as well, and then take out the loans and other tools that were being used, the number was actually \$6.8 billion over 10 years.

That is fine: \$6.8 billion is still \$6.8 billion. That is great stuff; am I right? Maybe. That money was supposed to be spent through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, through five main programs: the rental construction financing initiative, the national housing co-investment fund, the rapid housing initiative, the affordable housing innovation fund and the federal lands initiative. How have they done since 2017?

• (1715)

The Parliamentary Budget Officer reported in 2021 that despite the overall increase in spending to help particularly low-income Canadians, it is up to \$192 million a year, or a 9% increase. Because of the Liberals' inflationary spending, that actually represents a 15% decrease in the power of those dollars to buy goods. The CMHC programs that were designed to contribute to the cost of construction to address homelessness included the national housing co-investment fund, which spent 50% of its allocated budget. The rental construction financing initiative spent 53%. With respect to Employment and Social Development Canada funds to address homelessness, they have increased that budget dramatically from \$118 million a year on average to \$357 million per year. That is a 203% increase.

It is amazing; am I right? Not so fast. The Auditor General now reports that the CMHC and Employment and Social Development Canada have no idea if their programs are even helping. They do not know whether they have made a difference or not. What a plan it is. They spend half the money that was committed, do nothing to monitor the grandiose commitments of the Prime Minister and tell Canadians that everything will be fine. However, we know. We

know the proof is in the suffering. House prices have doubled since the Prime Minister announced sunny ways in 2015.

A report by the C.D. Howe Institute, named after a fellow who knew how to get things done in this country, cited the burden of government cost as one of the big reasons for our lack of housing supply. In some major cities like Kelowna, Regina, Toronto and Ottawa, homebuyers had to pay an average of \$230,000 extra for a home because of the municipal costs. In Vancouver, that number is \$644,000. Big, expensive government is getting in the way of new construction. It is getting in the way of retrofits and renovations. It is getting in the way of new rental units. It is getting in the way of accessible and affordable units. It is getting in the way of a person's ever owning a home.

This is all while the government asks people to pay more, earn less and pay higher taxes to cover its ballooning debts. The PBO reported in September that the housing affordability gap, which is the gap between the average price of a house in Canada and the ability of the average family to borrow money, is a whopping 67% now. For the record, in January 2015, just months before the current government took office, that gap was 2%.

It is all made worse by a government that, when it is not bent on its misguided ideological entrenchment, just does not seem to get the job done. The Liberals talk a big game. The Prime Minister peers into the camera with empathetic eyes and says he really cares, but then he does not get the job done.

It seems like a cruel joke, but to the people in this country, those most vulnerable, who are paying the highest price, it is far from a joke. There are seniors on fixed incomes who cannot afford to heat their homes and eat healthy food. Tent cities are growing in communities large and small, all across our country. The current government has failed Canadians. Never has so much been promised and spent and borrowed to deliver so little. The economic statement that we have heard here is more of the same.

Government Orders

The Leader of the Opposition has been warning about excessive government borrowing and that it would lead to inflation that would make everything we try to buy more expensive, and now we know he was right. Even the Minister of Finance knows he was right. In a road to Damascus moment, she actually started to speak about fiscal restraint. However, she only talked about it, because immediately thereafter, she added another \$20 billion of debt to her \$1.2-trillion debt. Next year, payments on the national debt will be more than we spend on health care transfers.

Canada cannot afford to throw money in the air anymore and just hope it sticks. If we are really interested in supporting the next generation and making sure their life is better than ours, by that measure this economic statement is a failure and the government is a failure. Frankly, we should be voting against this economic statement. Conservatives will vote against it, and every single member of this House should do the same.

• (1720)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must admit I am slightly taken aback by the member's intervention today, although I am not surprised, because I continually hear the same thing from Conservatives. Conservatives like to portray themselves as the saviours of the economy. As one of my colleagues said earlier, they like to think they are the be-all and end-all when it comes to economic and monetary policy.

We know that as the individual by whom this individual is led in the House and in the Conservative Party, the Leader of the Opposition's solution to investing and to the Canadian dollar was to get away from the Canadian dollar and move towards Bitcoin. I wonder if this member would—

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Joliette on a point of order.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, the interpreter says there is feedback. The member might want to remove his earpiece and move it away from the microphone.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member can move the earpiece away from the microphone, and we will stop the clock. I think he needs to apologize to the interpreters as well.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the first thing I need to do is apologize to the interpretation staff. I tried to put it on my seat, but accidentally set it right next to the microphone this time.

My question to the member is quite simple. What is his position on cryptocurrency? We know the position of the Leader of the Opposition. I know this member ran to be the leader of the opposition and must have engaged in dialogue on this during that campaign. Where does he stand on cryptocurrency as it relates to being an alternative to the Canadian dollar?

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, I can assure the member that when I was running for leader of this party and criss-crossing

the country, Canadians were not talking to me about that. They were talking to me about what it costs to live in this country and the abysmal record of the government. That is what we are here to talk about, frankly, not what somebody else may or may not have said about anything.

This is about the Liberals' record. This is about their failures. This is about the fact they have spent more money than any government in the history of this country. The housing situation specifically, which I have talked about a lot, is worse today than it was seven years ago, despite the grandiose promises.

I do not care what the member talks about. The fact of the matter is that the Liberals' record is an abysmal failure and Canadians deserve better.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's speech on housing. It was very thoughtful, well-documented and well-written. He hit the nail on the head. The government's housing strategy includes a lot of numbers and promises, but it does not actually do much.

Let us talk solutions. The rapid housing initiative works fairly well because it fully funds projects. The program also makes it possible to build housing quickly.

Organizations tell us that all the other programs, such as the national housing co-investment fund and rental housing programs, which primarily offer loans, need to change. That money should go to not-for-profits so they can buy private property and get it off the market to ensure longevity. Does my colleague agree?

[English]

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, it is a really great idea. In fact, what we need to have here is a situation in which all levels of government are working together. Let us not kid ourselves. Municipalities and to a smaller degree provinces are the front lines of the housing crisis in this country. The federal government has a role to play in working with municipalities and provinces and, frankly, with the private sector. This country requires trillions of dollars of investment in the housing sector. We need the private sector on board. We need community groups on board. We need to be all working together to solve this crisis, not pandering to grandiose fixes but getting to work and working together to solve the problem.

• (1725)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I asked this question of one of my colleague's Conservative colleagues and did not get much of an answer, so I will pose it to him. There was interesting news coming out of the United Kingdom today, where the Conservative government of that country announced it was increasing the windfall tax rate on highly profitable oil and gas companies to 35%. It is doing that because it realizes the amount of money they are making is simply unfair to the British people.

Why is it that the U.K. Conservatives have the courage to do something like this but I do not hear anything from Canada's Conservatives, when we have the exact same problem affecting our two nations?

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, I am not going to get trapped in the ideological entrenchment of the NDP, but the fact of the matter is that the Liberal government collects billions and billions of tax dollars and promptly wastes it. Instead of collecting more taxes from companies and hard-working Canadians, I suggest we get rid of the government, put a Conservative government in place, and actually spend their money wisely.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this chamber and bring the voices of the constituents of Chatham-Kent—Leamington to this place, and it is an honour to speak to Bill C-32, the fall economic statement implementation act.

The Conservative Party had two asks going into the fall economic statement process. One was to stop the tax increases and have no new taxes, which includes cancelling all of the planned tax hikes and the tripling of the carbon tax. The other was to stop the spending and have no new spending, and ensure that any new spending by ministers or ministries is offset by equivalent savings found elsewhere. We need to cut the wasteful spending and stop the inflationary deficits that drive up the cost of living. Of course, none of our demands were met in the fall economic statement, and for that reason, the Conservatives, me included, will not be supporting it. I know that is a shock to the members opposite.

The cost of government spending is the main driver of the increasing cost of living. As stated by a colleague in an earlier speech this week, Canadians now have to make tough decisions. Why? It is because the government did not make tough decisions.

Of course, the pandemic required extra spending. The Conservatives knew that and supported the early programs. However, \$200 billion of it, almost half of the \$500 billion of added debt, was not pandemic-related. Program spending by the government is now 30% above pre-pandemic levels. It is amazing.

Last week I was in my riding and hosted a series of coffee meetings over two days to hear from constituents. I was just talking about the rising cost of living, and that is exactly what I heard from my constituents. Over and over again, the rising costs of everything, particularly food, fuel and housing, were highlighted. Last month it was reported that there was 11.4% food inflation. This month the rising cost of food is reported as being 10.7%. That is what Canadians are facing when they make a trip to the grocery store.

While rising inflation is causing pain for Canadian families in their everyday lives, it has boosted the tax revenues of the government. One would think there would have been an opportunity in the fall economic statement to bring some fiscal responsibility to budgeting.

I am not an economist, but let me share some thoughts from some respected voices on the fall economic statement. I will begin with Douglas Porter and others from BMO Capital Markets, who stated:

Private Members' Business

Less than half of this year's revenue windfall will make it through to an improved bottom line. Moreover, the double-whammy of slower (or no) growth and rising interest rates will limit flexibility into 2023.... [T]he boost to government finances from higher inflation is temporary. Eventually, costs do catch up to the run-up in prices, and revenues get crimped by the economic slowdown. Accordingly, after a nice run of better-than-expected fiscal outcomes, Ottawa's finances are expected to turn more challenging next year.

Will the government look ahead and plan accordingly? Obviously from pre-pandemic times we know that it did not.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1730)

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC) moved that Bill C-291, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other Acts (child sexual abuse material), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in the House of Commons to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-291, an act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts.

At the outset, I would like to express my thanks to the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, who was central to the conception and drafting of this bill. The hon. member's years of experience as a Crown prosecutor have afforded him insights into how Canada's laws and legislation in some instances are not necessarily as succinct as they should be and where changes could be made to improve them. Not all MPs have a chance to introduce and debate their private member's bill, so I was certainly happy to work with the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo to achieve this. The hon. member's experience also afforded him insight into how the House and our colleagues in the upper chamber can strengthen our federal statutes. I thank the member for his work on this bill and other proposals that seek to enhance the protection of Canadians, especially children.

The Criminal Code of Canada contains many elements, including essential elements that define, prohibit, deter and penalize criminal activities. Bill C-291 does not propose amendments to definitions, prohibitions or penalties. It clearly and succinctly proposes to change the term "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse material".

Some members in the House or Canadians watching this debate may wonder what the motive or value of Bill C-291's proposals are. This is a question that I believe all legislative proposals should be subject to, and I will endeavour to answer this question.

Private Members' Business

Let us start with my motive in presenting this bill. I believe it is essential that the Criminal Code of Canada contain terms that accurately describe prohibited activities. I also believe that the code's use of the term "child pornography" is a misnomer that fails to accurately describe the gravity and reality of such material. "Pornography" is a term typically used to describe material involving consenting adults, but there is no legal basis for children to consent to participating in such material. This factor of consent is central to the motivation behind this bill, and if hon. members agree that pornography describes material involving consenting adults, I hope they will also recognize that children cannot legally consent to being depicted in pornography.

What the Criminal Code currently calls "child pornography" is more severe than mere pornography because it involves children and cannot be consensual. It is exploitive and abusive, and the Criminal Code should clearly reflect these realities. So-called child pornographers are producers of child sexual abuse material. Those who distribute it are distributors of child sexual abuse material. Those who possess it are owners of child sexual abuse material. Those who view it are consumers of child sexual abuse material. These are the realities that compelled me to table this bill.

I hope all hon. members understand and support my motivation in proposing this bill. Together, we can collectively make a difference by ensuring that Canada's Criminal Code contains clear terms for what is prohibited by the code. Words matter, especially the words and terms Parliament chooses to apply to federal statutes and especially the Criminal Code. The term "child pornography" is a misnomer, and I hope all members can recognize the necessity for our statutes to do away with this term. We cannot miss this opportunity to update and strengthen the Criminal Code so that it reflects reality. We must call child sexual abuse material exactly what it is: child sexual abuse material.

● (1735)

As I mentioned earlier, it is important for us to understand the motive and the value of all legislative proposals and I hope that I have provided the House a clear account of my motive in pursuing the proposals of this bill.

As for the value of the bill's proposals, I believe that changing the term "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse material" will not only provide our statutes with a greater degree of accuracy, but will also provide a more accurate and true recognition of those victimized by such material. The terms "abuse", "sexual abuse" and "exploitation" currently exist in the Criminal Code. I believe that the House must acknowledge that these terms afford a truer recognition of the victimization of children and potential future victimization of children caused by child sexual abuse material.

We must support those who, as children, have been victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. I believe this bill is a valuable opportunity for the House to acknowledge the true and severe nature of the crimes inflicted on victims of child sexual abuse material.

It is time that Parliament addresses the seriousness of what is occurring by providing clear terms to ensure that the words used in our laws reflect the severity of offences and the gravity of what is inflicted on victims.

I also see the value of the necessity of this bill's proposals, considering the latest crime data from Statistics Canada, which clearly states that child exploitation and abuse are on the increase here in Canada.

In a report released in August 2022, Statistics Canada reported that from 2019 to 2021, the rate of police-reported child sexual abuse material increased by a staggering 31% to a rate of 31 incidents per 100,000 of population. For a Canadian city of one million people, less than half the size of Vancouver, that translates to 310 cases per year. Those are just the cases reported to police. We all must understand that many more cases go unreported to police, but they do exist.

This increase from 2019 to 2021 follows a 47% increase in 2019. These increases have likely been contributed to by criminals using the Internet to abuse and exploit children.

The Statistics Canada report from this August states:

For many child sexual exploitation and abuse violations, the incidents that occur are committed online as cybercrimes. For instance, 61% of incidents of child pornography and 20% of sexual violations against children were recorded as cybercrimes. The pandemic has potentially exacerbated issues related to cybercrimes for these offences as children have been more likely to be staying at home and individuals are more likely to use the internet to engage with others.

It is also shocking to see that in 2021, there was a 14% increase in sexual violations against children. A Statistics Canada 2021 report on the 2020 data detailed how child sexual abuse material is a growing problem across our nation, especially in my home province of British Columbia. The 2021 report showed that among Canada's census metropolitan areas, or CMAs, Vancouver, Montreal, Winnipeg and Victoria reported the largest increases in the number of child pornography violations. Together, these four CMAs represented 75% of the increase in incidents of child pornography among CMAs from 2019 to 2020.

● (1740)

The same 2021 report further demonstrated how from 2019 to 2020, incidents of child sexual abuse material significantly increased across Canada. The majority of the national increase was due to more incidents in British Columbia and Quebec, but the data showed troubling increases in other provinces as well. This includes 81% more incidents in New Brunswick and 55% more incidents in Nova Scotia.

The data is truly shocking, but it is not enough for us as parliamentarians to be just shocked. These realities demand a response, especially our response as parliamentarians. By passing this bill, we can strengthen our Criminal Code. We can acknowledge the true severity and often long-lasting effects of child sexual abuse material inflicted on victims. We can also demonstrate the responsiveness that Canadians expect and deserve from us as parliamentarians.

At this juncture, the first hour of second reading debate, I will welcome input from all parties represented here in this chamber for this important debate. Child sexual abuse material is a growing problem across our nation, as I pointed out in the report from Statistics Canada, and Canadians look to us, their elected representatives, to take the steps, big and small, that are required to deal with problems like child sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

I believe this bill is a step in the right direction. It is a small but important part of the response that must be issued by Parliament, and I hope that this debate will lead us to an outcome that benefits Canadians, especially Canada's children and the communities that look to us to deliver results.

In closing, I would again like to thank the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for his work in drafting Bill C-291 and his passion for improving our federal statutes of law.

I commit to answering members' questions today on this bill to the best of my ability. I commit to listening to members' input, their suggestions and the interventions of other members as we participate in debate today and in the future. I commit to the dialogue we need for moving this bill diligently and expeditiously through the debate and committee stages so that it can continue through the legislative process to receive royal assent. I feel it is so important for Canadians, especially our children.

I commit to working with all to deliver results for Canada.

● (1745)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my friend from North Okanagan—Shuswap for introducing Bill C-291.

I want to ask him about what kinds of consultations he has had with victims and survivors, as well as those in the policing and justice communities. Could he maybe comment on who he has consulted and how that has informed the bill presented today?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, consultations have taken place, and as I mentioned, I want to thank the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for his work, advocacy and experience in his role as a prosecutor in his riding in Kamloops.

Consultation has been done. The key piece here is we are seeing that sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children is continuing to happen. The production of sexual abuse material is also continuing to happen, so I hope members from all parties will support us as we move this bill forward.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his very important bill.

Private Members' Business

I imagine that many people in the House have children. I have children myself, and with the Internet these days, all kinds of things can happen. We are always wondering what is going on. It is terrible to think that intruders can get into our homes and take advantage of our children through screens. It is quite worrisome.

What we are about to do is really important. Changing the wording will have very important consequences.

However, while we are talking about the problem of child sexual abuse, does my colleague have any ideas on how we could go even further to counter this phenomenon?

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, there is much more that can be done to protect our children here in Canada. There is so much stress out there right now.

I do not want this bill to become a partisan bill, but part of the stress being created out there is the cost of living. There are people who are homeless. There are children in vulnerable situations because of the conditions this country is under right now. Getting our country back on track, getting people back to jobs and having the ability for families to live and thrive as families are key to being able to do more for children, as the member suggests.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is rare for me to be able to intervene in the Private Members' Business hour, and I am pleased to be able to ask my hon. colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap how he sees this bill as making a difference. I know he covered a lot of this in his speech, but how will this bill better enable Canadians and the Canadian court system to protect our children?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, we spoke the other day, and I believe the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands is supportive of the bill.

The way this bill can help is it would provide a better term for the definition of child pornography within the Criminal Code of Canada. Our judicial system relies on clarity so there is no ambiguity. A big part of our duty as parliamentarians is to provide clarity in legislation and remove the ambiguity that might be there.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could talk a little about how this bill will help enforcement and also for making sure children are safer.

● (1750)

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, as I said, it is all about clarity in terms and clarity in the Criminal Code. We have seen how society has changed so much in recent years, and keeping our Criminal Code up to date with the terms that are used is so important.

Private Members' Business

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join the second reading debate on Bill C-291, an act to amend the Criminal Code and to make consequential amendments to other acts, child sexual abuse material, introduced by the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap on June 17, 2022.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking from the traditional lands of the Algonquin people.

I want to thank my colleague for introducing this bill. It has a very important objective, which is to ensure that the terminology used to refer to child pornography names what this abhorrent material actually is. It is the abuse of children.

The Government of Canada is committed to preventing and protecting children from sexual abuse and exploitation of any kind, in Canada and abroad. Canada works closely with international partners to combat online child sexual exploitation. This includes international co-operation regarding new and emerging threats, as well as sharing of best practices and lessons learned in combatting this crime.

Here at home, our government continues to fight child sexual exploitation through our national strategy for the protection of children from sexual exploitation. Four pillars underpin this important initiative: raising awareness, reducing the stigma associated with reporting, increasing Canada's ability to pursue and prosecute offenders, and working with tech leaders to find new ways to combat online sexual exploitation of children.

Under this strategy, we are working to build a safer Canada. We are protecting Canadian children by intensifying our engagement with digital industry leaders to encourage new online tools to prevent online abuse; increasing prevention activities, such as research and public engagement; and enhancing the capacity of Internet child exploitation units in provincial and municipal police forces, to name a few projects.

We are grateful to the many organizations that work tirelessly to halt the sexual exploitation of children, as well as Canadian parents, educators and civilians who remain vigilant for signs of potential abuse and work to educate others on how to recognize and report this despicable behaviour. However, there is still more work to be done. The incidences of making or distributing child sexual abuse and exploitation material increased by 26% from 2019 to 2021, contributing to a 58% increase over a five-year period from 2017 to 2021.

[Translation]

I welcome the opportunity that this bill provides to address a problem that has emerged in recent years, both domestically and internationally.

More specifically, there has been a shift away from the term “child pornography” to terms that are more descriptive of the harm caused by the production of such material. Some people feel that the term “child pornography” is too close to ordinary pornography, which is of course generally legal when produced by consenting adults and does not contain obscene material.

[English]

This bill, on its face, appears simple. It proposes to replace the term “child pornography” with the term “child sexual abuse material” in the Criminal Code and in four other federal statutes that use that term: An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service; the Corrections and Conditional Release Act; the Criminal Records Act; and the National Defence Act.

It is important to acknowledge that the definition of the term “child pornography” in Canadian criminal law has been part of the Criminal Code for almost 30 years, having been enacted in 1993, and expanded in 2002 and 2005. Our existing definition is very broad and includes a wide range of material involving the depiction of abuse of a child, both real and fictional, as well as materials that advocate engaging in sexual activity with a child.

● (1755)

This definition has been interpreted and applied by the courts for almost 30 years, including by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2001 in *R. v. Sharpe*. In this case, the Supreme Court made clear that the prohibitions against child pornography, including the broad scope of the definition, seeks to prevent the exploitation of children, both actual or real and imaginary or fictional, through material that sexualizes them and fuels the demand for such material. This decision also ruled that a person includes both actual and imaginary children.

I think it is important to be clear that the intent is not to change the definition. Rather, it is to more accurately reflect the definition in the name. Courts should not change their interpretation of the law based on the change in title.

I also want to be satisfied that the proposed new term of “child sexual abuse material” accurately reflects the full scope of material that is captured by the existing definition. For example, I think it is important to ensure that the new term cannot be interpreted more narrowly than the current definition. While I do not think this is intended by the bill, I think it would be important to consider it more fully and consider whether the proposed term should be clarified.

While there is no one term that has been universally adopted, terms like “child sexual abuse material”, which is the one proposed in this bill, or “child sexual exploitation and abuse material”, and other variations, are gaining favour on the international stage. The Luxembourg Guidelines, otherwise known as the Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, suggest using “child sexual exploitation material” as a more general term to encompass material that “sexualises and is exploitative to the child although it is not explicitly depicting the sexual abuse of a child.” As such, I have had discussions with my colleague about potentially expanding his bill to include the term “exploitation”, and I look forward to continuing those discussions at committee.

Lastly, I think it would be important to consider whether there are other implications of changing the term. For example, although Bill C-291 proposes consequential amendments to four other federal statutes, which are the ones I mentioned at the outset, it would not amend the federal regulations made pursuant to An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, also known as the Internet child pornography reporting regulations. Of course, the making of regulations falls generally to the executive branch of government and is not normally done by Parliament. When this legislation passes, the government will likely have to also update the regulations to match.

Most provinces have legislation that refers to the Criminal Code's child pornography prohibitions and definition. It is estimated that there are at least 50 such provincial and territorial statutes and regulations that refer to it. In some cases, the reference is made to the term "child pornography" as well as to section 163.1 of the Criminal Code. However, there are some instances where a reference is made only to the term "child pornography, as defined by the Criminal Code". Should this bill pass, we will work with our provincial and territorial partners to ensure the legislation is updated accordingly.

I want to conclude by expressing my thanks to the member for North Okanagan—Shuswap and his colleague from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for providing us with an opportunity to review the Criminal Code's definition of "child pornography" and the way that provision is incorporated into not only federal but provincial and territorial legislation.

The government will be supporting the bill, and I look forward to working with my colleagues opposite at committee to ensure that this legislation is as strong as it can be.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, pedophilia is standard practice among far too many people in positions of power or even with a drive to feel powerful. In some of his works, the Marquis de Sade described the domination of children as the logical sequel to the domination of women and pleasure as a type of aspiration to despotism.

In the 20th century, Sigmund Freud showed that civilization is built on restrictions. According to Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex, fathers and mothers could not be the sexual partners of children and the love that children have for their parents would ultimately turn into desire in adulthood.

The bill before us today amends the Criminal Code to replace the term "child pornography" with "child sexual abuse material" and makes consequential amendments to other acts. The bill does not have any direct or immediate legal effect to speak of, other than changing a term. However, that change is an important one.

In Canada, the age of consent for sexual activity is 16. Young people between the ages of 12 and 16 who are in the same age group have the right to engage in sexual activity with each other, but adults are prohibited from engaging in such activity with any-

Private Members' Business

one in that age group. Under the age of 12, consent is not legally possible under any circumstances.

Using children to produce pornographic material is abuse. Child pornography is most definitely child sexual abuse. We support the bill.

Unfortunately, the term "pornography" is not clear. Everyone has their own definition. There is no consensus about the degree of consent in pornography. It was not uncommon for certain libertarian authors in centuries past to explicitly promote pedophilia.

Not everyone agrees that pornography is fundamentally violent. It is not criminal in the legal sense of the term, but there are certain exceptions such as child pornography. The fact that it is impossible to ascertain, understand and conclusively assess the participants' consent makes it difficult to distinguish between material that is erotic and material that is violent and obscene.

In the case of children, the acts are clearly defined by the Criminal Code. It is obvious that to fully heal, the victim must shed the guilt associated with the events. The burden must be borne by the abuser. We must use the term "child sexual abuse" rather than "child pornography" to make the gravity of the offence clear, so the victim can fully come to terms with it.

A person charged with possession of child pornography will not be charged with sexual assault even though they are indirectly participating in it by not reporting it and by taking advantage of the situation to satisfy their own urges. Most of the time, we do not talk about the victim in cases of child pornography, except to say that the child was indeed a child.

By calling it "child sexual abuse material", we do two things: We name the abuse that the child suffered, and we also describe the accused as a sexual abuser of children. This term is much weightier, even though it means the same thing. It puts things into perspective: There is a victim of abuse in a crime involving child pornography, and there is a person sexually abusing children.

In many types of crime, there are often grey areas, extenuating circumstances, possible questions about the victim's level of culpability, participation and consent. In the case of child abuse, it is very clear. In the case of child abuse, we have to call a spade a spade and denounce this act without any nuance. There is no possible justification.

The term "child sexual abuse" is already being used by certain victim services organizations, including the Canadian Centre for Child Protection and Canada's national tip line for reporting the online sexual exploitation of children.

In Quebec, the majority of victims of sexual assault are adults, but the number of victims under the age of 18 continues to rise. It is rising more than the number of adult victims. The victims of other sexual offences are almost exclusively minors, specifically 90%.

• (1800)

Sexual assault is not the only such offence. Other sexual offences include sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, luring and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.

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The change in terminology proposed in the bill, which, once again, I welcome, would undoubtedly bolster judges' awareness because, let us face it, not all judges have all the knowledge required to deal with this type of case.

Let us not forget that in 2019, only three years ago, a judge said out loud during a trial that the victim, who was a minor at the time of the assault, had a pretty face and should therefore feel flattered to have attracted the attention of a mature man.

Furthermore, a judge in Alberta was removed after making comments deemed sexist and racist about indigenous people, abused women and victims of sexual assault.

Lastly, an acquittal was overturned because the judge, who found a man charged with sexual abuse of children not guilty, had made comments suggesting a stereotypical attitude. The judge said that, because nobody saw anything, the girl, who was between six and 12 years of age when the assaults happened, was not credible. According to the judge, the child's testimony was, and I quote, "not transparent, not reliable, not sincere and not credible".

These examples speak volumes. They remind us of the importance of forcing judges to get training on sexual assault and the social context surrounding it. Bill C-291 does not go that far, but a terminology change like the one proposed here is sure to be beneficial.

Masquerading as a libertarian utopia, child pornography is actually a system in which humans exploit other humans. We need to tackle it head-on.

• (1805)

[*English*]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, let me start by saying that I do accept the good intentions of those who brought this bill forward. It is an important distinction in changing the terminology from "child pornography" to "child sexual abuse material", which brings to the fore the question of the fact that there can never be consent for children.

However, given that there is absolutely no disagreement in this House, I had hoped we would move quickly through this bill today, perhaps all stages. If I had been able to ask a question earlier, I would have asked for assurances that this bill would be dealt with quickly and not become part of some larger strategy of delay by any given party later on either in committee or at third reading.

Let us not kid ourselves. This change would have, at best, only marginal impact on combatting child sexual exploitation. We know what works when it comes to combatting child sexual exploitation, and that is enforcement. That enforcement needs additional resources, especially for the specialized law enforcement units that work so hard to combat this scourge. We also need better coordination among federal, provincial and international partners, both public and those in the non-government sector, who are working to fight child sexual abuse.

Today, I want to say thanks to the police and those others who work in non-government organizations to combat sexual exploitation of children. This is, by default, unpleasant work and difficult

work, but it is so important to the future of children in this country and around the world.

Today, I want to say to victims that I am not just an ally, but as an adult survivor of child sexual exploitation, I am with them and I know first-hand the lifelong impacts that can carry forward from child sexual exploitation.

I hope that once we have dispatched this bill as quickly as we can, all parties will still be there when it comes time to support improvements to services and supports for survivors. I trust the good intentions, as I said at the beginning of my brief remarks. I hope we can move quickly and I hope that when the time comes, we will all be there to provide the support that survivors need.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Standing here, for me, is a bit of a dream. As my colleague for North Okanagan—Shuswap mentioned, this is a bill that I drafted. As I stood behind him when he was speaking, I was moved because two years ago, I never would have imagined that I would be sitting behind him in the House of Commons or standing up on this point, which deals with an issue so close to my heart.

Making this a reality is key. When I stood on people's doorsteps, I would tell them that this is something I wanted to change when I got to Parliament, and I am indebted to my colleague for North Okanagan—Shuswap for using his spot in the priority to work together to get this bill passed.

Before I get any further on this point, I would like to say that, in my maiden speech, this issue came up. I implored everybody in the House to change the definition of the term "child pornography" because it is not pornography. It is not consensually made material. To be speaking to this bill here today is one of the greatest honours of my career.

I would like to read from somebody who was a mentor to me on the bench and also in the classroom, the hon. Judge Gregory Koturbash. Like most good lawyers, he was educated at the University of Saskatchewan faculty of law, and I would like to read a decision of his. He wrote:

The phrase "child pornography" dilutes the true meaning of what these images and videos represent to some degree. The term "pornography" reinforces the perception that what is occurring is consensual and a mutual experience between the viewer and the actor. These are not actors. It is not consensual. These are images and videos of child sexual abuse.

Judge Koturbash continued:

The problem is so pervasive that police are required to triage and pursue only those with extensive collections or those involved in dissemination. One judge describes it as a virtual firehose spewing depraved and disturbing images across the internet. In addition to the ever-increasing supply, changes in technology make fighting its growth increasingly challenging.

I am standing before members today as a legislator, but I am not the Minister of Justice and I am not the Prime Minister. I do not want to put words in the mouth of my colleague from the NDP who spoke before me, but I understood him to say that this is a change in the wording and not necessarily a change in what is happening in combatting what is occurring.

Let us not make any mistake. What is occurring in this sort of material is the repeated victimization of children. I say “repeated” because the act itself happens, and the act is recorded. Every time that media is disseminated, viewed or passed on to somebody else, that child is revictimized, and we cannot lose sight of that. The children do not ask to be abused. However, not only are they abused, but that abuse is also perpetuated. It is my view that sentencing must get in line with the pernicious and insidious nature of this offence.

As my colleague from the NDP just alluded to, I also thank the police officers. Most people do not know what police go through. If there is a large downloaded data extraction for the police, often a police officer will have to go through nearly all of those images to ensure there is not a victim that was offended against by the person in possession of them.

• (1810)

We will have police officers at a constable level who go through, literally, 3,000 media files. They could be out on the streets. They could be investigating robberies. They could be investigating break and enters, but no, they are looking at media that will probably harm them psychologically maybe for the rest of their lives, maybe for a few months.

As a former prosecutor, I remember that some of the most scarring things were reading about what was in these files. I did not generally have to look at them. Those times as a prosecutor that I had to deal with these things even in the written word, I can say I viewed it as traumatizing, disgusting, vile material.

Make no mistake. I am not in a position to legislate unfettered on this point, but I will say this. If I ever am in the position where I can legislate with respect to sexual offences unfettered, I have a message. Those who carry out these offences should be worried. In a world where children do not even know that they may be being victimized, I will advocate for real penalties. In a country where people repeatedly trade images of children being abused, I will not take my foot off the gas pedal, nor will my Conservative colleagues do so, until anyone who trades in these images sees the inside of a jail cell.

Why? They are perpetuating the victimization of children again and again and again. We will not stop until that is exposed. I will look under every single rock I have to legislatively to put an end to this. I can speak for my own Conservative colleagues that we will do the same and I hope that every single person in the House does the same and is prepared to commit to the same.

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Some people may disagree ideologically, but house arrest, where a person can enjoy the comforts of their life, is not an appropriate sentence legislatively for people who produce these materials, who access these materials and who distribute these materials. I call for us to end conditional sentence orders for possession, distribution and production of child sexual abuse material.

One of our greatest failings as a society is to allow our children to be victimized in this way.

This is not a partisan issue, but I can say this much. When I would attend conferences with people in British Columbia, there would be people in the same room, police officers, who, again, investigated this work, oftentimes to the detriment of their mental health, as well as prosecutors, subject matter experts and people who worked for non-profits. I will never forget when someone in the room said, “I am not going to use the term 'child pornography' anymore. Let us call it what it is: 'child sexual abuse material'.” That person stopped saying what they were saying because it is not pornography.

I encourage the House to not stop here. Let us deal with Internet luring. Let us deal with sexual interference. Let us deal with all of these cases. It is time for sentences to get stronger, just like I proposed in Bill C-299.

I know that my colleague from North Okanagan—Shuswap is passionate about this. I can speak for my colleagues on this side of the House. We are prepared to do whatever it takes.

Again, I thank my colleague for using his position in the order of precedence to bring this bill forward. I hope that it is the first of many to come in which we take seriously the protection of children.

• (1815)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for North Okanagan—Shuswap has the floor for his right of reply.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member from the NDP who spoke on this bill hoped it would move through the process quickly. Seeing the debate collapse here tonight, I think, is an indication that everyone wants this bill to move quickly through the process.

I thank all the members who spoke. I thank the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo for drafting the bill, and I am glad we were able to work together as neighbouring ridings, as neighbouring seat mates in the House. It is an honour to work with him.

It is an honour to represent the people of not just our communities of North Okanagan—Shuswap and Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo but all of the constituents of Canada. The people of Canada are relying on us as legislators to strengthen our laws and to make them clearer and more concise, so that the judicial system can have the tools it needs and the direction it needs to drive our country forward.

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I want to thank all the members who spoke today on this. I look forward to the bill moving quickly through the committee stage and back here hopefully for final reading, so we can move it through the other house and receive royal assent. I thank everyone for their participation.

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[Translation]

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.

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I request a standing vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, June 23, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 23, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to follow up on the Liberal government's proposed fertilizer policy, which I also raised in the House just before the summer break.

On December 11, 2020, Environment and Climate Change Canada released a document entitled "A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy: Canada's strengthened climate plan to create jobs and support people, communities and the planet". The release of this document was important enough to warrant a press conference by the Prime Minister himself, accompanied by several of his cabinet ministers. At 78 pages, this document is a lot to take in, but what is most concerning is that on page 45 it indicates that the government will "set a national emission reduction target of 30% below 2020 levels from fertilizers".

I had the opportunity over the summer to talk with many farmers and farm organizations about this policy, and there are many people with many concerns. Given that fertilizer is already a major input cost for Canadian farms, it follows that farmers already use as little of it as possible and only as much as is necessary. The only way to reduce fertilizer emissions by 30% seems to be to reduce fertilizer applications by 30%. Such a policy would be harmful to Canadian farmers, Canadian consumers and the global food supply.

According to the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, a typical farm consisting of 1,000 acres of canola and 1,000 acres of wheat would have its annual profits reduced by approximately \$40,000 per year if these proposed fertilizer restrictions

were implemented. Such a massive reduction would be devastating not only to farmers, but to the many urban entrepreneurs they do business with.

A massive reduction in fertilizer would trigger a massive reduction in crop yields, which would then lead to a dramatic increase in the price of bread and bread products at the grocery store. With inflation and the carbon tax already driving up the price of everything at the grocery store, the last thing Canadian consumers need is for the price of groceries to be driven up even higher by these new fertilizer restrictions.

The problem will not be limited to Canadians, though. Indeed, Canada already produces enough food to feed everyone in this country, and we export the surplus to international markets. As brutal as these fertilizer restrictions may be, we should still be able to produce enough food to feed everyone in this country. The problem is that the amount of food that Canada exports to foreign countries will be dramatically reduced. That means these fertilizer restrictions will simply cause many of the poorest people in the world to starve to death.

Given that the only way to reduce fertilizer emissions by 30% seems to be to reduce fertilizer applications by 30%, how will the Liberal government implement this policy? Will it be with a fertilizer tax, similar to the carbon tax, perhaps by restricting the amount of fertilizer that farmers can buy with some sort of licensing program, or is the federal government simply going to nationalize every potash mine in the country and reduce output by 30%?

The Liberal government's plan to reduce fertilizer emissions by 30% does not seem to be particularly well thought out, but I would be curious to hear from the hon. parliamentary secretary as to how exactly the government plans to implement this policy.

• (1825)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Regina—Wascana. I think he would agree with me that Saskatchewan is one of the world's agricultural powerhouses.

Last year, despite historic challenges from the pandemic, the drought and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Saskatchewan agriculture and food exports rose to a record \$17.5 billion. That is a powerful testament to the resilience and determination of our farmers in the face of diversity.

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There is no question that fertilizer continues to play a major role in that success. Farmers in Saskatchewan and across Canada continue to work hard to ensure the responsible use of fertilizer. They are practising the four Rs: the right fertilizer source, rate, time and place for maximum yields and minimum carbon footprint. They are using the latest tools, such as crop sensors and drones, to help them align fertilizer rates to the needs of their crops. According to the recent census, the number of Saskatchewan producers using trees for shelterbelts and windbreaks has risen by over 50% since 2016.

At the same time, we know that we must build on this excellent work if Canada is to remain a world leader in sustainable agri-food production. That is why we are working with producers and the entire sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fertilizer application, and note the word “emissions”. It is important to understand that this is not a mandatory reduction in fertilizer use across the board. We know that fertilizers are necessary for agricultural production. That, as I am sure the hon. member would agree, is non-negotiable.

The hon. member mentioned consultation, and that is exactly what we have done. Over the past year, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada held consultations with farmers and the industry across Canada to develop a collaborative approach to reduce emissions from fertilizer use. The conversation has continued into the fall, with technical workshops focusing on solutions to key challenges. We will continue to engage with the sector, as we know the challenge ahead of us will require collaboration and partnership.

Our goal is to work with producers to develop voluntary approaches to meet the 30% target. We know that the best way forward is to expand the use of practices and technologies that farmers can use to reduce emissions while maintaining or improving yields. We also understand that there is a need to support these efforts through information and knowledge exchange. Farmers will need help when making the transition to new practices and approaches.

We certainly look to the leadership of our farmers and want collaboration with provincial and territorial governments and other stakeholders and partners. We want to move forward together, guided by our discussions. We are confident that action to meet the fertilizer target will build on the practices, innovation and expertise that Canada's farmers and scientists are already using and developing to improve nutrient management and reduce emissions while maintaining the quality that Canadian agriculture is known for around the world.

● (1830)

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, in closing, I would like to share some insights about how the government seems to make announcements first and then figure out the details later.

In a reply to my Order Paper question, Question No. 89, the government said that it did not even study how rationing fertilizer would affect the food supply in Canada and affect Canadian agricultural production, nor how lower exports would affect the global food supply. Furthermore, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food admitted in writing, in Order Paper Question No. 90, that the government did not study how rationing fertilizer would impact the economy of Saskatchewan, whether it be from reduced crop yields or from the resulting unemployment, including fewer jobs in agri-

retail, at canola crushing plants and at farms throughout the province.

Why is an issue as fundamental as food production not worth studying before an announcement?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, indeed, we are looking at all solutions for reducing fertilizer emissions.

Over the next decade, the government will invest over \$1.5 billion to help Canadian farmers adopt sustainable practices and technologies. That includes \$12.8 million to support two living labs in Saskatchewan, which bring farmers and researchers in the field together to develop sustainable practices that work in real farm conditions. Our first-ever indigenous-led living lab will bring together Saskatchewan producers and first nations to explore practices such as crop diversification for pesticide management and landscape diversification.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am raising tonight a question I initially asked in June of this year. I was basing my question on a written question on the Order Paper relating to the ongoing costs to the Canadian taxpayer of the reckless and pointless Trans Mountain pipeline expansion. In the question on the Order Paper, I pointed out that the Minister of Finance had said earlier that year that, with the rising costs of the Trans Mountain pipeline, as demonstrated by the reports from the corporation itself, which is a crown corporation owned by us, she was going to ensure that no more public money went into this crown corporation.

However, a question on the Order Paper pointed out that the assessment of the ongoing debt of the project was reviewed by the TD Bank and described as confidential for commercial reasons. Therefore, we were not going to get to find out. An independent economist within British Columbia, one of our leading economists Robyn Allen, pointed out that, no, we have ongoing costs for the tariffs and we have debt from the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion and that those debts are likely to be written off, leaving Canadians holding the bag once again.

Adjournment Proceedings

As disturbing as the analysis about the ongoing debt of the Trans Mountain pipeline is, it was the outrageous response of the member for Edmonton Centre, who is also the Minister of Tourism and also a deputy finance minister, that forced me to say that this better come forward at Adjournment Proceedings. In the short space of his 30-second response, he made three statements that were not true factually. He probably believes they are factual. I am not saying he is in any way dishonest; most people seem to believe this rot.

First, he said, “Canadians know how important it is to get our product to market and to tidewater.” There are two mistakes there. There is no market for dilbit. Nobody in Asia is clamouring for dilbit. This is demonstrable and empirically true and, if we have another chance in late show, I will bring forward all the statistics of how few tankers have left Vancouver with available dilbit. There is no market.

Second in the ridiculous statement is just misleading. It is that this project has led to 12,700 jobs, once completed. That suggests this is a job creator. The job creation is only the construction. It creates fewer than 100 permanent jobs. There will be many jobs if they ever have the horror of a seven-fold expansion of tankers carrying dilbit, because dilbit is a material that cannot be cleaned up in the marine environment. Therefore, there will be many thousands of people going to shorelines in a futile attempt to restore the ecosystem if we allow this horror to happen.

Third in his statement is that, if we do this, “Canadians will enjoy full price for our oil on the world market.” This is another big whopper that is just impossible to be true. Dilbit is diluted bitumen. Bitumen is solid, like tar. They add the diluent, not to process it to make it more viable but to get something solid to move through a pipeline. Guess what. It has a very low value, inherently low. It does not become more profitable or get to world price because it gets to tidewater. It is just a low-value product that is very expensive to produce and that produces more greenhouse gases than nearly any other fossil fuel.

Last, the member suggested that it is going to be de-risked. The Minister of Finance says this too. It is nonsense. It is a risky project financially and it is a fatal project environmentally.

• (1835)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on many points I disagree with the former leader, and possibly the future leader, of the Green Party.

We may need to be a little more transparent on the issue. The Green Party, the member in particular, on many occasions in the House has given her opinions on pipelines. To her credit, she has been very articulate in believing that there really is no justification whatsoever for Canada to develop pipelines or put them in place. If we were to further explore her thinking on it, it is more about getting rid of the pipelines that are currently in place. At least that is what I recollect offhand.

When we think of the Trans Mountain pipeline, I would argue it was indeed in Canada's national interest that we did what we did when we acquired it, because there was a great deal of interest and a great deal at stake. At some point in time, it will be divested. That

is when the member will be able to ensure that there is a higher sense of accountability in terms of how it is divested and where we come out on the balance sheet on that divestiture.

The member referenced jobs, and there were well over 10,000 jobs, even during its construction. She might say there will be a relatively low number of jobs once it has been constructed, but the resource is there and it is important, as I said, in the national interest. She did not talk about that aspect of it. I can appreciate why, because she does not believe we should be tapping into resources of that nature.

Suffice it to say that when we talk about the Trans Mountain pipeline, one of the things we need to recognize is that there is a difference in political approaches or philosophy on the issue. We constantly get targeted by members from the Green Party and, to a certain degree, the New Democrats and the Bloc, saying we are doing too much to support our resource industries. Virtually every day we are criticized by the Conservative Party of Canada, which says we are not doing enough and we need to get more pipelines built.

One of the first things we did, members will recall, back in 2016, was to establish a process to ensure that stakeholders are brought into it, that our environment is of the most significant concern, that it is part of the process and it has to be clearly demonstrated that we will not damage our environment. It also takes into consideration the economic factor, or the national interest. The Trans Mountain pipeline is the reason we are moving forward, because those things have been safeguarded and we very much want to do this in the name of the national interest. At the end of the day, once it is divested, many of the potential answers the member would like with regard to the feasibility of it will also—

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, my heavens, I need to say a few things.

I intervened in the National Energy Board process. I read all 23,000 pages of its so-called evidence, and I can swear on a stack of Bibles that nowhere in there was there a cost-benefit analysis. In fact, the National Energy Board blocked the evidence from Unifor, the largest union in the oil sands, when its representatives testified and had expert evidence that the pipeline project would cost Canadian jobs and that Unifor was against it. The National Energy Board said that jobs and the economy were not in its mandate and then magically ruled that, yes, there would be a lot of environmental damage if this went ahead, but it was in the national interest.

I think the national interest is in a viable planet. I think the national interest is in making sure we try to stabilize at 1.5°C, and we know that every international body is saying no new fossil fuel infrastructure if we have an interest in human civilization surviving to when my daughter, now 31, is my age. By God, this must be stopped.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member makes reference to how I started off the comment, saying that the member would ultimately argue that it is never in the national interest to build an inch of pipeline. That is the essence of what she is saying. Some, but not all, New Democrats might agree with that assessment, but all one needs to do is look at the LNG project, where the provincial NDP, working with the federal Liberals, recognized the natural resource and saw the national interest.

I like to think that is where we will see a bit of a difference between the Greens and the New Democrats, that under no circumstances whatsoever will the Greens ultimately see and acknowledge that any pipeline whatsoever would be in the national interest, and that is where we would have to disagree.

HEALTH

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to ask for further clarification on a question I brought up earlier on youth and children's access to mental health supports and the backlog of these supports as a result of Liberal inaction. This seems particularly timely as National Child Day here in Canada is coming up on November 20.

I want to start by expressing that I am a parent of two, and many in this chamber are also parents. I worked directly with children and youth in our school systems. I worked directly with youth and families in addictions. I saw the implications for children and youth directly of a lack of appropriate, accessible, timely and adequate mental health supports for children and youth.

We are talking about the accessibility and location specifically and having it somewhere nearby and having barrier-free access to mental health supports. The costs are a huge barrier. I am looking at free or appropriately priced mental health care, which should be free, and having it be appropriate. When it comes to availability and consistency, often youth struggle to build relationships with a service provider without that consistency, and of course, it should be culturally appropriate.

The wait-lists and backlogs, as we all know, are often months and sometimes years long. These youth and children were not only not accessing the support in relation to the immediate symptoms they were experiencing, but also those symptoms were compounded because they were not getting access to the supports. The illnesses they were experiencing often increased. I saw youth whose medication was either under-prescribed, overprescribed or inappropriately prescribed due to a lack of access to care.

When mental health supports are consistently unavailable and inappropriately funded, it reinforces the stigma attached to mental health supports. It reinforces the narrative that mental health supports are not important. We know that mental health and physical health are inextricably interconnected. We cannot disconnect one from the other. This is not only having a direct impact on youth and

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children, but it also has an impact on their loved ones. It has an impact on our capacity to support one another in the community.

We need to have federal leadership today. The stats do not lie. In 2020, one-quarter of the hospitalizations across Canada for those five to 24 years of age were around mental health, yet we are still seeing inaction. There was \$4.5 billion promised by the Liberal government over five years, and to date none of that has been delivered. This is money, much-needed support, that has been promised and committed that is not being used to support children and youth with mental health. Some \$250 million from 2021-22 and \$625 million from 2022-23 has not been allocated.

I think of my colleague, the member for Courtenay—Alberni, who put forward Motion No. 67, pushing the government to establish the Canada mental health transfer.

I see I am running close to my four minutes, so I will ask the government when it will be sending this much-needed mental health transfer to the provinces and territories.

• (1845)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to provide my hon. colleague with more details.

[*Translation*]

We all agree that we want to give young people access to mental health services when and where they need it most. Supporting mental health also helps to prevent suicide, and that is vitally important.

In 2020, suicide was the second leading cause of death among those aged 15 to 34. The government recognizes the devastating effects of suicide on families and communities. We also recognize that wait times and problems getting access to services are having a negative impact on people with mental health issues.

[*English*]

More people need more services. We all know about the lack of system capacity to meet needs, and the persistent and ongoing barriers to care have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

One such barrier is long wait times. This is unacceptable, and we are working to address this situation through a suite of measures. We have responded to these needs by working with provinces, territories and stakeholders to help spread and scale integrated youth services, or IYS, models of care.

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[Translation]

This measure builds on the work we have done to increase young people's access to mental health and addiction services, which includes transferring \$600 million to the provinces every year until 2027, as per budget 2017.

[English]

All 13 provinces and territories have developed or are developing an IYS network in their regions. Additionally, there is an indigenous IYS network in progress. These hubs are easily accessible, community-based one-stop shops that provide an integrated suite of services, which can include peer support, mental health and primary care support, and employment counselling, as well as support for navigating these systems of care.

This demonstrates how the federal government can work constructively with provinces and territories to spread and scale evidence-based practices in the mental health and substance-use space.

[Translation]

In addition, in response to the pandemic, we quickly launched Wellness Together Canada, an online portal offering mental health and substance use support. Budget 2022 committed an additional \$140 million over two years for the portal so it can continue to provide this support to Canadians. Through the portal, people aged five to 29 can access a wide range of resources free of charge, including Kids Help Phone.

Kids Help Phone offers support via chat, call and text. Once again, the government has recognized the need for this support and is providing more than \$14.8 million so that Kids Help Phone can support kids and teens in mental health crisis at this unique time.

In addition to investments in suicide crisis services, in the 2020 fall economic statement, the government announced a \$50-million investment to bolster distress centres across the country. It has supported over 61 such centres to date.

● (1850)

[English]

Furthermore, we are investing in the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, CAMH, to implement and sustain a fully operational pan-Canadian suicide prevention service with its partners. Talk Suicide Canada currently provides suicide crisis support via the phone in English and French, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and by text, in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, provinces and territories are asking when they will see the mental health transfer and the increase to our health care transfer as well.

The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health, for example, sent an open letter along with 65 organizations from health and allied sectors indicating that the development of the standards of the mental health transfer should not be a reason to delay the establishment of the Canada mental health transfer.

It is also calling for parity in legislation, so the federal government will value mental and physical health equitably, which is something that we do not currently see. Mental health stakeholders are calling for a target of at least 12% of health care spending to be directed toward mental health.

There are so many asks right now, but the bottom line is that provinces and territories need more funding to adequately staff our health care, for both mental health and physical health. When will we see the money transferred—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, as we look to the future, we know that more needs to be done. As the first Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, the minister is dedicated to ensuring that mental health is treated as a full and equal part of our universal health care system. Achieving this requires building on our current investments.

[Translation]

Over the past year, we have had the opportunity, as has the minister, to travel across Canada reaching out to stakeholders and hearing about solutions to meet mental health and addiction needs. There is more sound evidence on the models of care that work and on those that do not.

We recognize that more needs to be done, and we are determined to support mental health and addiction services so that Canadians, especially youth and teenagers, receive quality care at the right time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:53 p.m.)

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