



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 186
Thursday, April 27, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 27, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 27th report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts concerning the motion adopted on Monday, April 24, regarding the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation.

[*English*]

That motion calls on the CRA to audit the foundation as quickly as possible.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 14th report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, entitled “The Wake-Up Call: The World After February 24th 2022”.

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

* * *

PETITIONS

FIREARMS

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have 21 petitions calling on the government to repeal Bill C-21, the confiscation of private property act.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also have petitions asking that the government repeal the results of the mandates, hire soldiers back and reverse the hatred and contempt toward individuals who exercise their constitutionally protected conscience rights.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today.

The first one calls upon the House to adopt human rights and environmental due diligence legislation that would require companies to prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damage throughout their global operations and supply chains. There are a number of other points in this petition that, once it is tabled, people can read.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition calls on the Government of Canada to take the following action: immediately call for an end to violence and for restraint from all sides and parties involved in the Tigray conflict; and immediately call for humanitarian access to the region and for independent monitoring to be allowed. There are a number of other points along the same lines.

[*Translation*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning, I am tabling three petitions in the House.

The first one has to do with the rather horrendous story of a young man named Ahmad Manasra, who was arrested by Israeli forces in October 2015 when he was just 13 years old. After being found guilty of attempted murder in proceedings marred by allegations of torture, the young Ahmad Manasra was sent to prison, where he has remained ever since. What is more, he has been being held in solitary confinement since 2021.

UN human rights experts and Amnesty International are calling for him to be freed. The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to request that Israel immediately free Ahmad Manasra.

• (1005)

OPIOIDS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my second petition serves as a reminder that the opioid crisis is a national crisis and a public health emergency. There have been 21,174 deaths over the past five years.

Government Orders

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to declare the overdose crisis a national public health emergency and to decriminalize drug possession for personal use.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the third and last petition, signed by hundreds of people, points out that some Canadian companies contribute to human rights abuses, the destruction of ecosystems and environmental damage around the world.

The petitioners are calling for legislation on due diligence for human and environmental rights that would make it possible to prosecute, under Canadian law, Canadian companies that fail to respect human rights abroad.

[English]

NIGERIA

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members will recall the mass abductions in Nigeria a few years ago, largely the result of Boko Haram, the Islamic State and Fulani militants. The petitioners are particularly concerned about several people: Leah Sharibu; Alice Ngaddah; the Chibok girls, who are largely girls between the ages of 12 and 16; and the victims' families.

The petitioners are calling upon the Subcommittee on International Human Rights to make contact with the Nigerian government to express their concern and to urge the Nigerian government to intervene in these abductions.

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table yet another petition dealing with the issue of international travel.

The Indo-Canadian community has been growing at a great rate here in Canada, and with that growth there has been an increased demand for international flights. The petitioners are hoping to see an international flight that ultimately goes from Winnipeg to India, and if not, to Europe. The demand continues to increase, and they are calling upon the government to work with private industry and different airlines and for all of us to do what we can to ensure we get an increased number of direct flights coming out of Canadian cities, in particular the city of Winnipeg.

* * *

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 would ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed from April 25 consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak today about the 2023 federal budget, in particular the budget implementation act. This budget is a testament to the dedication and commitment of our government to the people of Canada. We have listened to the needs and concerns of Canadians and have worked tirelessly to create a budget that reflects our shared values and aspirations.

I want to share, in particular, some initiatives that would benefit the residents of Brampton, since I am the member representing Brampton North. As one of the fastest-growing cities in Canada, Brampton has unique needs and challenges. Our government recognizes this and has taken steps to address them in this budget.

We know that in Brampton, health care is a growing need of the population, and it is sad to say that the Brampton community has been underserved for many years. I can speak to my own experiences with having difficulty finding a family doctor. With the networks people think a member of Parliament has, one would think it would be easy. It makes me believe that my constituents really stand no chance and have a very difficult time being seen on a routine and regular basis. This is one of the reasons we have incredibly long waits in our emergency rooms, which we have been seeing across the country. However, as a representative and long-time resident of Brampton, I know we have been seeing this in our community for years and years now.

With the investment we are making in health care, it is my hope that when funding is completely received by the provincial governments, they put it to use in making sure they reduce waiting lines in ERs. We have, in particular, carved out a part of our budget to address that, and I really hope the Government of Ontario takes that seriously and gets right to work to reduce those wait lines. Waiting in an ER for 18 hours is the norm in Brampton, and when people started seeing it across the country, it made news stations everywhere else. However, it is the norm we are used to, and it is a shame.

I looked into this a bit, and we provide our health care transfers at the federal level based on population and some other factors across the provinces. We hand that money over to them in trust that they will divide the pie as fairly as possible down to the regions and municipalities. However, that was not done here. I hope the province is listening, will take this concern seriously and will make sure that Brampton gets its fair share.

There is almost \$200 billion over 10 years, including \$46.2 billion in new funding, for the provinces and territories. That is huge. We have never seen that type of funding and investment by a federal government in health care, and I think it is so important.

I spent some years living in the U.S., and oftentimes the grass looks greener on the other side and we think that perhaps we should have a system similar to that of the U.S. because we could get seen faster. However, I can tell members that it is not a pretty picture there either. It is extremely complex, having the insurance plans that it has. It is also extremely complex trying to figure out how to navigate all of that and whether one would even end up being covered.

Here, people go in and pay nothing other than maybe the parking fee or a cable bill, which is very minor, at a hospital, and they can have an operation of any magnitude. This is what we take pride in here in Canada and what we want to continue to see in this great country. One of the things I used to always say to my American friends and colleagues is that it is a sense of pride, and I want that sense of pride to continue with Canadians.

I know that many have been feeling a little let down by their health care system, but we are there as a federal government to support them and make sure those gaps are covered, especially in the area of mental health. We have seen so many issues arising post-pandemic in particular. Even before that, some areas were not addressed. This funding will help address them.

• (1010)

There are other areas of concern for Brampton residents. We have a very young population. We have one of the youngest populations in the country. The average age in Brampton is between 34 and 35, so there are many young families. Oftentimes, these families are the ones that, when we look at income disparity, have the most challenges when it comes to expenditures and the amount of income they are bringing in. This budget helps with affordability. It helps with grocery costs. It helps with day care.

I have been calling around to different day cares in the Brampton community to see what the costs have come down to, and it is wonderful to hear my local day cares telling me that the costs for many families have come down anywhere from \$700 to \$800 a month per child. Those are real savings.

I know that at times we hear from the Conservatives that a one-time grocery benefit is not good enough. However, it is not a one-time grocery benefit; it is a comprehensive plan that we have put forward. We have so many measures that we are providing for Canadians. Overall, when we look at the Canada child benefit, the day care savings, the top-ups for GST and for seniors that we have done, and the grocery benefit, the savings add up to over \$11,000 for an average family per year. That is real money, and it is going to help Canadians get through this challenging time that we are facing globally together.

Another measure that I think is extremely important to many Bramptonians, because they have approached me over the years many times, is dental care for those who could not afford it. Last year, we saw that by the end of the year. We had made a promise, which we kept, to implement a dental health care plan that would

Government Orders

provide for children under 12. We have put aside the funding and are doing the hard work that is needed to make sure that this plan continues to expand to seniors, to those under 18, and to those with disabilities. That is a big relief to many people in that community. We are not going to stop there. We are going to continue to help everyone in need, so that families that make an average income of \$90,000 or less will be entirely supported by the time we complete the full program of dental care in Canada.

These programs are going to change the trajectory of our country for decades to come. They will change the lives of many.

We are also seeing that many more women are joining the workforce. There are so many talented women. In Brampton, it is not uncommon to have a post-secondary degree yet not be able to find a job. Recently there was a study, commissioned with some support and funding provided by our federal government as well, that showed that South Asian women in particular, as well as other minorities, are some of the most highly educated but most underemployed category of immigrant women in this country. I think it is so important that we make sure they have the ability to balance both family and their careers and put their skills to use. We do not want to waste our talent. Our talent is one of the best things we have in this country, and we need to make sure that it is encouraged and used.

That is why we are seeing so many investments in our country as well, not to mention the clean, green investments in this budget, which I think are going to provide hope for many Canadians. It is going to create a lot of great new jobs. It is extremely exciting, because this is not just a budget for today but a budget that will lead us into the future.

I am excited about the investments that Volkswagen has made and the investments that MDA has made in Brampton. We have new jobs that are being created around battery manufacturing in Brampton as well, good jobs for good constituents in Brampton North. I am grateful to be here today to share some of my thoughts about the budget and my excitement.

• (1015)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more Canadians than ever are using the food bank, 1.5 million Canadians a month. The member seems to think Canadians have never had it so good, even though the cost of groceries has never been higher, rent has doubled and mortgages have doubled.

I have a simple question for the member: Under her government's watch, how many more people are using the food bank in Brampton than before?

Government Orders

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I am by no means saying that life is easy for everyone. I recognize that these are challenging times for Canadians, and not just Canadians but Americans, Europeans and people all around the globe, as we have challenges with our supply chains and inflation throughout the world. Those are challenges that everyone in the world is facing, but Canadians are receiving relief and support from their government. That is incredibly important. We have lifted over 800,000 children out of poverty. Over a million more people in this country are now above the poverty threshold. These are huge numbers, and this is important progress.

We will continue to have the backs of Canadians. We will continue to do what we can to get them through this challenging time so that we can see brighter hope with clean, green jobs of the future and good employment for all.

• (1020)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a fairly simple question for my colleague.

Throughout my time in the House, so over the past three or four years, I have been hearing the government voice its concern about the French issue and say that it is very important to protect minority languages in Quebec and Canada.

Yesterday, the government presented its action plan for official languages 2023-2028. This is important. The plan includes investments totalling \$4 billion over the next 5 years. However, \$800 million, or 20% of these funds, will go to anglophones living in Quebec.

I just want to point out that even the government admits that Quebec anglophones are not under threat. English is not under threat in Quebec. In Canada and North America, English is the majority language.

Why is the government sending \$800 million to anglophones in Quebec when they are not under threat?

[English]

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a good day for languages in our country. Many stakeholder groups gave statements that they were incredibly thrilled that this government has put forward funding to protect our two official languages throughout Canada. It is more than any government has ever given before. It is double what used to be put in.

It was a good day for Canada. It was a good day for French in Quebec and a good day for English in Quebec, too. That is the beauty of Canada. We respect both languages equally. We want to protect French, and that is why the government is making investments. Bill C-13 is another example of our government modernizing things to make sure that French is protected in our country.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to see the commitment in the budget implementation act to the red dress alert, but I want to ask the member whether she shares my concern about the announced cuts of \$150 million to women's shelters across the country. That money was provided during the pandemic, when domestic violence rates

spiked, and those rates have not gone down, so it is critical that money be provided in a timely manner once again to women's shelters.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Mr. Speaker, I can understand that women's shelters and other organizations that received funding from our government during the pandemic were able to get through the pandemic because our government stepped in at that time, when no one else was there to help them. Just like all Canadians, they were going through a very problematic period. Our government invested \$300 million to help support them.

This funding is not being cut. It was a program created for the pandemic, and we have a lot of money in the pot right now to figure out a way to continue to support these organizations. The talks are continuing. The work is going to continue. There will be consultations in the months to come to figure out how we can continue supporting, with the support of the provinces as well, of course, and their operational funding responsibilities for women's shelters.

• (1025)

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, budget 2023 continues the Prime Minister's record of high taxes and inflationary deficits. The Prime Minister has added more debt than all other Canadian prime ministers combined and has no plan to balance the budget and control his inflationary deficits, which are driving up the costs of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. Canada's federal debt for the 2023-24 fiscal year is projected to reach, and I hope everyone is sitting down for this, \$1.22 trillion. That is nearly \$81,000 per household in Canada. There is no plan to balance Canada's budget projections. The deficit of 2022-23 is up to \$43 billion. In 2023-24, the deficit is projected to be \$40.1 billion. The Prime Minister promised a balanced budget in 2019. He continues to make false promises to Canadians.

These Liberal deficits are hurting hard-working Canadians due to the increase of the cost of living. One in five Canadians is skipping meals. I know my colleague said earlier, when she was asked the question about the food banks by my colleague, that food bank usage is up and 8.2 million people are using food banks. That is up 60%, compared to two million people before the pandemic. Food bank usage is at an all-time high. One in seven employed Canadians is using a food bank, and seniors' food bank usage is increasing at the highest rate of all other age groups. According to CTV, "service providers in Sault Ste. Marie are noticing a growing number of seniors are relying on food donations."

Canadian seniors call my office daily. They share their struggles in trying to mitigate the Liberal-made cost of living crisis we are currently living in. Seniors are having to use their overdraft to keep heat in their home and food on their table. Unfortunately, budget 2023 continues to leave Canadian seniors out in the cold. In a 255-page document, only half of one page is dedicated solely to supporting our seniors. Seniors are telling this government that they are struggling, but they are not being heard.

Government Orders

The Liberal government claims that seniors have never had it so good. The Minister of Seniors consistently refers to outdated statistics and failed Liberal policies that have not helped the well-being of seniors. Statistics on Canadian seniors have not been updated since 2020, when many seniors were relying on the temporary pandemic CERB payments. The government is not listening to how seniors are struggling. Statistics Canada has determined that the poverty level for seniors is currently based on the cost of living in 2018. Since 2018, the cost of living has skyrocketed and grocery prices have increased. The price of heating a home and driving a car has increased. How can the government possibly judge the current well-being of seniors based on the cost of living in 2018? The government needs to listen to what seniors are saying right now, and unfortunately, according to this budget, it is not.

Budget 2023 has announced a new grocery rebate, an underwhelming effort to try to mitigate the cost of living. The Liberals' grocery rebate will give a senior citizen a one-time payment of \$225 to cover the rising cost of food that their inflationary deficit helped cause. However, "Canada's Food Price Report 2023" predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year, \$598 more than the \$467 they will receive from the rebate. I do not know, but that does not sound like good math to me. CBC reported that, for struggling families and seniors in Windsor, the new grocery rebate is just a drop in the bucket. June Muir, president of Windsor-Essex Food Bank Association, said that the amount of money is not going to make much of an impact. This grocery rebate will not solve the cost of living crisis that has already driven many Canadians over the edge.

• (1030)

To make things worse, the Prime Minister's carbon tax increase of 14¢ per litre on April 1 is making it more expensive for Canadians to heat their homes and get to work. By 2030, this tax could add 50¢ per litre to gasoline. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the carbon tax will cost the average family between \$402 and \$847 in 2023 even after the rebates. Sheila, a senior in Winnipeg, had to use her overdraft this winter just to pay her expenses so she could heat her home and stay warm.

Budget 2023 states, "Our seniors have made Canada what it is today". Canada's seniors paved the way for our nation's prosperity, but after eight years of the Liberal government's inflationary spending and tax hikes, the government has put a damper on the legacy seniors worked so hard to build.

After eight years of the Liberal Prime Minister, the dream of home ownership has died for young and new Canadians. Nine out of 10 people who do not own a home say they will never own a home. CMHC data for January showed that new housing starts were at the lowest level since 2020. It is down 52% in Toronto and 14% in Vancouver. Canada has the lowest number of housing units per thousand residents of any G7 country. The number of units per thousand Canadians has been falling since 2016. This is due to the sharp rise in population growth. According to CMHC, Canada needs 3.5 million more homes than projected to restore affordability.

Under the Liberals, the down payment needed to buy a home has doubled. The minimum down payment on an average home has

gone from \$22,000 to \$45,000 across Canada. Budget 2023 has no plan to get the gatekeepers out of the way and get more houses built to restore affordability. What is the government's plan for first-time homebuyers? It is the new, tax-free first home savings account to allow Canadians to save up to \$40,000. However, in our current, Liberal-made cost of living crisis, how will Canadians be able to save this amount of money? According to a recent survey by Angus Reid Institute, 40% of Canadians say recent challenges have forced them to draw money from their savings accounts, which they had put away for emergency purposes, and 35% say they have deferred contributions to their RRSP and TFSA accounts. The average rent in Canada today is \$2,200. There is also an 11% increase in grocery prices and a 14¢ increase to a litre of gas. How can Canadians possibly afford to save money in their bank accounts with all the price increases on basic needs?

First-time homebuyers have given up on ever owning a home. The dream has become a nightmare due to the cost of mortgages and inflation. This has been caused by the Liberal government's wasteful spending of taxpayer money without considering the burden it created, which Canadians now have to bear. Average mortgage payments have more than doubled in eight years, from \$1,400 to over \$3,100. When the Prime Minister first took office, someone needed 39% of their average paycheque to make a monthly payment. Today, it is 62%.

Budget 2023 also introduced a new, refundable multi-generational home renovation tax credit, which would provide up to \$7,500 in support of construction of secondary suites for seniors and for adults living with disabilities. I am in full support of seniors and persons with disabilities having the opportunity to live in their homes longer. However, \$7,500 could not possibly be enough to renovate a home, due to the inflationary cost of materials skyrocketing. Furthermore, we have no labour that can complete these projects. How will families be—

• (1035)

The Deputy Speaker: I am just making sure everybody gets to participate so they can get their thoughts in.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member did not start her speech off very well. When she talked about seniors, she tried to give the false impression that the government is not there for them.

Government Orders

Virtually from day one, this government has been there for seniors. We can talk about the substantial increase to the GIS. We can talk about legislation and one of our very first actions, which was to reduce the age of retirement from 67, something the Conservatives had put into place, to 65. We can talk about the direct supports during the pandemic and the one-time payments. We can talk about the 10% increase for those aged 75 or more. Within this budget, we find the grocery rebate, which she made reference to, but she did not talk about the dental plan, which we are expanding to include seniors. We have lifted literally hundreds of thousands of seniors out of poverty. How does that contrast with the Conservative regime of Stephen Harper and its blatant disregard and disrespect for Canada's seniors?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask what good the dental plan is when my seniors cannot even afford to pay for gasoline to go to the grocery store to buy groceries. They cannot afford groceries. The rebate does not offset the cost of the carbon tax, heating or medical expenses. The member is talking about dental, which is great, but seniors cannot afford to eat, so they are not going to have dental problems.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague talked a lot about housing, a subject on which we agree.

A few weeks ago in committee, I questioned a witness about the Century Initiative, which seems to have inspired the government to increase the number of immigrants to Canada to a minimum of 500,000 a year.

When I questioned the witness, I asked if any thought had been given to the French language and to the need for housing. The answer was that the only consideration had been the economy.

If the government insists on reaching its targets without considering the social aspects involved, what will happen to the budgets and needs of Canadians and of Quebecers, in particular?

[*English*]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, time and again, we have said that we need to build more affordable homes. The hon. member is absolutely correct. We cannot allow 500,000 new immigrants to come to this country and provide them with the false promise that they will be able to have homes for their families, when we are not building them. We need to turn that around. We need to make sure we get rid of the gatekeepers and get those homes built so that, when new immigrants come, they can contribute to our society and make Canada free again.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I often find, in this place, that we really try to find solutions to the many problems Canadians face. The member pointed out several important issues that, from my perspective, require addressing. However, one of the biggest aspects the New Democrats have called for is the idea of an excess profits tax, and I would love for the member to comment on that. We often hear the Conservatives talk at great lengths about how corporations are taking advantage of Canadians, and I agree. However, I also agree with the solution, which is that, just like the Conservatives in the United Kingdom have done, we need to introduce an excess profits tax. What

are the member's thoughts with respect to an excess profits tax, especially in the age of COVID, when we have seen record profits driving up inflation?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that Canadians are working to ensure they provide for their families. However, as long as the Liberal government continues to recklessly and foolishly spend money, scandal after scandal and trip after trip, those tax dollars are going to increase, which means Canadians will have less money in their pockets to support their families. When are the Liberals going to take their own advice, balance the budget, and ensure that Canadians can live the free life we promised them when they came to this country?

• (1040)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member tirelessly champions seniors. It was mentioned that seniors are now more likely to be visiting food banks to be able to eat.

Just two weeks ago, the Minister of Agriculture announced Canada's first food policy, and the food policy is going to be to fund food banks. Having Canadians dependent on government to fill their rice bowls is our first food policy. What does this tell the member about the government's intention to make life more affordable for Canadians?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I volunteer at some food banks, and this is what I have been hearing: They are desperate, because they have to turn people away. There are people going from food bank to food bank so that they can get enough food to feed their families. We need to stop this foolishness. We need to start having more money for hard-working Canadians so they can support their families.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, unlike Émile Zola who, a hundred years ago, wrote an open letter accusing all the intellectual and government elites of his time of racism, I will turn the camera around and accuse myself.

Government Orders

I accuse myself and admit that I am guilty of being naive when it comes to political and public life. I am naive. When I went into politics three years ago, I thought that we would have intelligent debates in Parliament, in the House. I thought that the people elected across Canada, people with experience, people with a past, people who had worked on important issues, would come to Parliament and debate. I thought that, if I presented an argument, someone would come up with a counterargument, someone else would then present another counterargument, and that the process would result in brilliant bills—in short, the truth. I thought that we were going to come up with bills that would benefit Canadians, that people would look at us and say, “Wow, these are extraordinary people who are passing really effective bills that meet the specific needs of all Canadians and that are improving our country and ensuring we are going in the right direction”.

That is what I thought. Imagine how naive I was. I thought that was how democracy works in Quebec and Canada. I thought that that was how things worked, that we would work together and collaborate to get to the truth for the common good. That is what I thought. Imagine how naive I was and how my balloon burst after my three years here, when I saw how badly we fail to meet Canadians’ needs and, especially, how we have to keep repeating the same things day after day. I really was not expecting that.

In my past life I used to repeat lines as part of my work. I have a background in theatre. I played Molière’s *Le Malade imaginaire* 250 times. I repeated all my lines 250 times. When you work with Molière, there is always something new to discover. There are always truths hidden behind the lines. This broadens an actor’s horizons, since they can improve their performance every evening. In Parliament, however, all of us in the opposition strive to make speeches. We work in committee, we try to be wise. We conduct studies, we think hard every day to tell the government, the supposed decision-makers, what they should do and the measures they should put in place. We are close to the community, in our respective ridings. We see what is happening on the ground. Unfortunately, we have to repeat ourselves.

I say this because what I am going to say today is something I have said hundreds of times before in the House. I will have to repeat myself again today. It is sad, because these are important issues. For example, what is missing from this budget and this bill? Housing.

As my colleague said so well earlier, we need a game plan to build 3.5 million housing units in Canada in the next 10 years. This does not come from an extreme leftist group advocating for social housing, it comes from Scotiabank and the CMHC. These are the challenges we face.

We expected to see housing treated as an important concern in the budget. Most people devote 30%, 40% or 50% of their income to housing. There are even 80,000 households that spend 80% of their income on housing, and that is just in Quebec. That in itself is scandalous. Imagine someone earning \$1,000 or \$2,000 and having to spend \$800 or \$1,600 on housing. How would they eat? How would they send their children to school and pay for their school supplies? We are not even talking about recreational activities.

• (1045)

With such major concerns, with the bar set so high, with all the things we have repeated here and that organizations across the country have been repeating, we would expect the government to address the issue in the budget, to tackle this challenge and propose robust measures. Out of 250 pages of various measures in all sorts of areas, how many pages in the budget are devoted to the 3.5 million housing units we need over the next 10 years?

There is only one page. There is one short page about the most important issue of our generation. That is scandalous: a single short page on one of the most fundamental issues of our era, along with the fight against climate change and the language crisis. That in itself is scandalous.

Instead of addressing the issue, from what we learned yesterday, they are allocating \$800 million over the next five years to protect the best protected linguistic minority in the history of humanity, the anglophone community in Quebec. This community represents only 8% of the population, but the power of English is quite evident in Quebec, Canada and North America. However, the government will be sending \$800 million to the community over the next five years.

I advocated for 20 years for the survival of the French language in Quebec. That is one of the reasons I went into politics. The survival of the French language and culture in Quebec is one of our greatest challenges. Since I got here, I have heard a lot of promises. They say they recognize the symmetry between English and French in Canada, that they know it is important, that they know that French-language communities across the country are in peril, that they know that French in Quebec is also threatened, that they will get down to it and come up with a bill with teeth.

Now the government comes up with Bill C-13 and, yesterday, with a plan to invest \$800 million. Anglophones in Quebec have three universities. They have as many hospitals and television stations as they need. They have access to all music on Spotify, and to more movies than they can watch. There is no housing for the most destitute in this country and no investments to make a difference in this budget, but the government’s excuse is that it has invested in recent years. It is unacceptable that we are failing to address this crucial issue. I just cannot believe it.

Right now, I am touring Quebec to document the crisis, to see what is happening on the ground. The things I am hearing are appalling. In Trois-Rivières, a victim of domestic violence is sleeping in a car with her two children. How can we allow that? How can there be only one page about housing in the budget?

In my riding of Longueuil, there are 17 people living in a three-bedroom apartment. What country are we living in? Is this a G7 country, or is it some country in the Middle Ages? I cannot get over the idea of 17 people living in a three-bedroom apartment. There are no measures in the budget for these 17 people in their three-bedroom apartment. There are no measures to help that victim of domestic violence who is living in her car with her two children.

Government Orders

This budget is a disgrace, a disaster. It does not meet the needs of Quebec and Canadian society today. It is misguided. It fails to target the most important issues, and that is extremely unfortunate.

Maybe I am being too naive. Still, however much I do not like it, I will keep repeating these truths until the government finally understands what and where the real needs are in this society, here and now.

• (1050)

The Deputy Speaker: I want to issue a reminder that using props is against the rules. In this case, it was a page from a document. I would like the member to go get the piece of paper that he used as a prop and throw on the floor.

Then we can continue with questions and comments.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will not use any props as I ask my hon. colleague a question.

I know that it is not all fun and games here in the House, but things do get done. One of the things that gets me down is when members exaggerate.

The government announced \$31.2 billion as part of the national housing strategy. That was in the previous budgets. This funding will be available until 2028. There is a measure in the strategy to assist people in urgent need of housing, such as victims of violence.

Instead of repeating misinformation, could this well-known member from Quebec occasionally admit that progress is being made? It is not always easy, but progress is being made. A lot of progress was made with the national housing strategy.

Mr. Denis Trudel: Mr. Speaker, is it not against the rules to accuse another member of spreading misinformation in the House?

My speech was completely accurate. My colleague is talking about women who are victims of domestic violence. Every day in Quebec during the pandemic, women who are victims of domestic violence were being turned away from shelters because there were no resources available. There were not enough spots.

In Quebec right now, there are 45,000 households waiting for low-rent housing. These are people who cannot afford housing. These are the hard facts. I do not know what my colleague is talking about. I do not know what planet he is living on. Right now, the housing crisis is one of the most serious crises of our time.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert on his spirited speech. In my province of British Columbia, the birth rate continues to decline, just like in Quebec.

Would more births in Quebec help fix the language crisis? How can we encourage Quebecers to have more babies?

Mr. Denis Trudel: Mr. Speaker, encouraging Quebecers to have more babies is a trap. They will not have more babies. Let us be honest, people in the west are not having babies. One way or another, we need to encourage francophone immigration to address

the language crisis throughout Canada and Quebec. It is extremely important. People are not having babies.

Unfortunately, in Quebec, society is anglicizing naturally. This is happening naturally. I talked about it in my speech earlier. We need a substantial francophone immigration policy because there is not going to be another baby boom, unfortunately.

• (1055)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the area I represent has over 300 years of francophone culture. The citizens I represent there are now going to be able to get dental care, and we have some of the highest rates of child poverty in the country. What would the member have to say to those people if we were to not do a budget that includes child care or access to dental care for children, persons with disabilities and seniors, in particular, given that we have some of the highest rates of poverty? I would like to hear what the member has to say about that.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel: Mr. Speaker, it needs to be said: We always get the impression that the NDP is in the wrong Parliament. There is a party in Quebec called Québec Solidaire that is proposing this type of measure. It is working out quite well because when we talk about dental care, that is part of Quebec's responsibility for health care.

Obviously, I am not against dental care, because it is extremely important. What we keep saying is that Ottawa does not run any hospitals, it does not pay for any doctors and it does not train any nurses. It does not have the authority to talk about these jurisdictions. If it wants to create dental care programs, the government should send money to the provinces, and the provinces will take care of it.

*Government Orders***POINTS OF ORDER**

ALLEGED UNPARLIAMENTARY LANGUAGE

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during the period of questions and comments following the speech by my esteemed colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, the member for Hull—Aylmer claimed indirectly that my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert was spreading lies in the House. I believe it is against the rules of this place to accuse someone of lying. I think the member for Hull—Aylmer did indirectly what he is not allowed to do directly by saying that the member was spreading misinformation. This is extremely insulting to a member who works very hard and does a very thorough job. I am bringing this to your attention because I think my colleague deserves an apology from the member for Hull—Aylmer.

The Deputy Speaker: I will review the video to determine exactly what was said and come back to the House with a ruling.

Resuming debate. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

* * *

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess the one disappointing thing about the previous member is that he did not tell us where he gets his shirts, and that is something this House needs to know. I hope, some day, he will tell us.

I rise today on the budget, and I would like to start by talking about some important news that happened last week. I represent the community of St. Catharines, which has been an automotive community for the better part of a century. There is a General Motors factory in our community. It has been a long-time employer in the community, and this week's announcement about the new gigafactory in St. Thomas is exciting for southern Ontario for many reasons.

An hon. member: Thirteen billion.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, when we got elected in 2015, there was a dark cloud over the auto industry. The previous government really did not pay enough attention. We saw factory closings in St. Thomas, with thousands of workers laid off. We saw closings throughout the manufacturing sector. We saw a lot of factories close in Niagara, automotive or otherwise.

I had GM pensioners come to me in the early part of our first mandate worried whether the St. Catharines plant would stay open, after serving the community and being an employer of members of our community for a century. It is a shocking thing for a community, to be worried about something that has been at the heart of it for so long. I tip my hat, not only to this government, but also to the provincial government, for focusing on the auto industry and under-

standing it is a priority for the province and a priority for southern Ontario.

The Volkswagen announcement would mean 3,000 direct jobs and 30,000 indirect jobs. Those would be jobs throughout southern Ontario, the rest of Ontario and even into the neighbouring provinces as well. There was a heckle that it is going to cost billions of dollars in federal and provincial investments, but it is an investment. That investment will be paid off in less than six years, and it is for a plant that will be there for decades, a plant that will produce 400 billion to 500 billion dollars' worth of economic activity. I am going to say that again. This will be \$400 billion to \$500 billion, not million, in economic activity for a region that has seen so many factories move away and so many factories close.

Conservatives will say that they stand up for workers, but I ask where the action is on that. It has become awfully quiet. The heckling has stopped, but at the end of the day—

Mr. Frank Caputo: Where were you for Alberta workers?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, the heckling has started again, and it is for Alberta workers. They ask about Alberta workers. Unemployment is high. I know the hon. member is excited about automotive workers. What is good for Ontario is good for Alberta. What is good for Alberta is good for the rest of the country as well.

The hon. member knows that oil is a commodity, and the price of oil will dictate the economy, so it is a global thing. I know he pretends the Prime Minister is in charge of that, which is an incredible thing to suggest to his constituents. It is kind of silly, and it really shows he really does not comprehend how the global economy works, which is truly disappointing for a member in a party that claims it speaks for business.

To hear these heckles, it is clear he does not know how business works and does not know how the economy works. That being said—

● (1100)

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member used unparliamentary language. If the member is going to talk about people personally, he can keep it parliamentary.

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to say that everything was nice and quiet until someone asked for some heckling.

The hon. member for St. Catharines has the floor.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I did not specifically point anyone out until the hon. member stood up to accept that he did not understand what he was talking about. As the old saying goes, it would be best to remain silent and be thought of as a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt, so I am happy to have him stand up.

It is truly disappointing that the hon. member would try to heckle me over 33,000 jobs. The Conservative member for the region was there. I am sure she is excited about the prospect of tens of thousands of jobs in southern Ontario. I know the premier of Ontario, who is a Conservative, gave her a shout-out for her work in her constituency, but it is disappointing to see the leader of the opposition stand against auto workers, the automotive industry and southern Ontario.

Government Orders

We have seen investments, and not just in Volkswagen in St. Thomas. We have seen them at automotive plants such as Honda, Toyota, General Motors and Ford. We have seen new announcements in places such as Windsor, London, Niagara and Oshawa, which some had feared would close. These are places that we thought were on the way out, which are now excited about the future, and are there for the future.

To cash in on the green economy and green jobs, we need to have an environmental plan. That is what the hon. members on the other side do not understand. They do not understand that we need a climate plan. The last election they ran on a carbon tax. At the end of the day, they have now changed their minds, going back to saying it should be free to pollute whenever and however one wants. That is how they go about things. They have tried it three elections in a row and can carry on to continue in the same way in a fourth election.

A company such as Volkswagen, after looking at Canada, realized that this is a country that is serious about climate and a province that is serious about climate. That is how we attract these jobs. Our workers, whether they are in Ontario or Alberta, are serious about doing better for their environment. We can see with our own eyes that the climate is changing.

We can bury our heads in the sand, or we can do better. We can get good-paying jobs. We can advance the middle class in our country, or we can say, "Oh, don't worry about it. We'll just stick with the old ways and see those factories close." That is what they did in the previous 10 years they were in office. They threw up their hands and said they do not care.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I heard another heckle. We reduced emissions. I always love that we reduced emissions, but they take credit for the Kathleen Wynne closure of coal plants in Ontario. One thing they do is quietly celebrate Kathleen Wynne about that. I appreciate the heckle on that point.

Again, this is optimistic for St. Catharines, and it is optimistic for southern Ontario. It is going to see workers continue and generations, moving forward, who will have great-paying jobs in this sector. That is how we build the middle class.

I would also like to speak about dental. This is something else the Conservatives are opposed to, providing free dental care to kids and seniors, even though they themselves get a government-funded dental plan, as we do on this side of this House. They would deny that to Canadians.

There was a weird comment by a previous member who suggested some seniors are having difficulty buying groceries, so a dental plan would be a waste, which is a shocking thing to say. I guess the Conservative viewpoint on this would be, if someone is having trouble eating, they do not need teeth, which is wild.

Before I was elected to office, my favourite job, which was also one I did not get paid for, was the chair of Quest Community Health Centre in St. Catharines. We had a volunteer dental clinic where a volunteer dentist would come and do work on vulnerable members of our community. It was incredible to see the results.

People who had been in pain for years, for decades, would use the emergency room to take care of their dental pain. We all know that there are ER crises across the country with long wait times, but people were smiling for the first time.

The Conservatives see it as a waste, which is disappointing. How does one get a job if one cannot smile? It is the right thing to do, but let us look at it as an economic plan. They can be opposed to alleviating suffering. They can be opposed to making people feel great being able to smile, but it will help them get jobs. It will help them get back into society.

● (1105)

This is something worthwhile. It is something this budget and this government stand up for, but we do not see it on the other side.

The Conservatives say that they stand up for the vulnerable, that they stand up for workers, that they stand up for their constituents, but time after time, when the rubber meets the road on these points that actually help Canadians, they are nowhere to be seen. Though they have been heckling me on issues that matter to Canadians, they are nowhere to be seen when the votes happen and it is time to help Canadians. The Conservatives have nothing except bumper sticker slogans, and that will never help Canadians.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reference a remark that the member made about my comment.

Could he please explain to me why Sheila has to live from overdraft to overdraft, paying 21% just to heat her house and to buy groceries? The dental care plan is not going to help someone who cannot eat. That was my reference, not that it is not a good idea. I am saying that we need to allow people to have more money in their pockets and less taxes.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, this is wild. She did not correct her comment that she does not need dental care, that she is having trouble. That she does not need to no have pain and that she does not deserve to have a smile is beside the point.

This is from a member who represented a party that was going to increase the age that people could collect OAS and GIS, from age 65 to 67. This is from a party that voted against increases to OAS, that voted against increases to GIS, that voted against cutting taxes on the middle class so we could raise it on the wealthiest 1%. It is a party that votes against dental care for seniors.

It is absolutely shocking that the hon. member would stand and want to correct her comments when they are flawed to their core.

Government Orders

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned the Volkswagen plant. We have been after a national auto strategy for a long time in this place. The original plan was with Dr. David Suzuki, my then friend and former MP Joe Comartin and the CAW, and now Unifor, back in 2006. To be fair to this agreement with Volkswagen, it is a pretty solid deal, because most of it is loaded with the production taking place as opposed to going in without any expectations.

However, I do want to correct one thing. When General Motors and Chrysler were struggling a few years back, the Conservatives at that time, with the late Jim Flaherty, said that they could not pick winners or losers at first. Later on, they made an agreement to save General Motors and Chrysler, which now Stellantis. Had we not sold the shares to General Motors, we would have made money off the loan that was provided at that time.

I would like the member to provide a little more details about the Volkswagen investment. To be fair, the minister has done a decent deal with regard to this, ensuring that the money is tied to the facility and the development of that facility, as well as the production of materials, including batteries and so forth. If we do not have that type of production, we will be a rip-and-ship nation, like we are for softwood lumber.

• (1110)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is right that the government stepped up, as did the government in the United States, to save General Motors. However, having lived in Windsor for three years and being from Niagara, we can probably sit down and go on for far too long about the number of factories that closed and how manufacturing was impacted and forgotten. Even though in that one moment it was saved, we did not see that desire throughout the course of the Conservatives' mandate.

I agree with the hon. member that this is a good investment. This will go on for years. It is not front-end loaded so the company can walk away or not produce the batteries it says that it will make.

However, I would like to expand briefly on his analogy with respect to ripping and shipping, as we have done for centuries in our country. We will produce in Canada the critical minerals that will then go into the battery plant. We will take advantage of this. I tip my hat to the Minister of Innovation as Canada has now become the number two place to do business with regard to batteries in the world in a short period of time. We see where the future is going to be, we see where the puck is going to be, and the hon. minister is there.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague stated, we keep repeating the same thing, but, there is no mention of regional flights in Bill C-47.

Regional flights are out of reach. There has been a considerable increase in the price of fuel, and the price of flights continues to increase. Bill C-47 would significantly increase the air travel security charge for both international and regional flights.

I want to talk about airports. When talking about regional flights, we must first talk about regional airports, and I would like to talk about the Val-D'Or airport in particular. We have been asking for

money for this airport, but have had no response from the minister. We keep repeating the same thing.

This airport is important for aviation safety. It is a hub for northern Quebec, and keeping it operating smoothly is actually a matter of life or death. There is nothing for the regions in this budget.

[*English*]

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, it is a very specific question about her region. The only thing I can say is that the airlines are private entities. I know the opposition likes to point to the government and say that it is our fault that flights are delayed, that this and that is our fault. These are private companies across the country—

Mrs. Kelly Block: Who regulates them?

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, though we do not control the weather, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition and the members heckling me seem to suggest we do, it is important for the private sector to step up. There are labour shortages across the sector, which is something at which I hope the minister is looking.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would like it if people could just have a nice discussion on what is going on, but I would also suggest to folks that extra heckling is a little too much sometimes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I want to suggest to folks that if they get a little too excited, it is really nice outside. They can go outside and say hi to their friends or take a walk. It is sunny. Maybe they can grab a glass water or something like that.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

• (1115)

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the federal government's budget and to report on behalf of working families, seniors and small businesses that I represent in New Brunswick Southwest.

I will join other Conservative MPs in voting against the budget implement act. We do so because the Liberal budget will make life more difficult and more expensive for Canadians.

Liberal MPs measure success by how many tax dollars are being spent. They say that the number of programs in this budget is what matters, yet Canadians know and understand why more federal assistance is needed. It is because the government's overall management of the economy is failing. Under the Liberals, Canadians are becoming poorer.

Government Orders

The Liberal government is raising taxes every year on households and businesses. It is a government that spent so much so quickly that inflation roared back, raising consumer prices throughout the economy on households and businesses, making it harder to get by and harder to compete.

As a result, Canadians are experiencing a cost of living crisis. It is especially painful on families, pensioners on a fixed income as well as modest and low-income workers. Canadians do not approve of massive inflationary spending. The Conservatives understand this. We recognize that out-of-control debt financing and taxes only hurts the country and it hurts Canadians. However, this is the Liberal plan.

As well, I should note that Conservatives do not approve of the Liberal-NDP coalition that barter tax dollars for confidence votes so the Prime Minister can govern as if he won a majority, when he did not do such thing.

We know the Prime Minister has no willingness to be fiscally responsible. Nor is he even skilled at overseeing the government. The Liberals have increased spending on the public service, the running of the government, by 50%, yet today, federal workers are out on strike in the largest job action in at least 40 years. I have to say that it takes a special sort of incompetence to accomplish both these things, to both ramp up spending, spending more than \$22 billion on the operation of government, and yet be in a position where taxpayers are receiving less but paying more.

Even while the Prime Minister drops the ball on big items and the cabinet passes these, the Liberal backbench cheers them on. Worse, taxpayers see a leader of a government who does not even care about ethics.

My constituents are certainly aware of the Prime Minister's extravagant spending habits and posh vacations. As struggling Canadians forgo basics and seniors make a choice between groceries and rent, the Prime Minister is choosing between visiting Jamaica and New York. Given his access to the pocketbook of Canadians, he chooses both. What is a \$6,000-a-night hotel room in London when taxpayers cover it, or taking a Caribbean vacation when the \$80,000-price is covered by a Trudeau Foundation donor? Canadians work hard and many cannot get ahead, yet the Prime Minister has never had it so good.

Earlier this month, the Prime Minister was in my home province to tell New Brunswick families that they should also spend without worrying about the consequences of more debt. At a town hall in Moncton, the Prime Minister explained how borrowing money, as his Liberal government is doing, was just like using a credit card. He actually encouraged New Brunswick families and all Canadians to use their credit cards to pay for things like tuition and home renovations. He said, "If you're using your credit card to go back to school, or if you go into debt to build an expansion on your house, then you're going to be able to sell your house for more."

Our Prime Minister is so out of touch, he is urging Canadians to borrow at interest rates as high as 28%, without any consequences, he says.

• (1120)

It is the same thing he told Canadians about inflation. Inflation will stay low. Homeowners took him at his word and took out variable mortgages with rates that have now gone through the roof. It is really making life difficult for millions of Canadians.

This is exactly how the Government of Canada is governing our nation's finances. Borrowing at 28% does not build wealth. It is a recipe for economic hardship. If someone borrows at 28%, their debt will double in three short years. That is what the Prime Minister is urging Canadians to do.

The projected interest on Canada's debt is going to hit \$44 billion this year. That is money we just pay to bondholders. It does not fund a single social program. It does not help hire another RCMP officer. It does not help equip our military. It is money that is going up and is being paid off overseas.

It is \$10 billion more than the estimates the government provided in the last fiscal economic update, and it will hit \$50 billion in four short years. That is the spiral the government has us in. We have rising interest rates because of its debt-fuelled spending, twinned with inflation that is making a bad foundation wholly unstable.

Nowhere in this budget is there a viable strategy to control spending, or offer a plan or an outline to balance the budget. Instead, the total debt will top \$1.2 trillion this year. Speaking of doubling debt, that is precisely what the Liberal government has done in eight short years. It has run up more debt than all governments in Canadian history combined. That has us on the road to fiscal ruin.

It gets worse. It does not just end with spending. The Liberal carbon tax increased to \$65 per tonne of emissions this year, resulting in higher prices for gasoline, home heating, food and almost everything in the Canadian economy.

Liberals like to point to higher gas prices as something that is caused by the war against Russia, and there is no doubt that war has caused hardship, pressure on supply chains and rising energy prices.

I point to my riding, which neighbours the state of Maine. If someone crosses into Maine and fills up their tank, after the exchange rate, gas is 50% more expensive per litre in New Brunswick than it is in Maine. That is 100% due to energy taxes on gasoline. It has nothing to do with Russia. It has everything to do with how the government is taxing energy to make life more expensive and make life more painful for Canadian families.

The Liberals are going to triple the carbon tax, raising it from \$65 to \$175 per tonne by 2030. This will be a body blow to the middle class and working families. It will make our manufacturing sector uncompetitive with the United States.

Government Orders

I can already hear the Liberals' reply that the carbon tax is for a clean environment, but the carbon tax is not an environment plan. It is the largest tax plan in Canadian history.

Conservatives do not believe in punishing families for buying groceries or punishing workers for driving to work. I have a few stats that are worth mentioning. If the government likes to talk about its big numbers, let us talk about some items that Canadians are facing every day.

Canada's Food Price Report this year predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food, which is \$598 more than the \$467 rebate they will receive from Ottawa.

I was happy to vote for that motion to return dollars to Canadians. The difference is I believe taxes should come down as a principle. Liberals only cut taxes when they are in trouble politically. They have driven up the cost of living in this country and, as a result, they are looking for rescue plans everywhere they can find them.

However, their fundamentals are such that this problem is not going to change. We will continue to see Canada go down a dark economic road until we turn things around. We need to limit the taxes on families and businesses, get our spending in order, and begin to make and build things here in Canada that do not require gobs of subsidies and government regulations.

This is why we are voting against the budget and this is why the Liberal government must be replaced as quickly as possible.

• (1125)

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the speech by my colleague with great interest when he talked about the importance of reducing the cost of living for Canadians. I reflect on some of the things that our government has done, including working with every single province to implement affordable child care. I would love for the hon. member across the aisle to explain to Canadians and to us why he and his party and voted against and continue to work against \$10-a-day child care in this country.

Mr. John Williamson: Mr. Speaker, the Liberals are becoming tiresome with their one answer to the affordability crisis. The affordability crisis in this country is not just for families with children who are facing struggles. It is about pensioners. It is about small businesses. It is about families throughout this economy, whether they are on a fixed income, whether they are earning a low or modest wage. The government needs a better answer to that as opposed to just ringing on about day care and its plan on that. This is the problem: Any senior who comes into their office is going to talk about the struggles they have in making ends meet.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I found my Conservative colleague's speech very interesting. It was really a typical Conservative speech, where the member rants and raves about debt. The Conservatives are saying that the federal government spends too much, that Canada is going into debt and that things are going to be hell for our children.

It is true that the government has done nothing but run deficits since it took office. We agree with that. However, the long-term projections tell a different story. Because of its fiscal capacity and minimal responsibilities, in a few years, the Canadian government could end up with no more debt, while the provinces go bankrupt. That is an acknowledged fact.

I would like to know whether my colleague can recalibrate his speech based on that information. It seems as though his speech was all about the federal government's finances being in a catastrophic state when, in reality, it is the provincial governments' finances that are in dire straits because the federal government is not helping them and is keeping all the money for itself.

Mr. John Williamson: Mr. Speaker, those comments are typical because these policies work. When we reduce taxes, we see that there is more economic activity in Canada.

In terms of debt, the provinces also need to act responsibly. In my home province of New Brunswick, Premier Blaine Higgs cut spending, and the province is in a very good position. It is the same elsewhere in Canada. The provinces are working hard, but they are running into problems because of the carbon tax and the fact that the federal government is infringing on their jurisdictions. The government spends too much and imposes too many taxes. That is hard for Canadians.

[*English*]

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from my home province of New Brunswick made a comment about trying to support pensioners and of course on this side of the House we do. We increased the CPP contributions and yet our Conservative friends continue to rail against this. I also heard a lot about the carbon tax. Now in New Brunswick we have the federal backstop where we will be having those quarterly payments going to help with affordability measures and yet once again they are against this.

I am trying to understand. Do we really want to help constituents here, or are you really just looking for issues where there are not any? I really think it is time that we get on board with pollution pricing in New Brunswick because it is a good thing for them and it is a good thing for environmental projects like supporting indigenous communities and schools. Would you repeal those if you had the chance?

• (1130)

The Deputy Speaker: Remember to speak through the Chair.

The hon. member for New Brunswick Southwest.

Mr. John Williamson: Would we repeal the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely. The member knows well that the reason Blaine Higgs is no longer administering the Liberal carbon tax is because it is ruinous to families, so he is out of the game. He does not want anything to do with this Liberal carbon tax, just like now eight out of 10 provinces.

Government Orders

Let me point out something this member says. She says she is for a green economy but opposes nuclear power. Her colleague from Saint John—Rothsay scolded her because if they want power that is carbon-dioxide free, just like other Liberals are realizing, they need to embrace nuclear. The member is an outlier on that and her own Liberal colleague from New Brunswick called her out on that because this fantasy world of high taxes and no energy is just going to result in a ruinous economy and a ruinous country.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget.

I represent a riding with one of the highest child poverty rates in the country. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have consistently left parts of the country like mine, northern Manitoba, behind, preferring to stand with their billionaire friends than communities like the one I come from, and communities in our region. I think in many ways this budget reflects that.

We have seen the slow pace at which the Liberals move when it comes to helping people versus the zeal that comes with standing with the billionaire class. Liberals have been in power for eight years, and it took New Democrats to force them to expand health care services and finally move to provide dental care services for millions of Canadians. New Democrats have made this call for years and now many seniors and young people will finally get access to the dental care they need.

We also know Canadians are struggling to put food on the table for their families in a way we have not seen in a generation. The reality is the current government is not doing enough. We know the GST rebate that will be sent to families will provide immediate relief for Canadians, and that is also something that is there because of the work of New Democrats. Let us be clear. If Liberals had it their way, none of these supports would have been included. While there is still more work to be done to deliver for the working class, if it were not for elected New Democrats in Parliament this budget would have been much worse.

Let us talk about what is not in the budget. New Democrats forced the government to help people, but we know there is so much more that must be done. Without this pressure by New Democrats, this budget would not have provided Canadians any sort of help, and they should know that New Democrats will always fight to get results for them.

One area that is very concerning is the lack of urgent significant investment in indigenous housing. The \$4 billion over seven years for a co-developed urban, rural and northern indigenous strategy, starting in 2024-25, is not enough. We know that Liberals did not even want to put this much money in the budget, and it is outrageous that the money will only start flowing in the next fiscal year. Indigenous communities, first nations and Métis communities, like the ones I represent, need action now. The infrastructure gap facing first nations is at least \$30 billion, and we suspect that number is much higher. The \$4 billion over seven years is barely a drop in the bucket and will not do enough to end the inhumane conditions the current government, and governments before it, have forced indigenous peoples to live in.

When we talk about the housing crisis facing indigenous communities, let us be clear as to what we are talking about. In places like Shamattawa, Cross Lake and Tataskweyak, we are talking about dilapidated, overcrowded homes, with 12 people or even more to a house, with holes in the walls, mould in the corners and heating that does not work in some of the harshest climates in the country. If members of the House think that the amount of money in this budget for indigenous housing is sufficient, it is because they have never set foot on a first nation.

It is shameful that the government had to be pulled kicking and screaming to make even these small investments, and I challenge any sitting member who defends the indefensible to come to northern Manitoba, to visit Nunavut, to visit first nations in northern Ontario. The money is barely a drop in the bucket. It is no surprise coming from the Liberal government. It could not even budget for indigenous housing in its platform. It literally had no money for indigenous housing, the most extreme housing crisis in our country, in its platform. When people show us who they are, we should believe them.

The current government will continue to pay lip service to these commitments and do less than the bare minimum. Yes, it might say all the right things, throw in the word “reconciliation” a few times, but I have suspected for a long time that when it comes to indigenous peoples the government is satisfied making Canadians in cities feel comfortable, rather than making the real systemic change that would allow indigenous peoples and indigenous communities to actually have the right to secure and safe housing. We need real systemic change.

A great example of how the government is satisfied to tinker around the edges without materially improving the lives of people is how they are dealing with the Canada Infrastructure Bank, a Crown corporation.

• (1135)

To rewind a bit, over a year ago, I proposed legislation that would help communities like the ones I represent, first nations, Métis and northern communities, to access over \$35 billion to take on the devastating impacts of the climate crisis in their communities. The Canada Infrastructure Bank, since its inception, has been an abysmal failure for Canadians but a success for the billionaire class. In our bill, we worked to fix that, and a lot of our solutions actually made it into this budget.

Government Orders

We called for the Canada Infrastructure Bank to prioritize the needs of northern and indigenous communities. At the time, the Liberals voted against that, but it is now in the budget. We called for the Canada Infrastructure Bank to prioritize funding projects that help us deal with the climate crisis. At the time, the Liberals voted against it, but it is now in the budget. We also called to end the corporate giveaway led by the Canada Infrastructure Bank by removing its privatization capacity. The Liberals voted against it. Curiously, this did not make it into the budget.

We see this repeatedly throughout the budget any time we deal with corporate profits. In 2021, as the richest companies in the country had record profits, they managed to push their tax rate lower, avoiding \$30 billion in taxes.

The government knows about these loopholes. We have called on it numerous times to close them, because the reality is that the problem is getting worse. As Dr. DT Cochrane from Canadians for Tax Fairness pointed out, in the decade before the pandemic, “Canadian corporations claimed about eight cents of every dollar as pre-tax profit.” In 2021, that number was 12¢, which is unsurprising. Every time a for-profit corporation gets a hold of a dollar, it is compelled to siphon as much profit as possible.

What is equally unsurprising is that the Liberals refuse to do anything about it. If New Democrats were in power, we would bring in an excess profit tax to make sure that billionaires pay their fair share. It really highlights the issue with the Liberal Party and its repeated, utter refusal to do anything that upsets the status quo or upsets the capital class and the Liberals' rich and powerful friends.

This is why we are unsurprised that the budget is woefully inadequate when it comes to combatting the climate crisis. For the 2023-24 period, only \$14 billion is allocated to climate-related spending efforts. This is insultingly low when compared with the 2% of the GDP we need to address the scale and magnitude of the climate emergency. Most of the spending in the Liberal budget is in the form of tax breaks and subsidies to corporations rather than direct investments in proven emissions reduction projects.

If we could solve the climate crisis through tax breaks to wealthy corporations, it would have already been done. Members can believe me on this: That is literally Liberals' only solution, which they try again and again.

We need to be real. The climate crisis is nothing to take lightly. Canadians need a plan that will funnel funds into publicly owned sustainable energy projects to reduce our carbon emissions in the long term. Such investments could be made in public transit, renewable energy projects and infrastructure that makes sense and protects our communities. What we have instead is the continued billion-dollar giveaway to big oil.

Why are the Liberals more concerned with preserving subsidies for big oil, which made record profits this year, than investing in a sustainable, green economy that will save lives? The government has always said the right things when it comes to the environment. It is an expert at greenwashing. Unfortunately, the government has always done the complete opposite. Continued support for the oil and gas sector hinders our progress towards a sustainable, low-carbon future.

I want to be clear on this: A New Democrat climate policy would involve investing public money in public carbon emissions reduction plans, such as public transit, decarbonized energy grids and renewable energy alternatives. This would be done at a much higher rate than is done in this budget, which carries with it an incalculable loss for future generations. The truth is that the current Liberal government lacks the imagination and, most importantly, the political will to seriously tackle the climate crisis head-on.

• (1140)

In closing, New Democrats are proud that we forced the Liberals to make some investments that would make a real difference to the people across the country. However, there is so much more that needs to be done, particularly when it comes to the most marginalized communities—

The Deputy Speaker: I know the hon. member did not get all her speech out, but maybe we can finish that up in questions and comments.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, when the previous speaker was up, I got a little animated, and I went across the floor. I had an issue that I wanted to raise. A more appropriate way for a parliamentarian to raise an issue is to stand on a point of order and go through the Speaker. I want to apologize to the House. I hold myself to a high standard of conduct, and I just want to apologize for going to the edge of the other bench and having my words personally, versus standing on a point of order, which is the parliamentary thing to do.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for that point of order. We appreciate it.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Manitoba serves the riding that is probably the most similar to my riding in all of Canada, and so my question for her is actually quite simple.

In a riding like ours, the carbon tax disproportionately affects rural and remote communities; many of these are indigenous communities that we serve in these northern and remote ridings. What I understand is that everything that gets to a shelf in the communities in these northern and remote areas is trucked in, and for anything that is trucked in, the cost of trucking it is being substantially increased by the cost of the carbon tax. The increase on the carbon tax is increasing the cost of everything on every shelf, everywhere in our northern communities. Increasing prices at a time when people have less money is not a recipe for economic success.

Government Orders

The member commented in her speech about the budget being woefully inadequate. With that as the context, my question to the member is simply this: Is she in conflict about supporting the budget, if it is so woefully inadequate?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the commonalities between northern Saskatchewan and northern Manitoba. I think we have to be very real about what is in front of us, and as I said, while there is good in the budget, there is also much more work that needs to be done.

However, I certainly want to speak to the issue of cost of living. We absolutely need government to be part of the solution. What is also clear to me in terms of regions like ours, and certainly communities across the country, is that we are not taking on the companies that are making profits on the backs of some of the poorest communities in the country.

For example, we have the nutrition north subsidy, which has not been reformed in ages, since the Harper government totally reshaped it for the benefit of the Northern Store. The reality is that a lot of communities cannot afford, even with the subsidy, to buy the kinds of healthy foods they need for their families. We need the federal government to be taking a hard look at the nutrition north subsidy and working with northern communities, indigenous communities, harvesters, trappers and organizations that want to make a difference in terms of food security. That is clearly not being done right now.

I would say more broadly that, when we are talking about the cost of living crisis, we also need good jobs in our communities. I come from a mining town where the Harper government signed a deal with Vale, a Brazilian multinational. This deal led to the loss of every single refining job in my community. We lost almost all the value-added jobs, with some of the best salaries, in my hometown. Families left and have never come back.

As such, if we are going to be real about what the government needs to do, I would take a hard look at the history of the way in which the Conservative government made life more difficult for northerners in my part of the country and do very differently. This is something we are not seeing much of from the Liberals. I can safely say that if we were in government, it would be a whole different story.

• (1145)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not know how helpful it is to speak in hyperbolic terms, and I think that we need to be more collaborative in this House. I take personal offence, given how hard we fight on this side for indigenous communities, at the suggestion that if we support this budget, for those who think it is wholly inadequate, we must never have set foot in a first nations community. That is certainly not true.

We are looking for creative solutions to address the housing crisis in indigenous communities across this country. Does the member support the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, which will help indigenous-led solutions for indigenous financial institutions to leverage funding and ensure that these kinds of infrastructure projects can move forward?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I am not really sure what to do with comments around personal offence. I respect the member's work when it comes to speaking out for first nations.

A few short weeks ago, 11 first nations in my region declared a public state of emergency because the housing, drug and health care crisis is so bad. If folks are offended by that reality and cannot realize that the Liberals are not addressing it, I am not sure what to say about that. We have to be very real about the crisis in communities, certainly where I come from, in northern and remote fly-in communities. This crisis is not by accident. It is the result of decades of neglect from federal Liberal and Conservative governments. Canada needs to do much better.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise on Bill C-47.

First, I want to thank members here in the chamber and those who are not for supporting Bill C-248, my private member's bill on the Ojibway national urban park, which passed almost unanimously. I thank members for that.

It is good to talk about how this place can work. I have worked, at the industry committee, on a couple of Conservative bills, one from the member of Essex, and I am glad that this Parliament is continuing, because that work will continue. However, if we do not support the budget bill, it is very clear what happens. As I hear from many members from all political sides, what they say in the chamber and sometimes in public is not the same thing as we hear in private. They are glad we are not going to an election for a lot of reasons, and they will talk about that quite openly because the consequence would be losing all private members' legislation.

I have worked with a couple of Conservative members, in particular, on their private member's bill, which are quite good. They are excellent, and a good step forward in making a difference for Canadians. One is on affordability and one is on interoperability with regard to sharing information on farming and other things. Lastly, there is one related to tax incentives, which is important for a number of reasons.

I think it is important to note, as I start to think about why I am supporting this bill, that there are some things I do not like in a bill and there are things I do like in a bill. That has been the same for me in this place for over 20 years for any government that has come forward. It does not matter which one it has been, whether it was Jean Chrétien's when I first got here or, most recently, that of the member for Papineau, the current Prime Minister. There are certain things I do like and certain things I do not like in a bill. However, overall, I am pretty proud of the NDP being able to use this opportunity to get things passed that were defeated in the previous Parliament, whether it is dental care or more housing initiatives.

Government Orders

They are not all of the things we wanted and asked for, and we wanted other things to go with them, but we are 25 members moving this country forward. Also, imagine going through another election during a pandemic with no results and it costing hundreds of millions of dollars. The Speaker would have to go through another election for the Speaker position, and we would have all the rigamarole to get the House back in operating form, for probably a regular scenario like we have here.

I have seen in this chamber other political parties get a lot less or not do anything. I remember that during the Harper minority years, the Liberals supported Harper over 100 times without an amendment. Over 100 times they supported the government de facto, letting it operate as a majority government without any challenges. During that time, Harper brought in the HST, a new tax on consumers, and even taxed hospital parking lots, which are no longer taxed. I could go on with a bunch of things that happened with no resistance whatsoever from the Liberals at that time. We sat next to each other in the old chamber, and I remember asking why they were not doing anything about it. They said they did not want to be bothered right now. We bother because we have to fight for things.

When I got here, there were only 14 New Democrats, and we played our role, as anybody in opposition, in trying to hold the government to account for a lot of reasons, such as making change and so forth. Then, when Jack Layton joined us, there was a real change in where we were. With where we stand today, we want to make propositions as well as be in opposition. That is what Jack instilled in many of the members here today.

With the culture we now work in on a regular basis, we look at this as an opportunity to get what Tommy Douglas wanted. Tommy Douglas wanted eye care, dental care and pharmacare as part of the full package, and that is part of what drove us as New Democrats. It was the understanding that our freedom, our sense of well-being and our health are so critically important, not only to us and our families but also to the economy and society, that they should be the number one things protected. That is one of the reasons Tommy Douglas was voted the number one Canadian, with the population supporting him as Canada's favourite Canadian.

We are now realizing a part of that dream that never came to fruition. It is important to recognize that each province does have some elements of dental care and some elements that are stronger than others. However, this is not across the whole country from coast to coast to coast.

• (1150)

In the area I represent, I have a lot of child poverty and a lot of single mothers. A lot of people, including my own hygienist, do not have dental coverage. These things are wrong because they affect human health, everything from one's heart to wellness to how one feels as a person. This is all preventable.

This is money that goes back in the economy. Yes, it does cost the government money and there is a cost and expenditure there, but it is not a tax cut, which is something the Conservatives and the Liberals have done in the past. In fact, Stéphane Dion was arguing with I think Michael Ignatieff at the time about tax cuts not going deep enough and fast enough.

When there are a lot of U.S. corporations and taxes on worldwide profits, some of our industries send money back to Washington. Instead of doing that, I would rather invest in dental care, as an example, because it saves jobs and lowers the cost of jobs in Canada for foreign investment and other investment.

Earlier in the debate today, we talked about the Volkswagen plant that is coming in. I have been after a national auto policy and I do not want to see one-offs. I would rather see a strategic investment, especially when it comes to batteries and the platinum age of auto, which we are in right now. In the calculations to do the deal here is the cost of labour. When we look at the productivity of Unifor and other labour organizations in the auto sector, yes, their wages and benefits are a little higher, but they also produce significantly more and better than their counterparts.

On top of that, when there are programs with subsidies going to the worker instead of the corporation, we control those subsidies and those subsidies are not going off to other countries. They are staying here and are investing in people. Those people with those subsidies are better off regarding production and making sure we can be economically viable.

There is also the social justice argument, which should be a no-brainer. How anybody in this chamber can accept dental benefits for their own children but deny others the same thing is beyond me. I do not understand how they can come to this place and check that at door every single time. We know we get a privilege benefit from the taxpayers, but we tell them they cannot have that. By the way, we still have not fixed eye care. We do not have that either. That is wrong. We should lead by example, and leading by example means providing things that would be fair and balanced.

Coming from the border town of Windsor, Ontario, in Essex County, where we have to compete against American jobs every single day, I know from talking to executives that they want health care in this country because they know it means a lower production cost for their workers in the United States, Mexico and other places. It means less turnover and less loss of skills and abilities. Especially with an unemployment rate now of 4% to 5% and having a problem attracting workers, this is key. That is what dental care adds to the equation. It will also bring better stability at the bargaining table.

The government needs to get on this and help negotiate a settlement agreement for its workers, because we are not going to see any value in keeping the public service out right now. It is not going to pay off whatsoever, and the government needs to change that.

Government Orders

The point is that, yes, there is a surface cost to paying for Canadians to get dental care for themselves and their families, but it is an investment back in them, our communities and our economy versus a net loss. That is one of the reasons I will support this budget. It is going to complete at least one chapter of Tommy Douglas's dream.

• (1155)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on something pretty fundamental. It is the difference between the budget, which I did not vote for because it failed to address the climate crisis, failed to address mental health issues and puts more money into fossil fuels, and this bill, Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, in which to my surprise, having read 429 pages, I did not find anything I wanted to vote against.

Yes, the change to the Income Tax Act that would allow CRA to share data to allow dental care to happen is part of Bill C-47, but a whole number of budget measures are not mentioned here. I wonder if, as an experienced parliamentarian, the member can help others, in this educational moment, to understand the difference between voting against the budget, which I did, and voting for Bill C-47, which I surprised myself by finding I am going to vote for.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague and the Green Party for supporting Bill C-248 since the very beginning and the Ojibway national urban park. They were instrumental in getting that done.

She is quite correct that it is not a double standard, by any means, to do this. It is a challenge. I have seen a game going on for a lot of years where if a member votes against the budget, they vote against everything in the budget. That is not true. There are many things, even with this budget, that the Conservatives would do, the Liberals would do and others would do back and forth. I think that argument is rather tired. It has been used against me repeatedly, but I have been able to get back here. Some have even said that I voted against the bridge, which I have been working on for a long period of time.

I think people are smart enough to know this, so it is not a double standard by any means. I am glad they are supporting it and they can differentiate between the two.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when listening to the member, I wanted to reflect on Thomas Mulcair and the type of election platform he provided. However, as opposed to doing that, as I know where the member is coming from and that he has a fairly good understanding of the automobile industry as a whole, my question will be related to the VW announcement. I know he made reference to it a bit earlier today.

The VW announcement is going to lead to the largest factory in Canada. I am talking geographically, in square footage. It will be a huge boost not only to the community of St. Thomas and the area but to all Canadians, as it will increase Canada's footprint in a significant way in the electrical battery industry, whether it is in mining or production.

Could he provide his thoughts on the importance of this particular announcement to the automobile industry and other industries beyond it?

• (1200)

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, we have to decide, for batteries and the electrification of vehicles, as well as other developments that come along with ancillary employment and innovation, whether we are just going to rip and ship raw materials out of this country and send them somewhere else to be produced or do it here. We have done a disservice to our forestry, mining and oil industries by basically being the hewers versus the producers of value-added work.

This value-added work is going to happen at the Volkswagen plant. That is why I support the announcement. I think it was done in a strategic way that gives us the best chances in an industry notoriously good at playing off different jurisdictions, such as countries and even neighbourhoods, quite frankly, within municipalities.

This is also going to help the Windsor region because of the critical mass that will develop between the 401 supply chain. The taxes will come back in droves. It is just like if we had not supported General Motors. We would have lost all of the investment that has recently come in.

This is a tough thing at times. Accountability is the biggest thing we need to see come forward with it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

My question was for the NDP member who spoke before him, since she talked a lot about housing, but I think my colleague should be able to answer.

As I said earlier, we have an acute housing crisis in Canada. One of the issues we do not hear that much about in the House is the financialization of housing, which is something really important. It refers to large national and international corporations' growing ownership of Canadian rental housing stock. It is thought that corporate ownership has gone from zero to 22% in 30 years. These large corporations could not care less about the right to housing. Their primary concern is making a profit. We have to deal with this.

I would like to ask my colleague if any concrete measures could be taken to tackle this issue.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I would never speak on behalf of the member from Churchill. That is never going to happen.

I do want to say that I appreciate the question. I think the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation needs to return more to its roots. We have to look at more not-for-profit and co-operative housing. Those are specific things that I would like to see improved.

Government Orders

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today in this House and speak to budget 2023 and, more important, Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023.

The budget this year comes at a time when Canada had the fastest-growing economy in the G7 last year and is projected to be the second-fastest-growing this year and when we have near record-low unemployment rate, having created an additional 865,000 jobs compared to what it was before the pandemic. However, we know those lofty numbers do not mean much for a lot of Canadians who are struggling right now. We have had high inflation since last year, peaking in September at 8.1%. It is now down to about 4.3%, but that has come as a result of the work of the Governor of the Bank of Canada in raising interest rates. We know that many Canadians right now are struggling with the high cost of living.

That is why the budget would make some important investments to help many folks with affordability measures. Key to this is a new grocery rebate, which would help 11 million low-to-modest-income Canadians with up to \$467 per couple to help with the rising cost of food. For students right now, as of April 1 of this year, we have eliminated all interest on student loans and we have increased the Canada student grants by 40%. We are also creating a new project and expanding a project to create automatic tax filing for Canadians, because we know it is really important for Canadians to file their taxes so they can get some of the benefits that I was just speaking about.

This budget would also make historic investments in health care: almost \$200 billion over 10 years, which would be key for areas like mine, where access to a family health practitioner is a very big challenge. We are also expanding Canada's dental care program for families earning under \$90,000. Last year, we started it with children 12 and under. This year, it would be for Canadians who are 18 and under and those over the age of 65. There are also some very important investments that would be made to tackle the opioid epidemic, which has struck B.C. very hard.

There are also some major investments in this budget in creating the good jobs of today and the good jobs of tomorrow. We know the world is rapidly transitioning to a cleaner economy, and that is why this budget would make significant investments in supporting renewable electricity projects right across the country, not just for the private sector, but also working with Crown corporations and provinces to do that.

There are new tax credits for clean hydrogen. I know this is going to be very important for companies in my riding like Quantum Technology, which is involved in projects for the purification and liquefaction of hydrogen. There are also some major investments being made in zero-emissions manufacturing. With the creation of new funds like the Canada growth fund, we would be able to crowd in private capital for projects just like the one that was announced last week with Volkswagen, to create a massive new battery-manufacturing plant in Canada.

Because it is National Tourism Week this week, I would be remiss if I did not mention that this budget would make some signifi-

cant down payments on the launch of Canada's new tourism growth strategy. There is over \$100 million that would go toward the regional development agencies to support local projects. There would be about \$50 million going to Destination Canada to attract international events to Canada, and there would be investments made to speed up the operations at airports, including investments in improving the protection of passenger rights.

With that, I will turn to the budget implementation act, which is where the rubber hits the road on a lot of these measures.

I mentioned passenger rights. Right now, we have a backlog of about 30,000 people who are waiting for their cases of delayed flights or cancelled flights to be adjudicated. We would change the process that we utilize for this by switching the onus so that it is not on the travellers to prove that they should be refunded, but on the airline itself to prove that they should not. This would greatly speed up the process and get passengers the refunds they deserve.

As I am a British Columbia MP, there are a couple of areas of this implementation act that are very important to me. The issue of money laundering in B.C. has really been put in the spotlight with the Cullen commission, which the Province of British Columbia commissioned and which delivered its report relatively recently. This report highlights many of the vulnerabilities that we have in Canada in tackling money laundering.

• (1205)

Canada has the dubious distinction of being a haven for this, a process called snow-washing. It is because we have a system without the necessary checks in it and a very well-respected financial system. This budget implementation act would make some very important changes to help us better control this challenge. In particular, it would criminalize the operation of unregistered money services businesses; it would create an ability to freeze and seize virtual assets with suspected links to crime; it would improve the financial intelligence, information sharing and strategic analysis of FINTRAC; and it would create a new offence for structuring financial transactions to avoid FINTRAC reporting. Importantly, a commitment has been made to implement all of the recommendations that are listed by the Cullen commission.

Government Orders

These measures also dovetail to other measures that we are currently debating in this House. We introduced Bill C-42 to create a national beneficial ownership registry so we will know who are the people behind a lot of the numbered companies, which are sometimes using this to evade paying taxes, evade sanctions or do money laundering. Importantly, this system would work very closely with beneficial ownership registries that the provinces are implementing, where the vast majority of companies are incorporated. There is also a commitment made in this budget to work with provinces and territories to look at things like unexplained wealth orders, which would greatly enhance the tools that law enforcement has to be able to locate and seize assets that could be from proceeds of crime.

As I am a coastal MP, there are a number of measures in this budget that I was very happy to see, particularly the new vessel remediation fund and changes to the abandoned boats program. This measure was introduced in 2017 by my former colleague Bernadette Jordan, and it created a fund to clean up boats that had sunk to the bottom of the ocean and were polluting the ocean. This was incredibly important and actually removed a lot of boats from waters around my riding. However, we need to go a step further, because it is much more effective to take those boats out of the water before they sink rather than having to clean them up once they have already sunk.

In the budget implementation act, we are establishing a new vessel remediation fund, which would be boat owner-financed, to provide the resources so we can do some of this very important work. There would be the creation of an allowance for financing of preventative measures, such as voluntary vessel disposal activities, so that vessels at risk of becoming dilapidated, wrecked or abandoned can access funding to repair, secure, move or dismantle and sell them. This is very important because it would save a lot of money, reduce the amount of pollution we are seeing in the bottom of our oceans and help a lot of folks I know in my riding, like Don MacKenzie, who, out of the goodness of his own heart, has taken it upon himself to clean these boats up.

I want to talk about something that I think we can all agree on in this House, and that is changes to the alcohol excise tax. As of April 1 this year, the alcohol escalator tax was supposed to increase by over 6%. Through measures that have been introduced in the budget implementation act, we have capped this at 2%. I know this will be a hugely important measure for the breweries in my riding, over a dozen, to be able to provide their products at a cost that is much lower than it would have been. It is really important that we do things like this and support small businesses, which, like all Canadians, are facing rising costs.

The last thing I will mention is that there is a commitment in the budget this year to lower the credit card swipe fees. There is an agreement with Visa and Mastercard to lower credit swipe fees by 27%. This would save businesses thousands of dollars. It is a really important measure to support small businesses in Canada, so they, in turn, do not have to pass on some of the additional costs they would face as a result of those credit card swipe fees.

With that, I would encourage all members of this House to vote in favour of this important piece of legislation so we can make some of these great changes and put them into effect.

• (1210)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague and I share a passion for the environment. Something I was really excited to see as part of the budget was the Canada water agency and protections for our fresh water in the country. Can he comment on how important that is and how it is achieving a commitment we made to Canadians across the country?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, there have been many years of work put into designing this new Canada water agency. We are excited that it is going to be in the Prairies, in Winnipeg.

There are so many different federal agencies in Canada that have some type of responsibility related to water. This would provide an opportunity for all of those different organizations to collaborate in a very meaningful way so we can better address issues like water quality and water quantity, issues we know we are increasingly going to see.

I think it is very important that it is established in Winnipeg because we know the Prairies are facing some of the largest challenges, sometimes with water scarcity and sometimes with flooding. I am very excited to see that in the budget this year. I think it is going to make a huge difference on one of the most important issues related to the environment.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I note that the member did not discuss the deficits that are projected in the budget. If we look through to 2027-28, they project that the combined debt of Canada will be over \$1.3 trillion, which is more than double what it was when the government took office. Does he think that qualifies as being fiscally responsible?

• (1215)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I think it is very important that we remain fiscally prudent in this budget, and always. In my province of B.C., we have seen an example of perhaps too much spending. Recently, B.C. had its credit rating downgraded and we have not seen that in Canada. I think that is an important measure to understand the fiscal sustainability of this.

There are some very important investments that needed to be made. I do not know whether the Conservatives would not have made the investments in health care or whether they would not have made some of the affordability measures. It is on the Conservative Party to explain to this House what services it would have cut. Those are areas that I certainly would not support cutting.

Government Orders

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's advocacy on the climate crisis, and I also appreciate hearing his comments when it comes to new subsidies that were introduced in this budget for the very sector most responsible for the crisis that we are in. There are at least four, totalling over \$3.3 billion in this budget, including new offshore drilling in the Arctic. Can he speak to the influence he can have in this place to move toward ending subsidies like these?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, a commitment has been made as part of the G20 to phase out all fossil fuel subsidies by 2025. We brought that commitment up to the end of this year. We remain committed to doing that. I think it is very important that we do that because we know the world is quickly transitioning to a cleaner economy and there are tremendous opportunities for Canada, as we go forward, to do that. The subsidies we should be providing are the ones that we see in this budget, such as for clean electricity, clean hydrogen and other things.

I would also mention that the measures in the budget for carbon capture are very important, particularly to take some of the legacy emissions already in the air. There is a company in my riding called Carbon Engineering, which is doing direct air capture. We do need to support companies like that because even when we get to net zero, we are going to have to continue to take carbon out of the atmosphere.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to talk about “a line we shall not cross.” Only one short year ago, the finance minister said, “let me be very clear: We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline.” It did not. In fact, it went up. She also said, “Our deficits must continue to be reduced”, which they were not. She said, “The pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe and solvent must—and will—be paid down.” It was not. “This is our fiscal anchor. This is a line we shall not cross”, she said. Just last November, the Liberals predicted that the budget would have a \$4.5-billion surplus in 2027. Now, they say there is going to be a \$14-billion deficit in 2027.

I am stuck on the words “a line we shall not cross”. High-sounding words of integrity they are indeed, but so many lines have been crossed. In 2015, the Prime Minister promised that the budget would be balanced by 2019. It did not happen. This year alone, the government will go another \$43 billion into debt. In 2019, the Prime Minister said that the debt-to-GDP ratio would go down. It did not happen. Do members remember his abandoned promise from 2019? He promised to cut mobile phone rates by 25%. It never happened.

The Liberals then said, in 2021, that they would create a \$5-billion mental health transfer, which was a major promise of transfer to the provinces. It did not happen. It is not mentioned in the budget at all. Do members remember 2015? The Prime Minister said that the election would be the last first-past-the-post one. It did not happen. In 2019, he said, “we will plant two billion trees”. It never happened. How about the carbon tax and the claim that “Canadians get back more than they pay”? This is not true, says the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer. Let us not forget the perennial pharmacare promise in almost every Liberal platform over the last

30 years. In this budget, the word “pharmacare” does not even appear. There is not one mention.

How about the claim that interest rates will remain low, or that we need to be worried about deflation, not inflation? How about the promise of affordable housing or rent? The Liberals have spent \$89 billion on a national housing strategy that hardly creates more housing. Since 2015, mortgage payments, down payments and rents have doubled. They promised to help students, but instead cut the Canada student grant from \$6,000 to \$4,200 a year.

The Prime Minister promised to keep our streets safer, yet violent crime is way up. Another promise, “We will make information more accessible by requiring transparency to be a fundamental principle across the federal government”, did not happen. He also promised to stop money laundering. Canada is now such a haven for money launderers that it has its own name: snow-washing. This is not a badge of honour.

Let us talk about crossing a line. The Prime Minister just appointed, and I cannot believe I am even saying this, as it sounds so ridiculous, the sister-of-law of the intergovernmental affairs minister as the Ethics Commissioner. The minister himself has been charged by the last ethics commissioner.

It is time for Conservatives to cross a line, the line between this side of the aisle and the government side of the aisle. We will cross that line after the next election, members can be sure, when the member for Carleton is the next prime minister of Canada.

Conservatives were looking for just three reasonable things in this budget: lower taxes for Canadian workers, an end to inflationary deficit spending, and meaningful measures to make housing more affordable. None of the three Conservative demands has been met, and there is not a chance that Conservatives will support this anti-worker, tax-hiking, inflationary budget.

Let us talk taxes. Nearly all economists agree that raising taxes during or just before an economic slowdown is absolutely terrible economic policy, yet this government continues raising taxes for ordinary Canadians. The Parliamentary Budget Officer shows that the carbon tax will cost average families way more than the rebate they receive. There is a war on work in this country. Higher taxes mean less take-home pay. Do we know what happens when we punish work? We get less work. Just this year, the Prime Minister raised payroll taxes on workers and small businesses. A worker making about \$66,600 will be forced to pay an extra \$305.

Government Orders

• (1220)

By increasing the excise tax on alcohol by 2%, Liberals are still raising taxes on the restaurants and breweries that are struggling to survive. Just when service industry workers are trying to get back on their feet from the pandemic, the current government's brilliant plan is to make it more expensive for Canadians to dine out.

Let us talk about inflationary spending. In 2015, the total federal debt was about \$600 billion. Today, it has doubled, to \$1.2 trillion, which is \$600 billion from Confederation to 2015 and \$600 billion from 2015 to 2023. That is nearly \$81,000 per household in Canada. To make matters worse, this year alone, interest on this massive debt will cost Canadians \$43 billion. To put that into perspective, it is almost as much as what the federal health care transfer will be, at \$49.4 billion. That is interest, going to pay wealthy bondholders and bankers, that is more than enough to fund the health care transfer. Even with revenues way up, the government is going to borrow another \$175 billion between now and 2028, bringing the debt to over \$1.3 trillion. The spending in this year's budget is \$63 billion higher than it was a year ago. That is \$4,200 for each and every Canadian, which is almost enough to house the Prime Minister in the hotel room for one whole night.

The massive federal bureaucracy is costing Canadians in a major way. Here is a troubling statistic: Personnel spending over the past two years increased by 30.9% to \$60.7 billion. In spite of that, we now have the biggest strike in Canadian history. That takes a very special kind of incompetence.

It gets even worse. At the same time, expenditures for external contracting have more than doubled since 2015, to over \$20 billion, with billions going to wealthy companies like McKinsey and other consulting firms that are totally unaccountable to taxpayers. Never before has a government spent so much to achieve so little. As Canadians are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet, the current government is raking in record revenues. It will receive \$413 billion this year, which is up \$151 billion from 2015. In fact, Canada's per capita economic growth has been the weakest among the OECD countries, despite all of this spending.

The dream of home ownership has died for young and new Canadians under the current Prime Minister. Nine in 10 people who do not own a home believe they never will. We have the most expensive housing on the planet, higher in some of our cities than in New York, Los Angeles and other major cities. That makes no sense, with only 38 million people living on the second-largest land mass in the world. Young people who have done everything we have asked them to do, such as go to school and work hard, are living in their parents' basements.

Conservatives will make sure that the municipal gatekeepers get out of the way so we can get some homes built. We will sell off 15% of federal buildings for affordable housing and will bring back the dream of home ownership.

Grocery price inflation is in the double digits for the seventh month in a row. Record numbers of people are using food banks. One in five Canadians is skipping meals. The Prime Minister now stands up in the House and brags about all the cheques he is sending for this or that, but the government has no money. It first has to take it from Canadians before it gives it back. Why not leave it

where it belongs in the first place? The so-called grocery rebate will not come close to covering the rising cost of food that the inflationary Liberal deficits and tax hikes have caused. The "Canada Food Price Report 2023" predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year.

We must bring home a country where people bring home powerful paycheques. Canada must work for the people who have done the work. Conservatives will bring home powerful paycheques, with lower taxes. We will scrap the carbon tax so hard work pays off again. We will bring home lower prices by ending the inflationary debts and deficits that drive inflation. We will make sure that homes are affordable for young Canadians again. That is what Conservatives will do.

• (1225)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened intently to the speech by the member opposite this morning. By the sound of it, he was supporting some progressive ideas that he had hoped to see in the budget.

My question is simply this. Can we expect to see, in the next Conservative platform, things like aggressive emissions reduction targets, support for unions and workers, pharmacare and electoral reform? I am curious what his response would be.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, the reality is that we need to be able to afford to have these things. We have the weakest growth of OECD countries, despite having more than doubled our debt to over \$1.3 trillion since the current government took office. We need to grow the economy. We need policies that create more wealth so we can afford the important programs Canadians deserve.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member spoke directly about some of the massive issues facing Canadians. Some of them are the most critical when it comes to affordability. We know there are programs that can be funded to ensure that Canadians have a better outcome in their lives, like dental care and pharmacare. We know that Canadians value these programs.

We want to see the Conservatives, however, speak about revenue generation. We know that, for example, an excess profits tax is something the Conservatives in the United Kingdom have done to try to bring into balance some of the big oil companies making record profits and to help finance and give regular people a chance during this cost of living crisis. Would the member agree that a profiteering tax to curb the excess profits of big oil companies, big banks and some of the country's largest companies should actually be done?

Government Orders

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, only the NDP could think that raising taxes for Canadians would make life more affordable for Canadians. The reality is that we need to increase the size of our economic output so we can afford the important programs that the member cares about, and I hope he comes along with us to bring in policies that promote economic growth.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. What I found interesting was that he used the word “workers” a lot. It always sounds odd to me, hearing the word “workers” from the mouth of a Conservative, but I suppose it is good to hear, because at least it means they might be somewhat concerned about them.

What has left me wondering, however, is that I do not recall the Conservatives advocating for one of the things that workers want most of all, something the Bloc has also been calling for, which is EI reform in order to make it more generous. I would like to know what the member has to offer workers who need help and support for a period of time when they lose their jobs, especially in this time of high inflation, with costs going up everywhere.

• (1230)

[*English*]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, the reality is that the current Prime Minister has increased spending on our public service by \$20 billion at the same time as increasing spending on external consultants by \$20 billion, and he still managed to trigger the largest strike in Canadian history. Yes, I do worry about the workers in this country, but I lay the problems workers have in this country squarely at the feet of the Prime Minister.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is astonishing to me to hear the NDP and Liberal members stand up in the House, with the record-shattering levels of debt and spending they are undertaking together, and call for, in the debate today, more spending.

I hearken back to the Trudeau government of the seventies and eighties and the massive debt and deficits they rang up. This resulted in record cuts to social services, like health, education and all of those different things, in the late nineties, by another Liberal government, precipitated by the massive levels of debt taken on by the Trudeau government of the seventies and eighties. I wonder if the hon. member could reflect on what it was like in the late nineties, when we saw \$35 billion cut from health, education and social services transfers in this country.

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, in 1995, the most draconian budget in Canadian history was brought in by Liberal finance minister Paul Martin. Why did he do it? It was because he had to. He had to do it because the Government of Canada was broke. It could no longer borrow money. It had hit a wall. The Wall Street Journal was saying that Canada was an economic basket case, because interest rates were high and debt was high, and the Government of Canada could no longer afford to maintain its credit rating or pay for the important programs Canadians required. That is where we are heading today.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by sharing, as I usually do, what I like about the bill we are debating this afternoon, in this case, Bill C-47, which would implement some measures that were in the budget, many that would benefit people in my community.

I would like to share two examples.

The first is dental care, which is part 4, division 29. Bill C-47 takes meaningful steps to advance the new Canada dental care plan specifically by introducing the dental care measures act. The measures in Bill C-47 move toward dental coverage, starting for those who need it most, including uninsured Canadians under 18, people with disabilities and seniors who have a family income of less than \$90,000. Those with average annual family incomes under \$70,000 would have their dental visit covered by the federal government without any out-of-pocket costs.

Second, there is a provision to lower the criminal rate of interest, which is in part 4, division 34. Bill C-47 would amend the Criminal Code to cut the maximum allowable rate of interest to 35% from 47%, at least for alternative lenders, like EasyFinancial, for example. It is a positive step forward that I support, but, sadly, it does not include all companies like this, specifically, predatory payday lenders. Money Mart, for example, would still be exempt from this new rate cap. However, it is a step in the right direction.

In light of constructive measures like these, I intend on supporting Bill C-47.

I recognize this is in contrast to how I voted on the budget as a whole, which was against. Therefore, I would like share more, with the rest of my time, on why this was the case. In brief, it is because the budget does not meet the moment we are in.

I will start with housing, and the words of the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, an advocate whose role was created by the federal government. It said, “The newly unveiled Federal Budget is a sorry disappointment. It completely misses the mark on addressing the most pressing housing crisis this country has ever seen.”

Tim Richter from the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness said, “It’s clear that the federal government does not see the scale and urgency of these crises, and have offered no solutions.”

When I look at my community, the housing crisis has and will continue to define us. The number of people living unsheltered has at least tripled since 2018, as encampments continue to grow across our community. When we look at the cost of rent and homes, in 2022 compared to 2005, house prices had gone up 275%, while wages had only gone up by 42%. However, in this budget, there is almost no new investments in housing, and the one investment that was made, an important one in indigenous housing, is back-loaded, meaning the funding will not begin until future years.

Government Orders

There is also nothing to address the commodification of the housing market to move us back toward homes being places for people to live and not commodities for investors to trade. There is so much the federal government can and should be doing on this front.

One example of a sensible, simple measure I proposed is to end the tax exemptions for large, corporate investors, real estate investment trusts and direct the minimum of \$285 million of revenue that this would generate to build the affordable housing that we need.

Next is on mental health. I will read the words of Margaret Eaton, National CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association. She says, “The budget is out of touch with the reality of Canadians’ well-being and their ability to afford mental health services. I believe that the government has missed the mark, and that there will be deep human and economic costs to pay.” I feel the same way, and that is reflected in the stories I hear from people and organizations in my community.

Very specifically, the governing party ran on a campaign that included dedicated mental health funds. In fact, there were \$4.5 billion, to be called the Canada mental health transfer, yet there has been some kind of a magic trick, because that has just disappeared in the time since, including again in this budget. At a time when people in my community need that support now more than ever we cannot separate the housing crisis from the reality of the mental health services that people need.

● (1235)

Third, when it comes to reducing poverty, one of the most effective ways to do that is to ensure we lift people with disabilities out of poverty. In fact, we could cut poverty by 40% if we followed through on promises for which the disability community have advocated, and that is to introduce the Canada disability benefit. Again, in this year's budget, the federal government chose not to do it.

We know that when the federal government is serious about moving ahead with a policy, it does not start with legislation in the way it did with the disability benefit; it starts with funding. It is what it did with child care, and it is what it is not doing here. It is unfortunate that we will continue to see people with disabilities living in legislated poverty because of this budget. The governing party chose to not move ahead with that as quickly as it should. Neither did the Liberals introduce an emergency response benefit for people living with disabilities.

When it comes to the arts community, I would like to share another quote with the members:

[Budget 2023] does not offer a vision for how Canada's arts, culture, and heritage sector can contribute to the fight against existential challenges of our time... We are... disappointed there is no new funding announced... for critical areas like [modernization initiatives]... supporting repatriation... or helping create new Indigenous museums or cultural centres.

This is from the BC Museums Association. It reflects concerns in my community also, including organizations like the KW Symphony and Centre in the Square, which need all levels of government to step up. When demand has not returned to pre-pandemic levels, we need to be continuing to support arts and culture organizations

across the country. Instead, in this budget, if it is not a festival or a federally owned national museum, there is nothing here.

Last, is with respect to climate. I will quote the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, who said, “the truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels. Investing in new fossil fuels infrastructure is moral and economic madness.”

Even so, in this budget, at a time when the governing party says time and again it is committing to phasing out so-called unabated fossil fuel subsidies, it has introduced four new ones, including funding for drilling in the Arctic for more oil. At a time when we know we need to move with urgency to address the climate crisis we are facing, does it not make sense that we start by not subsidizing the very sector most responsible for the crisis at a time when its profits are over \$38 billion among the five largest oil and gas companies across the country?

Julia Levin, the associate director of national climate at Environmental Defence, said:

Rather than finally delivering on the government's promise to end fossil fuel subsidies, this budget throws more fuel on the fire by funneling even more public dollars into false solutions that serve to prop up the fossil fuel industry. Carbon capture and hydrogen are great for greenwashing oil and gas, but they won't deliver meaningful emissions reductions.

She knows as well as I do that this is exactly what we need at this point in this critical decade when we have a chance to keep global average temperatures below 1.5°C.

I want to encourage all my colleagues here to push for measures that would address these significant gaps that I know are priorities, not only for people in Kitchener and in Waterloo Region but right across the country, when it comes to addressing the housing crisis, mental health, lifting up people with disabilities, investing in the arts and addressing the climate crisis that we are in, while also being mindful that there are important measures in Bill C-47 that we all should be supporting.

● (1240)

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Kitchener has a place in my heart as well, because I have family members who live and work in Kitchener. The member spent some time talking about the affordable housing issue and that not enough was being done in this budget. Does he agree with the Conservatives' thoughts on affordable housing, which is getting municipalities out of the way and letting the government go in, build houses and solve the problem? It has to have the municipal touch on it. Does the member agree with that statement?

Government Orders

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, my concern with the talking points from the Conservative Party is that they are playing on justifiable anger but then not offering reasonable solutions. The fact is that we need all three levels of government working together, and browbeating municipalities is not how we are going to solve the housing crisis. What will the federal government get back to the stage of investing in the housing we need, non-market and co-op housing, the way we used to in the eighties and the nineties. Anything less is unacceptable.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Madam Speaker, although we do not always see eye to eye on everything, I do appreciate the tone my colleague from Kitchener Centre brings to this place.

I would like to stick on the topic of housing. To the point that was just made, the Conservative Party has brought forward a number of solutions, such as bringing forward a plan to speed up building permits to get more homes built and create an incentive for housing units to be developed. There is certainly a need for more affordable housing and social housing, no question about it, but we also see issues with supply around regular market housing in my region as well.

I would like to get the member's comments on what our party has brought forward to help address the issues we see with market housing.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, I would agree. The member for Kenora's tone in a similar way is how we have constructive conversations here. However, I will also agree to disagree.

I have not heard those kinds of proposals from the Conservative Party, and I would like to hear more of it. For example, when it comes to building the supply we need, the proposal I offered was with respect to at least looking at large corporate investors who are not building. They are primarily buying existing units and are getting preferential tax treatment for it.

Why is the Conservative Party not stepping up to say that we should at least have them pay their taxes, and with the minimum \$285 million that this would generate, invest in the supply of the affordable housing we need? I would welcome more support across the aisle on reasonable proposals like that.

• (1245)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech, which once again demonstrates his well-developed sense of balance and impartiality.

I recall that, during the pandemic, the government and the Prime Minister kept repeating that no one would be left behind. Even so, people with great credit scores of 800 and 900 ended up going bankrupt because they were among those left behind by the government. At some point, they were unable to make ends meet. These people have been left behind because when they file for bankruptcy or make a consumer proposal, their excellent credit rating is wiped out. There has been no effort to come up with legislation for this, and to ensure that the major credit score companies consider people's history and also exceptional circumstances.

Is it not time to pass legislation so that these people are not left behind and their personal lives impacted for five or even 10 years by this omission?

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, my colleague from Beauport—Limoulu raises a good point, and it is true that many people have been left behind by this government. I am thinking in particular of the homeless and people living with disabilities. Many people need more than lip service. They need investments and legislation to show them that the federal government is there for them.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to join the debate on Bill C-47 and highlight our government's efforts to support the middle class, build a strong and prosperous economy, and help Canadians cope with the rising cost of living.

The 2023 budget tabled last month by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance proposes, for one, targeted inflation relief for 11 million Canadians and families. That is what I would like to talk about today.

This targeted relief is both necessary and appropriate. Since 2015, the government has been committed to helping those who need it most, and that has not changed. On the one hand, Canada's recovery from the recession caused by COVID-19 has been remarkable. There are 865,000 more Canadians in the workforce now than there were before the pandemic, and the unemployment rate is near its record low. Inflation also continues to drop.

On the other hand, there are challenges that remain. For example, inflation is still too high. Canadian families are feeling the effects every time they go grocery shopping. Rising prices for basic necessities are a concern for many Canadians.

In the 2023 budget, we propose new, targeted inflation relief for the Canadians hardest hit by rising food prices. Thanks to this grocery rebate, 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians and families will receive financial assistance. These 11 million Canadians include people in my riding of London West.

In concrete terms, this represents up to \$467 for couples with children and up to \$234 for single people without children. It represents an extra \$225 on average for seniors. This assistance will be provided through goods and services tax credits. The reimbursement will be paid by the Canada Revenue Agency as a one-time payment shortly after Bill C-47 passes.

I am therefore happy to see that our grocery rebate is advancing well at the legislative level, Bill C-46 now being before the Senate after having been adopted by the House on April 19.

Government Orders

That represents a \$2.5-billion investment for the treasury. It is indeed an investment that will strengthen Canada's social safety net and improve the quality of life of millions of Canadians, without boosting inflation. It would be unreasonable to send a cheque to every Canadian, since that would only make things more difficult for the Bank of Canada, and things would remain more expensive longer for all Canadians.

We need to understand that the worst appears to be behind us in terms of inflation, which has declined every month in the past nine months and is now holding stable at 4.3%. That being said, we know that some families are having a harder time than others, and they are the ones that need help.

Budget implementation Bill C-47 also includes a series of measures to help Canadians face the rise in the cost of living. They include legislative amendments to crack down on predatory lending. The bill also includes several provisions to implement the new Canadian dental care plan. This will help up to nine million Canadians, and ensure that no one in Canada has to choose between dental care and paying their monthly bills.

This is in addition to other measures included in budget 2023. I am thinking in particular of collaboration with regulatory agencies, provinces and territories to reduce junk fees such as high roaming and telecommunications charges, excessive baggage fees and unfair shipping fees. I am also thinking of the implementation of a right to repair to make it easier and less costly to repair appliances and electronics than to replace them. The possibility of implementing a common charging port for telephones, tablets, cameras and laptops will also be explored.

• (1250)

There is also a reduction in credit card transaction fees for small businesses.

This is also in addition to measures already in place, such as the reduction of day care fees at regulated services across Canada. Six provinces and territories already provide regulated child care services at \$10 per day or less, on average. The other provinces and territories are on track to do so by 2026. We have also strengthened the day care system in Quebec. In that province, we are providing more day care spaces.

These are responsible measures. All Canadians want right now is for inflation to keep declining. Canada is proud of its tradition of fiscal responsibility. It is a tradition that the government is determined to maintain. That is why budget 2023 will allow Canada to keep the lowest deficit and net debt-to-GDP ratio among the G7. Budget 2023 will slow the growth of public spending and bring it back to prepandemic levels.

In exercising fiscal restraint, we ensure that we will continue to make investments for Canadians. With targeted investments, we will help those who truly need it. There are investments in housing, because our economy is built by people and people need a roof. There are investments in labour so workers have the skills needed to find and keep good jobs. There are also investments to strengthen the immigration system so that we can welcome a record number of qualified workers and help growing businesses.

In conclusion, Bill C-47 will help the most vulnerable Canadians cope with price increases. It will ensure that no one is left behind. This bill will make it possible to consider everyone and manage the public finances effectively.

I encourage hon. members to support this bill and help create a stronger and more prosperous future for Canada.

• (1255)

[*English*]

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could tell us a little more about the help that this budget would provide to vulnerable people in her riding.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, it is important to highlight that this budget targets families and young children. There would be dental care for families in need.

I just mentioned that this budget really targets families that are struggling, and that is what our government is trying to do right now to support Canadians who are struggling the most. The grocery rebate would go 11 million targeted Canadians to make sure they have the support they need to continue to thrive in the environment we are in.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have had a chance to chat with the hon. member about some issues, and I know we are concerned and care about similar issues regarding vulnerable Canadians.

I brought up earlier, as I do many times in the House, one of the things I am concerned about. Looking back, the Liberal government of the late 1990s had to cut \$35 billion in transfers to provinces for things such as health care, social services and education, many of the things that most impact the most vulnerable of Canadians. It had to do that because of deficits run up by the Trudeau government in the 1970s.

Is the member at all concerned with these record-breaking deficits, the record-breaking levels of spending that we are seeing right now, and that there might be a similar challenge down the road, in the future, caused by the record levels of spending we are seeing right now?

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, I have had multiple occasions to talk with my colleague about similar, shared interests and how we are both working to serve Canadians. I do agree that we care about a lot of similar things, including health care.

I want to talk about how this budget would help Canadians. This budget would ensure that all Canadians have access to health care, dental care and doctors. We also need to talk about protecting the Canada Health Act and making sure it is not about those who make more money who are able to access health care. Those things are really important for my riding, and those things are really important for Ontarians and Canadians altogether.

It is important to talk about how this government has set up Canadians to be successful in the future by investing in child care and dental care, and by making sure that all Canadians are starting on good ground to be successful, as we get through the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, on certain things, we do agree. The budget considers some people, but it leaves out a huge number of others.

The fact that the budget offers no new money for housing is appalling. These announcements are nothing new. They were made before, over the past two years. Now, however, the need is glaring. It seems that 3.5 million housing units will be required in the next 10 years, without even factoring in population growth. Every newcomer has the right to decent housing.

Will my colleague confirm that her government will invest new money in housing, instead of simply rehashing old announcements?

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: Madam Speaker, I greatly appreciate my colleague's commitment to making sure all Canadians have access to housing, to a home.

This government has invested a lot in housing. We can talk about the \$40,000 that young people like me can invest today to be able to buy a home. We can talk about the interest that has been removed from student loans so students can have money to invest in a home. We can also talk about the fact that the money we invested in child care now allows people have a little more money to do groceries and to buy a home.

I think we can agree that everyone in the House is committed to making sure all Canadians—

• (1300)

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

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about the budget implementation act, just one of a string of many betrayals of Albertans and future generations. I will offer a spoiler alert right now, in case anyone is waiting until the end of my speech to see whether I will be supporting this bill. The answer is no.

There are far too many reasons why I oppose this bill to explain in just 10 minutes. There are lots of bad parts in this bill. If I do not discuss them or mention them, it is just due to a lack of time. It is not intentional.

The Liberal Party continues to treat our children, our grandchildren and future generations as an ATM with this bill. The debt has soared to an eye-watering \$1.2 trillion. Just as a ballpark, there are about 28 million taxpayers in Canada. That is about \$42,000 for every taxpayer. People in their twenties or thirties right now have mostly given up any chance of owning a home. As an added bonus of being able to spend all this time in their parents' basements, they are going to be saddled and crushed with future debt from the government.

Government Orders

The Liberal government is going to claim that a lot of this spending is Harper's fault, which is a default for them. Their members will get up to say that it is due to the pandemic; they had to because of the pandemic.

We need to look at the taxes collected, not just the gross amount of spending going out. In 2019-20, what I call "1 BC", before COVID, the government collected \$334 billion in taxes for the year, including personal taxes, excise, GST and corporate taxes. In 2021-22, during the COVID period, the amount of taxes increased to \$413 billion. This year's budget expects \$457 billion to be collected in taxes, rising to \$543 billion collected in 2028.

The last year before COVID was a very good year for the world, with strong economies around strong employment. There was low growth, but it was still relatively strong. From then to now, there has been an \$8,200-per-family increase in the amount of taxes collected by the government. I have to ask if families feel they are getting an extra \$8,200 extra in services this year. What did \$8,200 per family for just one year get us? We have had to wait six months for passports and have missed weddings, funerals and other occasions. We have had a record delay in immigration backlogs, five-hour waits at Pearson Airport and missed flights because of the incompetence of the transport minister.

The government claimed to be taken by surprise about the increase in travel. Who could have possibly foreseen an increase in demand for travel as COVID ended? Do we know who did? The transportation safety authority, CATSA, actually had in its corporation plan that exponential growth was expected in travel, yet somehow the transport minister missed it and did not get our airports ready for that.

We have ended up with 1.5 million Canadians visiting food banks. We have had a record increase in violent crime, and we are seeing the largest strike in the history of the public service in Canada right now. That is what we are getting for \$8,200 more per family in taxes collected.

The government's own record from the Treasury Board president shows that the government actually missed 51% of all its targeted goals for service to Canadians. They still managed to pay out well over \$100 million in bonuses to bureaucrats for that failure, so we have \$8,200 a year for extra taxes collected and nothing back. I guess I should be thankful that the government has not collected \$10,000 more per family. Imagine the level of incompetence delivered for that.

Government Orders

Let us look at the debt side. Last year, despite \$103 billion more in taxes taken from Canadians than in the pre-COVID era, we have \$43 billion added to the debt. This year, there is going to be a gobsmacking \$123 billion more in taxes collected from Canadians than in the pre-COVID era, and yet we are still going to have a \$43-billion deficit. In 2028, at the end of the five-year budget forecast cycle, it is predicted that \$200 billion more in taxes will be collected from Canadians compared with the last year before COVID. It is still forecasting a deficit. How is it that taxes can be increased almost 60% to 70% and we still end up with a deficit? Actually, it is 62% more revenue, yet still a deficit.

• (1305)

The finance minister famously stated about a year ago that Canada could not afford not to go deeper into debt. Of course, she also said that deflation, not inflation, was the issue to worry about and that growth would stay higher than interest rates. Considering her track record, I hope everyone will excuse me if I do not go to her for a forecast for the Lotto 6/49 numbers.

I want to look at the interest costs. This is money coming out of taxpayers' pockets and the government's pocket that goes right to bondholders and Bay Street bankers and provides nothing to Canadians. We are going to be paying \$235 billion in interest costs alone over the next five years. Almost a quarter of a trillion dollars will be gone, just for interest payments. That is \$13,000 per family in Canada, just for non-productive interest. It is not going to help health care or anything.

In five years' time, in 2028, interest alone is forecasted to be \$50 billion. To put this into perspective, \$50 billion in one year is 31% more than Alberta is paying for health care. Alberta pays more per capita than any other province in Canada, and we are going to be spending 31% more just on interest than we are paying for health care.

It is far more than we pay for defence. We have heard the horrible stories of Canadian soldiers serving in Poland and not being reimbursed for their meals. However, the government is going to spend far more on interest than we pay for all our defence.

I want to put this into perspective for government members, so they can understand better what that \$50 billion is. It is eight million nights in a luxury hotel suite in London. It is half a million individual suspect donations to the Trudeau Foundation from Beijing Communists or about two and a half years of the government shovelling money into Liberal-connected consulting firms. That \$50 billion would be going to Bay Street bankers and the wealthy and not to our armed forces, our seniors, our health care system or anything Canadians value.

Would a budget be a Liberal budget without being stacked full of various things hidden in an omnibus way? In the BIA, the Liberals plan to extend the unfair equalization program for another five years. This is what I mean by calling it another betrayal for Albertans. There were no consultations with the Province of Alberta. The government is just sliding it in for another five years. Albertans were very clear when we did a referendum last year. We want a place at the table, and we want to discuss equalization. The government is just ramming it through without anything.

I want Albertans to think about that. There is an election coming up in May, and there will be a federal election coming up as well. I want them to look at their provincial candidates. Which party is supporting an extension of equalization without any say from Alberta? It is the NDP. Federally, which parties are backing an extension of the unfair equalization? They are the NDP and the Liberal Party. I want Albertans to remember that, come election time in May and in the next federal election. They need to understand who is going to stand up for Albertans. It is not the Liberals, and it is certainly not the NDP.

The bill before us would do nothing to address the productivity crisis. We are going on a downward slope with our standard of living. The bill would do nothing for that. It would do nothing to address inflation. In fact, the Bank of Canada, in its monetary update that just came out, stated that the Liberals' budget and their spending are adding to inflation. Moreover, there is nothing for Alberta, except a continual betrayal in the form of an extension of the equalization plan.

That is unfair to Albertans, and that is why I will not be supporting the bill.

• (1310)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard several times that he was trying to make things clear to us. I am not sure what the member opposite's background is, but it does not sound like it is business. You asked how we could have revenues go up but not have expenses—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the hon. member that I did not ask anything. Please speak through the Chair.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, the hon. member questioned how revenue could go up from taxes and why our expenses went up.

Typically, the balance sheets affect income and expenses, so the revenue went up because of inflationary pressures. These are global, as we all know. Although the member would like to give credit to our government for causing global inflation, I do not think we are quite that powerful.

The other thing the member opposite was talking about inflation. Since the budget came out, inflation has actually gone down. I think it is about half of what the high was. Perhaps it did have an effect.

The other point I wanted to make was that the member opposite mentioned that we get nothing for the interest we are paying. Again, as business people, we know that when we borrow money, we invest it. We are investing, in this case, in things like the Volkswagen plant, which will create jobs and increase our economic growth—

Government Orders

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will give the member for Edmonton West the opportunity to comment or answer.

The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for “Lib-splaining” basic economics to me. To be very clear, the government is increasing its take from taxpayers by 62%. Generally, in business, when we increase our sales by 62%, we can squeeze out a profit or at least break even. We do not increase our sales by 62% and end up with a catastrophic debt.

I want to quote something right from the Bank of Canada, from the monetary policy report for April 2023: “Fiscal measures adding to the growth of domestic demand”. We asked Bank of Canada officials about this at the finance committee, and they said that, yes, it is a polite way of saying that government spending is increasing inflation.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague has a good grasp of the economy. We are both members of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, where we received the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who mentioned in one of his recent reports that 30 years from now, Canada will have paid all of its debts since its creation in 1867.

To achieve that, it will have brought the budgets of Quebec and the Canadian provinces to their knees, and some of those provinces will be technically bankrupt. Does my colleague not see a problem that needs to be addressed, namely a fiscal imbalance that should never have happened in the first place?

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I quite enjoy working with my hon. colleague on the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, or, as I call it, the “mighty OGGO”.

Yes, there is a fiscal imbalance, quite often, in a lot of issues; this is caused in part by the aging population and other issues. However, the biggest issue we have is the fiscal incompetence of the federal government. We have never seen so much money come in and so much money spent unproductively. We could fix a lot of the fiscal imbalances between the federal government and the provinces if the federal government would get its act together.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I have the pleasure of sitting on the public accounts committee. At that place, we do good work together across party lines and for the betterment of all Canadians.

He mentioned, in particular, our home province of Alberta and, of course, the upcoming provincial election. My question, in reference to the statement he made, is this: What about the reality that health care, education and many of the items that he has spoken about are under provincial jurisdiction?

We have seen what the UCP has done to our province. How can he reconcile the fact that the UCP is in power right now and that there has been support offered by the federal government that the premier will just not accept? She is trying to privatize health care.

Will the member stand to defend public health care?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, it is committee day for me today. I enjoy my time with my colleague, who is also from Edmonton, on public accounts. I am going to disagree with him on a lot of the issues he has spoken about. I do not think they are quite correct.

I think that when I look at it and when Albertans look at it, there is a stark choice. I do not get involved in provincial politics, but I will note that there is a stark choice. Who is going to stand against this government? Who is going to stand for Albertans to address equalization?

It is not the party that is voting to extend the unfair equalization against Alberta. It will be Conservatives.

• (1315)

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, New Democrats have always been on the side of everyday Canadians. I want to speak to that, and I want to ensure that we can have a healthy debate about this today. What I mean by a healthy debate is that, in this place, often times we speak at each other. We speak to each other without the decency and respect that Canadians across the country expect from us in this place.

I want to talk about one of my role models and one of the great stewards of our country, who has now passed on, Tommy Douglas. I want to speak about what an incredible man Tommy was. He was an incredible person who often spoke about the needs of regular, everyday Canadians. I know Canadians from coast to coast to coast respect him. Some may disagree with his ideology, and that is okay, but his ideas are still with us and are still present.

Whether we are talking about this budget, or the one in 2005, which witnessed our beloved Jack Layton force the government to make historic investments in social programs during a time of Liberal austerity, or talking about when Tommy Douglas pushed the Progressive Conservatives to come to a deal on publicly financing health care, they were both major achievements.

We have always used our time, our voice and our power in this place for good. I believe all members believe deep down in their hearts that they are doing the same. It is my hope that we can show all Canadians, particularly young Canadians, that there is a third way, through a little tale told and retold in my home of Alberta in the Prairies.

The story is a story that many members may know and sympathize with, but I want to retell it for the generations of prairie people and Canadians across the country who may not know about it.

Government Orders

It is a story about mice in a community called Mouseland. It was a place where all the little mice lived and played, where they were born and died. They lived much the same as us. They even had a Parliament. Every so often, they would be asked to go to an election. They would walk to the polls and cast their ballots. Some of them would walk there and others would get a ride, and many of them would get a ride for the next four years as well.

Every election day, all the little mice would go to elect a government. On one election day, a government was formed and that government was made up of big, fat black cats. Some would think it was strange that a community of mice would elect cats. However, we do not have to look that far in our own Canadian history to see that perplexing reality for the past nearly 150 years, and they were not any wiser than we are today.

I am not saying anything against the cats. I am not, trust me. I believe that the cats were decent, hard-working and good. They believed that they were doing the best for those they represented. They passed good laws. That is, they passed good laws for cats. They passed laws that were really good for cats.

Some of those laws were laws that made the entryway holes to the homes of mice into circles, so the cats could grab the mice from their homes. They also brought in speed limits, so a mouse would be unable to run away from the cat. These were all good laws for cats, but they were dangerous and scary for the mice.

Life was getting harder and harder. When the mice could not put up with it anymore, they decided something had to be done about it. They went en masse to the polls and voted out the black cats, but they voted in the white cats.

The white cats had put on a terrific campaign. They had said that all Mouseland needed was more vision, and they had sometimes said, “triple, triple, triple”. They said that the trouble with Mouseland was all those round holes. All the round holes were a big problem, so they said that they would bring in square holes.

The policy of square holes did not make the lives of those mice any easier. The square mouse holes were twice as big as the round holes, and now the cats could get both paws in. It was a shame, and life was harder than ever.

● (1320)

The mice could not take it anymore. They voted the white cats out and the black cats back in. For 150 years it has been the black cats out, the white cats in, then the white cats out, and the black cats in.

Then one little mouse had an idea that some would say is ludicrous today. They might even say it is impossible to be done. There were attempts to create alternatives to the black and white cats, some with spots and some with stripes, but at the end of the day, they were still cats.

Can members see that the trouble with all of this is not that the cats were white or black? The trouble is that they were cats, and because they were cats, they naturally looked after cats. We spoke about that. I would tell my friends to watch out for the little mouse with an idea. When that one little mouse asked the other mice why they kept electing a government made up of cats, they called it a

socialist that should be locked up, and they locked him up. I want to remind members that we can lock up a mouse or a man, but we cannot lock up an idea.

I share this story to not only pay tribute to our party's many great leaders and the decisions we have made, but also to ensure that the next generation of Canadians know that, throughout our country's tough moments, there have been mice fighting for them each and every day so that we can build a better future for everyday people, and they did it in a way that showed decency and respect for Canadians, and for each and every one of us in this place.

Canadians are experiencing one of the most devastating times in their lives. It is talked about by our Liberal and Conservative colleagues. We are now in a position where we understand the problem together, which is a good thing. It is good that we are speaking about those who are attending food banks at record levels, the lack of clean water in first nations and indigenous communities, and the need to ensure that children get the support they need, but we are divided on the solutions.

New Democrats have been consistent in our support for many of the solutions. That is why dental care is something we fought so hard to achieve for decades. Though we have never formed government in this country, it is my hope that one day New Democrats and our ideas can truly show Canadians that there is a third way.

I know that many, not just those here, will laugh at us, mock us and tell us it can never be done. I would tell those people to just watch us, because the mice know that, whether it is the black cats or the white cats, they will make laws, and those laws will be for cats. We are here to say that now is the time for the everyday people.

When we look around our communities and see hard-working Canadians show up every single day and do everything right but fall further behind, we know that the laws that are put against regular Canadians are unfair. They know this. They feel it. They see it every single day.

It has been the project of New Democrats to ensure that our colleagues in this place, and one day hopefully across this country, will see that mice can make laws too. We can make laws for the regular everyday people that do not take so much from them to reward the cats, because they will continue to do that if we do not break the mould in our country of electing cat after cat. We can bring this place to a new reality, where regular folks can have their issues heard, have the respect and decorum we would expect for all Canadians, and ensure that the programs are there so that mice can take care of mice.

● (1325)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the member wants to focus on health care. We learned a lot about cats and mice, and I get the message he is trying to convey there, but I want to get us back on track with the budget implementation act.

Government Orders

For me, health care is certainly top of mind, as we know it is for Canadians across this country. In my riding in New Brunswick, \$1.3 million was held back in federal health transfers because it was in contravention of the Canada Health Act for reproductive services and diagnostic testing. My question is this: How can we work together in this place to ensure that the public universal health care system is upheld in this country?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I do have great respect for the member opposite. However, I do think she may have missed a really critical part of our analogy. When we have a public health care system like the one we have in Canada, which should guarantee access and administration for regular, everyday Canadians across the country, it is up to the federal government to actually enforce the Canada Health Act.

The reality is that, right now, in my home province of Alberta, there are private surgeries taking place already, which is in contravention of the Canada Health Act, but the government allows it. It continues to make transfers. It continues to send money to the provinces and to not enforce it. My question back to the member would be, when will the government enforce the health care transfer rules in the act?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member spoke about cats. When I think about my cat, my cat has this habit of jumping out of nowhere and grabbing me, and it is really annoying. It is kind of like another cat I know in this place, a cat who has taken an all-expenses-paid trip to the Aga Khan island, charged six thousands dollars' worth of hotel rooms, went on a Jamaican vacation with a donor to his family foundation, turfed the first indigenous justice minister and has ethical breach after spending breach after problem. He is the biggest cat here. He is the fat cat, the fattest cat of them all.

Why is my colleague opposite, if he is a proponent to support mice, continuing to prop up this cat's government?

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, the member from Calgary oftentimes does great work in respecting the dignity and decency of this place. There are two kinds of cats in this place: the Prime Minister and the member for Carleton.. Both of them are one hundred per cent government funded.

When it comes to ensuring we actually get real results for mice, yes, New Democrats will continue to show up so we get those services for mice. Why are these cats so opposed to ensuring dental care and things like pharmacare are realized for mice?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his very inspiring speech.

I asked a question earlier for which I did not receive a satisfactory response from another NDP friend. Housing is a top priority in this country. The financialization of housing is a growing phenomenon, where large financial conglomerates are buying more and more rental housing in Canada. According to a study, in the past 30 years, ownership of the rental housing stock by large international financial conglomerates has gone from 0% to 22%. There are no simple solutions to this issue. Obviously, their priority is not the right to housing, but rather their bottom line. We need to address this if we want to address the housing crisis.

I would like to know if my colleague has any solutions for dealing with the financialization of housing in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I apologize to my Bloc Québécois colleague for my inability to speak French at this time. I am learning.

In relation to housing, it is true that housing is a true crisis in our country. The reality is that we need to ensure there is outside the market to ensure the right to housing, for example, is truly met for those who cannot participate in it. The reality is we need to see social housing in our country. We need to see the federal government return to the business of building homes, and we need to do it quickly.

The reality is those corporations, those large investment trusts, are going to continue to get away with ripping off Canadians so long as we allow them to. We need to see the introduction of social homes and housing that is out of private market to ensure those who fall below the cracks and fall below the margins have a home. We know that a good life, good health care and a good education starts with a good and safe home.

● (1330)

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a great opportunity to stand up and speak in the House today.

If members will indulge me for a moment, I want to briefly mention two people who are very important in my life, my mother and father, Alvin and Irene Redekopp. They have been there for my whole life, a great life growing up, and are probably the most ardent watchers of the House out of all of us. They watch question period, they watch, of course, when I speak, and they probably watch random debates just for fun. They have been married 63 years, and it is my privilege and honour to still have a great relationship with them even though they are a few years older than me. I thank my mom and dad for all they have done.

One month ago, we listened to the budget in this place, and here we are now a month later. I think I would summarize the budget with the word “underwhelming”. There was a Global News story the following day in which Pamela George, a financial literacy counsellor who works with women, said that the 2023 spending plan was subpar. She said:

It's nothing to write home about. I'm not shouting and celebrating anything...When I hear things like, “we're going to do this,” or “we're looking into this,” I just feel it's stalling....

I think that summarizes my thoughts on the budget; it really was quite underwhelming. So, of course, the questions from the residents of Saskatoon West are: How does this budget affect me? What is going to change because of this budget? How is it going to impact my life?

Government Orders

Of course, they are struggling, like all Canadians are, with pressures on meeting their monthly costs, whether it is to put groceries on the table, fuelling their cars, heating their homes or even their cost to own a home. Saskatoon is one of the cheaper places in the country to own a home, yet it is still very difficult. Many people in my riding struggle with paying their rent and paying their mortgage payments, especially as mortgage payments increase. So, many of them were looking for solutions.

It is fair to say that there were no long-term solutions in this budget at all. There were some band-aids, yes, but there were really no long-term solutions. Getting a few hundred dollars extra on a GST rebate might help in the very short term, but it does not help in the long term. We have heard the proverb, "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." I think that is what we are seeing here with a few hundred dollars to a family. Okay, fine, they can buy groceries for a week, maybe two, but then the problem is there again.

We need permanent, long-term solutions that actually solve the problems that are out there, and I acknowledge that this is a hard thing. A master's level skill is required to achieve this. Unfortunately, what we have seen in so many things, and this budget is a good example of it, is a master's level of incompetence. We just cannot get the competence that we require out of this government. Of course, right now, we are in the middle of this strike and, as has been mentioned many times, this government has managed to spend 50% more on its workforce and still have the workforce go on strike. That takes a master's level of incompetence.

Conservatives had some very positive suggestions for this budget, and I just want to review those very quickly.

The first one was that we had suggested the government pursue an area of lower taxes for workers. People need to keep more of their paycheques so that they can spend the money they need to survive. The second thing we suggested was that the government end inflationary deficits that are driving up the cost of goods. This is fairly straightforward and was a very good suggestion that should not have been very difficult for this government. The third was to remove gatekeepers to increase home building for Canadians. This is something we hear of constantly in our ridings and across the country on the availability of affordable housing.

Did the government take us up on our constructive advice? Well, let us talk about taxes.

Several days after the budget was released, what happened to taxes? They went up. Why is that? It is because of the carbon tax. This is part of the plan to increase the carbon tax over the next months to ultimately triple it to where it is going to cost 40¢ a litre for fuel, for gasoline, and, of course, it adds a cost to everything else, whether it is fuel for homes, which, by the way, there is GST on top of the carbon tax, or whether it is for groceries. Basically, anything that moves on a truck is impacted by this. Of course, food is greatly impacted by this, because farmers end up bearing a huge cost of GST on their farms. So, did taxes go down? No, they went up.

What about the inflationary deficits? Did they go down? No, actually.

• (1335)

I would like to read a quote, which says, "Our deficits must continue to be reduced. The pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe and solvent must...be paid down. This is our fiscal anchor. ...a line we shall not cross." Who said that? Of course, it was the illustrious finance minister, and it was said less than a year ago. Here we are, just months after making that statement, and what do we see in this budget? We see deficits forever. The idea of deficits being reduced and eliminated is just not there. The crazy thing is that in 2026, it would just take a 3% reduction to achieve a balanced budget, yet that is not something that this master's level of incompetence government was able to achieve, which I think is quite simple.

What about the third thing: home building? What I see in the budget are some things that are going to increase the supply. Let me take a moment and talk about supply and demand, because that is the most basic principle of everything that affects money in our country. When there is a lot of supply, there are low prices; when there is a lot of demand, prices go up. What we see in this budget are measures that would increase demand. What is the effect of that? It means there are more people chasing fewer things, which means the prices will go up. The master's level of competence approach to this budget would be to increase the supply of houses, and that is not something I see in here. We need to incentivize companies and cities to build houses and require cities to build more houses. They are the gatekeepers that are holding back the supply of houses that could be built in this country.

Another way to look at this is what is missing in this budget. One thing that struck me quite obviously was foreign credential recognition. As I have spoken with newcomers to Canada all across the country, this comes up inevitably as one of the first or second things they mention. They will say things like they are doctors and not able to work in this country or they are lawyers, engineers or in a certain profession and they cannot work in this country because it is too difficult for them to be licensed to practise in this country.

Health care is a huge problem. Canadians will say that in surveys, but yet, after eight years of the Liberal government, only 41% of foreign-trained doctors are able to work as doctors in our country. Only 37% of nurses are able to work as nurses in our country, and there are countless others. That leaves us with the typical doctor driving a taxi. I am sure many of us in this room have been driven in taxis by doctors, and the reason is because they are unable to be licensed and work as doctors. This is a huge issue for our country because we need doctors.

That is why I introduced my private member's bill, Bill C-286, to help address this issue and allow foreign-trained professionals to have their credentials recognized more easily, and that is why the Conservative leader has introduced his system, which is the Blue Seal system. The Blue Seal is modelled after the Red Seal program. The Red Seal program is for professions like electricians and plumbers. It has been adopted for 50 years and is used in all of the provinces. The idea is that we would have a similar system where doctors or nurses could make sure they qualify by showing they have the knowledge through passing a national competence exam. They would then be given a Blue Seal and be able to work in the country, in provinces that choose to join the program. Why would they join the program? Because it would allow access to more staff, and that is what we need to do.

One other thing that surprised me that was not in this bill was the student direct stream. Bangladesh has been asking for the student direct stream for a long time. This allows students from other countries, which are part of the program, an easier and quicker way to come to Canada to get their post-secondary education in the country. It is good for our country because our post-secondary institutions benefit from having them. They are a great asset to our country in terms of their knowledge and skills. They create businesses and increase trade between the countries. Bangladesh has been trying to become part of the program. India and its neighbour Pakistan are part of this program. I have spoken about it many times with the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. There are many things we can gain in our country by having this done. We do not have it yet. It is something I wish had been in the budget and I am sad to see it was not. On behalf of Bangladeshi students who are trying to get to Canada, I am sad we did not see that.

We are seeing a budget from a tired and worn out NDP-Liberal coalition, a government that is full of scandals and cover-ups. Conservatives will bring relief. We will lower taxes, we will end inflationary deficits and we will remove the gatekeepers so that we can build more houses in this country.

• (1340)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I must admit that in the entire intervention the best part of it was how he opened it: talking about his parents. Indeed, congratulations on such a successful marriage of 63 years. That is absolutely remarkable. I wonder if the member can inform the House on the secret to having a marriage that lasts 63 years.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, I will note a couple of things. First, neither of my parents were politicians, so that might be part of it. I can think of a trip in Florida when I was young where I was not sure they were going to make it. My dad was driving and my mom was navigating. Members can imagine how that went, but they did survive. Obviously, it is love and dealing with issues that come up. That is something that we could all take to heart in this place. We are never going to agree on everything and we have to work together for the betterment of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague's question is going to be hard to beat.

Government Orders

My opposition party colleague mentioned several things that are missing. Members have been talking about them since this morning. One of those things is housing. We need more than three million housing units in the next 10 years, and that is not even counting housing for the immigrants who are arriving in Canada by the hundreds of thousands.

What does my colleague suggest we do to meet the urgent and growing need for housing? Does he have any advice for the party opposite?

[English]

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, of course, as I mentioned quite strongly in my speech, we have a master's level of incompetence on one side of the House and, I believe, a master's level of competence on this side.

One of the ideas that we have been pushing forward is that we need to force municipalities, through funding and through different arrangements that we have with them, to actually increase the amount of housing that is available. One easy way to do that is to provide infrastructure spending for transportation. We need to make cities create housing around the transportation hubs that we are funding. When we have a large transportation hub, we would need to have housing and apartments around that. That increases the availability of housing, which, as I said in my speech, increases the supply. When they increase supply, they decrease the cost.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. Before I begin, I just want to welcome to my family my cousin's child, a brand new little girl, Isabelle Vera Smith, daughter to Claudia Wright and Lewis Smith and my newest constituent. I welcome Isabelle to the family and also welcome her to Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

My colleague comes from an area that, in my view, provides for Canada through so many farmers who really know the value of hard work. Is there anything the member can point to that he would have loved to see in this budget for the hard-working people of Saskatchewan?

Government Orders

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, there are many things that come to mind. The very first thing that is top of mind and top of mind for many people in Saskatchewan is the carbon tax. The member spoke about providing for the country and of course he is referring to food and the way that hard-working farmers in Saskatchewan and other prairie provinces produce food not only for Canada but for the world. What we are seeing here is a tremendous amount of money that is being spent by each farmer to cover the cost of the carbon tax. That cost is only going up from this point. It is going to triple from where it is now. A typical farmer pays more than \$150,000 a year in carbon tax.

What happens to that carbon tax? It ends up getting built in to the cost of the products that the farmers produce, which then shows up at the grocery store. When people go to the grocery store and wonder why prices are so high and why they are seeing 10% and 6% inflation on grocery prices in the grocery store, part of the answer to that is the carbon tax. The carbon tax is built into the cost of everything that is in the grocery store. That is a huge element of what we are seeing. People in Saskatchewan would like to see this carbon tax reduced because they are not getting the benefit. They are paying more than they are receiving back.

• (1345)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-47, especially since I have here with me the Minister of National Revenue, who came just to hear my speech, as well as two of my loyal squires.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member because members are not allowed to draw attention to either presences or absences in the House. I just wanted to remind him of that.

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I fully understand, but sometimes when we get excited we forget the most basic parliamentary rules.

I am pleased to speak to Bill C-47 today. At first, I thought that, as natural resources critic, I would focus my comments on energy but, as luck would have it, I will be able to speak on another one of my favourite issues, health transfers. Members will understand why.

I have risen many times in the House to speak about an issue that is plaguing Canadian federalism, and that is the fiscal imbalance. The fiscal imbalance could probably have been resolved in Bill C-47. I will explain why. In fact, I hope that it will be resolved in Bill C-47 by a stroke of luck.

Before rising, I spoke with my favourite colleagues, the members for Drummond and Lac-Saint-Jean, to find out what they thought about health. The member for Lac-Saint-Jean, with his usual edgy wit, told us that, when it comes to health, the Leader of the Conservative Party makes Scrooge look like a spendthrift. Basically, we know that the Conservative Leader now wants to maintain health funding at \$4.6 billion, as proposed by the Liberals, against the wishes of all the provinces, which want \$28 million in funding. That is the silliness of the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, but I want to bring up something that happened on Wednesday, April 19.

At that time, the House had voted unanimously in favour of Bill C-46. That bill included \$2 billion in health transfers to the provinces. For us, it was not enough. However, we later found that the \$2 billion was in Bill C-47. That was very interesting, because a total of \$4 billion would be going to the provinces instead of the initial \$2 billion. I think that is very good news. It should be very good news for all government ministers, including the Minister of Revenue, but unfortunately, the member for Winnipeg-North put a damper on the good news. He can always be counted on to put a damper on good news. On April 21, he told us in a statement that he would be removing the most interesting part of Bill C-47, the part saying that there would be an additional \$2 billion.

The Bloc Québécois will clearly oppose that amendment. Indeed, in our opinion, the fiscal imbalance must be resolved. We will talk more about that. Our recent experience with the pandemic showed us that our health care system is struggling. That \$2 billion would be very useful.

Now comes the million-dollar question, as the expression goes. Except it is even worse in this case, because it is the \$2-billion question. What is the NDP leader going to do? Will he support the government in cutting \$2 billion from health transfers? The government has a coalition with the NDP right now, so I think the NDP has the opportunity to make a difference by not supporting the government in its plans to cut those \$2 billion.

As I said earlier, we know that the provinces were asking for \$28 billion, and they got only \$4.6 billion. We know that the government refuses to fund 35% of health care costs, but the NDP could make all the difference.

To put things into perspective, I will share what the leader of the NDP said very recently. On December 12, the leader of the NDP said that his party was prepared to withdraw from the supply and confidence agreement it had signed with the Liberals if there was no federal action to resolve the health care crisis affecting Canadian children. That is what the NDP leader said on December 12. He went on to say that this was a decision he was not taking lightly and that it was time to keep the pressure on, because the goal of the New Democrats was to save lives.

The NDP can always be counted on when it comes to saving lives.

• (1350)

Saving our health care system is about helping workers and helping children. I wonder if the NDP today still wants to save lives. Does it still want to save our health care system and children? It has the opportunity to do so. All it has to do is refuse to allow the removal of the much-touted \$2 billion from Bill C-47.

In February of this year, the same situation arose when an NDP opposition day was specifically about health care. Its strategy was a bit questionable, in my view. They tried to put the onus on the provinces by saying that there could be funding for health care as long as the money was not used for private services, as long as the private sector was not involved. Health falls under provincial jurisdiction. I would describe myself as a progressive. I do not agree with allowing the private sector to play a bigger role in health care, but the crux of the problem remains the same. The crux of the problem is funding.

On February 7, 2023, the NDP leader said, “After spending the last two and a half years stalling any progress to improve health care, Justin Trudeau has come forward with the bare minimum”—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Need I remind the hon. member that members should not be named, even in the context of a quote?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, in a momentary fit of enthusiasm and sincere affection, I forgot myself.

As I was saying, the Prime Minister has come forward with the bare minimum. Let us go back to that bare minimum. According to the NDP, the minimum was \$4.6 billion. The NDP therefore wants there to be more than \$4.6 billion. In my opinion, the NDP surely wants the \$2 billion dollars that was in Bill C-46 to also be included in Bill C-47. That is my interpretation.

I will continue to read the quote: “The Prime Minister has come forward with the bare minimum—a deal that won't do nearly enough to recruit, retain and respect frontline workers, does not address the conditions in long-term care”.

I think it is clear that the leader of the NDP has the same objectives as us and that he wants the health care system to be better funded.

I will read a third statement by the leader of the NDP, who said, “Increasing the Canada Health Transfer is a start—but this is not enough to rebuild our public health care system.” Again, the leader of the NDP finds that the government is a bit stingy when it comes to funding health care.

In my opinion, \$2 billion is not enough, but \$4 billion might be enough. I have a feeling that my colleagues in the NDP are thinking the same thing. The \$2-billion question, therefore, is this: Will the representatives from the NDP support us for better health care funding?

Based on everything the leader of the NDP has said, I get the feeling they will. Will they instead support the government and deny us a more robust health care system?

I would like to quickly address something else. It is the issue of energy and the environment. In Bill C-47, \$21 billion will be used for greenwashing oil companies and for funding madness, namely small modular nuclear reactors that will allow the oil and gas industry to use less gas in its processes. Essentially, nuclear energy, energy that is anything but clean, will be used to produce more gas.

That is a total aberration that everyone is against. It is all the more a total aberration because there is no country, to my knowledge, that considers nuclear energy to be clean energy, except

Government Orders

Canada. It is well known that nuclear energy costs 10 times more than solar or wind energy. It is also well known that research has shown that every country that has wanted to go the route of nuclear energy in their fight against climate change in the past 25 years has clearly failed. It is known that the federal government's strategy is doomed to fail, and there are funds for that in Bill C-47. That is another aberration.

I will conclude my comments by reaching out to my colleagues in the NDP, because I am a man of good faith, so we can demand that the government adequately fund the health care system.

• (1355)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated my colleague's speech. As I said yesterday, I strongly believe in respect for jurisdictions. What falls to the federal government is up to the federal government, and what falls to the provinces is up to the provinces.

The question I have for my colleague is about two measures in Bill C-47 that are very important to my constituents. I am referring to the tradesperson's tools deduction. We are also proposing to advance payments for low-income workers to help them with their cash flow. Does my colleague support these two measures?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I did not quite grasp the part about cash flow, but I did understand what she said at the beginning of the question: She respects provincial jurisdictions.

If she does believe in respect for jurisdictions, like me, she should be outraged to see the government implement this ridiculous promise to put in place a dental care system, as this is fully and entirely within the jurisdiction of the provinces. This will again strain the provinces' finances and exacerbate the fiscal imbalance. I see that my colleague completely agrees with me on the fiscal imbalance issue.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, although we desperately need affordable housing, the budget contains no decent plan for providing affordable housing. We are expecting many immigrants to arrive, but there is no plan for housing them.

Would my colleague like to share his thoughts on that?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam President, I would advise my colleague to go back and listen to the speech on housing given earlier by my colleague for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

I do agree with her. Affordable and social housing is essential. Apart from that, what I wanted my colleague to take away from my speech is the fact that our health care system is still falling apart.

Statements by Members

I would point out to her once again that her leader agreed to maintain the minimal funding that the Liberal government granted to our health care systems.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am fascinated by the remarks of my colleague from Jonquière about small modular reactors. I do not think they are a source of clean energy and I think it is a big—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): May I interrupt the hon. member for a second?

[*English*]

Could everyone please keep the tone down so we can actually hear the question and the answer when the time comes?

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I see no need to start over from the beginning, but I will say that my friend from Jonquière said some very interesting things about the nuclear industry and small modular reactors, which are not a source of clean energy. It is a serious distraction, moving us further away from the need to tackle the climate emergency.

My question is this. Why does he think we are facing a new nuclear threat?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, earlier this week, I took part in a non-partisan media scrum with my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands, some Liberal members and my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie to denounce a situation that is completely inconceivable, specifically that Canada considers small modular reactors to be clean energy. Ottawa is going to invest in a technology that every other country seems to want to get away from and that costs a lot more, as I said earlier, compared to wind and solar energy. It defies reason and must be condemned.

I would actually like to applaud the efforts of my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands and thank her for everything she is doing to combat this ridiculous nonsense.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[*English*]

RETIREMENT CONGRATULATIONS

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate Bonnie Wong on her retirement. As the executive director of the Hong Fook Mental Health Association, Bonnie's work has changed lives.

Bonnie expanded culturally competent services for East Asian youth and seniors, launched three new satellite offices and established a nurse practitioner-led clinic to provide primary care access for the Scarborough community. Bonnie also served the wider community as co-chair of the mental health sector group on the collaboration council of the Scarborough Ontario Health Team. She even came to Ottawa to fiercely advocate for the inclusion of people of colour in mental health policies.

Under her leadership, Hong Fook just became accredited with an exemplary standing of 98.3% under a global standards program.

I thank Bonnie Wong for her dedication, hard work and advocacy for mental health.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, today is a good day for the cause of human rights in Canada. Bill C-281, the international human rights act, has passed in the foreign affairs committee.

Bill C-281 would help hold human rights violators accountable, raise awareness of prisoners of conscience, prevent genocidal regimes from broadcasting their propaganda on our airwaves, and it would help eliminate the vile cluster munitions from the face of the earth.

I would like to thank the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan for his friendship, his support and his leadership on this important legislation, and all members who worked collaboratively to get this back to the House.

However, our job is far from done. We are in a minority Parliament and there are no guarantees in a minority Parliament. That is why I call on all members of the House to work as hard as possible to get this important legislation passed as soon as possible.

* * *

BATTERY PLANTS

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last Friday, I was proud to represent the residents of Windsor—Tecumseh at the historic VW announcement in St. Thomas. This \$7-billion battery plant will create thousands of well-paying auto jobs in communities up and down the 401. That is good teamwork and good Liberal policy at work.

The same Liberal teamwork delivered a \$5-billion battery plant in Windsor, which will create over 5,000 jobs in my community. It is the same Liberal teamwork that delivered a \$1.5-billion battery plant in Loyalist near Kingston.

I am thrilled my Conservative colleagues, the member of Parliament for Elgin—Middlesex—London and the member of Parliament for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, have joined me in representing ridings now home to billion-dollar battery plants, creating thousands of well-paying auto jobs.

We see the benefits of Liberal policies at work and the value of investing in auto workers. Why oh why can the Conservative leader not see the same?

* * *

[Translation]

PETIT THÉÂTRE DU NORD

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to mark the 25th anniversary of Petit Théâtre du Nord, a veritable institution of the performing arts in the Lower Laurentians.

Founded in a garage in Mirabel in 1998, Petit Théâtre du Nord moved first to the Blainville community centre, and then to its permanent home at the Centre de création de Boisbriand, a beautifully renovated old church. The little theatre company has certainly come a long way.

Year after year, this theatre company has stood out for its entertaining, accessible and professional programming, focused on showcasing up-and-coming Quebec playwrights and actors.

I congratulate the entire Petit Théâtre team on 25 years of laughter and entertainment. I congratulate Luc Bourgeois, Sébastien Gauthier and Mélanie St-Laurent, the artistic directors and founders of Petit Théâtre du Nord, on their wonderfully successful venture. I wish them a happy 25th anniversary and, especially, a great summer season.

* * *

NATIONAL TOURISM WEEK

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since it is National Tourism Week, allow me to take this opportunity to invite everyone to explore the magnificent riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle, soon to be renamed Châteauguay—Les Jardins-de-Napierville. Nestled between the U.S. border and the St. Lawrence River, our region boasts a wide range of unforgettable tourist attractions.

Tourists passing through the area will have fun discovering the beautiful Île Saint-Bernard in Châteauguay, our safari park, and the vineyards and cider houses along the Circuit du paysan tourism circuit. I encourage everyone to visit the Circuit du paysan website for great ideas on sights to see and places to stay.

Everyone is sure to have a great time in our region.

* * *

• (1405)

[English]

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL PROGRAM

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I come from a three-generation family of professional football players. Courage, loyalty, integrity, that is the motto of Simon Fraser University's legendary football program that has developed elite athletes from across Canada for 58 years, producing 217 CFL draft picks. Alumni include TSN star, Farhan Lalji; sports broadcaster, Glen Sutor; CFL veterans, Dave Cutler,

Statements by Members

Rick Klassen, Lui Passaglia; and community leaders like Glen Orris, K.C., a prominent Vancouver lawyer.

On April 4, SFU terminated its football program. The 97 student athletes on the current roster were blindsided by a press release during exams. Many players depend on football scholarships to pursue higher education. Scrapping this program is a major blow to varsity sports in B.C.

I encourage all sport lovers to join thousands and sign the alumni online petition. Let us save the SFU football program.

* * *

OTTAWA INITIATIVES

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure members have noticed that the days are getting a little longer and the sun is shining a little brighter.

With spring in full bloom and summer just around the corner, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some active ways my community of Ottawa Centre, as well as visitors to our nation's capital, can get out to enjoy this beautiful city.

This summer, Ottawa will see the grand opening of the new Chief William Commanda Bridge, made possible by an \$8.6-million investment by the Government of Canada, that will connect bikers and pedestrians across the Ottawa River between Ottawa and Gatineau. We will also see the return of NCC Weekend Bikedays, encouraging residents to use our existing parkways without their cars.

These initiatives build on Ottawa's growing active transportation network, which includes new paths across LeBreton Flats, the iconic Flora Footbridge, hundreds of kilometres of bike paths and, quite possibly in the future, a fully pedestrianized Wellington Street.

I encourage all members to join the residents of Ottawa Centre whenever they visit our city, by walking, biking, running or just roaming around.

* * *

FIREFIGHTERS

Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to speak about the brave men and women who serve as firefighters in our communities. These courageous individuals put their lives on the line every day to ensure we all remain safe from emergencies. They are the front line of our emergency response system.

A few weeks ago, I was fortunate enough to meet with a few of their firefighters and their union from my riding of Mississauga—Streetsville. Our interaction was enlightening and it reinforced my admiration for the invaluable work they do.

Statements by Members

Bill C-224 was introduced by the member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine. The bill would establish a national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting. It has passed in the House with unanimous consent and is now in the Senate. As elected officials, we owe it to our firefighters to ensure they receive the support and resources needed to remain healthy and safe.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank firefighters from across Canada for their dedication and continued service to keep us safe.

* * *

[*Translation*]

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one morning in January 2020, my home phone rang. It was the father of Catherine, a very close friend of my daughter Justine. He was calling to tell me that Catherine had passed away in a car accident with her friend Jérémy Routhier. I had to break the news to my daughter.

Three years later, Catherine and Jérémy are still with us as ambassadors of an organization called Chaîne de vie, whose mission is to educate young people on the importance of organ and tissue donation. Catherine's brother, Philippe Poulin, along with Elie Lessard, Mikaël Binet, Alex-Antoine Mercier and Émile Brousseau, with the help of Félix Tanguay, Samuel Laflamme and Mégane Bolduc, produced a poignant video that begins with an image depicting Catherine and Jérémy's accident. The video's narrator says:

When I die
My brain shuts down
My body leaves me
My soul takes flight

But my skin can still embrace
My lungs can still fill with air
My bones can still crack
My muscles can still lift
My corneas can still see
And my heart can still love

Catherine and Jérémy's organs and tissues have helped improve the lives of at least 30 people. Let us be part of the chain of life and share the video. Organ and tissue donation is about giving others a second chance at life. It makes perfect sense.

* * *

● (1410)

[*English*]

VANCOUVER CHINATOWN FOUNDATION

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, next Wednesday, the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation will host its annual spring banquet.

The foundation is dedicated to the revitalization of one of Vancouver's most historic neighbourhoods, honouring a culture and community established in Vancouver over 100 years ago. It is building a more resilient and inclusive community, and preserving

Chinatown's irreplaceable cultural heritage, the historic heart of Vancouver.

To generate support and awareness for its projects, the foundation hosts several events each year. Some of this phenomenal work includes the autumn gala, which in recent years raised an impressive \$1.1 million toward 230 units of social housing.

The spring banquet next week is held annually to remember the stories of working, playing and living in Chinatown. It is a celebration not only of Chinatown's future, but also of its long and storied past.

I would like to particularly thank my friend Carol Lee, chair of the board of the foundation and the indomitable force behind this historic community's revitalization.

I want to thank all for the work being done to preserve Chinatown in Vancouver for generations to come.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce the death of a groundbreaking tidal energy project near Digby, Nova Scotia. It was operated by a world-leading company, Sustainable Marine Energy, which has been killed by the Liberal government.

A wonderful opportunity to make this country a leader in clean energy has been lost and thousands of hours of hard work have been wasted. This paints a picture of a government that is psychosclerotic, unintelligent, unimaginative and unwilling to experiment with new ideas to protect our environment, outside of taxing Canadians into submission at the fuel pump.

In the paraphrased words of the Premier of Nova Scotia, the federal government is shutting down a project that would change the economy of Nova Scotia and supply clean, green energy.

The federal Liberal government is happy to saddle us with a carbon tax, which will cost us more and do little to protect the environment.

Shame on the Liberal government.

* * *

CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE BANK

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, McKinsey & Company has been connected to the Canada Infrastructure Bank since the beginning. It was McKinsey's CEO, Dominic Barton, who recommended the bank's creation. They then funnelled from the bank \$1.4 million in contracts to McKinsey. Then a bunch of McKinsey loyalists were hired at the bank.

Now these former executives, board chairs and even the Minister of Infrastructure refuse to appear at the committee on transport and infrastructure.

Statements by Members

These taxpayer-funded executives with six-figure salaries, some of whom are receiving big payouts and bonuses, think they do not have to answer to Parliament.

The committee was cancelled today, at a cost to taxpayers. That is why I am putting the witnesses on notice. The Conservatives will be demanding that these witnesses appear at committee. They can come the easy way or they can come the hard way, but they will come to committee and they will answer to taxpayers.

* * *

[Translation]

LA NUIT SUR L'ÉTANG

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month, La Nuit sur l'étang celebrated 50 remarkable years in our community. La Nuit sur l'étang is a Franco-Canadian music festival held every year in my riding of Sudbury.

This festival has contributed to the development of the Franco-Ontarian culture and helped it thrive, especially in the north. La Nuit sur l'étang has played an important role in promoting Franco-Ontarian musicians. It has had a crucial and lasting impact on the francophone arts community in the North.

I want to acknowledge the distinguished history of La Nuit sur l'étang. I also want to congratulate the team, the volunteers and the musicians on their remarkable work, their dedication and their passion. I congratulate them on 50 stellar years.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

HONORARY DOCTORATE DEGREE

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, when I first visited Bella Coola, several Nuxalk people encouraged me to track down Clyde Tallio, their knowledge keeper.

The words “knowledge keeper” conjure an image of a wizened elder, so I surprised to discover that Clyde was an energetic 30 year old. After high school, instead of university, Clyde undertook five years of intensive traditional training with a group of elders and became one of only a handful of people who speak the Nuxalk language fluently. He was initiated as an Alkw, a ceremonial speaker and knowledge keeper.

Clyde's work revitalizing the Nuxalk culture, language and ceremonies now spans two decades and has made a tremendous impact.

Next month, the University of British Columbia is bestowing upon him an honorary doctorate in recognition of his work.

I spoke to Clyde the other day and he told me, “Our ways work. Our ways are relevant. Our ways are the future.”

I want to congratulate Clyde.

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, May 1 is International Workers' Day, a day that will be marked in Quebec by rallies that will focus on inflation.

Too many workers cannot make ends meet because inflation is driving up expenses but not wages. May 1 is the time to remember the struggles of the working class and the many gains painfully earned through lengthy struggles. These victories should not be taken for granted.

We should keep in mind that federal workers who are on strike or locked out can still be replaced by scabs, as we are currently seeing at the Port of Quebec. We should keep in mind that, because of the federal government, 60% of those who lose their jobs cannot rely on employment insurance. We should keep in mind that 150,000 people are on strike right now and the Prime Minister is ducking the issue.

On May 1, let us keep in mind that the struggle continues and that solidarity remains the key to victory. I wish everyone a happy May 1.

* * *

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it takes an “unforgettable” amount of incompetence to increase public service spending by 53% and still end up with the biggest federal public service strike in history. Where is the Prime Minister this weekend? He is making a “brand new start of it in old New York”. We jest, but with how often he is out of the country, one would really think he is Frank Sinatra.

We all know that at the end of the day he likes to say, “I did it my way”. While everyday Canadians struggle thanks to ever-soaring inflation, Liberal insiders are still singing “come fly with me, let's fly, let's fly”, even “to the moon” and back.

Canadians cannot fly with the Liberal elite when their cost of living is so out of reach. The Prime Minister may be in his “New York state of mind”, but Canadians no longer care about “the way [he looks] tonight”, because after eight long years, they have felt like “strangers in the night”.

“The best is yet to come”, because nationwide, as “a moon hits [their] eye”, Canadians will realize they deserve a bigger piece of the pie. Thankfully, “just in time”, a Conservative government will bring it home and that will be “amore.”

* * *

TREE PLANTING IN KITCHENER—CONESTOGA

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now, or in this case, this past weekend.

Oral Questions

The rain did not dampen our spirits in Kitchener—Conestoga. We had an amazing turnout for two Earth Day tree-planting events in our community.

I spent the morning with the organization Trees for Woolwich planting, staking and sheltering over 100 trees in the Elmira Nature Reserve. That afternoon, I joined another hard-working group of volunteers, led by Let's Tree Wilmot. This organization dedicated its time and efforts to extend the forest between Schmidt Woods and Highway 7 and Highway 8 in Baden.

Nature-based solutions play an important part in protecting our environment. Trees help clean the air we breathe and the water we drink. They shelter and protect biodiversity. Investing in nature is one of the most affordable climate actions we can take.

I thank the amazing volunteers with Trees for Woolwich and Let's Tree Wilmot for their time and dedication in selflessly planting trees knowing that in their lifetime, they may never sit in their shade. Future generations might someday spend an Earth Day in the very forests they helped create.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[Translation]

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Prime Minister, one in five Canadians are skipping meals and 1.5 million have to go to food banks just to eat. We have a government that is costing 50% more because of red tape and a strike at the same time. What is the Prime Minister doing? He is going to New York on vacation with fancy people who have a lot of money, but not much common sense.

When will the Prime Minister and his government get back to work?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe the question was about what is happening at the bargaining table. What is happening is that we are working very hard to ensure that there is an agreement that is reasonable for employees and reasonable for Canadians. We are working hard to make sure that this agreement can bring the strike to an end. Obviously, we respect the strike, but we are working very hard at the bargaining table right now.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians are broke and the government is broken. Here we have one in five Canadians skipping meals because they cannot afford the price of food. Nine in 10 young people say they cannot afford housing, and no wonder, as the Prime Minister has doubled rent, doubled mortgage payments and doubled down payments. Crime is raging out of control on our streets, and there is the biggest federal strike in Canadian history.

What is the Prime Minister's priority? Why, it is another vacation, this time to New York to hang out with people who have lots

of money but not a lot of common sense. When will the Prime Minister and his government get back to work?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the Leader of the Opposition's comment, I believe I heard him asking what is happening at the table at this time. What is happening is that we are negotiating. We are trying to find a reasonable deal for public servants that will be fair, and we are working day in and day out to get to that deal. We respect workers as they are striking, but we know that the best deal we will find is at the table.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they consider the best deal to be paying 50% more tax dollars on bureaucracy and ending up with a strike regardless.

The average Canadian household has to spend \$1,300 more in federal tax just for bureaucracy, and people are not getting the services they are paying for. This is on top of 40-year highs in inflation, a doubling in housing costs and jobs that are leaving our country because the Prime Minister's gatekeepers are standing in the way.

Why does the Prime Minister not turn his plane around, get back to Ottawa, do his job and get his government back to work?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts, because we have a lot of bluff and bluster from the other side.

This government has been working for Canadians since the day we formed government. Let us just take a look at the facts over the last year: the strongest economic recovery in the G7, 830,000 jobs created since the worst time of the pandemic, an economic recovery that is faster than the United States' and over 700,000 people lifted out of poverty. We are going to continue to lead growth in the G7.

We are here working for Canadians every day. That is our job. We are going to keep doing just that.

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Wow, Mr. Speaker, are they ever out of touch, telling Canadians they have never had it so good. Well, the 1.5 million people eating at food banks, some of them asking for help with medical assistance in dying because they are too hungry and miserable to go on, might beg to disagree with that rosy picture over there.

Oral Questions

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister is expatriating our jobs to other countries. Most recently, we have Glencore, an ethically challenged company, threatening to take over one of the oldest resource companies in Canadian history, Teck Resources. Will the government protect the thousands of jobs at stake and our minerals by blocking this takeover?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, critical minerals are an enormously high priority for this government. They represent a generational economic opportunity for Canada.

At this point, there is no formal offer on the table, but as a British Columbian who lives in Vancouver where Teck is headquartered, I am very proud of the fact that its corporate office is in Vancouver and its research and development is done in British Columbia. It is an important member of the Canadian business community, and we certainly are in touch with it on an ongoing basis.

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we need to do is bring home more control over our resources so it is in the hands of Canadians, rather than ship our jobs overseas, as the Prime Minister has been doing for eight years. We can do that by getting rid of the gatekeepers to quickly build natural gas liquefaction facilities; by getting rid of the gatekeepers so we can have tidal power developed, which is clean and green, in Atlantic Canada; by getting rid of the gatekeepers to build more hydroelectric dams in Quebec; and finally by blocking this foreign takeover by an unethical overseas company.

Will the Prime Minister finally bring it home for Canada and block this takeover?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where the hon. member has been sitting for the past few weeks, perhaps behind a gate, because if we look at the work that has been done, we see the approval of a recent LNG project, two critical mineral mines and a major port expansion. Just yesterday, TD put out a report that said Canada is the second-best place in the world to invest in the green economy, largely as a result of the investments we have made in the budget.

I would encourage my hon. friend to do his homework.

* * *

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Who is telling the truth, Mr. Speaker?

On Tuesday, the 2019 Liberal campaign director, Jeremy Broadhurst, said that CSIS informed him about foreign interference in the riding of Don Valley North and that he told the Prime Minister about it on September 29, 2019.

In November 2022, the Prime Minister said in the House, and I quote, “there was never any information given to me on candidates receiving money from China”.

Who is telling the truth, Mr. Broadhurst or the Prime Minister?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear in the House. Since we took office, we have taken the matter of foreign interference in our democratic institutions very seriously.

There have been increasing attempts by several countries to interfere in our democracy. That is why our government has taken meaningful and effective action to counter that interference.

We are prepared to do more. We look forward to hearing Mr. Johnston's recommendations, and we will continue to ensure that our democratic institutions are protected.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on September 29, 2019, there were just a few hours left to get a new candidate.

The Prime Minister did not want to run the risk of giving his political opponents an advantage. He closed his eyes, looked away and now says that no one told him anything at all.

This Prime Minister prefers to create an alternate reality. Today he would have us trust his special rapporteur, appointed by him and for him, on the matter of Chinese interference.

When will there be a public and independent inquiry?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe, and rightly so, that Canadians trust the work of Mr. Johnston, his service to Canada in several capacities and his integrity. He will be transparent in his work as an independent special rapporteur. He is the one who will advise the government on the next steps to take to reassure Canadians that our democratic institutions are definitely protected.

We look forward to working with Mr. Johnston and sharing his recommendations with all Canadians.

* * *

LABOUR

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is nowhere to be seen when it comes time to tackle the excessive profits of grocery stores, the housing crisis and the climate crisis. The Prime Minister was nowhere to be seen for two years when it was time to give employees—

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to remind the member that he is coming close to saying something that he is not allowed to say in the House. Members are not permitted to draw attention to the presence or the absence of a member. I would ask the hon. member to rephrase his question.

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Oral Questions

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is doing nothing when it comes to tackling the excessive profits of grocery stores, the housing crisis and the climate crisis. The Prime Minister has been doing nothing for the past two years, when all that public servants are asking for is a salary that is in line with inflation.

When will the Prime Minister do his job, show some respect for public servants and give his minister the mandate to resolve the issue?

• (1430)

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the minister responsible for the bargaining process, here is another update for the Canadians and the public servants who are watching at home. We are at the table today to try to find creative solutions that will enable us to move forward and reach an agreement. However, the government will not give in to demands that are unaffordable and that will affect our ability to provide services to Canadians.

We are working tirelessly to come to an agreement, and we will do so as soon as we can.

* * *

[English]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, most of the public service workers on strike are women. Some of them try to raise their families on \$40,000 a year. Where is the Prime Minister? He is in New York announcing funding for international women's organizations while cutting \$150 million from women's—

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into a place where we know something is happening, but we cannot really say here on the floor of the chamber whether somebody is here or not. We need to be careful and judicious in the words we are using in our questions.

I will go back to the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre and ask her to back up and restart her question, and try to stay away from who is here and who is not here.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, most of the public service workers on strike are women. Some of them try to raise their family on \$40,000 a year. What is the Prime Minister doing? He is announcing funding for international organizations while cutting \$150 million from women's shelters here in Canada and refusing to reach a fair agreement with PSAC workers. He has to support women internationally and here at home. He must do both. Does he really think he is fooling Canadians with his fake feminism?

Hon. Marci Ien (Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has always been there for women and will continue to be there for women.

When the pandemic struck, we saw what was happening. We knew that grassroots organizations had to keep their doors open. We responded with \$300 million in emergency funding. That work continues with the action plan to end gender-based violence, with half a billion dollars on the table. I am negotiating with provinces and territories right now to get this done.

We have been there for women. We will always be there for women.

* * *

LABOUR

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spent \$21 billion more on public services that brought Canadians the biggest federal strike in Canadian history. There are more than 150,000 people blocking streets, blocking buildings and now blocking critical infrastructure. Canadians trying to get a passport, call Immigration or talk to anyone at CRA cannot do it because of this government's incompetence.

He paid \$21 billion to cause this strike, and he took off on a private jet to lecture the world about climate change with the fancy people in New York. Will somebody kindly tell us how much it will cost Canadians for him to end this strike?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in difference to the Conservative members of Parliament, on this side we actually respect workers and we respect their rights. We are at the negotiating table right now to ensure that we get a fair deal for Canadian taxpayers, as well as for the hard-working public servants who have been there for Canadians, particularly in their moment of need, particularly during the worst economic and health crisis that we have seen in a generation.

We are going to get a good agreement that is going to support our workers as well as Canadian taxpayers.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, nobody is disputing the hard work of the public service; they are simply flabbergasted by the incompetence of the Prime Minister and the government. He grew the public service by 53% and hired his friends to do the work, and he still cannot assure Canadians that they can get through to CRA or even get a passport in this country. He is on vacation again, far away from this strike.

When will he and his government get back to work?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think what is particularly concerning about what the member opposite is saying is that the public service grew at a time when Canadians were in their darkest hour. We are talking about a once-in-a-generation pandemic. We supported, and those same public servants supported, 8.5 million Canadians to access the Canada emergency response benefit. Those same public servants supported Canadians to receive the Canada emergency business account support. They were there in Canada's time of need.

We believe in collective bargaining. We believe in the right to strike, and we will get a good deal for the public servants and for Canadians.

• (1435)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while the Prime Minister jet-sets to New York trying to up his phony celebrity profile, he leaves behind a Canada that feels more and more broken.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: The rule is specific on whether a member is in the House or out of the House. Members cannot say indirectly what they cannot say directly in the House. Members have to be judicious in how they ask questions and try to stick to the rules of the House of Commons.

I will let the hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn continue with his question.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister jet-sets to New York trying to up his phony celebrity profile while leaving behind a Canada that feels more and more broken. Only this guy could blow up the public service by 50%, costing an extra \$21 billion, and cause the biggest strike in Canadian history, a special kind of incompetence only the Prime Minister could accomplish. After spending all that money, Canadians ended up getting longer lineups, bigger backlogs and slower services, a job well failed.

After eight years of this costly coalition, when will the Prime Minister get out of his empire state of mind and get back to work?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is interesting about the other side is that we have said time and time again that we respect collective bargaining, that we are going to get a good deal for Canadians and that we are going to get a good deal for the federal public service, but what the Conservatives do not want to talk about is all the stuff they are going to vote against in the budget implementation act. They are going to vote against a new tax credit to boost investment for critical mineral production. They are going to vote against tradespeople getting more money for their tools deduction. They are going to vote against getting good resource deals approved faster.

They are going to vote against economic development. We are going to keep working for Canadians.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those empty words are not going to fill the empty stomachs of Canadians, as one in five continues to skip meals. While the Prime Minister drops in on the Big Apple, Canadians cannot afford many. The Prime Minister created a socialist paradise for his Liberal insiders and elites, and his costly coalition NDP partner supports all of this.

It supports the carbon tax scam, which takes more from Canadians than what they get back in these phony rebates, making the cost

Oral Questions

of gas, groceries and home heating more expensive. When will this tax-to-the-max team stop the scam and get back to work?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit hard to take the Conservatives at face value when they talk about Canadians in poverty, because when the Conservative government came into power in 2006, it was 17th in the OECD when it came to child poverty rankings. By the time Conservatives left office nine years later, they had fallen to 24th. They had actually done nothing to alleviate people who were living in poverty.

We came into office in 2015. We have helped 450,000 children get out of poverty. We have helped 2.7 million Canadians get out of poverty. We are going to keep being there for Canadians, unlike the members opposite.

* * *

[Translation]

LABOUR

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we speak, there is a Canadian in New York whom I know, whom everyone here knows, and he is out there living it up.

Meanwhile, here at home, millions of Canadians are struggling. It is a very serious situation. Over the course of eight years, this government has increased the public service budget by more than 50%. At the same time, there is a general strike right now. It is incredible: an additional \$21 billion in spending and a general strike. Only the Liberals under the current Prime Minister could make that happen.

Why are the Liberals unable to fix a problem that affects all Canadians?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will continue to sit at the bargaining table with the public service, and we will reach a deal that makes sense for Canadians.

What the Conservatives do not want to discuss is the fact that Canada is leading global growth in the G7. There are 865,000 more jobs than at the lowest point in the pandemic. Canada's female workforce participation rate is 85.7%.

The Conservatives do not want to talk about women in the workforce. They do not want to talk about the economy. We are going to do it. We are going to grow this country.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we do want to talk about the economy. Consider the \$22 billion in additional spending. We want to talk about jobs. Consider the 150,000 workers currently on strike. That is Canada's reality under this Liberal government.

I want to be fair. I want to give them credit for one thing.

Oral Questions

In their eight years in power, the Liberals have been unwaveringly consistent when it comes to flouting ethics rules. I could mention the SNC-Lavalin scandal, WE Charity, the Prime Minister's vacations, and the multiple conflicts of interest involving the Trudeau Foundation.

When will the Prime Minister buckle down and get to work for all Canadians, instead of his Liberal cronies?

• (1440)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a lot of energy is being spent on talking about all the things the Conservatives want us to do for Canadians.

Let us look at all the things that the Conservatives will oppose in the budget. They are going to vote against a tax credit that will boost investment in critical minerals projects. They are going to vote against workers and their tax deductions. They are also going to vote against dental care assistance for Canadians. It is shameful.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-13 acknowledges that French is under threat in Quebec.

However, the Liberals introduced an action plan yesterday that gives Quebec \$140 million per year to promote English. That is \$700 million over five years for English in Quebec and nothing, or a few crumbs, for French.

Today, Quebecers are wondering if the federal government has some statistics to prove that English is under threat in Quebec. If not, why are the Liberals funding English in Quebec when it is French—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Official Languages.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a historic day for this country's official languages.

The action plan makes a historic \$4.1-million investment to support our official language minority communities and reverse the decline of French across the country, including in Quebec.

The funding we announced yesterday does not include funding for English in Quebec. On the contrary, we are funding the vitality of Quebec's English-speaking community with French courses and the help these people need to find jobs.

Once again, yesterday was a good day.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that is some logic.

The Quebec government official said, "I have not yet seen in the plan any measures that are consistent with the declaration of [the] Prime Minister...namely that French in Quebec is threatened".

In other words, there is nothing in there for French in Quebec, but there is \$700 million for English. If French is threatened in

Quebec and not English, then why not use this \$700 million for French at work, for promoting French?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, yesterday, we announced and unveiled a truly historic action plan with \$4.1 million to protect and promote our official language minority communities and reverse the decline of French in Quebec and across Canada.

We are not funding English in Quebec. On the contrary, we are supporting the vitality of English-speaking communities with employment assistance services and French as a second language programs.

We will always be there to support our communities and we will do everything we can to reverse the decline of French in the country.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals acknowledge that French in Quebec is under threat; it is even in Bill C-13. That is nice, but they have not changed a single thing in the federal strategy for promoting English in Quebec.

Despite their lofty words, their action plan for official languages 2023-2028 is basically crumbs for French in Quebec and \$700 million for English.

What will have more impact, the rhetoric or \$700 million invested directly in the anglicization of Quebec?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is quite the opposite.

With our investment in official languages, we are doing everything we can to protect and promote French across the country, including in Quebec, as well as to support our official language minority communities.

Yesterday, we unveiled a plan. We had conversations with thousands of Canadians across the country. They told us about their priorities: francophone immigration, continued investment in education, support for organizations on the ground, and assurance that the government is showing leadership.

That is exactly what we are doing with our bill and our action plan.

* * *

• (1445)

[English]

HOUSING

Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under the Prime Minister, many Canadians cannot afford a place to live. The Liberals have committed \$90 billion to housing, and what do they have to show for it? It is a record of unprecedented mismanagement and ineffective governance.

Oral Questions

Mortgages and rents have doubled. It now costs an average of \$2,500 a month to rent one room in a townhouse. Where is the Prime Minister during the crisis? He would rather be gallivanting to New York City. I cannot wait to see the outrageous bill he will foist on struggling Canadians for this junket.

When will the Prime Minister and the government get serious and get back to work?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been working for Canadian renters, and we have been putting in place groundbreaking programs, such as the Canada housing benefit, which the party opposite voted against.

When we proposed the top-up to the Canada housing benefit to help vulnerable renters during this difficult period, what did the party opposite do? Not only did it vote against this badly needed help, but it also played procedural games in the House to delay the passage of much-needed support.

Canadians can see through their rhetoric. The Conservatives can come here and talk about supports for renters, but when it comes time to actually do the work, they are MIA.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under the Prime Minister, Canadians cannot afford a home of their own. It costs \$2,500 a month for a couple to rent a room in a townhouse. That is not for the townhouse; that is just for a room.

Mortgage payments have doubled. Construction of new housing is actually in decline. The Liberals' \$90-billion transformational housing scheme is making the situation worse. Of course, the Prime Minister would rather be hobnobbing with his rich friends in other places while Canadians are struggling and cannot afford a house.

When is the government going to get back to work for Canadians?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually get along really well with my critic. He recently said he is looking for literature to figure out how to build housing policy. I am happy to share our national housing strategy. Not only that, but I am also happy to share the new, groundbreaking housing accelerator fund. This is about adding more housing supply and working with municipalities to make sure that we unlock more housing supply, including affordable housing and purposefully built rentals, as well as tying federal dollars of infrastructure to housing while also making sure that we are taking care of the most vulnerable. The Conservatives voted against every one of those elements.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have news for the minister. I have read his national housing plan, and it is not working. It is making the situation worse. Every member on this side of the House can be very proud of the fact that we did not write a blank cheque for Liberal failures when we voted against it. The housing minister does not seem to even understand that we are in a housing crisis. The Liberals' expensive schemes are making the situation worse and worse.

My question is simply this: When will the government learn that in a housing supply crisis, photo ops and talking points simply do not get more homes built?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservative gatekeepers simply are not serious when it comes to housing. When his leader was the housing minister, he did nothing to help Canadians with affordable housing opportunities. The Conservative position on housing is now to do nothing, cut funding and magically hope that things will get better. It is the same kind of thinking that underpinned his leader's call for the embrace of cryptocurrency to deal with inflation. That is not a serious plan. Our national housing strategy is serious, and it is getting help to Canadians.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in committee, we found out that the former chief of staff to the past minister of defence provided a senator an altered official government document to bring Afghans to safety. We found out that the minister was copied on all communications. Shockingly, the minister said he was too busy at the time to check his personal government email account. Almost two years later, he says he still has not checked.

How is this even possible? Does the Prime Minister really think this is acceptable?

• (1450)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the evacuation of Kabul was an absolute crisis situation. The response by the Government of Canada during that time saved thousands of lives. I am pleased to share with members of the House that, today, there are more than 30,000 vulnerable Afghan refugees who have received a second lease on life.

When it comes to the issuance of facilitation letters, we used those to move people through Taliban checkpoints. They were not intended for people to arrive in Canada. When we became aware of the use of inauthentic letters, we shared them with law enforcement to conduct an independent investigation. It was the responsible thing to do.

* * *

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is the National Day of Mourning, a day when we remember workers who have been killed or injured on the job, such as Troy Pearson and Charlie Cragg. They were killed when the tugboat MV *Ingenika* sank near Kitimat.

It has been a month and a half since the Transportation Safety Board issued four recommendations to prevent similar deaths; every single day, workers board vessels just like the *Ingenika* up and down our coast.

Oral Questions

Will the minister stand in the House and commit to finally implementing all four recommendations?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his constant advocacy on making sure that we increase the level of safety in our transportation industry.

I recently met with Ms. Cragg. I expressed our government's condolences to her for her loss. I looked her in the eye, and I told her that we are going to take action based on the recommendations of the Transportation Safety Board.

We are currently examining our options, but we will take action, because one loss of life is too many.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians deserve to have access to a fair and efficient passenger airline sector and to travel with relative ease and without major inconvenience and disruption. Many travellers, however, have experienced delayed and cancelled flights over the past year. They deserve to be compensated accordingly.

Can the Minister of Transport inform the House on actions our government has taken to ensure that air travellers' rights are respected and protected?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his leadership.

Last year, we saw significant disruptions in the air sector as it was recovering from COVID. We promised Canadians that we would further protect passenger rights. This week, we delivered on that promise.

We are reversing the onus on airlines to make sure that compensation will be mandatory. We are putting into place new standards of service and new rules for delayed and lost luggage. Plus, we are simplifying the complaint process at the CTA.

Protections for passengers in Canada will be the toughest in the world.

* * *

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal Prime Minister, despite a series of disturbing and shocking revelations, the Prime Minister finds all sorts of tricks to avoid answering questions. This week, he continued to claim that he has no affiliation with the Trudeau Foundation, but the Trudeau Foundation held a meeting in the Prime Minister's Office. The person protecting elections from foreign interference, who the Prime Minister himself appointed, is the president and CEO of the Trudeau Foundation. The special rapporteur is a member of the Trudeau Foundation.

When it is time to get to work and tell Canadians the truth, why is the Prime Minister nowhere to be found?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear on this issue. The member knows full well that the Prime Minister has had no direct or indirect communications with the foundation over the past 10 years.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, we know that the Prime Minister likes travelling by private jet, attending New York high-society receptions, with an audience that is not fully aware of what is going on in Canada. The situation is bad. The Trudeau Foundation, with help from the Prime Minister's brother, received \$140,000 from the regime in Beijing. This morning, in committee, after several questions, the Minister of Public Safety could no longer deny Beijing's influence on the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister is going to run out of jet fuel if he keeps denying the evidence. When will he accept reality and get to work?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I will reinforce this. To be perfectly clear, the Prime Minister has no direct or indirect communications with the Trudeau Foundation. That has been the case now for over 10 years.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there is an old saying that "you can't win if you don't try". In order for the Liberal government to resolve the PSAC strike, rescue hundreds of Canadians stranded in Sudan or answer basic questions of accountability about the Trudeau Foundation, the Prime Minister has to at least try. However, I do not think the Prime Minister is trying too hard to solve these problems if he is hobnobbing with celebrities in New York City.

When is the Prime Minister going to get back to work and resolve these—

• (1455)

The Deputy Speaker: We are running against this line. We continue to run against the line.

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to set the record straight. It is important for Canadians to know that consular services helping on the crisis in Sudan right now are working 24-7. The strike is not affecting these services; there are 130 people right now at Global Affairs helping Canadians who are stranded in Sudan, and they will work until every single one of them is back.

ETHICS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister would have us believe that a wall exists between him and the foundation that bears his family name. However, we know that the Prime Minister held a meeting with the Trudeau Foundation in his office, and the Prime Minister is still listed as a member of the foundation. His appointed election watchdog was the president and CEO of the Trudeau Foundation and his special rapporteur was a Trudeau Foundation board member until a few weeks ago. With walls like this, what is holding up the roof of his New York hotel room?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows full well that the foundation actually met with public servants. The Prime Minister did not have a meeting, as has been suggested by the member, and he knows that.

* * *

[Translation]

LABOUR

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, eight days have passed since the public service strike began, and people are still looking for the Prime Minister.

The union has formally asked him to join the negotiations. The invitation has been made, but it is being snubbed by the Prime Minister. Eight days is unusually long for a dispute of this magnitude. The Prime Minister knows that he cannot do without the 150,000 workers who provide services to Canadians.

When will he answer the workers' call instead of prolonging the labour dispute?

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the public servants represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada provide important services to the Canadian population, and, of course, the government values their work.

For the last three weeks, we have been in mediation with the union to try to come to an agreement that will be reasonable for Canadians and fair to workers. We have a good deal on the table, but we cannot act in a way that will disrupt the services we offer Canadians. We will get there.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, CBSA just clued in about the violence in Sudan.

Ottawa finally decided yesterday to stop the deportation of asylum seekers to that country, to avoid putting their lives in danger. Some may say that it is better late than never, but when we are talking about people's lives, what we should be saying is, "the sooner the better".

Ottawa should have done that automatically on compassionate grounds from day one. Sudan has been in total chaos since April 15. It was only yesterday that deportations were halted, and not until this morning that the first Canadian plane evacuated nationals.

Oral Questions

Did the government learn nothing from the debacle in Afghanistan?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, getting Canadian residents and Canadians out of Sudan is absolutely our priority.

Just a few days ago, the UN Secretary General called Sudan one of the most dangerous places in the world, so we are operating in a very volatile and very difficult environment. At this point, 200 Canadians have managed to leave the country. Two planes have left Sudan. The goal is to help all the Canadians who have reached out and are asking for help. At this point, that is about 800 people. We are in contact with all of them. Some of them want to leave by land and some by air.

Of course, we are doing everything we can to communicate with the countries around Sudan to negotiate safe passage.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years under this Prime Minister, violent crime is up 32% and gang-related killings are up 92%. It is shocking, yet this Prime Minister and his Attorney General continue to ignore the demands of police chiefs begging for bail reform in this country. After months of empty talk and no action, our communities feel less safe because repeat violent offenders are continually being released.

What is the Prime Minister doing about it? He would rather hang out with Liberal elites in New York City. When will he and the government finally get back to work?

● (1500)

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have a right to feel safe, and they have a right to be safe. That is precisely why we are working with the provinces and territories and with provincial and territorial attorneys general. We are proposing to amend parts of the Criminal Code to strengthen the bail regime and work with the provinces so that they can also better administer the bail regime with adequate resources. We all have to work on this problem together. It is complex, given the structure of Canadian federalism and the assignment of responsibilities, and we are doing just that.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, just in time for Earth Day, this government approved a devastating, nature-killing project, massively expanding the Port of Vancouver at Roberts Bank.

Oral Questions

It is also a job-killing project, because the head of the longshoremen dock workers union says that it will be devastating, but wait, I am going to anticipate the minister's answer and save him some time. He is going to tell us that there are 370 legally binding conditions. Here is my favourite: 14.7.1, the construction cranes will be painted in a colour that matches the nature they are destroying.

How does he make this match up to the COP15 commitments to protect nature?

Shame.

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I announced in the House of Commons here last week, the Minister of Natural Resources and I informed Canadians that we have declared that the Roberts Bank terminal expansion is in the national interest. We have obligated the port with 370 conditions. I know the member opposite has read the entire number of conditions and how strict they are and how focused they are in ensuring that we are protecting the environment.

We have committed to Canadians that the best way to develop and grow our economy is having an environmental plan.

We are showing Canadians how the economy and the environment go hand in hand.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 32%, the increase in violent crime, 92%, the increase in gangland slayings; and police and premiers are begging for bail reform.

Where would the Prime Minister rather be? Not in Kamloops looking at boarded windows from break and enters. Not in Vancouver, seeing failed Liberal bail policies. Not in Toronto, where broken bail policies have led to crime.

When will the Prime Minister get back to work on bail so that Canadians can feel safe, rather than jet-setting?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have already said to the House on numerous occasions, we are working with the provincial and territorial attorneys general on bail reform. I have committed to doing that and tabling it in the House before the end of this session.

We are on track to do that. While I am up, let me tell the hon. members across the way and in the House and Canadians across Canada that yesterday we tabled, in the Senate, our government's response to fixing the sexual offenders registry, parts of which had been struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada.

We have created a presumption in favour of registration, as well as other measures to strengthen the sexual offenders registry.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the Prime Minister took office, violent crime has increased by 32% and crime related to street gangs has jumped by 92%. Sex offenders can serve

their sentences in the comfort of their own homes while watching Netflix.

Together with police forces, we are calling for tougher legislation so criminals go to prison rather than staying at home.

Instead of gallivanting around the world, including in the Big Apple, could the Prime Minister get back to work and fix this problem once and for all?

• (1505)

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said several times, serious crimes deserve serious consequences.

Our government has taken action on several fronts to ensure that victims of sexual assault are treated with dignity and respect.

Yesterday, I tabled in the Senate Bill S-12, which will strengthen the Sex Offender Information Registration Act and will also give victims more powers. I hope that all parties in the House will support it.

This is in addition to other measures we have introduced such as Bill C-3 and Bill C-51, which will protect victims of sexual assault.

* * *

HEALTH

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is working hard to help Canadians have a healthier lifestyle.

We have implemented important initiatives, such as an updated Canada's food guide, new nutrition labelling standards and investments of \$10 million in budget 2023 to encourage people to adopt a more active lifestyle.

Can the Minister of Health tell us what new measures might be added to Canada's healthy eating strategy?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel for her question, her leadership and her focus on the importance of protecting people's health.

That is why we are so proud of her bill, Bill C-252, which protects children from the effects of food and beverage marketing. That is why we are introducing a new food guide and improving food labelling to help people make better food choices. That is why budget 2023 includes \$10 million in funding for Participation to help people, particularly youth, to increase their physical activity.

*Oral Questions**[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “They will definitely be allowed to enter Canada with this letter” is what a senator's office told people when distributing hundreds of unauthorized travel documents, yet the then minister of defence said he did not know this was happening because he was not reading his emails. These actions put lives in danger and vaporized any illusion of equity in Canada's grossly inadequate evacuation of Afghanistan, and none of the people involved in this scandal have faced any consequences.

Is the government comfortable sending a message that the system is so broken that the only way to help people during a crisis is for Canadian politicians to issue fake travel documents?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the crisis situation during the evacuation in Kabul presented extraordinary challenges. Despite those challenges, thousands of people were able to escape and their lives were saved. I am so pleased to share that there are more than 30,000 Afghan refugees living in Canada today as a result of this initiative. These are people I have met. They are living in our communities. I happened to meet some of them in the community of the hon. member who posed the question during one of my recent visits to Calgary.

We are going to continue to do what we can to protect the integrity of the system, including the decision that we made previously to refer the use of inauthentic letters to law enforcement. It is the right thing to do. We are going to continue to be a welcoming country and protect the integrity of Canada's immigration system.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every day I receive calls to my office from people who are struggling with the high cost of living that the Liberal government has caused. Seniors who are losing their homes are having to go back to work. People are skipping meals because they cannot afford to eat and heat. Other people cannot find affordable housing. What is the Prime Minister's response? To jet-set with the rich and famous while Canadians struggle.

When will the government get serious and get back to work?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are working every day on behalf of Canadians. I hope the Conservatives will have a change of heart from their normal approach to vote against measures designed to help Canadians, like, for example, taking the pinch out of inflation or making sure there is a \$196-billion investment into our health care system to stabilize it for the next generation, and, heaven forbid, will lean in to grow the economy. I know it is hard, because in the 10 years they were in office we had no economic growth.

We are on that track to grow the economy and deliver jobs to Canadians. That is our job. We are going to continue doing it.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling. The carbon tax is going up, which means the cost of gas is going up, the cost of groceries is going up and the cost of home heating is going up. One in five Canadians are now skipping meals and Canadians cannot afford a place to live because rent has doubled under the current Prime Minister. The Prime Minister does not care.

Private jets and expensive hotel rooms will not get the job done. When will the Prime Minister and his government get back to work?

● (1510)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. Since the day we took office in 2015, we have been there to support Canadians. We have put in place the Canada child benefit, which helps nine out of 10 Canadian families and has lifted 435,000 children out of poverty.

Most recently we brought forward the Canada dental benefit and, so far, 250,000 children have been able to access the dentist.

When it comes to child care, something the Leader of the Opposition calls a “slush fund” has helped thousands of Canadian families across this country save thousands of dollars this year.

When it comes to climate change, we put in place the climate action incentive.

We are there for Canadians every single step of the way.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier this year our government announced two major initiatives in Alberta and Saskatchewan that support Canada's commitment to investing in renewable energy and achieving the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050. Can the Minister of Public Services and Procurement please share the details of these investments and how this furthers the government's goals on greening initiatives?

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, recently we announced agreements with Alberta and Saskatchewan energy providers to power federal buildings in their provinces with 100% green energy. This will help reduce emissions by about 166 kilotonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent, which is equal to the annual GHG emissions of more than 50,000 gas-powered vehicles. We are fighting climate change and greening government.

*Government Orders***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians in Sudan need our help right now. Our men and women in the armed forces are eager to help, but the minister put them on the sidelines at a critical time. While the government delayed deployment, there were reports that it is now charging one Canadian family evacuated by the U.K. \$10,000 for their flight home.

Can the Canadian government explain why it acted so slowly to send our armed forces and why it charged Canadians thousands of dollars for trying to get home?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the beginning of this crisis, we have been at it. At Global Affairs Canada, 130 people have been reaching out to every single Canadian who has been registered online on the Global Affairs website: 800 Canadians have raised their hand for support and 200 Canadians have left. We will continue to help. This morning two Canadian planes left Sudan. They are on their way to a safe third country. We also made sure that we were participating in international co-operation efforts. Since day one, Canadians have left Sudan.

* * *

[*Translation*]**911 SERVICE**

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the House require that the CRTC act immediately so that all those answering 911 emergency calls are able to respond quickly, efficiently and clearly in French.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[*English*]**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it being Thursday, I would ask the government if it could update the House as to the business for the rest of the week and the next week ahead.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will resume second reading debate on Bill C-42, regarding the Canada Business Corporations Act.

On Monday, we will continue to debate Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

On Wednesday, we will commence report stage debate of Bill S-5, regarding the Canadian Environmental Protection Act.

Tuesday and Thursday will both be opposition days. In order to assist the Table, I will ask my friend, the hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, to confirm their designation following my statement.

• (1515)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague mentioned, I would like to confirm that Tuesday, May 2, and Thursday, May 4, shall be allotted days.

* * *

RED DRESS DAY

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

That a take-note debate on Red Dress Day be held on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, pursuant to Standing Order 53.1, and that, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House: (a) members rising to speak during the debate may indicate to the Chair that they will be dividing their time with another member; (b) the time provided for the debate be extended beyond four hours, as needed, to include a minimum of 12 periods of 20 minutes each; and (c) no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS[*English*]**BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1**

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of the fiscally sane constituents of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

This is supposed to be a debate about a budget. Sadly, the document the Liberals tabled is an insult to the word “budget”. They claim it is fiscally responsible as they cast away the last fiscal anchor. They claim it is about productivity while they strangle innovation with red tape. They claim their GST rebate is a grocery rebate, when there is no GST on groceries.

Government Orders

Spending is clearly out of control. Each budget and fiscal update revises future spending upward. Whether it is a household budget or a business budget, the goal is to make a plan in the face of an uncertain future. If a person is responsible in their financial planning, some years they will be a little over in their estimates, and other years a little under. For a business, that might mean that an estimated profit of 5% at the end of the year might come in at 4.9% or 5.1%. It is like target shooting. If a person is generally around the target, they can be satisfied they are doing it accurately, but if their shots are way off to the extreme left, it means they are doing it wrong. As this gang shoots Canada farther and farther to the extreme left, they are no longer shooting at the target. Instead, they have decided that the best thing for Canada is to shoot ourselves in the foot. That is the best way to describe this glut of corporate subsidies for green energy.

The Liberals claim that they have to spend like crazy because the Americans and Europeans are spending like crazy. No one told the Liberals that, just because all of their friends are throwing money off the bridge, it does not mean that they should too. The Liberals claim they believe in free trade, but they do not really get it. If our competitors are lighting money on fire, we do not join the bonfire; we sell them matches. Canada had an opportunity to sell natural gas to Europe, but the Prime Minister, the Mr. Dressup drama teacher, claimed there was no business case. The finance minister claims they are not picking winners and losers, then proceeds to pick which Liberal-friendly companies will get subsidies and picks out all the small businesses and expects them to pay for those subsidies.

The government is picking electricity-hogging electric vehicles over more emissions-efficient hybrid vehicles. The government is effectively prohibiting carbon-neutral fuel development in Canada by banning internal combustion engines. All this extravagant spending is supposed to lead us to a promised land of green jobs. This was the same pipe dream we heard from Dalton McGuinty in Ontario. The result was higher electricity prices, tens of billions of tax dollars wasted, and, according to the Auditor General, over 60,000 net jobs lost. After laying waste to Ontario's economy, the Liberals packed up their taxpayer-funded moving trucks and came to Ottawa to repeat their failed experiment. This seems to be the socialist mindset. Every time socialism is implemented, it leads to misery, suffering and death. Yet they continue to try again, thinking that, somehow, it will be different. Einstein called this insanity.

What is worse is that failure only seems to make the Liberals more ambitious. In their first budget, they said they would conserve an additional 7% of Canada's natural habitat by 2020. After eight years, they managed to reach only half of their goal. A normal person who missed the mark by half would lower their future estimates. Instead, this Prime Minister announced that he would conserve 30% by 2030. That would require him to conserve four times as much land in the next seven years as he has in the last eight years.

The truth is that the Liberals know they will not be held accountable for empty promises, so they just use the simplest slogans. That is why they announced a target of 30% reduction in fertilizer emissions by 2030. They announced a Soviet-style sales quota mandating that 30% of cars must be EV by 2030, and then there is their Paris pledge of a 30% reduction in carbon dioxide by 2030. This

policy-making is based on slogan. It is tweet-sized thinking. It is TikTok-style government: short, snappy, attention-deprived and a little too close to the Communists in Beijing.

If we need any more evidence that this government is abandoning liberal democracy for a progressive socialist technocracy, we need look no further than the Public Health Agency report on public health and climate change.

● (1520)

For the Public Health Agency report, they hired a radical academic to act as an outside consultant. They used taxpayer money to conduct focus groups with other far-left extremists working in public health. What was the conclusion of the government-published report? According to the so-called experts, climate change is not caused by carbon but by capitalism, individual liberty and democracy. In socialist mindset, capitalism is always the villain. In reality, socialist and authoritarian countries are the worst environmental offenders. Unfortunately for Canadians, the Liberals have abandoned reality-based policy, making for visions of a socialist utopia. The radical socialist public health manifesto said that non-western science fiction "offers a way of imagining the future without colonization and asking ourselves how we can get there."

While it is true that *Star Trek* was inspiring to many who worked at NASA, it should not form the basis of our climate policy. If these radical socialists were just sitting around in a big self-congratulatory circle while fantasizing about a climate apocalypse, they could be dismissed. However, they have laid out their plan for all to see. The report calls for a complete reordering of Canadian values led by these radical public health socialists. The authors of the report wrote, "Many experts we heard from highlighted the importance of shifting dominant societal values and transitioning to health and well-being economies if meaningful action is to be taken on climate change adaptation and mitigation." What are those societal values that they need to shift? Here is what one expert had to say:

Ultimately, there are 3 core values in western society, and for that matter, in global society, that have to change. One core value is about growth and materialism. The second core value is liberty and individualism, which has to be rethought because the kind of individualism that is preached by neoliberals is part of the problem.

In response to this extremist claim that individual liberty and ending poverty are the root of all evil, the report's authors wrote:

Government Orders

The above-noted core values, which are undermining public health and well-being, are well known, but public health systems have been successful in reorienting society values. For example, public health research and communications have changed our societal relationship with tobacco products.

That is shocking to read. Radical public health experts want to socially stigmatize liberty. They want to socially stigmatize economic growth. Stigmatizing people has become the current government's calling card. That is what the Prime Minister was doing when he accused opponents of forced vaccinations of being misogynists and racists who hold unacceptable views. If someone does not agree with their plan to use climate change as an excuse to advance socialism, they accuse them of being a climate denier.

The goal is to rhetorically link critics of bad climate policy to racist anti-Semites who deny the Nazi Holocaust. All societies stigmatize gluttony and over-consumption, but these socialists want to stigmatize all consumption. Then he tried to stigmatize words like “freedom” by labelling them as dog whistles. They are even trying to stigmatize the Canadian flag. None of this comes as a surprise. The Prime Minister said that Canada is a “postnational state”, and he is committed to seeing this fantasy become reality.

The budget bill would further entrench the government in the market. It would keep expanding the state and driving out free enterprise until there is nothing left but the party and the state. Ever since the Prime Minister positioned the Liberals to the left of the NDP and broke the Canadian consensus that balancing the budget was the responsible thing to do, we have been sent down a dangerous path. We have become governed by slogans. The Liberals have forgotten Canada's multicultural heritage in favour of a single narrative of oppression. They love to claim they have Canadians' backs; the truth is that they just find it easier to pick people's wallets when they are hiding behind them.

After eight years, the Liberals are tired, desperate and dangerous. Reduced to spewing slogans like “30 by 30”, they now project their policy on poverty onto us. We have a plan to put more money into people's wallets. They have a tax plan; we have an environmental plan. They have slogans; we have solutions. If they had any real confidence in their radical socialist agenda, they would put it to Canadians to decide. While the Liberals are busy dividing and stigmatizing Canadians, Conservatives offer unity and hope.

• (1525)

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at a time where Canadians are struggling with the cost of living, Conservatives provide no solutions. That speech was a prime example of that. There were no ideas or concrete things that could be done. Instead, they have just been calling for cuts to pensions and employment insurance, which Canadians rely on, and they are urging for pollution to be free again.

It is reckless to suggest the ideas they have been suggesting, such as crypto, but one thing I was really happy to see was that the Conservatives were able to give unanimous consent to have the grocery rebate passed so Canadians could receive it. I know the member just mentioned the grocery rebate was not a good idea, so I am wondering why she provided unanimous consent to provide Canadians the grocery rebate. I would like to know why she thought it was a good idea that day.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, what this member opposite just did is called paltering: stating a fact then propagating it with a lie. What I said was that there is no GST on groceries, yet they call the bonus they are giving Canadians a GST rebate. They do not make sense.

We have a concrete plan. The plan is to reduce taxes, so there is more money in people's pockets to pay their bills, feed their families and spend their money the way they feel is best, and not have the government spending on their behalf.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things my NDP colleagues and I are very proud of is that we have brought in Canada's first-ever dental care program on a national basis. Last year, of course, it covered children under the age of 12. Now it would be expanded to children under the age of 18, seniors and persons with disabilities—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Members of Parliament are talking loudly while they are coming in and interrupting. If members want to have conversations, they should go into the lobby or the hallway.

I will ask the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford to restart his question.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: I appreciate that, Madam Speaker.

As I was saying, one of the proudest accomplishments my NDP colleagues and I have is expanding dental care to low-income Canadians, who have never had the opportunity to afford to go to a dentist. That program is now going to expand to seniors and to persons with disabilities. These are the people who live on the margins of our society and need this.

I hope my hon. colleague from the Conservatives will recognize that good oral health care is a part of health care. Will she commit, along with her caucus, to keeping that program? Will she at least see the benefits it has for her constituents?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, I am familiar with dental plans, and what they have put forth is not a dental plan. A dental plan matches codes with procedures.

This is dental CERB, and we are still sorting out the problems from the CERB, which went forth initially without the necessary screening. Now we have people who were given all these thousands of dollars who need to find ways of paying it back because it was not given properly.

• (1530)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are seized with the budget implementation act, which is several hundred pages long and will amend dozens upon dozens of acts. Toward the end of these hundreds of pages, division 31 recognizes Charles III as King of Canada. The clause in question reads, “Charles the Third, by the Grace of God King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth”.

Does my hon. colleague think it is appropriate to include this in a budget implementation bill, or should it be tabled separately from these hundreds of pages of amendments?

[*English*]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, there are all kinds of unexploded ordinances hidden in this budget implementation bill. We cannot even tell what they will be until they start blowing up in Canadians' faces.

I know “Her Majesty” is still copied and pasted and put into templates, referring to Her Majesty giving a royal assent. This is probably another copy and pasted budget. I would be surprised if it says “His Majesty” anywhere in the budget.

In the meantime, Canadians should be very careful. We have had experiences with budget implementations where people had tax imposed retroactively. That is the kind of thing they bury when they push through the budget before a fulsome scrutiny can be taken on a committee-by-committee basis.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just had the opportunity to visit Kapuskasing, and many people said wonderful things about you.

I want to start with a positive view of the budget, and then go toward where there is some improvement required. Unfortunately there is a missing element that I think ought to be emphasized as well, but let us start where there are clear and incredibly important priorities. The federal budget rightly prioritizes better health care, affordability measures and clean economic growth.

On the health care front, we see major new funding to modernize health systems, including significant funding through bilateral agreements with provinces. We see measures to address urgent pressures in emergency rooms, to support hourly wage increases for PSWs, to expand access to family health services, to increase mental health and substance use support, and more.

We see a major commitment to a dental care plan, and this is really one of the signature pieces of this budget, done in co-operation with our partners across the aisle in the NDP. We have made a \$13-billion commitment over five years to expand dental care to families earning less than \$90,000 a year.

Government Orders

We also see important new measures to combat the opioid crisis. While it does not quite get to the \$500-million commitment in our platform, we are getting there. There is \$360 million committed over five years for a renewed Canadian drugs and substances strategy, including community-based mental health, harm reduction services and more.

We see the Canadian Cancer Society saying, “#Budget2023 is a sign that there is political will to fund our healthcare system so people can get timely, affordable access to cancer care.” The Canadian Medical Association says, “We’re pleased to see the federal government confirm significant health funding commitments as part of budget 2023-24.”

On the affordability side, we see targeted inflation relief. There is a new rebate increasing the GST tax credit delivered to 11 million low and modest-income people. We see affordable higher education prioritized with increases to student grants and the raising of the interest-free loan limit. We see action for consumers and small businesses to reduce junk fees, crack down on predatory lenders and lower credit card transaction fees. We see measures to protect air passengers, enshrine the right to repair and more.

We also see a code of conduct to protect Canadians with existing mortgages and automatic tax filings. It is not a perfectly automatic tax filing, so there is more work required, but the CRA will be piloting a new filing service to help vulnerable Canadians receive benefits to which they are entitled. Everyone should receive the benefits they deserve.

Third, we see a major emphasis on clean economic growth. We see \$21 billion over five years to really build on past measures. We have come a long way since 2015, and we need to keep moving forward.

Government Orders

We have seen a rising price on pollution to help shift demand and spur innovation, with the revenue rebated directly to ensure low- and middle income Canadians are not worse off. There is now a clean fuel standard, rules to phase out coal-fired electricity and increasingly stringent measures to slash methane emissions. Work is also well under way to establish a clean electricity regulation and cap emissions from the oil and gas sector, and we have put a climate accountability law in place that sets strong targets, requires the government to table a comprehensive climate plan and ensures regular progress reports to keep all future governments honest.

In past budgets, we have invested billions in retrofits, zero-emission vehicles, public transit, nature protection, clean technologies, critical minerals and more. We have also encouraged recent and multi-billion-dollar private sector investments in the clean economy, and the 2023 federal budget would build on this work with new initiatives to protect our fresh water and deliver clean electricity, clean tech manufacturing and clean hydrogen.

The Canadian Climate Institute called the budget measures “decisive steps to ensure Canada won’t fall behind in the global race to net zero.” The Pembina Institute said the budget “sends a clear message that Canada is committed to building a cleaner future.” The International Institute for Sustainable Development called the funding for clean electricity and fresh water “unprecedented,” and the David Suzuki Foundation called it “historic” and “an important turning point”.

Challenges remain, of course. I do not want to get into the \$30 billion on TMX, which I wish we were spending elsewhere, but we do need stronger climate conditions to ensure money is well spent and there are safeguards against inefficient fossil fuel support.

Some programs need to be strengthened, especially for home and business retrofits. We need to increase international climate financing, and we need all provinces to step up to do their part. We lack a serious and credible climate plan here in Ontario, for example, and that undercuts our overall ability to meet and exceed existing national targets. Despite the significant federal action to date, we are not yet where we need to be, but we are on track, in a serious way, to get there.

The IPCC, or the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, lead scientist Dr. Otto said that its recent report highlights “the urgency of the problem and the gravity of it”. However, Dr. Otto also acknowledged that there are “lots of reasons for hope – because we still have the time to act and we have everything we need”. We certainly see significant action here in Canada.

● (1535)

The fourth item I want to note that is going in an incredibly positive direction is this. We see significant new spending, \$4 billion over seven years, to implement a co-developed urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy. I think some of these ideas should be pulled apart. An urban strategy ought to be different from one for the realities of northern and rural Ontario.

I just mentioned travelling in Kapuskasing, and I was in Timmins as well. I certainly heard concerns. When programs are being designed, whether at Queen's Park or Ottawa, they need to be designed with northern realities in mind. It really would make a lot

more sense to pull the strategy apart and deal with urban, northern and rural realities separately.

On the fiscal sustainability front, before I get to where work is required, I will quote Kevin Page, the former PBO, who wrote, “On balance, the 2023 budget has a credible fiscal strategy.” He continued, “Net new spending in 2023 largely goes to people struggling with high inflation...and our health care system. This is not spending that will impede efforts to lower inflation.” He then concluded, “Fiscally credibility has to be earned budget by budget. The 2023 budget gets a thumbs-up.” Those are not my words but the words of Kevin Page.

It is important to not only look at Canada's situation in isolation but also to compare Canada's fiscal situation to our partners around the world. Budget 2023 notes, “Including new measures...Canada's net debt as a share of the economy is still lower today than in any other G7 country prior to the pandemic—an advantage that Canada is forecasted to maintain”.

With the time I have left, I will look at where work is required. On mental health, we have made progress. I highlighted new spending on mental health and addictions. However, it is not enough to meet our platform promise of \$500 million. The CEO of the Canadian Mental Health Association has said, “We are deeply concerned that this budget does not include critically needed investments in services delivered by community providers”. Our platform promised federal funding for mental health transfers, a significant commitment, and we are not yet where we need to be on that front.

To give a very specific, concrete example here, we are launching 988, the new national mental health crisis number. It is incredibly important as a matter of delivery on mental health, but callers need to be referred to services in their own communities for it to be the most effective. Therefore, we need to fund services in our respective communities.

Government Orders

I also want to emphasize the need to address the disability benefit. Many in the disability community were expecting a clear signal about what is to come. It is important that we see additional spending on consultation. We are going to do an expansive consultation to get it right, but to really make a meaningful difference, to deliver a transformative benefit, it is going to take billions in new spending every year to lift people with disabilities out of poverty in a way that they deserve. Much more work is required on this front.

So too with housing. I mentioned the importance of the new billions in spending for an urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy, but we need to do much more on housing. It is a matter of generational fairness. It is a matter of productivity. People are leaving our cities. People are leaving our provinces. We are not going to be as competitive as we need to be if we do not fix the affordable housing crisis. That means governments have to get out of the way and help build housing. Governments have to get back in the game on building social housing, and we really have to treat housing as a home first and an investment second.

Last, where there is a missing piece, we committed to increase foreign aid every year. We simply did not do that in this budget. Results Canada has rightly criticized the budget on those grounds. As wealthy a country as we are, we need to look after those in need in our country. We also have to look after and do our part for those in need all around the world.

With that, overwhelmingly, despite areas of improvement and despite some areas of criticism, there are many reasons to be positive and optimistic about what we see in budget 2023, and there are certainly many reasons to support the budget in the coming weeks.

• (1540)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, toward the end of his speech, my colleague said that there needs to be money for mental health. Then he went on to quote organizations that say there is not enough funding. Something interesting happened, however. Last Wednesday, Bill C-46 was passed by the House at all stages. The next day, Thursday, the government introduced Bill C-47.

Bill C-46 included a \$2-billion, unconditional health transfer to the provinces. This is included again in Bill C-47. At the Standing Committee on Finance earlier today, senior officials confirmed to us that if Bill C-47 is passed as is, an additional \$2 billion would be transferred to the provinces.

The hon. member says there is not enough money for health and mental health. Now, there could be an extra \$2 billion if his government does not make an amendment to take that part out.

Will the hon. member vote to keep the extra \$2 billion?

[*English*]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Madam Speaker, technology being what it is, I missed the preamble to the member's question. I only heard the last 15 seconds of it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will allow the hon. member to restate his question.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, we have been using Zoom for two or three years now. It is a shame that some people still have problems choosing the right interpretation channel.

I have a question for my colleague.

Bill C-46 includes a \$2-billion investment in health care. This measure appears again in Bill C-47.

Today at the Standing Committee on Finance, senior officials confirmed that, if the bill is not amended, a total of \$4 billion will be invested in health care.

The hon. member is saying that there is not enough money for health and mental health. This is our chance to ask his government to not remove that part of Bill C-47, so that \$4 billion will be invested in health care instead of \$2 billion.

Will he commit to working to keep the \$4 billion?

[*English*]

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Madam Speaker, it was not, by the way, a matter of selecting the right channel. It was simply a matter of my home Internet.

I am committed to supporting the budgets that the government puts forward. In this case, I do not support the idea of transfers that are not coordinated, that are not properly negotiated and that do not have adequate strings attached. The idea that some inadvertence is being corrected to allow inadvertence to stand that is not intentional makes no sense at all to me.

• (1545)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned the lack of investments in housing and affordable housing. I wonder if he could share his thoughts around the fact that we are losing 15 affordable units to every one unit that is being built, yet the government continues to go forward with its market-driven lens on housing.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Madam Speaker, I would dispute the idea that the government is not looking at non-market options. It was not in this budget, but in previous economic statements and budgets we certainly committed to an expansion of co-op housing, for example, one of the largest investments in co-op housing in decades. There is a commitment to non-market-based options, but I will agree that we are not delivering at scale.

Government Orders

It is not only up to the federal government. In fact, provincial governments have more to say on housing, all things considered, working with municipalities, but I do think market supply is a huge part of the answer.

We should not be pitting these ideas against one another, but we do need much more market supply and we also need governments to get back in the game on social public housing, like co-op housing. Then, important at all levels, especially at the federal level, as we examine every policy measure, we need to ensure that we treat housing as a home first and investment second. Whether we look at the work of Generation Squeeze or any analysis, over 40 years ago, it used to take five years to save a down payment. Now it takes over 20 years, and over 30 years in some communities, and that is obviously unacceptable.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will continue along the theme of housing. I am so glad my friend and colleague referenced the investments that we have made in affordable housing. Unfortunately, we have not seen those same investments at the provincial level, especially in Ontario.

I wonder if the member could comment on the importance of having all three levels of government investing in affordable housing to ensure that the supply is there for the people who need it.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his work, especially his work in looking at housing options and partnerships with community organizations like legions.

There is no question that provinces need to lead on this. I will speak to Ontario specifically. Its housing affordability task force has said that we need to do more on housing and enshrine a 1.5-million supply target in planning guidance to ensure we encourage municipalities to add density and end restrictive zoning. What does the provincial government do? It encourages sprawl and builds on the greenbelt.

We, at all levels of government, but especially at the provincial level, need to take housing much more seriously and deliver the housing supply, all kinds of housing supply, that is so desperately needed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, today we are examining Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023. I wanted to read the full title because I am going to use it to back up what I am saying.

This is a huge bill, a mammoth bill. It is 430 pages long and seeks to amend 59 statutes and the Income Tax Regulations. However, since we have people who can read quickly, we noticed that King Charles III was hiding in this mammoth bill.

The government is trying to sneakily introduce a measure in this budget implementation bill that will force us to be loyal to His Majesty and will enshrine in law the fact that Charles III is indeed Canada's sovereign. That is quite appalling.

It is more than just appalling. I am convinced that, while there are those who are just a bit complacent about this matter, there are

others who find this extremely offensive because of their roots. I am sure that those who have indigenous or Acadian roots may find it offensive to have to recognize this archaic institution. Clearly, the government put this in a mammoth bill because mammoths are another archaic part of history. In fact, they have disappeared, just as the monarchy should.

For someone with Acadian roots, swearing an oath and recognizing this monarch in 2023 hurts deeply. We know the harm that was caused to the Acadian people and to indigenous peoples.

I do not get it. How is there not a majority of members here who agree with what I just said? They could make sure we have an honest bill and submit the issue in all honesty to the House in a separate bill. No, this is hidden in a mammoth bill that amends 59 statutes. I get the impression that the government is a bit ashamed of its monarch.

I am not the first member to speak to this bill, but the Bloc Québécois is voting against Bill C-47. First of all, there is nothing in there for seniors. For years we have been asking the government why there is a two-tiered system for seniors, but it stubbornly refuses to change this. It is as though people between 65 and 74 do not have needs and were not affected by inflation. It is as though every senior between 65 and 74 had enough income to live it up every day, when the opposite is true.

According to epidemiological studies, many illnesses emerge at this age. If we add to that financial insecurity, instead of a life without too many worries about living comfortably and deciding to buy this or that product or this or that medication, we would see that it is far more costly, in many ways, not to make the program fair.

● (1550)

The bill should have included tax measures to allow seniors who want to work to do so without being penalized. Something should be done about that. I cannot understand this stubbornness. Obviously, this is the budget implementation bill. These measures were not in the budget, which is not surprising, but it will come as no surprise that I am criticizing it.

The bill contains no long-term solutions for funding health care. My colleague spoke before about Bill C-46 and Bill C-47. Bill C-46 included a \$2-billion transfer, without conditions, to Quebec and the provinces. Suddenly, Bill C-47 decides that would be redundant. We thought it was a generous gesture, given the government's previous power grab.

Government Orders

Now the government is preparing an amendment to walk it back. We are going to work hard to ensure it remains in Bill C-47. I am appealing to the social conscience of all so-called Liberal members. A Liberal is supposed to be a progressive who is in touch with what is happening. At present, I would truly like to see one Liberal rise and show me that, in the medium and long term, the health transfers being provided are enough to meet the needs that the provinces and Quebec will have over the next ten years. That is an impossible task.

This does not mean that we do not appreciate the one-time investments made as a result of the pandemic. However, the structural problems of the health care system will not be fixed with one-time investments. The government made non-recurring investments when medium- and long-term structural investments were needed to rebuild the health care systems and to ensure that a pandemic will never again undermine and weaken these systems to the point that we have to lock down for a year, for example.

It is appalling, what is happening here. Taking away this \$2 billion is shameful. That they would even consider taking it away is shameful, indecent even. They are offering crumbs. As I said before, the provinces were asking for \$28 billion a year, from coast to coast to coast. The government offered them \$4.6 billion with a gun to their heads. Take it or leave it; the budget was already written. The government thinks that that will be enough for the provinces to be able to take care of their aging population and cover all other needs, which ballooned and became more acute during the pandemic because of the delays and the waiting lists.

The Standing Committee on Health has done a study on the collateral effects of the pandemic. In the midst of the third wave, the experts came to us and said that even if we injected that \$28 billion during that wave, it would still take 10 years for us to claw our way out of the pandemic. Imagine that. The government did not inject the money until after the eighth wave, and offered only \$4.6 billion in new money, thinking that it would be enough for the provinces to take care of their people.

There is nothing in the bill for EI. Worse still, the government is about to pilfer \$17 billion from the EI fund, because the only budget item it has decided not to absorb is EI. Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have ever put back into the EI fund the \$57 billion the federal government stole from it.

My father worked and paid into EI all his life. He was proud to pay into it for his colleagues who might need it and for workers who would probably need it. It made him proud to pay into it out of solidarity, but to never have personal need of it. He took pride in that.

• (1555)

What has this government done? It has pilfered \$57 billion from the fund and has never returned it. Today, when it should be able to pay back \$17 billion of that amount, it has decided to pay it by increasing workers' premiums. It is shameful, and it is why I will be voting against the bill.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his brilliant speech. I would, however, like him to clarify something for me. I heard him criticize the govern-

ment for making non-recurring investments rather than structural ones.

When I look at what is happening with the budget, I get the impression that the government is investing based on events. I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that.

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, I do not know whether the government is investing based on events, but the passage of Bill C-47 will not be an event. To clarify, I would say this.

The government boasts about having invested a lot of money during the pandemic. However, had it taken the necessary precautions, it probably could have spent a lot less money.

We likely would have been able to save the lives of more people in long-term care if the national PPE stockpile had not been completely depleted and if we had had masks to protect the personal support workers who had to work in two or three different facilities to be able to make ends meet at the end of the year, because the federal government has been making cuts to health care transfers for 30 years. The chronic underfunding of health care weakened the system, which led to anomalies during the pandemic.

Yes, there is an obligation to make one-time investments, but if we want to make our health care systems strong again, then we need to make long-term structural investments to get results.

• (1600)

[*English*]

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member referenced the health accord quite a bit and the Canada health transfer, and mentioned that the government should demonstrate in some way that this funding will be enough. Well, it is \$198 billion in new funding over 10 years, and it includes \$46.2 billion in new funding for the provinces and territories.

One of the ways something like this can be demonstrated is by the Province of Quebec signing agreements. The Province of Quebec entered into negotiations with the federal government and agreed to this transfer of funds. The Premier of Quebec has come out in statements commending the government on providing these transfers, just like with the new funding for official languages and many other investments that have been made in the province of Quebec.

What would the member say about the province's support?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, I think that my colleague and I see history differently.

The Quebec government was hoping for \$6 billion in recurring funding every year to rebuild its network. It got barely \$1 billion. Then the Minister of Health had the nerve to claw back \$42 million.

Given that, the correct answer is not complicated. The Quebec government had no choice. It had to either accept the \$1 billion, one-sixth of what it needed, or it would get nothing at all.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with the member about the structural investments we need in these budgets, and that is why I am happy to say the NDP has solidified structural investments in dental care. I am also proud to say that the NDP is putting in place structural benefits for child care, which Quebec has benefited from for over 25 years. I commend it on that.

I want to ask the member specifically about dental care. Does he support at least that part of the budget? The second piece is the red dress alert. Does the member support that?

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Thériault: Madam Speaker, with respect to dental care, the program got off to a very poor start. The government rushed to get it up and running.

Quebec asked for the right to opt out with full compensation so that it could actually use that money to improve its own program. The Canada Revenue Agency showed that the project was off to a bad start, because there was no way to confirm whether the \$650 given to people was being used appropriately.

When it comes to health care, we cannot afford to waste any money anywhere. That is my answer.

[English]

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer (Mississauga—Malton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the defining issue of our time is how to keep the promise of a better future alive for everyone. We have a choice. We can settle for a country where a few people do very well and everyone else struggles to get by, or we can work toward a promise of a country where everyone gets a fair shot, where we all play by the same rules and where the strong do not get to pick on the weak and the rich do not get rich by exploiting the poor. That is what our government is about. That is what this budget is about. From Whitehorse and Vancouver to Toronto and Halifax, that is the Canada we believe in.

Middle-class Canadians need a sense of security. We cannot let that slip away. We should not forget that we are still recovering from an unprecedented time and still have a ways to go before the international economic order finds a steady state. However, every month, we are adding tens of thousands of new jobs to the economy. Canadian manufacturers are creating jobs here. Our government's investments in clean tech are creating high-paying, high-skilled jobs here in Canada.

As we move forward, far too many Canadians are being left behind. There are some gaps in policy, and folks have been falling through the holes. That is why it brings me great pride to speak to budget 2023. This budget is a budget of small victories with big impact, immediate focus and long-term vision.

Looking at budget 2023, I can point to so many measures meant to help those who are just starting out or those who are in vulnerable positions. For example, for too long, predatory loaners have preyed on vulnerable Canadians in our communities experiencing financial crises, such as seniors, newcomers and low-income Canadians, by extending them high-interest loans, loans that lock Cana-

dians in dangerous cycles of debt that they cannot afford and cannot escape. Victims are far too often Canadians with poor credit who cannot receive a loan from a traditional bank.

Consider someone who takes out a single, small payday loan to deal with an emergency expense and finds themselves unable to pay back that expense within the usual two-week period. This can trigger significant penalties and can lead to extending the loan or securing an additional loan from another payday loan company.

Budget 2023 introduces changes so that payday lenders cannot charge any more than \$14 for every \$100 borrowed. That would be the fee over a two-week period. Additionally, we are also proposing to change the criminal rate of interest to 35% from the current 47% APR. These measures are crucial for stopping exploitation.

The Toronto Star has estimated that our changes to the system around payday loans would help Canadians save hundreds if not thousands of dollars that would otherwise be lost to predatory lending. This is a critical first step to ensure a more equal society, a society that does not leave people behind and a society where we can all grow.

This is a budget of small victories with big impact, immediate focus and long-term vision. We can look at automatic tax filing. Up to 12% of Canadians do not file their taxes. The majority of these folks are low-income and would not pay much in tax anyway. In a lot of cases, they would not pay any taxes at all. However, by not filing their taxes, they miss out on the valuable credits and benefits they are entitled to even if they do not pay taxes. Examples include the Canada child benefit, the guaranteed income supplement and the climate action incentive.

A report by Carleton estimated that up to \$1.7 billion went unclaimed by working-age, non-filing Canadians in 2021. The primary reason is that vulnerable Canadians find dealing with taxes daunting, as something that is difficult to navigate and just too complicated.

Budget 2023 outlines a pilot for automatic tax filing next year. Through this program, many vulnerable Canadians would have access to benefits and credits they have never had before. This is targeted relief for those who are feeling the worst of worldwide inflation. This is a small program that has the potential to be transformative in supporting low-income Canadians for years to come.

Government Orders

● (1605)

Last, to help us realize our highest potential, we need to ensure that our young people are supported. I want to work so that every student in this country receives at least the opportunities that were presented to me, because the young people of today will be the foundation for this country tomorrow. Students are looking for greater security and we cannot ignore that.

That is why it gives me great pleasure and great relief that budget 2023 includes measures for students. Thanks to changes we are introducing, students will be able to rely on their RESPs more going forward. While the cost of attending a post-secondary school has risen in recent years, the withdrawal limit for RESPs has not been increased in 25 years.

Every year, nearly half a million students rely on their RESP to fund their education. Students rely on the RESP to cover everything from course enrolment to buying textbooks to living expenses. Budget 2023 plans to increase the withdrawal limit for full-time students from \$5,000 to \$8,000 and for part-time students from \$2,500 to \$4,000. These changes would help ensure that the next generation's access to education is not compromised amid the rising cost of living.

Budget 2023 would also expand loans and grants for the 2023-24 school year, increasing the maximum grants available to \$4,200, up from the \$3,000 it was before, for low-income students. This represents a 40% increase to student grants for students who qualify in normal years. This is on top of our previously announced policy to erase interest on federal student and apprentice loans as part of our fiscal update last year. That move helped budget-strapped young Canadians who have borrowed to finance their education. It was a monumental investment for students across this country.

I truly believe that if we can outbuild, out-innovate and out-hustle, the jobs and industries of our time will take root here in Canada, people will prosper and the country will succeed. The only way we can make this happen is if we invest in our economy to give it a boost and spur industry and innovation so we can see around the corner to the industries of tomorrow and lay the bedrock of industry today.

However, we also need to make sure that as we move forward, we take everyone with us. Canadians should not be left behind, and that is exactly what this budget would do. Even as we cut out things we can do without, we have a responsibility to invest in things that will have the biggest impact on our future. That is especially true when it comes to measures that help vulnerable Canadians.

Here in Canada, the story has never been about what we can do by ourselves; it is about what we can do together. It is about believing in our future and the future of our country. That is why Canadians are working hard, with some balancing jobs and school and others learning our languages while they learn their jobs. It is about working hard. It is about pulling together and pulling each other up, and it is on government to enable our population to achieve their maximum. If we work together in common purpose, we can shape an economy that will cement Canada's place on the world stage, an economy that does not leave Canadians behind. That is something we can be proud of.

● (1610)

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is spending, spending, spending. There is one thing that should concern all members in this House, something that is not really being talked about. We touched on it at the finance committee: the Bank of Canada, with \$600 billion on the balance sheet. It was \$120 billion in 2020.

For the first time in 87 years, the Bank of Canada lost \$522 million last year. We do not see that in the budget. How are the Liberals going to account for that loss? Is the Canadian taxpayer, because there is only one, going to be on the hook for that?

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Madam Speaker, my speech was on budget 2023 and that is what I will focus on.

In opposition to Conservative logic, we cannot just cut our way into growth. We have to provide subsidies to companies that are creating jobs here in Canada, and that is something we can all agree on. Short-sighted, crisis-driven spending is never the answer. The answer is a fiscally responsible blueprint for jobs, which is exactly what this budget focuses on.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, we were expecting the government to use Bill C-47 to eliminate the EI deficit that accumulated during the pandemic, but it did not. The Employment Insurance Act requires the EI fund to break even over a seven-year period. Ultimately, workers will have to pay off \$17 billion through their premiums to wipe out the deficit.

The government covered all of the other pandemic-related deficits, but not this one. As my colleague from Montcalm said a few moments ago, in the Chrétien and Martin eras, the government took \$57 billion from the fund.

Does my hon. colleague consider it fair to leave workers on the hook for this deficit?

● (1615)

[*English*]

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Madam Speaker, EI is something that is under consideration by this government. This government will never leave vulnerable Canadians behind. We will support vulnerable Canadians and our workers. That is exactly why my speech touched on automatic tax filing and on drawing more RESP loans for students. This government believes in the right of every Canadian to live in dignity, so we will support Canadians.

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just want to follow up on the question of EI. Let us face it: The budget implementation act is very light on EI measures. One thing it does is extend the pilot program for the “black hole” by just another year. When this pilot program is something that has been going on now for five or six years, I think it makes a lot of sense simply to make it permanent, rather than continuing to extend it year by year. There are also some modest changes to the EI appeal board, but there is not really anything that addresses the important changes that were made during the pandemic and cancelled by the Liberals in September.

Why does the government continue to drag its feet when it comes to this important reform as we are being told that Canada is likely heading into a recession, when employment insurance is at its most important in terms of the lives of Canadians?

Mr. Iqwinder Gaheer: Madam Speaker, EI was there for Canadians during the pandemic. We will continue to look at the system and how we can modernize it for our current day.

Once again, these programs are meant to help vulnerable Canadians. That is exactly why I was touching on automatic tax filing for Canadians, which will help vulnerable Canadians who have not been able to access Canadian benefits. We also looked at students and the fact that the interest on their federal loans will be waived. They can also draw more from their RESPs heading into the next school year. These measures are there to help Canadians who are the hardest hit by worldwide inflation.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak this afternoon to the budget implementation act. At the outset, let me acknowledge that we are gathered here on the traditional, unceded lands of the Algonquin people.

While talking about the budget, I want to preface it by outlining the current economic state of our country. After coming through the pandemic, Canada, while facing a number of headwinds, is in a very strong position. First and foremost, we continue to have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. We continue to have one of the lowest levels of unemployment in the G7, but also in Canadian history. We continue to lead in building a green economy that responds to the needs of the day, including addressing the existential threat of climate change.

In many ways, the pandemic taught us that the government can be there to support Canadians of all stripes, whether it be through supporting organizations that work on the front lines or supporting businesses through wage subsidies or emergency loans, which, in many ways, were lifelines for our businesses. On an individual level, the Canada emergency response benefit, or CERB, supported so many Canadians in getting to the other side of the pandemic.

As we look forward, we realize that the issues around inflation and increasing interest rates are a threat to our economy and, as a government, we have been addressing these issues head-on. We have one of the lowest rates of inflation among developed countries. Also, our rate of inflation has gone down to new lows, and we are confident that we will reach the 3% mark by the summer and be

well into the 2% mark by next year. That should give us some confidence.

As a steward of this economy, we have looked at our economy in a very different way than it has traditionally been viewed. We have made sure that our economy is very much linked to our environment. We do not decouple the issue. We believe that they are fundamentally related and we cannot, under any circumstances, decouple it. If we look at modern accounting practices, we will note that many companies are now reporting their environmental liability. As we go forward and as we see the impacts of climate change, whether it is floods or wildfires, we know that the environment plays a critical role in our long-term sustainability, directly linked to our economy.

In this budget, the Minister of Finance and her team worked very hard to put together some measures that will give individuals real support during the pandemic. As we know, in the fall economic statement we had very important measures that supported Canadians on affordability. First and foremost was the GST credit, and the second one was the \$500 housing rebate for those in the lowest income brackets. Those were crucial in ensuring that affordability was maintained for the most vulnerable Canadians.

As we look forward, we are looking at a number of targeted initiatives, the critical one being the one-time grocery rebate, which will support 11 million Canadians in making ends meet. While we know that it is not a permanent fix, we do realize that in these most difficult times, we need to get Canadians to the other side of these economic threats. I believe this is a very smart way of addressing this issue.

● (1620)

With respect to predatory lending, when I was in my first year of law school, a professor by the name of Iain Ramsay was my contracts prof, and he was a highly respected professor at Osgoode. During our contracts class, his singular focus was on predatory lending. He did an enormous amount of research on the impacts of predatory lending on low-income Canadians, the cycle of debt that it brings individuals and, subsequently, young families into, and the systemic challenges of getting out of this debt. As a result, I learned a great deal about those who are dependent on payday loans, which can only be described as predatory.

I realize that this was over 20 years ago, so I am actually quite heartened and also somewhat disappointed that it took Canada this many years to get to the point where we are actually addressing this issue head-on, redefining the notion of criminal interest rates and ensuring that those who are dependent on payday loans, our most vulnerable, are supported. It is something that I believe is fundamentally important to the economy but also to those who may be struggling right now. In addition, we are cracking down on junk fees to ensure that businesses are transparent with the prices they are set to pay.

Government Orders

We are also looking to implement automatic tax filing for low-income Canadians. Every year, and I know my colleagues here will probably relate to this as well, we have a volunteer who, since I was elected in 2015, comes every February and offers up her time to do tax returns. In fact, even if we do not call her, she calls us. Every year, that service is full. She really does it as a service to her community, to those who are struggling and to those for whom the tax return is so critical to their income, whether it be the Canada child benefit, old age security, the guaranteed income supplement or other government entitlements. She is very diligent in getting this done, and there are literally thousands of tax preparers who do this out of the kindness of their hearts, to make sure they support other Canadians.

Automatic tax filing, in many ways, will ensure that those who are left outside of the ability to prepare their taxes or get the type of help that is provided by my office, and I am sure many of my colleagues' offices, are supported. I am very glad to confirm that automatic tax filing will be coming and is included in the budget implementation act.

We know that students have had a particularly difficult time. I interviewed for the summer leadership program that we have, and I am pleased to say that we have two students who are starting next week. As a government, we have over 150 students, with over 4,000 applications from students who have applied to our program. This is, I believe, our seventh year running this program. It is so good to see the quality of candidates who are coming forward, but when I speak to students, I know they are struggling. Whether it is through the youth constituency advisory council that I have or through the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus, which is located in my riding, or Centennial College, I hear from students about the issue of affordability. Oftentimes, it is the ability to pay the tuition or to make ends meet.

I believe there are many measures in here, including increased grants, that will enable students to ensure that their education is affordable. I often say that in our society education is our ultimate equalizer and the measures that we have in place will support students in attaining an education.

• (1625)

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, given the hon. member's legal expertise, I appreciated his legal analysis of the budget.

However, I am concerned about the economic trajectory of this country. With the data from the budget itself and from last year's budget, in fact, our GDP per capita is significantly lower than those of the Americans and of our OECD advanced economy competitors. In fact, it has gotten worse over the last three decades. In particular, we have seen stagnant wage growth over the past five years, compounded with record-high inflation and very high housing prices.

The Liberal government is spending all this money, and yet we are not seeing great economic growth trajectory for Canadians. I am very concerned about it.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, let me say at the outset that the expenditures we are talking about are investments in our community, individuals and businesses. Just last week, the

Prime Minister was in St. Thomas announcing a record investment in the auto sector with Volkswagen coming to Canada. It is the first European carmaker to set up shop here, which we believe is transformational. While we have some challenges with respect to the economy today, we are poised for long-term sustainable growth because of the investments we are making in individuals and businesses.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, in the recent budget, the government announced \$80 billion for the green economy and the transition to a carbon-neutral future. In Bill C-47, we learn how this will be managed and that has us concerned. Through a legislative change, the government is creating two institutions that will be in charge of administering the money the government plans to invest, money that escapes the control of Parliament. Non-elected people will be able to choose the projects they support without being accountable to anyone, without being accountable to the House and without any clear criteria.

What does the member think about that?

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I do not think it is a bad thing for decisions regarding funding to be made by independent actors. I believe Parliament has a very important role in setting the agenda and terms of reference, and appointing custodians and managers to ensure the funds are managed. However, I believe that processes that are meant to adjudicate and allow funding to go to individuals and businesses ought to be managed independently of government and that it is wise for us to continue to do that. We have a civil service that does it. Oftentimes, we Crown corporations that do that. I believe that is probably a more prudent way to achieve the goals we are mutually trying to achieve.

• (1630)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I asked earlier about the urgency of employment insurance reform. I want to talk about another facet of the employment insurance problem that Canada has at the moment, which is the decision of the government to allocate \$25 billion of CERB debt to the EI account. We know that EI was not in a good place prior to the pandemic. It was not adequate to the task. The whole system had to be revamped. It was effectively run like a program and not the usual employment insurance system that premium payers are used to. That was cancelled back in September.

How does the government imagine it is going to achieve an effective modernization of the employment insurance system when premium payers are preoccupied with paying down a \$25-billion debt over the next seven years instead of seeing improvements to the employment insurance program?

Government Orders

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, of course the issue of employment insurance is so critical to Canada, and to anyone who depends on a paycheque, which is the vast majority of Canadians. We know that any one of us could, at some point over the years, face the difficult challenge of applying for employment insurance.

During the pandemic, we were there for Canadians through the Canada employment response benefit. I recognize the member's concern with respect to the additional obligations under EI for the CERB shortfall, but we are confident we will ensure we will have a system that protects the most vulnerable, especially those who may be out of a job or temporarily see themselves seeking employment insurance because of seasonal employment and the like.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are talking about budget 2023, and there are many serious issues facing Canada. Unfortunately, I do believe that many of them are not addressed in the federal 2023 Liberal budget.

I am the shadow minister for public safety and the vice-chair of the public safety and national security committee for Canada, and so when I was looking at the budget, I was looking at it through a public safety lens: How is this budget going to improve public safety in Canada? Again, there are very serious issues in public safety that need dire and immediate attention from the Liberal government, and I do not feel that they were given that attention in budget 2023.

We are facing a 32% rise in violent crime since 2015, which is the 2015-21 statistic. I am confident that, unfortunately, the 2022 statistic is going to be even worse, given the headlines that we have seen over the past year and a half. Also, 32% is not just a number. In fact, it represents 124,000 more very serious violent crime incidents that have impacted innocent Canadians across the country. That is how many more violent crime incidents per year we experienced in 2021 versus 2015, when the Liberal Prime Minister first came to power. So, there are very serious issues not being addressed, from my perspective, in the budget.

Many of us read the news and watch the headlines, and we have seen a lot of very concerning stabbings, shootings, murders, assaults on innocent Canadians and stranger attacks on public safety, and a lot of it has to do with repeat violent offenders in our community who continue to get bail and wreak havoc on innocent Canadians. For example, there was a violent knife attack on a Surrey Sky-Train, which is its public transit, that left a young man in hospital. The attempted murderer was released on bail less than two weeks later. A man was almost stabbed to death, and the culprit was back on the streets. This follows the death of a 17 year old who was murdered, stabbed to death, in B.C. on a bus. This follows a 16-year-old boy who was stabbed to death in a Toronto public transit station. There are countless other examples of these horrific attacks in Canada. It seems that there are more and more every day.

It is not just civilians; it is also police. In fact, 10 police officers have died in the past year, eight of them on the job, and notably repeat violent offenders is a theme in many of the murders. Of course, everyone has heard of OPP Officer Greg Pierzchala, a young OPP officer who was murdered just after Christmas this past year. He walked up to a vehicle in a ditch and the driver shot and

murdered him. That driver, that murderer, was out on bail and had a lifetime prohibition from ever owning a gun. Yet, he got out on bail, got a gun and shot and murdered that young police officer. We mourn the loss of Greg Pierzchala with his family.

Notably, his death sparked a necessary national conversation about bail reform, which is not mentioned once in the federal budget, despite every premier in the country joining in on one letter, which is very rare, and sending it to the Prime Minister demanding bail reform. Despite big-city mayors and municipal police forces across the country demanding bail reform, we see no action, no results on bail reform from this government. It is not mentioned in the budget at all. I find it very concerning, and it is very serious. Last year, in Toronto, of the 44 murders when someone used a gun to murder someone, 24 of the murderers were out on bail at the time, and so 24 of 44 could have been prevented if our bail system was a bit tougher. It is quite serious.

In B.C., the NDP provincial government has written urgently to the Prime Minister just in the last few weeks outlining what they are facing in terms of bail and violent crime. Only about 16% to 17% of those who are going through a trial for a violent crime actually get detained. I was shocked at these statistics, and I had to read them a number of times. Fewer than 20% of violent criminals are being denied bail in B.C. Something is seriously wrong, and the B.C. NDP government is demanding bail reform as a solution from the Liberal government, and yet it is not mentioned as a priority in the Liberal budget. I found that very disappointing, given the national conversation and the deaths that we have seen. We could say that maybe bail will be mentioned somewhere else, but violent crime was not mentioned as a priority. Members can google it themselves; it was not in the budget.

Again, folks at home need to understand that a government's budget is telling Canadians what its values are and what it is prioritizing for the year ahead with the billions of taxpayer dollars it accumulates over the year. If violent crime is not mentioned, then clearly it is not a priority for the Liberals to fight violent crime or to deal with bail and repeat violent offenders. There are issues in our parole system as well.

• (1635)

What is in the budget? It is not something that is answering the calls of police. Before I move on, I want to say I found something quite shocking this week. The Victoria Police Department, just to drive this point home, recently released a news release about a vile rapist who was charged with 10 counts of sexual assault with a weapon. It says, “Why was this person released? Bill C-75....”

Bill C-75 was a Liberal bill from a couple years ago. Where is the mention of fixing this problem in the budget? Where are the resources to fix this problem in the budget? Why was it not prioritized by the Minister of Public Safety? I have not received any answers for these questions yet.

There are a few things in the budget that I did find notable in the public safety realm. There is \$29 million over five years for an IT computer program for the government's so-called buyback program of long guns. I know this is very contentious. I have talked about this extensively elsewhere.

There is no evidence to suggest that long gun confiscation is going to do anything for all the issues I have outlined. In fact, of the multitude of violent crimes in this country, fewer than 0.5% are committed with long guns. We know the majority of crime committed with firearms is committed by people who are not legally allowed to own them.

Spending millions of dollars on an IT program, millions of dollars buying inventory from small gun shops and then billions of dollars buying property from law-abiding citizens who have been trained, tested and vetted by police to own firearms, is not going to make any difference to everything that I have been talking about.

However, it is a top priority for Canadians that it get solved. I put this to the minister. He said there are a lot of ways to fight gun violence. I said sure there are, but I asked what they were in his opinion. He said he is investing money in the border. Is he doing that?

I took a closer look at the budget since the Liberals formed government. In 2015, there were 8,400 frontline officers and investigators working for CBSA, our border agency. We know, as Toronto Police have told us, about nine out of 10 guns that are used in crime in Toronto are smuggled in from the U.S. We hear this quite universally from police departments across the country. It is a gun-smuggling problem from the U.S.

In 2015, we had 8,400 frontline workers who were tasked with stopping things like this from happening and stopping the gun smugglers. The Minister of Public Safety has said to Canadians multiple times, every time he gets a microphone, that he is spending all this money on the border to stop gun smuggling.

However, eight years later, there are only 25 more frontline officers, yet a lot of money has been spent. There are only 25 more frontline officers to fight gun smuggling, which is the source of violent crime in this country. Every chance he gets, he boasts about how much money he has invested.

Where is that money going? A closer look at the employees at CBSA shows that middle management has gone from approximately 2,000 people in 2015 to 4,000 people in 2023. It has doubled middle management, not the frontline workers who are working

Government Orders

hard and putting their lives at risk to apprehend gun smugglers at the border, but the middle managers.

I greatly respect all of our middle managers in public safety, but the point is that it has doubled, while there has been almost no movement of the frontline officer numbers. How serious is he about cracking down on gun smuggling? The numbers are not telling me that the results are going to be there.

We know the RCMP is facing significant issues as well. Recruitment is way down, as is morale, across the country. Police say this is an issue, yet there is not any new money in the budget to encourage recruitment or for new recruits. We are seeing serious declines in recruitment in our police forces. Why is that not being addressed? We need more frontline police officers to fight violent crime.

We also know there has been a 12% funding cut to the Parole Board and a 36% decrease in staff at the Parole Board. Perhaps that is why we have major mass casualties like the murderer in Saskatchewan who murdered, with a knife, 11 people and sent 17 more people to hospital. He was out on parole with 59 prior convictions.

After all that, we see cuts to parole and no increase in this budget, yet increases everywhere else. Public safety is not a priority for the government from what I have seen in the budget.

I do feel very strongly about this, as does the Conservative Party. We know Canadians care about public safety. I call on the Minister of Public Safety and the Liberal government to bring forward real measures to address public safety because so far, they are getting a failing grade from me.

• (1640)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I are members of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. I also studied the budget from a security perspective. I realize that not enough is being done, as she said, to counter gun violence.

Yes, we are working on Bill C-21. There are good things in there. Is this going to solve all the problems? Unfortunately not and it is certainly not going to solve the problem of illicit firearms trafficking.

Government Orders

For months, the Bloc Québécois has been proposing that more people work together and that we create a sort of squad of New York police officers, Akwesasne Mohawk police officers, police officers from the Sûreté du Québec, police officers from Ontario and Border Services officers. They also need to be given more resources.

When these people appear in committee, they tell us that guns are crossing the border and they do not have the resources to stop it. Does the member think that the government is putting money in the right place?

[English]

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, it has been a great pleasure to work with my colleague on public safety. It is great to have two young, strong women fighting for public safety in Canada. I appreciated the guns and gangs study that the two of us and the others at the public safety committee spearheaded, and we all signed on to that report. It is amazing what we can accomplish when the Liberal cabinet does not stick its nose into public safety affairs, I will say.

That aside, we did learn significantly that, just as the member outlined, there is a lot of gun smuggling and drug smuggling coming in. Actually, this is happening near her riding, I believe. I firmly believe in empowering first nations policing and first nations community resources to stop that sort of thing. I think they clearly need to be an equal partner at the table in that regard. I am not happy with the results we have seen, and I do not believe the first nations are either, because we have had them at committee and we have talked to them. It does not seem like they are getting the resources they need, which is very odd given the money being spent.

This is where the problem is. Why are we not investing more money? They are spending money everywhere else. Why not do so to stop the problem?

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, in my riding of Vancouver East, we are actually struggling with a series of crises. We have a homelessness crisis, and we have a drug poisoning crisis; we have a mental health crisis where people need mental health support and are not able to access it.

I wonder whether the Conservatives would support an approach whereby all levels of government are brought together, including federal, provincial and municipal governments, along with the community and indigenous leadership to find a way to address the crisis that we face. This would be similar to what is in place in Winnipeg, in what is called the Winnipeg accord, and formerly in Vancouver, in the Vancouver agreement. Then, in a non-partisan way, we could take a concerted approach to addressing the situation that we are all facing, and particularly, in my situation, in the Downtown Eastside.

• (1645)

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, I appreciated working with the member when we were on the immigration committee together. This collaboration is something I would personally support. I cannot speak for the Liberal government or any other level of government, but I certainly believe that when we come together and collaborate, especially across party lines, we see real results. We have seen collaboration across party lines at the provincial level. All premiers of multiple different parties signed a letter demand-

ing bail reform, which is a consequence and part of the problem the member outlined. This problem is that there are repeat violent offenders who are wreaking havoc on our communities and taking advantage of vulnerable people, particularly those addicted to drugs, thereby putting them at risk or even hurting them.

I think that there is a lot that the member and I would work well together on, and collaboration is certainly a female strength. I would love to see something like that happen given all the lives that we have lost, particularly young lives in the last number of years, to the drug addiction issue.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened attentively to the member's speech. There are many things in this budget that are very good for Canadians. I wanted to ask about her opinion on the dental plan, which is now free for children under 12. By the end of this year, we will be expanding it to those with disabilities, seniors and those under 18.

What does the member think about providing this plan for Canadians?

Ms. Raquel Dancho: Madam Speaker, when looking at the budget, I think we all need to be concerned about children and what the future will be for them. On the dental plan, I believe in provincial jurisdiction. Dental is a health care issue. I believe that we need to allow provinces to lead the way on health care issues. I feel that the Liberal government has really waded into provincial jurisdiction way too many times and way too much.

I appreciate the member's question. When we are talking about children, I know that she heard when I mentioned there were multiple deaths by stabbing, notably from those repeat violent offenders I mentioned and talked about at length. Those were children who were murdered. What is her government doing about that in terms of protecting those children and ensuring their future? It is not doing a lot.

[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 Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Government Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Health; the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Carbon Pricing.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am delighted to rise and enter into debate about budget 2023.

Government Orders

There are many issues I want to touch on with the budget, but first and foremost, I must speak about the situation with the housing crisis that Canadians are facing from coast to coast to coast. It does not matter if one is in a large or a small community; there is a housing crisis all across the country.

There are encampments in communities big and small, and un-housed people are in fact dying on the streets, unable to access safe, secure and affordable housing. Long-term renters are getting pushed out of their apartments just so that corporate landlords can turn a bigger profit. Tenants cannot find an affordable home, and prospective homeowners are priced right out of the market.

Housing costs went up 77% under the Harper government and by another \$300,000 under the Liberals. Therefore, successive Conservative and Liberal federal governments have abandoned their responsibility to invest in social and co-op housing. They are letting housing profiteering go unchecked right under their noses.

Real estate investment trusts enjoy preferential tax treatment, and the seven largest real estate investment trusts alone have saved a combined \$1.5 billion through federal tax loopholes. The Parliamentary Budget Officer just released a report estimating that the federal government will lose another \$300 million in taxes over the next four years. Yes, the Liberals are letting corporate landlords profit off Canada's urgent housing crisis by purchasing affordable housing stock and renovating long-term tenants to jack up rents.

This is what the financialization of housing means, and it has to stop. Housing is a basic human right and not a commodity. Budget 2023 was an opportunity for the Liberal government to tackle the housing crisis and stop wealthy corporate landlords from treating housing like a stock market. Sadly, it fails to take the necessary action to ensure that Canadians' basic right to housing is met.

The Federal Housing Advocate calls the budget a "sorry disappointment." Previously, the Auditor General issued a damning report stating that the government will not reach its own targets to reduce chronic homelessness. The 25 largest financialized landlords held more than 330,000 units last year, which is nearly 20% of the country's private purpose-built stock of rental apartments. It is time to put people before profits, and the NDP has real solutions to address housing profiteering.

I am calling on the Liberals to take a human rights-based approach to housing, as enshrined in the national housing strategy. The federal government must stop rewarding real estate investment trusts for pushing out long-term tenants and jacking up housing prices. We must end special tax treatment and make them pay their fair share.

It is time for a moratorium on the acquisition of affordable homes by real estate investment trusts and other corporate landlords, which are making big profits while driving up the cost of housing, as well as renovating and demolishing Canadians. It is time to put housing back into the hands of the people.

The federal government needs to use the taxes from real estate investment trusts and create a non-profit acquisition fund to allow not-for-profits, co-ops and land trust organizations to purchase at-risk rental buildings when they come on the market. There should

be no more profiteering, no more renovations and no more special tax treatment for corporate landlords.

Aside from addressing the issue of the financialization of housing, or profiteering, we need to take other actions as well. The co-investment fund is a program within the national housing strategy. In the budget, this fund is almost depleted. I had been looking for the government to actually make new investments into the co-investment fund to support non-profits in the development of social and co-op housing. However, that did not happen.

• (1650)

What the government did was rob Peter to pay Paul; it took repair dollars within that fund to put into the construction arm of the fund. Robbing Peter to pay Paul is actually not going to get projects done. If the government does not replenish the co-investment fund, we are not going to see those projects become viable; thus, we will not see the much-needed housing develop in the community.

Strangely, the Minister of Housing, with the ministry, decided to put a cap of \$25,000 per unit on the dollars that non-profits can access out of the co-investment fund. In the face of the rising cost of housing, inflationary costs and so on, that cap will only kill projects. It will just mean that the projects cannot be developed. That makes no sense whatsoever. The federal government needs to lift the cap on this requirement.

The NDP also wanted the government to invest in the rapid housing initiative. This is one program that is working relatively well, but we need to make sure that the community knows there is sustainable funding in that stream. Therefore, the NDP called for the government to invest \$1.5 billion annually into the rapid housing initiative. Sadly, we did not see that investment either.

One investment in housing that we did see, which the NDP fought tooth and nail for, was this: the "for indigenous, by indigenous" urban, rural and northern housing strategy. For too long, indigenous, Métis and Inuit peoples who have lived away from their home communities have not gotten the housing supports they need. Somehow, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is not recognized when they are away from their home community. This is wrong. Therefore, we have been pushing the government and demanding that action be taken.

Government Orders

I am glad to see that, in this budget, there is an investment of \$4 billion over seven years to be made in a for indigenous, by indigenous urban, rural and northern housing strategy. That is a start, I will say, and more needs to be done. This amount of money may sound like a lot, but it is still absolutely deficient when it comes to addressing the housing crisis for urban, rural and northern indigenous, Métis and Inuit peoples in our communities.

We also need to make sure that the government rolls these dollars out quickly. It should not slow-walk or back-end load the program, as it has done with other programs in the national housing strategy. I would also say that it has to be true that the programs are delivered as a for indigenous, by indigenous housing strategy. The government has to hold true on this. We need sustainable funding for this into the long term.

I would also say that, in the budget, I was glad to see what the NDP had pushed for and forced the government to take action on, which is the dental program. I cannot tell members how much seniors in my riding need this program. I have met seniors who have lost their teeth and are unable to afford to get dental services, where they are blending up their food to drink it in order to get the sustenance that they need to stay alive. This is just wrong. Our seniors are desperate for this program, and I am so glad to see that the NDP prioritized this and demanded that the government put forward this dental program. Therefore, at the end of this year, seniors, people with disabilities and people aged 19 and under would be able to access this program, and it is high time that we actually look at health care from head to toe and ensure that people's oral health is taken care of.

I have much more to say about this budget. There are some good parts, and there are some parts that are missing. No matter what, the NDP will continue to use our power to force the government to take action. I will continue to speak up on the things where the government fell short and to fight for the community so that every member has access to fair and equal treatment and can live with dignity in our communities from coast to coast to coast.

● (1655)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I want to thank the member for her support of the budget and for her advocacy on the housing file. As the member knows, we are going to start the financialization of housing study soon at HUMA. I know the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, who is the author of that motion, is here tonight. I look forward to that.

I just want to ask a question about social housing and the importance of investing in that. The member mentioned the rapid housing initiative. We have now had three rounds of rapid housing funds that have benefited my municipality, in particular, in my riding, and I know Vancouver has been a leader on the modular-build front. I am anxious to see further investments in that area. Could the member talk about and highlight the benefits of rapid housing and the modular builds that we have seen across the country?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, it is important for the federal government to show leadership with a national affordable housing initiative. To that end, we need to cut the red tape. The member knows very well that the federal government's CMHC is not ensur-

ing that programs are delivered. As it is said, projects go to CMHC to die, and that is not good enough. We have to cut the red tape.

Investment needs to be commensurate with the needs in our communities. The federal Liberal government cancelled the national affordable housing program in 1993. As a result of that, we lost more than half a million units of social housing and co-op housing that would otherwise have been built. We need to at least make up for that and then some as part of the solution to addressing the housing crisis.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, in her speech, the member talked quite a bit about housing. Both of us are from British Columbia, where there is some of the highest housing costs in the country. At committee, when the housing minister was there, a Conservative asked him if he considers our housing situation in Canada a crisis. He would not acknowledge that we have a housing crisis in Canada.

I am wondering if the member can comment on that and what her thoughts are on the fact that the housing minister does not consider that we have a housing crisis in Canada.

● (1700)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, there is no question that we have a housing crisis in Canada from coast to coast to coast. It does not matter if it is a small community or a large community, there is a housing crisis.

Both the Liberals and the Conservatives have failed to tackle the issues sufficiently. The reality is that corporate landlords are making a killing. Real estate investment trusts are not paying their fair share of taxes. Why did the Conservatives allow this to happen? Why are the Liberals continuing to allow this to happen? That is why the NDP is saying no more free rides. Real estate investment trusts need to pay their fair share. If that had happened, we would have close to \$2 billion that could be invested back into housing to support people in the community.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member so much for her advocacy and work on housing. It is because of the member that we are trying to save so much social housing in the community, but it is still very much at risk.

I wonder if the member could share with the government how much of our affordable housing is really at risk and what the impacts will be if we lose more of it.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her excellent work in advocating for the community, not just on housing but also on disability issues.

Government Orders

I will say this, just so that everybody understands. For every one unit of social housing or co-op housing built by the government, 15 units are lost. That is a significant number. We can never build enough to make up for that loss. That is why we have to stop corporate landlords from taking the affordable housing stock. That is why we have to support non-profits in holding that stock in perpetuity for the community. If we do not do that, housing prices will continue to rise and more and more people will die because they are unhoused and unable to access safe, secure, affordable housing.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise on behalf of the residents of Kelowna—Lake Country.

Budget 2023 is titled, on the cover, “A Made-in-Canada Plan”. There is no doubt that this is a Liberal made-in-Canada plan. It features made-in-Canada tax hikes, made-in-Canada inflation, made-in-Canada debt and made-in-Canada deficits.

Budget 2023 would do nothing to make essential government services work as Canadians deserve them to, nor to make ministers and department heads accountable. The Liberal-NDP plan would continue to devalue the paycheques of hard-working people, continue to inflate the costs of gas, groceries and home heating, and continue to cut into the earnings of young families and the savings of seniors through higher taxes and high interest rates.

According to a forecast prepared by the Parliamentary Budget Officer ahead of the budget, the cost of servicing our federal debt was already on course to jump from \$24.5 billion to \$46 billion by 2028. This is money that would no longer be available to invest in areas Canadians want to see investments in, such as health care, national security and public safety.

A Nanos poll showed 71% of Canadians are concerned with the government's deficits, but the Liberals obviously are not listening to Canadians. It is a budget that devalues the hard work that residents in my community and all Canadians do every day and deflates what our seniors have saved for, while burdening future generations by paying more to service the federal debt instead of paying into the government services and programs that Canadians deserve from their tax dollars.

The Conservatives were clear in what we wanted to see from this budget. First was lower taxes so that workers can bring home powerful paycheques. I am hearing from many of my residents that they are having their work punished through higher taxes, reducing the value of the take-home pay they earn. Second was to bring home lower prices by ending the inflationary debt and deficits that drive inflation and interest rates. The Prime Minister has doubled the national debt, incurring more debt than all past prime ministers combined, with only a portion of that being attributed to COVID programs. Last, we called on the government to tackle the gatekeepers who lock up land, slow down permits and block the next generation from the dream of owning their own homes. Nine in 10 Canadians who do not own a home today say they do not believe they will ever be able to afford one.

These were common-sense measures that a majority of Canadians support. Sadly, the Liberals chose not to proceed with any of them. Budget 2023 will leave Canadians overtaxed, with billions more in debt and at the mercy of continuing inflation.

Leading up to the budget release, the Liberals were talking about fiscal restraint, but it is not just dictionary definitions they are ignoring; the Liberals have broken the promises they made in 2022. The budget abandons the path for balance the finance minister projected just six months ago. It seems like every time the Liberals table a fiscal update or budget, they reference that they will go into deficit in the short term, but they tell us not to worry and to be happy, as everything will be all right. However, here we are eight years later hearing the same tune.

Promises from the Minister of Finance last year to pay off pandemic debt and lower our debt-to-GDP ratio have also been abandoned. Our debt-to-GDP ratio is up. Government spending is now \$120 billion higher than prepandemic spending. Budget 2023 promises to find billions in savings in government operations, yet budget 2022's strategic policy review, aimed at finding \$9 billion in savings, has already been cancelled. There is no reason to believe the Liberals on this. Just like people's paycheques are evaporating, trust in the government is also evaporating.

Members can just look at the numbers. The consumer debt index shows that British Columbians are the most likely to be on the brink of financial difficulty. The eight consecutive hikes in interest rates to manage Liberal made-in-Canada inflation have left 61% of British Columbians saying they will be in real financial trouble if interest rates go up any higher.

Many people are already saying they are pulling money from their savings just to survive. Polling from Nanos shows 40% of Canadians believe the new federal budget would do a “poor” or “very poor” job of addressing their concerns.

● (1705)

However, I do not need polls to tell me what I hear from residents in my community daily regarding the cost of living. A family in my community put out a public call for empty bottles or cans so they could collect from neighbours because they needed financial help to take their dog to the vet. A local senior recently told me she would like to live alone but has to live with three other people just to get by.

Government Orders

The carbon tax is now 14¢ per litre on Canadians' gas and heating bills. The fiction long peddled by the government of carbon tax rebates covering the cost for families was finally exposed by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. His report showed that the carbon tax will cost the average family between \$402 and \$847 in 2023 after receiving rebates. Even the Greenpeace activist environment minister agrees that we will be further behind, yet he chooses to hike his carbon tax anyway while missing every GHG emissions target.

Local wineries, breweries, cideries and distilleries in the Okanagan and across Canada are still having their bottom lines eaten away by the excise tax increase of 2%. I met with a local craft distiller in my community who said this will represent a \$60,000 hit to his bottom line. That is \$60,000 in one year. The government's doubling down on increases in carbon taxes, payroll taxes and excise tax increases leaves families and small businesses poorer.

The Liberals' made-in-Canada inflation continues to take a human toll, as one in five Canadians is skipping meals and food banks are barely keeping up with rising demand. I recently visited the Lake Country Food Bank, where Joy, the executive director, told me that usage is up 36%.

Canadian grocery bills are expected to increase. Canada's 2023 food price report predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year. Also, the Liberal made-in-Canada interest rate increases will add \$300, \$400, \$500, \$600, \$700 or more to mortgage payments per month. Rents will continue to increase as interest rates get passed on to renters.

Anyone receiving some type of government rebate, which means giving people back the tax they pay after it churns through the federal bureaucracy, will see it evaporate. We need a budget that actually helps reduce inflation.

I will also mention, as a shadow minister with employment in her portfolio, that I am disappointed the government is not fulfilling its commitment to reforming EI, as in the minister's mandate letter. This is leading to uncertainty for workers and businesses.

Canada's housing crisis continues to be of great concern to residents of mine, but the government's new tax-free first home savings account, a new TFSA, is completely useless if one does not have any money to put in it. It is so out of touch.

A recent Angus Reid poll showed that fully one in three Canadians is either in "bad" or "terrible" shape financially, and 35% are deferring or not making contributions to an RRSP or a TFSA, an increase of 13% since September. However, creating a new TFSA is apparently the bold and innovative idea the Liberals have for addressing the housing crisis.

Since the current federal government took office, the average down payment needed to buy the average house has doubled. The average mortgage payment has doubled. The average cost of rent has doubled. It is no wonder that in a recent Ipsos poll, more than 60% of Canadians who presently do not own a home have given up on ever owning one. Even for those who do, maintaining ownership has become more difficult, with the Bank of Canada holding interest rates and not ruling out more increases. Also, CMHC, in January 2023 data, showed new housing builds at the lowest level

since 2020, and Canada now has the lowest number of housing units per 1,000 residents of any G7 country.

This is Canada. This is not the country I grew up in, which had endless opportunities. There was hope. As leaders, we need to give hope and show results, and this budget does neither.

• (1710)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I agree with the member on most points. I do not think people will be surprised by that.

She talked about the government's recently announced, or reannounced, homebuyer savings plan. She raises a good point: Many people do not have \$8,000 in their back pocket to set aside into a new account.

The government has taken over a year. This was promised in the last budget, and here we are in 2023 and it was available April 1. My information shows that National Bank is the only bank across Canada that has access to it.

Does she believe this is just more marketing from the Liberals and something that really will not help the next generation of homebuyers?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, this is another example of an announcement, a reannouncement and a rollout that takes forever, which is then fraught with bureaucracy or is not applicable to a lot of people.

I have memories from during the pandemic when some of the programs people could apply for could only be accessed through the major banks. If people dealt with a credit union, they were not allowed to apply, and a lot of people deal with credit unions across the country. This is another example of the government not thinking its programs through. They will not work for most people.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, regional flights are very expensive and with the increase in the cost of fuel, ticket prices have continued to increase over the past few years. Instead of proposing measures to make regional flights more affordable, Bill C-47 is making them more expensive with a significant increase in the air travellers security tax for both international and regional flights. Prices will therefore increase.

What does my hon. colleague think about that? Would it not make sense to at least exempt regional flights from the tax increase?

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, the whole air transport system is a colossal mess, and when we look at what has happened, we see it is because of the government. We have seen lineups at airports beyond compare. We have seen that people are unable to get their passports, and the minister responsible for passports is now saying that people should not even bother applying.

Everything the government touches is a mess and is broken. When it takes anything on, it has shown it really cannot govern and cannot operate. Anything it touches, it seems to break.

• (1715)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, yes, certain federal services are going to be disrupted. That is the nature of a strike as workers fight for better wages.

I have a question for my Conservative colleague because we have not yet heard from them on this. As they like to stand with workers, would they stand with these workers, who are some of the lowest-paid civil servants we have, as they fight for wages that keep pace with inflation?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, a lot of what I was talking about earlier had to do with services over the last several years, where we saw an immigration backlog of over a million people, veterans waiting four years for disability insurance, and of course the whole passport fiasco.

All of that has existed over the last so many years, and this is at a time when the government has increased the bureaucracy, doubled the cost of the bureaucracy, and spent billions of dollars on consultants, yet we have fewer services.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, for eight years, Conservatives warned that the cost of this NDP-Liberal government would fuel inflation, hike interest rates and drive up the cost of living for all Canadians. The Liberals are spending more than ever before, while everyday Canadians are struggling more than ever before. That is the consequence of the costly coalition's agenda to tax and spend recklessly.

Budget 2023's \$70 billion in new spending will have to be covered by \$4,300 from every Canadian family in the taxes they pay. Since 2019 alone, the Liberals have increased spending by \$120 billion, and most of it was not related to COVID. The Liberal deficit is now over \$40 billion a year, and the debt will hit \$1.3 trillion in only five years from now.

This Prime Minister has added more debt than every other prime minister before combined. His own finance minister confirms that debt interest has increased 80% in the last three years. That is \$43.9 billion a year, or 10% of all government spending. These are shocking numbers that are hard to conceive of. In reality, they mean that, if a Canadian paid taxes this year, they paid \$1,400 dollars just to service the Liberals' debt, not even to pay it down. So much for the Prime Minister's 2015 promise of three years of \$10-billion annual deficits.

Government Orders

What the Liberals have done is exactly what Conservatives warned about. This budget will up the debt, up how much Canadians pay for it and up the cost of everything in daily life. This is all while Liberals drive away private sector investment, businesses and jobs in key sectors, such as natural resources, which make outsized investments and pay outsized taxes compared to all other sectors for the public services and programs that Canadians value.

Liberal meddling makes life more expensive for people in Lakeland and across Canada. The January 2023 Liberal tax hikes already cost Canadians over \$300 more this year, when half of Canadians are already \$200 away from bankruptcy.

The Liberal carbon tax will cost Canadians in Lakeland nearly \$3,000 dollars a year only seven years from now, and it will immediately take another \$700, which they do not have, from them this year alone. While the Liberals may claim otherwise, the independent PBO is clear that their carbon tax increases the cost of literally everything, which is why Canadians pay more than they will ever get back from these Liberals.

Across all provinces where the Liberals have imposed their carbon tax, four in five Canadians will pay more than they get back, which is the truth, while nearly half of Canadians are forced to borrow for basics and have no emergency savings. More than ever before, 1.5 million Canadians have to go to food banks to make ends meet, and 69% of seniors have to work longer than planned now because NDP-Liberal spending-driven inflation has killed the purchasing power of their retirement savings.

What is the Liberals' response? It is to increase taxes and increase spending to wipe out any savings Canadians have been able to keep, and then have the gall to ask struggling Canadians to be grateful when the few who meet complicated criteria get a one-off cheque for a couple hundred dollars in the mail, which does not come close to covering the costs most Canadians face because of these Liberals. They are so out of touch, and Canadians are out of money.

The truth is that lower taxes and attractive business conditions always result in more revenue for governments. The Liberals do this backwards. Under the former Conservative government, foreign investment averaged \$55.6 billion annually in Canada while major projects flourished. Under these Liberals, there has been a big drop to \$39 billion a year.

Government Orders

There are big problems with the Liberals' plans for natural resources in budget 2023. The Liberals should not aim to match the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act's \$394 billion in subsidies, which is more than Canada's total annual revenue. The Liberals did try, with billions in badly targeted subsidies, but the tax credit incentives will not actually incentivize and expand energy transformation in Canada as well as they could, and I will explain why.

The U.S. IRA has technology-neutral production tax credits for low-emissions electricity or parts manufacturing, which means established and multipronged, profitable energy companies can keep investing in these technologies. However, in Canada, the Liberals cut out every oil and gas company from eligibility for the clean technology investment tax credit, the very companies who currently fund 75% of Canadian clean tech investment in this country overall. The Liberals' tax credit encourages them to put those investments in the U.S. and other countries, where it would be welcomed and rewarded.

• (1720)

Meanwhile, labour conditions on the Liberals' tax credits, which will infringe on negotiated agreements, are likely to harm exclusive solar and wind companies' ability to access the credits since their workers are often unskilled labourers and the companies just cannot meet the Liberals' targets. The Liberals obviously make bad investments with tax dollars, with a third of the budget, \$35 billion, now being sent to the Canada growth fund. Canadians probably remember the very expensive \$35-billion Canada Infrastructure Bank, which has not actually built a single thing after eight years. It is so bad that Parliament's transport committee even says it should be abolished.

Now the Liberals are putting billions into the Canada growth fund, run by the board which, as alleged by Hong Kong Watch late last year, invested Canadians' pension funds in companies helping the Communist Party's Uyghur labour camps. Liberals pick a couple of winners and make lots of losers when they put Canadian tax dollars into big government slush funds, where they seem to disappear and do not actually benefit Canadians.

Conservatives have a better idea. It is to cut taxes and scrap the anti-energy, anti-private sector agenda that drives money and businesses away, so Canada can be a world leader in energy and environment technology development and exports without a single taxpayer dime, instead of pumping billions into broken programs and ineffective, poorly targeted tax incentives.

Under Conservatives, the private sector built three pipelines and reversed a fourth for western oil to feed eastern Canadian refineries, as well as attracted proposals for export pipelines in both directions. In contrast, after eight years, the Liberals have killed five pipelines that would have increased Canadian export capacity, and then they even bought TMX because they refused to give the legal and political certainty for the proponent to get it built after approval. In the least surprising, and most brutal, news ever, its cost has ballooned over 350%, from \$6.8 billion in the private sector to \$30.9 billion today. It should have been in service four years ago, and it is not even built.

The whole NDP-Liberal agenda is designed to hinder Canadian oil and gas, the leading export and private sector investor in the

economy, but they are just fine with oil imported from the U.S. and from regimes with lower environmental and human rights standards, while landlocking Canadian resources and innovation, and gatekeeping our ability to help lower emissions globally. Instead of attracting foreign investment to Canada, Liberals choose to pay tens of billions of tax dollars to major foreign companies just to get them to do business here.

Canada used to have competitive advantages to attract investment, but instead, in a recent announcement, the Liberals are paying \$4.3 million tax dollars per job to get a company to expand. That is because they have added layers of new red tape and taxes that drive away the private sector investment and tax revenue that comes from these projects, while they made government less efficient. Maybe the worst part is that their anti-energy policies do not even do what they claim. Their record on emissions reduction is that, after eight years, every year emissions have increased, except for one year, which was 2020, when governments locked Canadians down.

They also promised to plant two billion trees, but the Auditor General says they will not even get 4% of that done by the 2030 deadline. They cannot even claim to know their policies work because the Auditor General also said, "Environment and Climate Change Canada did not measure or report on the contributions of each selected greenhouse gas regulation", but the Liberals are doubling down with their fuel regulations, a second carbon tax that will cost Canadians another \$1,300 dollars more a year and a 13¢-a-litre increase to gas. Their own research shows it would "increase energy prices" and "disproportionately affect lower- and middle-income households", as we have always warned.

The Liberals plan more mandates, more standards and more regulations to come, which will hike costs for everyday Canadians and businesses. On top of imposing these extra costs, which producers in competing countries do not face, their permitting system for natural resource development is broken. Canada is second last in OECD countries and 64th in the world for building permits.

The Liberals are talking a big game about critical minerals around the world, but it takes 30 years, and they have made no changes. They talk about sending out LNG, but they have allowed 18 proposals under their watch to be abandoned, and they leave Canada behind. It is a travesty. Conservatives would cut taxes, cut red tape, reward people who are hard working and unleash Canadian private sector investment and innovation to help lower global emissions and get our economy back on track while protecting taxpayers.

• (1725)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member brought up the carbon tax on a number of occasions. I will say one thing, which is that we are consistent on this side. We ran on it in 2015. We implemented it. We continue to stand by it because we know and believe that it has been widely recognized throughout the world as a solution to combatting the emissions out there. However, we cannot say the same thing about Conservatives, because they seem to flip-flop back and forth as to how they feel about a price on pollution.

Can the member comment on what it was like in 2021 when she was going around knocking on doors and selling people on the price on pollution, which her leader, the member for Durham, was advocating at the time? Perhaps she did not agree with it, but can she tell us—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, my team and I did knock on 10,000 doors in Lakeland over the course of the campaign. I can just confirm that I never sold that plan, and Conservatives have resolved this issue. We will axe the carbon tax. I would like to talk about the initiatives that Canada can offer the world to help lower global emissions, which is the goal that the member says he wants to achieve with his carbon tax but clearly cannot.

Let me go back to the issue around critical minerals. Fewer than half of the mining applications in the last eight years have actually gone ahead under the Liberals. Canada has a huge opportunity to produce critical minerals and rare earth metals for our own self-sufficiency and secure development of the fuels of the future, and to export them. However, the Liberals' red tape keeps the minerals in the ground, while competitors and hostile regimes dominate globally. That is the exact same thing that is happening with LNG. When our allies are begging for Canadian LNG, these guys stand in the way.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Lakeland for her speech.

What stands out for me is that she presented a vision that is very typical of the Conservative Party, and that is to cut taxes and keep cutting them. I wonder if the only way to act in the public interest will always be to cut everything or to spend everything.

[English]

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question because it reveals just how backward this is and what a mess

Private Members' Business

the Liberals have made. Lower taxes and attractive business tools that attract private sector investment always actually result in a government's gaining higher tax levels, more taxes and more revenue that they can then put into the programs and services that Canadians value.

The course that the Liberals are sending this country on is a betrayal of all future generations. It is an absolute catastrophe for the competitiveness and economic opportunities of our country while Canadians are struggling more than ever before. The government has to put needs before wants and establish clear priorities. It does not have a revenue problem. It does have a spending problem. It needs to cut taxes and red tape to make sure the economy can keep—

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member, who will have a minute and a half after Private Members' Business to conclude with questions and comments.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

COPYRIGHT ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-294, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (interoperability), as reported (with amendment) from the committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There being no motion at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC) moved that the bill, as amended, be concurred in.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I request that it be carried on division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

Private Members' Business

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to once again be able to rise in this place and speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-294. This time, it has reached a new stage, at third reading, in the House of Commons. It is also important to acknowledge many of our fellow Canadians who are listening and who have been following this bill's progress for a while now. They are watching and waiting for the necessary change that it would bring.

So far, the process of reviewing Bill C-294 has been moving along at a steady pace. It might not happen very often, but when we voted on it, this bill passed through the House of Commons at second reading with unanimous support. That was an encouraging thing to see and I remain hopeful that it can happen once again as we go through third reading and debate in the House again. Now that the committee has finished its study and the bill passed through the committee unanimously as well, I am eager to, hopefully, vote and pass this as quickly as we possibly can. There are many communities in my riding of Cypress Hills—Grasslands, in my province of Saskatchewan and all throughout this country who are counting on this bill's passing. The sooner we can help them, the better. That is what got this whole thing started in the first place.

In my first speech with respect to Bill C-294, I told the story of Honey Bee Manufacturing, which is based in my riding, because its owners are the ones who brought this issue of interoperability to my attention. It is one success story among many for small businesses in Canada and it should be allowed to continue doing what it does best. However, it is the company's larger impact on the survival of local communities in the surrounding area that really brings it home for me, so when we had witnesses appear for the committee study, it felt like I had some *déjà vu*, because some people from Honey Bee came all the way out to Ottawa just to be part of the panel. About three years earlier, they had done the exact same thing when I was a member of the industry committee and we were studying the CUSMA deal. That is when they started to raise the issue of interoperability under the Canadian Copyright Act.

The same effort to make sure that Canadian innovators and communities can thrive has been going strong ever since. Once again, during their most recent appearance, they were the best advocates for the issue because of their unique position on the front lines as the people who are the boots on the ground working on these issues each and every day. I am going to quote from a large portion of their statement to the committee, because they can speak to their own situation better than anyone else can. I quote:

We are a global company, from the people we work with to the 29 countries we export to. Honey Bee sells 50% of its product in North America and exports the remainder to the rest of the world. However, our industry is still placed on an uneven playing field versus our U.S. counterparts. Foreign platforms seek to prevent participation by Canadian brands.

Honey Bee's opportunity to capitalize on intellectual property is based on our ability to interoperate with OEM equipment platforms. Interoperability means that a Honey Bee harvest header can "plug and play" with OEM equipment. Historically, this has been provided in a straightforward and obvious way, like the way a keyboard plugs into a computer.

Today, Canadian industry is technically blocked by some dominant international brands, with the impact being a loss of substantial market participation opportunity. The net result is "authorized use only". This is controlled by OEM digital locks and keys that are unavailable to manufacturers of implement. Instead of spending our research budget on innovation, we are burning it on adaptation.

It is important to state that in no way should Canadian manufacturers, dealers and—most importantly—farmer customers be at a disadvantage on choice. Histori-

cally, we had an integrated farm equipment market in North America and abroad. Honey Bee innovation caters to the specific needs of many markets and considers their unique environments, practices and crops. Meeting these challenges brings Canadian innovation to the world. The impact of technical lockout by OEMs will be the collapse of our Canadian implement manufacturing industry, which will decimate many of our smaller communities.

Throughout the different stages of Bill C-294, I have talked a lot about Honey Bee specifically. It is a good example of short-line manufacturing in particular, but it is always important to emphasize that the issue of interoperability is something much larger and more significant than a single business or any one single type of product. In their presentation, the people from Honey Bee made a point of passing on support for the Agricultural Manufacturers of Canada and the North American Equipment Dealers Association, whose representatives were unable to attend the proceedings on that particular day. They mentioned that those two industry associations represent 240 members and 4,000 members, respectively.

In addition, the committee heard directly from other witnesses who were present. Along with members of the Canada West Foundation, there were various stakeholders and experts who specialize in copyright or related areas of public policy. Overall, it is fair to say that the testimony provided to the committee was overwhelmingly supportive of Bill C-294 and what it is aiming to do.

● (1735)

For the benefit of my colleagues who were not at the committee meetings but are participating in this debate tonight, I will try to quickly provide some highlights from the study. One of the witnesses, Anthony Rosborough, is a lawyer with relevant expertise. He explained part of the issue this way:

In the world of embedded computer systems and the Internet of things, interoperability is synonymous with innovation.

Bill C-294 reflects this reality, and it reflects the needs of Canadian innovators by not allowing manufacturers to prevent competition in secondary markets under the auspices of copyright.

In another part of his opening statement, he added:

This bill takes the right approach by broadening the application of the interoperability exception to include not only computer programs but also devices in which they are embedded. This is crucial, because the distinction between the computer program and the computing hardware is much less clear than it once was. In the past, it may have been easier to distinguish between hardware and software, but when software now controls the physical functioning of devices and components, the software and hardware blend together. As I wrote in my 2021 article, the Copyright Act's conceptualization of interoperability needs to reflect today's computing and innovation paradigm. Computers are no longer just boxes with screens and keyboards. They are cars, home appliances, pacemakers, agricultural equipment and learning technologies.

With the rapid pace of changing technology, it is no surprise we need to update the Copyright Act after its most recent update over 10 years ago. The focus of Bill C-294 is to update our legal enforcement of TPMs so they are not misused to stifle creativity and innovation. That was never their original intention, and we have to make sure our law is applied fairly and with common sense. Over the last decade, the use of digital locks has been spreading far beyond the simple protection of creative works.

Dr. Alissa Centivany, who works as a professor and researcher, provided more detail and context about TPMs. In her opening remarks, she said:

TPMs were originally intended to create artificial digital scarcity so that creators of creative and artistic works who feared that the burgeoning Internet would lead to unfettered infringement on their works online wouldn't lose all incentive to create. Times have changed. We can now see that TPMs overshot their original mark. Today TPMs are used to restrict a wide range of lawful non-infringing activities that bear no relationship to protected works at all. By being keyed to access rather than infringement, TPMs have been a disaster for consumers....

TPMs lock consumers and third parties out. They also lock us in to ongoing relationships with companies and service providers whether we like it or not. We live in walled gardens, platform bubbles and tech silos—disconnected, closed worlds—and we are largely stuck because restrictions on interoperability have enabled switching costs to rise to untenable levels. We lack the economic agency to leave for an alternative or substitute provider. No matter how nice the trappings might appear at times, a cage is still a cage.

On a similar point, a witness for the Public Interest Advocacy Centre added:

In order to achieve improved access to compatible goods, competing companies must be able to examine each other's software for the purpose of developing interoperable products. Currently, manufacturers use TPMs to deny competitors access to the information, preferring instead to make goods that can only be used in conjunction with other products that they manufacture in a closed loop that encourages anti-competitive lock-in.

It was good for us to hear some of the academic input in committee. It helped us to step back and hear about the issue in a way that shows how broad and far-reaching it can be. While most people do not think of interoperability very often, if they ever do at all, it is still an issue that affects us as consumers or as businesses in a competitive marketplace. This issue has so many aspects and we only have a limited amount of time for debate.

There were some points of disagreement between different witnesses, although there seemed to be almost consensus that Bill C-294 is going in the right direction and would improve an outdated version of the Copyright Act. It reaffirmed the all-party support that this bill received at second reading. We are moving forward with the same principles that the Copyright Act has always maintained.

• (1740)

This bill is not doing something new. It is only responding to recent changes in the marketplace that have caused innovators and consumers to lose ground they once had. All we are trying to do is get back to the right balance, which we had before. Interoperability has existed all along and was taken for granted. It is an essential part of our economy that we cannot afford to lose. Bill C-294 has a simple solution. We would have a limited exemption for interoperability with clear and meaningful language that is currently lacking.

Something else that should be discussed at this stage is the amendment that was made to the bill at committee. The original

Private Members' Business

draft that I introduced had a separate section with specific language about manufacturers. With the example of Honey Bee and similar businesses out there, it is absolutely necessary for the legislation to protect what they are doing. At the same time, I have acknowledged from the start that our approach to copyright has to be compliant with our trade agreements. The additions to the bill have taken a careful look at our agreements and have expanded the scope of the bill in some ways. That is what we are trying to do by using newer language about “lawfully obtained computer programs”, instead of specifically mentioning manufacturers.

To be clear, the intent of this bill remains exactly the same as it was in the first version. We want to guarantee manufacturers the right to circumvent TPMs for the purpose of interoperability. That is non-negotiable. For my part, I agreed to accept this amendment from the government on the understanding that this would be the case. I have been assured that this is what the bill's language would do in practice if it is, hopefully, passed.

Along with the need to use technical language that is in harmony with our trade agreements, I want to reassure my colleagues across the House once again about our relationship with our trading partners, especially the United States. For the agricultural sector, we are seeking an exemption for interoperability that is equivalent to what already exists south of the border. Their system for regulating copyright is quite different from ours in practice, but this bill is trying to accomplish the same goal, mainly for our farm equipment, but also across other parts of the economy.

We did hear some testimony at committee about the potential benefits of imitating the U.S.'s regulatory approach, and that could be a conversation worth having. That will have to be on another day. It is not the intent of this particular bill. What we wanted to deal with is what is not happening in Canada, and we need to catch up. Sometimes we have to move faster than the speed of bureaucracy, which is why we are taking this legislative approach.

As it stands, our consideration of Bill C-294 has helped to show how we might want to improve the Copyright Act in other ways, such as by having a more flexible approach that can be accomplished through regulation, but that is a much larger issue than is typical or realistic for a private member's bill. I will leave that to the government side to figure out, and I hope the work we have all done together on Bill C-294 will help that out.

I have a lot of hope that we can move forward with this bill and see it quickly pass this House and move on to the other place, where hopefully it can receive royal assent.

Private Members' Business

• (1745)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just want to circle back to some of the member's reflections on the Canada-U.S.-Mexico trade agreement, which I know Conservatives were concerned to see pass very quickly. Of course, this was one of those extant issues. I am wondering if he could speak a bit to how he thinks our trade partners might respond to something like this and what the consequences could be.

We know we are under some other trade agreements. Of course, CUSMA does not have the same investor-state dispute settlement provisions as NAFTA did, but I wonder if he is aware of what some of the risks are in terms of other parties. There is a nation-to-nation dispute mechanism in CUSMA, for instance. How might that be received, and what kinds of risks might Canada have to consider in moving ahead with something that makes a lot of sense for people in the Canadian economy, who should have the right to repair their own equipment?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I think the important part is that we are not trying to go above and beyond what the Americans already have. They have kind of set the standard right now around the world for how interoperability can be achieved. As I said, their mechanism is different, but what we are trying to do is only come up to and match what they already have, so that way we are not setting a new precedent. Hopefully one day the government can do that, but right now we are just trying to match what they already have.

Within CUSMA, we heard both from the department officials and from some of the other witnesses that there is a legislative process that does allow us to expand the scope of TPMs or the ability to circumvent TPMs without being in circumvention of CUSMA. We also looked at how this bill could impact some of the other trade deals we are already in with other countries and also the future deals we might be signing. As of right now, there are no negative implications for any of our trade deals. This does fit within that narrative, and we should be okay.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we spent, in second reading, a great deal of time with a focus on the agricultural industry, and justifiably so given the nature of the bill. However, the whole issue of the right to repair goes far beyond just the agricultural community. I wonder if the member might want to share some thoughts on that particular issue.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I think it is important to distinguish between right to repair and interoperability. What we are trying to focus on with this bill is solely the ability for people to manufacture add-on products that will go along with the tractor. We can think of it in a technological sense. For example, if we have a Windows tablet but buy a Lenovo mouse, we just plug it in and it works. That, in and of itself, is interoperability to its core. However, imagine if Windows were to implement something on the side of the computer so that only a Windows mouse would do. Apple has previously done this with its chargers and different connection cords. The European Union has taken measures to simplify things. I will give the government credit: In its budget, it did provide some wording around trying to move to a single charge cord. That is interoperability right there: a single standard.

The agriculture sector has previously used a single standard for electrical and hydraulic connections. However, some of the main OEMs are trying to redo that, so they have proprietary connectors. This is what is happening right now in agriculture, which is why I have specifically gone after the agricultural side of it, but it does apply to more than just agriculture in the economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands on his leadership, diligence and passion when it comes to the subject of interoperability, particularly in the agriculture sector.

When a private member's bill goes to committee, sometimes compromise is needed. I would like to know if my colleague is satisfied with how the bill is currently drafted.

What does he think could be improved in this bill? Is he satisfied?

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I think the big thing is that initially we were trying to have a specific, carved-out exemption for manufacturing because we wanted to recognize that when we talk about a manufacturer, we are specifically talking about a corporate entity. However, by removing that and broadening the language, it does apply to more of the economy than just the manufacturing sector.

The amendments do provide a broader application to it, and the Copyright Act does have a very broad scope and application to it. We did want to keep it confined to a specific thing, but in the same breath, I do see the benefits of having it broadened, and with the advice of the analyst, we did so to help provide a bit more certainty and clarity with trade deals and other things.

• (1750)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the manner in which the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands made his presentation on the bill. I also had the opportunity to speak to it previously.

I believe that as a government, and as members on all sides of the House, we have an appreciation for consumers, and it is important that we take legislative and budgetary actions where we can in order to support consumers. That is the way I look at this piece of legislation.

Although the emphasis is in one area, the example I was going to use is the one the member made reference to, which is that of Apple. I recently purchased an Apple iPad. When I say "recently", it was a number of months ago. The Apple iPad now has a different end on it, so if I have other Apple products I cannot use the same charger, nor plug in a headset to listen. If I want to listen to a video, I have to buy a special attachment, which Apple of course is the first to produce, at a prime price. This is something very serious, and it gives the bill a great deal of merit.

A number of years ago, when I was much younger than today, I can recall being out in the area of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. They were stowing a farm, and they had the big John Deere tractors back then. What was really impressive was how this individual, and the family, understood every aspect of the machinery. It is truly amazing how our farmers in the Prairies understand farm machinery. It very much matters should something go wrong on the farm, if they are cultivating their field and they have a computer issue or a part issue, or if they want an add-on. If we want to talk about innovators, we can look to our farmers and we will see innovation in many different ways, in how they can modify equipment to enable the operation of that piece of machinery to ultimately do a far better job because they are using it first-hand.

Therefore, when we talk about interoperability and how technology has changed over the last number of years, we find that the initial thinking behind it, in dealing with issues like the Copyright Act, made a whole lot of sense because as a government we want to encourage and promote creativity and innovation. That is one of the reasons why it is important that we have the Copyright Act, whether it is with respect to our cultural industry or our economic industry, which is specific to things such as manufacturing.

That is why we have the legislation. That is why we have governments around the world, in particular western governments, that have recognized that if they want to support state-of-the-art technological advancements or creativity, they need to have copyright legislation. Generally speaking, it has been very effective. However, when we look at the TPMs and the advancements in technology, in particular in the whole area of computers, we can very quickly understand why in recent years we have seen issues come to the table that I do not think people had really anticipated. I can try to relate to it from a personal perspective.

• (1755)

At one time, I had a car where I could take the motor apart and put it back together and it would actually run. Today, if a person pops the hood of a vehicle, it is truly amazing how the computer is intertwined with the running of the vehicle itself. In the past, one could go to third party manufacturers to pick up the necessary parts and make some modifications so that the vehicle or the tractor would be able to do the things that it was meant to do.

Those are the types of concerns I think that most of us have. This inability was put in place by things like TPM, or better known as digital locks, and particularly through the advancement of computers. The days when someone would look at a motor and attach some wires to it to try to find out what the issues were are long gone. Now we can plug in one thing and it will do a complete diagnostic. Nowadays, through the Internet, we can get notifications telling us when it is time to have an oil change done on a vehicle. Those are the types of advancements that we see in technology. It has actually gone to a degree in which TPMs are now being utilized in such a fashion that it is not friendly to the consumer. That is why there is a need for us to take a look at the act to ensure that there is a heightened sense of fairness to the individual who owns the product or to the third party manufacturers. That is a very important industry to be taken into consideration.

Private Members' Business

Talking about the Copyright Act, we need to balance consumer rights and competition. I appreciate the member made reference to the bill, Bill C-294, being at committee with presentations being made. Some suggestions from the government were actually incorporated, I suggest, for good reason.

In the chamber I have talked about the importance of international trade for Canada. That is of the greatest importance. International trade and the trade agreements that Canada has entered into need to be respected. Having these agreements in place, we cannot just pass anything that we feel ultimately makes a whole lot of sense too quickly; due diligence must be done. If we were to unknowingly pass something that has an impact, we could potentially be in violation of a trade agreement that could cause other repercussions. I know this should concern all members of the House as we do not want to be in violation of agreements or areas of the legislation meant to promote and protect innovation and creativity.

I think, in listening to the member and having somewhat of an understanding of the legislation, that the legislation will in fact improve upon the system. That is why, I suspect, the member is getting the support because it is indeed a step forward. This government has been a champion of consumer rights and competition. Therefore, I suspect that it will be getting the support of the government.

• (1800)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak on the importance of this interoperability bill, a key initiative in protecting consumer rights and encouraging innovation.

However, it is equally important to prevent this legislation from being used to restrict competition or limit the consumer's ability to use products and services they lawfully purchased themselves.

I would like to acknowledge the work of the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands. He answered questions from us and showed a strong command of the topic. I think that all members of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology would agree that many companies will use this new provision of the Copyright Act as intended. I would also like to underscore the work of the member for Halifax and parliamentary secretary, who managed to get us all on board despite our conflicting positions during the negotiation phase.

Like the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, I also come from a rural area, and all too often our farmers, miners and others find themselves stuck in closed ecosystems. In other words, if a farmer purchases a John Deere tractor, and a company has developed a piece of machinery with the features he needs and that suit him, as it stands, it is quite possible that the elements are not interoperable, that they cannot connect to one another. Bill C-294 will allow the company in question to develop a connector so that the machine can be used properly with a John Deere tractor.

The Bloc Québécois will be voting in favour of Bill C-294 at third reading.

Private Members' Business

Interoperability is an important concept in the digital world, too. This is about IT products and services being able to work together, regardless of their origin.

In the copyright context, interoperability means that consumers can legally use the products and services they have purchased with other products and services, even if they are produced by other companies. This might seem obvious, but in practice, companies can use the Copyright Act to limit the interoperability of their products and services with those of other companies.

For example, a company can use technological copyright protection measures to keep consumers from using a product or service with another product or service that has not been approved by that company. That can have major negative consequences for consumers and innovation. Consumers can find themselves stuck in a closed environment where they are forced to use the products and services of a particular company. That can make it difficult for competitors to compete with these companies, which can stifle innovation and lead to inferior products and services. I could cite the example of Apple products, which can only connect with other Apple products.

The interoperability bill seeks to address this problem and allow consumers to circumvent technological copyright protection measures used by companies to limit the interoperability of their products and services. It amends the Copyright Act to allow interoperability in certain circumstances. Specifically, Bill C-294 proposes to introduce a copyright exception to permit the creation of products and services that are compatible with other copyrighted products, provided that it is done in a fair and equitable manner. This exception to copyright would allow developers to create compatible products and services without infringing on other companies' copyrights. This could pave the way for greater competition and innovation in the technology industries.

In addition, the interoperability bill would help strengthen consumer rights. Consumers would be able to freely choose the products and services they prefer without being limited by digital locks. It may also encourage companies to offer higher quality products and services, as they would be forced to compete on the basis of quality and innovation, rather than on the basis of digital locks.

It should also be noted that the interoperability bill would not affect companies' legitimate copyrights. They would still be able to protect their products and services with copyrights and prevent their illegal use. However, they would not be able to use copyrights to block interoperability and prevent competition. In committee, I wondered in particular about the video game industry, for example, and the possibility of copying games and putting them on other platforms such as online streaming platforms.

The interoperability bill is also important for researchers and universities. They often need to access data and proprietary software to conduct research, which can be easier with interoperability. This could encourage research and innovation in a wide range of areas, from medicine to technology.

Finally this bill could help boost Quebec's economy by encouraging competition and innovation, especially in the regions. Interoperability could stimulate the creation of new companies by mak-

ing it possible for emerging companies to create products that are compatible with existing products without having to develop a new ecosystem from scratch.

• (1805)

This could also help more established companies to innovate and remain competitive by offering goods and services that are more user-friendly and adaptable. This is an important initiative for the future of innovation and competition in Canada. It will allow consumers to freely choose the goods and services they prefer, help stimulate research and innovation and encourage the creation of new and innovative companies.

This bill brings something positive for consumers, since it frees us from the limitations that many companies tend to impose on their clients, preventing us essentially from becoming prisoners of the original software owner. I commend the companies that do not resort to the act, that allow interoperability and do not obstruct it. If this bill gets through every stage, which has become highly likely on this side of the House, it will be the standard for all. There are many companies that come to mind that illustrate good practices and the benefits for consumers. If there is one thing to remember, it is that interoperability opens infinite possibilities to use the technological tools we have in better ways.

We need to think about the enjoyable and user-friendly tools people want to work with. That is what the bill addresses. Take a cell-phone, for example. It is much more than a telephone; it is a pocket computer that can be used for all kinds of activities. To make it even more versatile, we can download many different apps that get added to the operating system and add new functions to it. Without interoperability, would the use of this device be so widespread? I doubt it. The answer is obvious.

I invite all my colleagues to support this bill and to work to promote it. By working together, we can create a more equitable, innovative and prosperous future for everyone. The idea is to dissuade businesses from developing products in a vacuum. I will repeat the same message this evening: We need to shift to a new paradigm and stop throwing money away. Repairability and interoperability are principles that need to be enshrined in the Copyright Act. We have to do much more with fewer resources. This realization is already reflected in Quebec's new laws and policies. It also helps to prevent waste and planned obsolescence.

I want to thank the many witnesses and all the companies that made submissions. They have contributed to an initiative that originated in the work of an MP who was able to reflect the needs his constituents, as well as those in many other ridings.

In closing, I would like to point out that the Copyright Act can be reformed in many other ways. I am thinking in particular of the people from Copibec, who appeared before the Standing Committee on Science and Research today. They basically told us the same thing they have told us in the past. There is recommendation 18 of a report by the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage from 2019. The Standing Committee on Industry and Technology has already done a lot of research as well, but I am referring to this recommendation because it could take the Copyright Act further. To be clear, the fair dealing provisions do not apply to educational institutions if the work is commercially available. This creates a whole imbalance in terms of funding for creation in the science and research publishing community. This law prevents full funding because universities do not have to pay dues or royalties. Another example of how the Copyright Act will need to be reformed in the near future is to include all the issues involving artificial intelligence, where interoperability will certainly have many possibilities, but also some limitations.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise on Bill C-294, an to amend the Copyright Act regarding interoperability. I want to thank the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for introducing this legislation.

As I have mentioned before, private members' bills go through a certain process in this House. This bill builds on previous work done in the House of Commons and at the industry committee. It is almost like a cousin to some of the right to repair work I have done in the past. In particular, this is work related to technological protection measures, or TPMs, which can interfere with the reuse or use of different types of electronics. Many times TPMs are done through a loophole in the Copyright Act that allows them to be used in a way that reduces competition, reduces the ability for products to have an extended life and reduces the ability for individuals to repair an item and for other companies to employ technologies.

What we have, basically, is a system that can be abused to stop devices from talking to each other and, importantly, from being part of the Canadian economy in many different ways. I know we often use it in agriculture, but it is also about other electronic devices, entertainment devices, programs, services and gear. What ends up happening is that we get a lot of waste and get a lot of different ways to reduce competition, affecting small business and innovation. We have a number of different situations where it can be used to create a monopoly in and dependence on different types of industries.

We heard at committee some really good testimony about this. Several witnesses came forward from across the country at the industry and technology committee to talk about the challenges we have. We also had some good testimony regarding what is going on with the United States and the fact that it is a little more advanced than we are in this situation.

This bill would not be the end-all, cure-all for many of the situations we have, but it is a great step forward to start dealing with some of the unfair practices that take place with TPMs. Again, TPMs are technological protection measures.

Private Members' Business

What they can do is lock in customers. That way, a customer who has been using a certain product, which could be in the farming industry, for example, or another one, is actually stuck with a supplier. That type of product might have been used with something else in the past, but because of the use of technological protection measures, a person is required to make a change and shift into a company's other products, not by innovation but by a designed attempt to circumvent other competition.

In the past, I have worked on the right to repair issue related to automotive. My right to repair bill has been retabled. It would provide more consumer protection, would reduce environmental degradation and would increase public safety.

In the past, automaker companies that were original equipment manufacturers, or OEMs, would block the fixing or servicing of vehicles through non-competitive practices to ensure we had limited places to go to fix a vehicle. Why is that important? It is important because if someone has no choice, they are going to need to pay more, which is one thing. Also, people in rural, agricultural or remote communities may not even have access to some of the services and may have to ship or drive their vehicles hundreds of kilometres away, which is bad for the environment and bad for public safety.

I come from Windsor, Ontario, which is right across from Detroit, Michigan, in the United States. In my situation, I could get my vehicle fixed two kilometres away when crossing into the United States, but because Canada was behind with its measures, I could not in Canada. The suppliers, the original manufacturers, would not provide information. In the United States, for the most part people can get this through a number of measures, because its laws are much more restrictive on anti-competitive practices. It is still an issue there and different states are dealing with it, but it has a bit of a better situation.

● (1810)

I tabled legislation, which went through this chamber and passed, on the right to repair, but a voluntary agreement with automakers was created instead. We wanted a full law, but at that time, the industry agreed we could try a temporary solution to it. We basically got a field goal instead of a touchdown on the issue.

Private Members' Business

The problem is that we now have a new digital age where technological protection measures are much easier to embed, and some companies, like Tesla, have opted out of the voluntary agreement. The voluntary agreement has a number of manufacturers that have agreed to participate. There is no free cost to this and no rip-off going on in the aftermarket. It is a way to pay for the product, have a servicing application for the product and get the training and all the necessary things needed for the product. It is not a gift. It is not stealing. It is just a way of being able to use those things.

Unfortunately, if we look at Tesla, Elon Musk is just choosing to opt out, and it is ironic that the government is allowing Tesla to put charging stations in parks and recs but is not enforcing the act. We are actually going into discussions on that. Maybe the act should not be voluntary anymore. We will see about that, but it is unfair to consumers. This is one of the reasons I support this particular bill.

With the TPMs and access to technology, it is also really clear that the agricultural community needs this right now, as this issue creates inefficiency. It puts greater stress on those in the industry, whether they have small, medium or even larger farming establishments. It also creates more pressure for services, because some of these areas are remote, as I have noted before. One of the dangers is that there are fewer options because of the geography of remote or rural areas. We put equipment either on the road or in the fields that is not operating as if in prime condition, as it should be, just because of anti-competitive measures that use a loophole in the Copyright Act.

We have been warned that the bill has to be compliant with the Canada-U.S. trade agreement. This issue was raised at length. We believe we have found a kind of sweet spot for the bill, and we will now pass it on to the Senate for it to have a review. I think that is to the credit of the entire committee, which is known for being as cooperative and collegial as it can possibly be.

One of the reasons I think the bill should go to the Senate now and get passed is that the session is coming to an end. I say it is the end now, but we have a long four weeks and then another four weeks, and believe me, that is a long time. At any rate, it will disappear before we know it. Hopefully the bill will get to the other chamber, where senators will get a chance to look at it and get it done before the end of the summer so it can go to the next process at that time.

This is the policy outcome we want with this legislation. When this type of private member's bill comes forward, it is very much focused on a particular problem and issue. It is why its merits were proven at committee. I think that is important to recognize, because the committee could have sent it back here, and it could have come back at a point where we would not have supported it. However, we have decided to support it as New Democrats, first for the issues related to competition and the TPMs, which basically use a loophole to be anti-competitive, and on top of that, for the stress already placed on the agricultural community. This is one of those unnecessary elements that should be eliminated from it.

This could have been done a long time ago; it is not a new issue, but I do want to acknowledge that it is becoming increasingly complicated to deal with. That is one of the reasons we want this to be done in a relatively quick fashion, if we can. The other House will

decide its agenda in terms of its time and what is at committee, but hopefully it can look at the bill and get it done, because there is no time to waste in the chamber on this. There will only be increased elements to consider with artificial intelligence and the other types of electronics and communication issues that take place among devices and goods and services, so this is one of the things we should clear up right away. I am happy to support the bill, and I encourage all members of the House to do so.

• (1815)

I want to conclude by thanking the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for bringing the bill forward. I think it is an important piece of legislation that would create at least one benefit to help people in our economy.

• (1820)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to take a moment to express my appreciation for the member of Parliament for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for his dedication and hard work in crafting Bill C-294. As someone who is familiar with the demands of crafting a private member's bill and who understands the complexity of the legal amendments, I recognize the effort and energy that goes into such a private member's bill. I believe that even small changes in law can profoundly impact an industry or an activity, and as such, I commend the member of Parliament for his foresight and fortitude in seeing the bill through.

I was part of the last review of the Copyright Act, and the process was like drinking from a parliamentary lobbyist's firehose. First there were calls from special interest groups to appear, and then there were calls asking to meet prior to the meeting. Then there were calls to come to committee to respond to the position of the first group by a second group, and by then the first group wanted a follow-up meeting. I think everyone gets the picture.

Copyright Act changes are full of winners and losers. Everyone wants to win, often at the expense of each other and especially consumers. This is where government is supposed to come in and make sense of it all. Unfortunately, we have seen time and time again that the government would much rather ignore issues such as these than make changes. It has preferred to make changes when needed to appease a trading partner by inserting a clause pertaining to copyright in an omnibus budget bill, rather than to see a comprehensive legislative change.

Private Members' Business

At a time when digital innovation is moving so fast, the government simply wants to wait around hoping no one will notice. Well, someone has noticed. We know that by tabling the bill, the member of Parliament for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has uncovered an important issue. I will go back to the copyright report.

In the report, we made several recommendations, which unfortunately the Liberal government has failed to pursue. For example, recommendation 19 states:

That the Government of Canada examine measures to modernize copyright policy with digital technologies affecting Canadians and Canadian institutions, including the relevance of technological protection measures within copyright law, notably to facilitate the maintenance, repair or adaptation of a lawfully acquired device for non-infringing purposes.

Most attribute this recommendation to the issue of the right to repair, which has been addressed by other private members' bills. In today's debate, I would like to focus on the last part.

Bill C-294 is all about the “adaptation of a lawfully acquired device for non-infringing purposes.” By the way, this is because some companies are utilizing technological protection measures, or TPMs. As we know, these technological locks are widely used to prevent users from accessing copyrighted content. While these rules were first put in place to protect the works of others from being stolen, such as a pirated video game or music album, we have seen manufacturers use these copyright technological protection measures to create new business models.

In one of these business models, they create a proprietary data ecosystem, one backed by terms and conditions, protected by law and copyright, and secured in the hardware by a technological protection measure. Farming is one of the first examples where this issue of interoperability has arisen.

Once a customer, like a farmer, agrees to purchase a piece of hardware, such as a tractor, a harvester or another piece of machinery, all the data and all the systems are powered using the manufacturer's technology. While this business model may seem reasonable and offer many benefits at first glance, it becomes problematic when a farmer purchases a separate piece of equipment and finds out that due to the TPMs they cannot use it. It is not that the tractor will not tow it, as it hooks up fine, but it will not function, as neither the data nor its operating system allows for interoperability.

First, this raises costs for the user, as the farmer paid for this expensive piece of equipment from another company, so there is that loss. Second, it hurts innovation and productivity, as that piece of equipment, despite it being from a rival company, may arguably lead the field among that kind of specialized equipment. That company would lose the sale, and the farmer would lose the productivity gain in using a different specialized piece of equipment. This hurts innovation overall, as firms that could make or used to make these specialized pieces are cut out of the game entirely due to this business model.

Some would ask what is wrong with that; that is competition. Well, real competition pits products and services against one another, rewarding innovation and productivity, not copyright and exclusivity. This is where Bill C-294 comes in. The bill proposes to amend the Copyright Act to allow consumers to bypass TPMs for

the purpose of achieving interoperability, like in my example of the farmer.

• (1825)

The right to interoperability is critical for consumers. In today's digital age, consumers expect to be able to access their software seamlessly on different devices and platforms. Technological locks prevent this from happening and limit consumers' right to use their purchased equipment for non-infringing purposes. Therefore, as we have heard, this argument applies to more than just farming.

The Internet of things, where every device or part has sensors or relays information, raises important questions. A good example is the standard charging cord. If a consumer purchases a generic charger that meets the specifications of a device like a phone or tablet, it should work. I contend that a phone or tablet company should not be able to deny a consumer's wish to use a different charging product just because it was bought from another supplier and works as well as the one the tablet company might offer.

If I bought a car and was only allowed to have it serviced by the manufacturer's approved vendor or was only allowed to install its approved parts, which of course would have a chip in them, there would be benefits to me and to the company. For instance, I would be eligible for a longer warranty or for discounts, I would get performance data and I would have a plan for when each new part should be replaced, so I could budget accordingly. However, what if I chose a different part or wanted to stick with a trusted mechanic? What if the car manufacturer designated under my warranty that if I used a generic part that worked as well but was not the official authorized part, the car would not start or the manufacturer might void the warranty? I am picking on that industry, and those who work in it would say this is unfair. However, is it unfair? What if a company decided it would change its model, as Microsoft and Apple did in the 1990s and 2000s, in terms of what browsers, programs or apps would be available on their networks or devices?

This is why Bill C-294 is so important. We want to see competition and innovation. We want to see profitable companies hiring workers, making investments and paying taxes, but not with a business model that disables choice by limiting interoperability.

Government Orders

It is also my hope that other members of Parliament will look at the example of the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands and show the same entrepreneurial, competitive spirit, looking at how they can make changes to the Copyright Act that are necessary and needed. This is particularly important because the government looks more and more listless; it does not want to tackle these tougher issues outlined in the recommendations in our copyright report that. To this day, they have been ignored or, worse yet, sold out policy-wise for expedience. The government has done this rather than trying to build a truly competitive copyright system.

In conclusion, the right to interoperability is crucial for consumers, and Bill C-294 proposes to amend the Copyright Act to allow consumers to bypass TPMs to achieve interoperability. This amendment would benefit consumers, promote innovation and create a more competitive marketplace. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I will start with you, but I encourage all members of this place to support Bill C-294 and to recognize the right of interoperability and how important it is for consumers and businesses alike. I hope that members of this chamber support the bill and that the other place takes it up quickly.

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to express my support for Bill C-294, which is now at the last step of its study in the House of Commons. I would like to congratulate and thank the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for bringing forward this initiative for us to consider.

Bill C-294 proposes a measure that removes an important barrier to the interoperability of products in the copyright framework. The Copyright Act already includes an exemption permitting the circumvention of technological protection measures, also known as TPMs or digital locks, to make two computer programs interoperable. However, with the increasing number of software-enabled products that include digital locks, such as smart phones and farm vehicles, achieving interoperability often goes beyond making two computer programs interoperable.

Bill C-294—

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will interrupt the hon. member at this point.

It being 6:30 p.m., the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order has dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

* * *

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that, in relation to Bill C-11, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other acts, the Senate agrees to the amendments made by the House of Commons to its amendments and does not insist on its amendments to which the Commons disagreed.

[*English*]

The Senate takes note of the Government of Canada's public assurance that Bill C-11 will not apply to user-generated digital content and its commitment to issue policy direction to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, accordingly.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard the member's response in regard to her personal position on the price on pollution. In the last federal election, 337 Conservative candidates made it very clear that they supported a price on pollution.

They are being somewhat hypocritical now to take a completely opposite position. My question for the member is this: Does she or the Conservative caucus feel any obligation whatsoever, given that it was an election platform, to the promise made to Canadians?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I already addressed that question earlier. Why do we not talk about the measures that could actually help reduce global emissions? This is what the Liberals say they want to do and are failing to do through their carbon tax, having missed every single emissions target except in the one year that governments locked Canadians down. It is LNG—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, a quick question for the hon. member for Lakeland.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in this debate and to ask a question of my very learned colleague from Lakeland. She is brilliant when it comes to the oil and gas sector.

It is unlikely, but is there anything in this budget that will actually help the oil and gas sector? If there is nothing, what could we do as Conservatives to make sure that we get the oil and gas sector up and running when we have the ability to govern?

Government Orders

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, this budget actually admits that the Liberals broke their own regulatory process for traditional sources of oil and gas and will now harm ever-increasing attempts at private sector investment in renewable and alternative energies in the future. There is \$1.3 million in this budget allotted for regulators to “improve the efficiency” of assessments and another \$50 million to help participants navigate Liberal red tape after eight years.

Let me just finish, please, the point on LNG. In the last eight years, 18 projects have been proposed in Canada. Only three have permits, and zero have been built. In the same time, the U.S. has built seven. They have approved 20 more, and they will build five more this year alone. Meanwhile, allies around the world are begging for Canadian LNG to help meet their energy needs and lower global emissions. That is what the government should focus on promoting.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House to speak about such an important democratic exercise, specifically the budget and its implementation. A budget provides a framework and a guide for the government's policy agenda. It is normally quite thick and takes a while to analyze. This bill is huge, I have to say. The government has thrown a lot in there. This type of bill is called an omnibus bill.

There are many items in the budget, but a lot of reading between the lines is still needed. The government announces things without really describing them, so we have to guess what its intentions are, what those things mean and when they will be implemented.

In this budget, I noticed that the government wants to differentiate between the investments that have already been announced and those that are forthcoming. To do that, it is putting different markers at the start of each line. Checkmarks are used for investments that have already been announced. That implies that it has been done. Arrows are used for upcoming investments. When I flip through the budget, I see a lot of checkmarks. That means that the government is announcing things a second time. That is a rather odd strategy. Announcing an investment twice does not double the amount. That is not how it works. The government needs to stop treating us like fools.

It is difficult to see what new announcements this government is making. For example, in the housing section, all we see are checkmarks. There is nothing more for the regions of Quebec, despite the fact that they too are experiencing a housing crisis. The housing crisis is not something that is only happening in big cities. There is a crisis in the largest regions of Quebec and in the smallest, and I am sure that the same is true elsewhere in Canada. Unfortunately, the funding is not reaching the smaller regions.

I do not like it when politicians criticize everything all the time. We see this every day, and I believe it does nothing to counter the cynicism people feel toward politics and toward elected members who find fault with everything.

I looked at the budget that was brought down in Quebec City shortly before the one in Ottawa. The opposition parties had some

harsh criticisms. They ranted and raved, saying there was nothing good in the budget. I decided I would do my homework and acknowledge the good things when it was Ottawa's turn. It is nice for our constituents to see us commend things instead of always criticizing the government. It is nice to note the positive things, the aspects that are good, while pointing out what could have been done better.

When I received the federal budget, I realized that it would be hard to point out the good things because there are not that many, especially when I look at what Quebeckers were asking for. Often, what the Bloc Québécois suggests aligns with what Quebeckers are asking for. What Quebeckers want is what we are going to bring forward and ask for in the House of Commons.

As I was saying, the bill includes nothing for housing, nothing for seniors, nothing about the EI reform we have been asking for for years, and no long-term solution to health care underfunding. I am willing to recognize the good points, but is it that hard to meet the public's expectations?

Still, I did want to go through the process of trying to find good things in this budget. For example, the government seems to want to resolve, once and for all, the uncertainty around the calculation of the taxable capital gain on intergenerational transfers of small and medium-sized businesses, especially farms. That is good. At last, this is happening. Farmers have been talking to us about this issue for a long time. Will it be resolved soon? We hope so.

Another good thing in Bill C-47 is that the government is planning to establish a real employment insurance board of appeal by incorporating elements of Bill C-37, which was introduced before the holidays. Great, that is a good thing. That is progress.

However, in all honesty, what we would have liked to see is nothing less than EI reform. That is what we have been asking for for years. Every year, unemployed workers' advocacy groups in every region of Quebec are promised that EI reform is coming and that it will be in the budget. They have been hearing this since well before 2015. Every time a budget is tabled, these groups realize they have once again been taken for a ride.

Need I remind the House that about 60% of people who lose their jobs cannot get EI, even if they paid into it with every paycheque? Need I also remind the House that it is worse for women and youth because many of them work in non-standard jobs?

● (1835)

The only other EI measure in the budget is a one-year extension of the pilot projects to provide an extra five weeks of benefits in regions where seasonal work is particularly prevalent.

We can hope that this is good news for our ridings, but obviously there is a “but” because only unemployed workers who have access to EI can benefit from that. As I was saying, unfortunately, 60% of seasonal workers are excluded from the program. Yes, it is a good measure, but there is always a “but”.

Government Orders

The problem is that the measures are temporary and ill-conceived. That is what workers in my area have been complaining about for years. We wonder whether it would be possible for the government to have a more long-term vision, or any kind of vision at all, really. The government seems to think only about tomorrow, not about what might happen in the coming years. It cannot keep using one-time cheques and temporary measures, because that will never really solve the problems that have been going on for far too long.

It is a little disappointing, and it is kind of symptomatic of this government. I believe that it would not be that difficult to put in place a more well-thought-out measure, one that might perhaps take more than two weeks to create. I understand that EI reform cannot be done quickly, but people have been proposing solutions for years, and everyone has been weighing in and saying that there are solutions and they just need to be implemented.

I will quickly address another point that my colleagues have already brought up. This is the proof that this whole thing is half-baked. Bill C-47 contains items that were in Bill C-46. We thought this meant that the GST would be doubled once again and that there would be an extra \$2-billion top-up for the health transfer. It was a nice surprise for us, but it was actually just a little mistake. When Bill C-46 was passed last week, the government forgot to remove those items from Bill C-47. These are really rookie mistakes.

I will now talk a bit about the environment. I see that time is flying and I have a lot of things to say. The government is announcing significant sums of money for the transition to a low-carbon economy. We are talking about \$80 billion over 10 years. That is a lot of cash.

To me, the energy transition means transforming our energy sources, our economic model, our consumption habits and our vision of production. That, in my opinion, is where we should be investing our money, but that is not all the government's vision. No, the government says it wants to continue to do everything the same way, but by polluting less. Obviously, we wonder how that could be done and how we can do the same thing and hope for a different result. How can we increase production while lowering greenhouse gas emissions? The government says it will be easy with carbon capture and storage technologies. Oh, that is interesting.

Now we are left to wonder whether it actually works. No one knows, because it is virtually non-existent in Canada. The Minister of Environment himself said in a Radio-Canada interview in 2021 that he wanted to lower expectations around this technology. He said that the government wanted to invest in these technologies, but added that it must be understood that nothing will happen overnight. He said that this is not the best way to reduce our emissions over the next few years. He also said we are going to need a lot of new technologies in the years to come, including things like carbon capture and storage. He said we are several years away, maybe a decade, from commercial use. That is what the minister said in 2021.

Between you and me, I would not count on it too much. This is the same government that announced in its 2015-19 policy agenda that it would ban single-use plastics by 2021. However, that ban was only put in place a few weeks ago, and it is 2023, so we will

not put too much stock in that. Considering that Canada began developing this technology in 2021, perhaps we can hope that it will be ready for 2031.

The problem is that the government has set greenhouse gas reduction targets, and the next milestone year is 2030.

The government's plan for 2030 is to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 45%. The Minister of Environment often says that our emissions are going down, but everyone knows that was because of the pandemic. Even in 2020, emissions started to go up again due to transportation and oil and gas production.

I see my time is up, and I am ready to answer questions about the environment.

• (1840)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, whom I always appreciate because she speaks so eloquently. She touched on several topics in her speech on this very important bill.

Bill C-47 is important because I believe we will achieve our government's goal of helping Canadians while being very fiscally responsible.

One of the concerns that my colleague talked about is housing, and that speaks to me because I represent Orléans. Our government has implemented a number of measures, and if we look at the history of Canada, we are probably the first federal government to put forward a national housing strategy. We know we need partners, and we respect all jurisdictions. I would like to know if my colleague supports—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, they should be proposing something. When I look at the section on housing in the budget, I do not see anything new. I see nothing new for the regions of Quebec, nothing new for the Lower St. Lawrence, nothing new for the Gaspé.

I would certainly like to support a national housing strategy, but the money has to be made available. It is not just major cities that are affected. Housing, affordable housing and social housing, is not going to get built by re-announcing amounts of money that have already been announced. There is a need for housing across Canada. The need is great in Quebec and in the regions. However, the money is not there, so it is difficult to support it.

Government Orders

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am glad that the member mentioned indigenous issues. I am wondering if she could share her thoughts on a concern I have that this budget did not do enough for indigenous housing.

While it says that \$4 billion over seven years will go to urban, rural and northern indigenous housing, that will not start until 2024 and will go over seven years. What are her thoughts on that policy?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her extremely important question. I have two first nations communities in my riding, so I am well aware of the issues. I know that they too are facing housing challenges.

This is nothing new. It has been an issue for a long time. We keep bringing it to the attention of the federal government, which throws us a few crumbs in the hope that they will solve all the problems. It is definitely not enough. As my colleague mentioned, we will not see any of that money before 2024.

I think the government could be more proactive in addressing the country's housing needs, in both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. The need is great. We are seeing it more and more. The government could certainly have done more with this budget.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague to keep talking to us about the environment, in connection with the budget.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for giving me the opportunity to continue talking about that, because it is extremely interesting. I was talking about how many megatonnes of greenhouse gas emissions Canada produces. It was 670 megatonnes in 2021. Our levels are obviously lower than they were in 2005, which is good, but it is important to remember that, when we say we want to reduce our greenhouse emissions by 40% or 45% by 2030, it is compared to the number for that base year. When we look at the overall picture right now, we have only reduced our emissions by 8.4%. We have a long way to go, and 2030 is not that far off.

We often hear the Minister of Environment and Climate Change say that we are a quarter of the way there and that everything is going well. When we are at 8.4% and we are trying to reach a target of 45%, I think it is a bit of an exaggeration to say that we are a quarter of the way there, particularly when this budget is focusing on technologies that have not yet proven to be effective. It is being said that these technologies will be ready in 10 years and that they will start giving results in 10 years. By then, 2030 will have come and gone. What are we actually relying on to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions?

I think that investing in these technologies is an underhanded way of continuing to give public funds to oil and gas companies. We are telling them to continue to produce but to pollute less as they do so.

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with great enthusiasm that I join the debate this

evening to talk about the budget implementation act and go over some of the comments I have heard today about the budget. I know the member for Edmonton Griesbach talked about Mouseland and Tommy Douglas, and I am going to get to some of those points later on.

First off, on the budget, one of the main reasons I will not be able to support this budget because the extra spending is going to cost the average family an extra \$4,300 a year, all on more spending. Conservatives, as an opposition party, laid out some of the things that we would like to see in this budget, so that we could go forward and work together.

One was no new spending. I think that the inflationary fire has burned out of control for long enough, so we had asked, before the budget came forward, for no new spending. Another thing we had asked for as Conservatives in opposition was no new taxes.

Although members may have heard this before, I ask the members opposite on the Liberal side to please not increase the carbon tax on April 1. On this side of the House, we have heard from all of our constituents that the carbon tax is adding to the price of groceries, home heating, driving one's vehicle to and from work, and driving one's kids to hockey.

We have three kids. I know our van is costing more to fill up when we are going to hockey for our three kids. It is just adding to the pressures of a family trying to make their budget last to the end of the month. That was not listened to either.

Another thing we had asked for, and our leader put this out in his policy declaration when he was going out for leader, was a two-for-one. If we are going to bring in new spending, perhaps we can find savings elsewhere so that we do not have to increase the deficit.

I remember this, and I have said it in a few of my speeches. I remember during COVID the Prime Minister went on national TV and said that the government was going to go into debt so Canadians did not have to.

I do not know if he knows how economics work, but there is no other way for the government to then get out of debt than by taking more money from the Canadians who earn it by going to work. There is no government in the history of the world that has ever earned a dollar. It only gets a dollar by taking it from someone else who has earned that dollar. My friends across the way and our friends in the NDP do not seem to understand that this is how governments get money.

My friend from Lakeland said it very well. This government does not have a revenue problem. It has a spending problem. We have seen it for years and years. I can remember back to the 2015 campaign, and my friend from Winnipeg probably can as well, when they said, "We will balance that budget in 2019." I remember that. That was a campaign promise in 2015 by the Liberals.

Government Orders

I also remember another promise by the Liberals in the 2019 campaign. They, hand over heart, said that they would never increase the carbon tax over \$50 a tonne. I remember that. We talked to people in Saskatchewan. We have not wanted a carbon tax ever, but some people who were going to support the Liberals said that, no, they are not going to increase it past \$50 a tonne. I remember having these conversations and thinking we will see.

The 2021 campaign rolls around and, lo and behold, they believed it, but now we see that it is at \$70 a tonne. It is affecting people's everyday lives now. In 2030, if the Liberals are still in government, that is going to be 41¢ a litre on gas, when the carbon tax gets to \$170 a tonne.

I do not know about many people, and I do not know if the members opposite have talked to their constituents, but I think that the price of gas has increased substantially over the last few years. I do not know anyone who can afford an extra 41¢ a litre when they fill their vehicle, whether they are going to work or taking their kids to sports or driving to school. I know that where I went to school at the University of Regina, kids drove back and forth from out of town, from Moose Jaw, from Indian Head. They drove in. That is going to be a thing of the past because I do not know a lot of students who can afford an extra 41¢ a litre on their gas.

There is something else that I wanted to touch on. I listened to the member for Edmonton Griesbach. He talked about the late, great Tommy Douglas, and there are some great things there. I see the member is coming into the chamber, and I know that he talked about—

• (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is a very simple rule that has existed for a while. There should be no mention of who is in the House or who is not.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I am excited that more people are here to listen to the second part of Mouseland. Tommy Douglas said that mice should vote for mice because if mice vote for cats, cats only govern cats.

In 2010, there was a Mouseland part two. It was delivered by Premier Brad Wall in a 2010 convention speech. I would like to read Mouseland part two for my NDP colleagues. Brad Wall stated:

It seems a great change had taken place in this magical location known as Mouseland. For many years, life in Mouseland had been going downhill because mice aren't exactly the most productive species in the animal kingdom. They don't really produce anything except droplets. What they do is wreck things that others have produced, like the time they got into the potatoes, spud coal. Now, for years, all the other animals had been sick and tired of the mice wrecking everything so a lot of them just left to Alberta. There was one mouse ... who had been around for a long time ... a long, long time. He was one of the mice who had made life difficult for the other animals, he was one of the mice who had wrecked the potatoes. But one day he even got sick of the other mice, so he packed up and moved to the land next door [known as Alberta]. The funny thing is when he got there, he told everyone, he wasn't really a mouse. He put on fake cat ears and fake cat whiskers and told everyone he was a cat. Now, no one there really believed him but there weren't very many mice in the new land next door. Not enough to wreck anything anyways so they decided to let him stay.

Now, as I was saying, after he left, a great change took place in Mouseland. The cats and the other animals had finally had enough of the mice wrecking everything and told the mice they weren't allowed to run things anymore. In fact, the place wasn't even called Mouseland. They discovered, that place called Saskatchewan.

All of the animals liked this new Saskatchewan with the mice no longer chewing up all the food, there was more food for everyone. The animals stopped moving away. In fact, new animals started moving in from near and far and for the first time that anyone could remember Saskatchewan was growing. Lots of animals who came liked to dig holes in the ground and as it turned out there was buried treasure everywhere, oil, potash and uranium, and so there were lots of new jobs digging holes and lots of new jobs for all the other animals doing things they liked to do. Things were even better jobs for the mice. There was more cheese for the mice, so they didn't have to chew on other animal potatoes anymore. Things were going so well in the new Mouseland called Saskatchewan that the mouse who had moved next door decided that he wanted to move back home [and take over]. So, he took off his fake cat ears and fake cat whiskers and he came back and announced that he was going to be the new leader [but the changes that had happened in Mouseland caused people to not want to go back to the way thing used to be. They considered it] ...the bad old days of the mice wrecking everything and driving the other animals away. Even the mice didn't seem too sure [they wanted to go back to the way Mouseland was. They weren't sure they wanted a fake cat from next door, Alberta, to come back and lead them]... Some of the mice liked the new Saskatchewan with its new abundance of cheese, some of the other mice didn't really trust him. They weren't so sure he really even was a mouse anymore. [After all, those fake ears looked pretty real.] ...as a result, the new mouse who now looked like a cat didn't have many mice [supporting him]... everything had changed, the old Mouseland and had changed to the new Saskatchewan and one day soon, all the animals would make a great choice. Did they want to follow the mouse who looked like a cat going back to the old Mouseland days or did they want to keep moving forward in the new Saskatchewan and that chapter has yet to be written.

Premier Wall gave this speech in 2010. What happened is in 2016 and 2021, he decided to move forward with a new Saskatchewan.

• (1855)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed storytime. I hope my colleagues enjoyed storytime. The whole time, I was searching for a reference to the budget, to the implementation act, to renewable energy or to any of the challenges that are being faced by the great province of Saskatchewan. As my colleague knows, my father used to live in Saskatchewan. I visited often. We have some mutual friends over there.

There is a lot in budget 2023 for Saskatchewan, particularly because prairie provinces are leading on sustainable energy, electrification, and extraction of critical minerals for batteries and for many other technologies. We have an opportunity to build a clean, prosperous and sustainable made-in-Canada economy for ourselves, the future of Canada, our children and our grandchildren.

Can the member opposite elaborate, perhaps with another story, on how many great things there are in budget 2023 for Saskatchewan?

• (1900)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I would take that comment and question as coming from a mouse because they believe that the government is always the answer to fix everything.

Government Orders

Saskatchewan was doing much better before the Liberals took power. They brought policies forward to try and make, in the government's eyes, Saskatchewan fall behind. We were doing fine with oil and gas extraction. We were doing fine with carbon capture. In fact, we have the ingenuity to move forward. The thing is that sometimes the government does not understand that it just needs to get out of the way so we can unleash our economic potential.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I certainly think that speech should be watched by all Canadians. We are in very serious times. We are dealing with a war in Ukraine that has upended inflation. We are dealing with a climate crisis.

I find it telling that the Conservatives are telling us toxic nursery rhymes about how much they hate mice and how much the world would be better if we all hated mice. This is a party that believes the world is flat and does not believe there is a climate crisis. This is a party that believes that its leader is entitled to a chef and groundskeeper, that is paid for by the taxpayer, and he lives in a mansion, when he has a house that is only half an hour away from Ottawa.

What I find concerning is that the Conservatives want to present these toxic fairytales, rather than talk about the serious issues we need to address in this nation and whether this budget is doing that. There are some great things in this budget. There are real problems in the budget, but if the member is happy reading nursery rhymes, then he is probably very happy in the Conservative caucus.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, that is the problem with the NDP. The old NDP does not exist anymore. His party is the one that started storytime with Mouseland and he thought it was really funny when his colleague talked about Mouseland and Tommy Douglas. The NDP has always been the party of “do what we say, not what we do”. That is why it is drippingly ironic that he talks down on something that his party member did.

This is a very interesting time to be an NDP member because he will talk about how the Liberals are leaving people behind, but then that member will support the Prime Minister and his party every step of the way. The NDP will do anything to make sure the Prime Minister stays in power.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to commend the member for Regina—Lewvan on having done a great job reading somebody else's speech. It is always interesting when people choose to use the words of others, rather than their own words in this place.

I thought maybe the member for Regina, of all places, might have a better handle on the Mouseland story, in which, of course, the mice are working people. I take his criticisms of mice running government as being quite demonstrative of the Conservative position over the years in respect of working people and whether they should be allowed to control their own destiny, which is the point of the Mouseland story.

I know he talked a lot about inflation. He talked about fat cats. Perhaps he will know that 25% of every inflation dollar spent by Canadians in this economy has gone not just to the oil and gas industry but to the profits of the oil and gas industry. That has not been shared with workers. That \$18 billion in extra expenses by

Canadians has gone to the oil and gas sector, and only \$650 million of it actually went into the pockets of workers.

What does he think about that?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, obviously the member did not listen to the actual story I told. It is always an honour to bring forward the words of someone like former premier Wall into this House because he was a great premier. The fact is that the Mouseland that we talked about was about bringing people together. They always want to divide and conquer, and that is not what we are going to—

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am going to bring the discussion back to the budget.

This budget is certainly not as strong a budget as one that an NDP government would table, but I am supportive of portions of it, and those portions are very important to Canadians. Because of the NDP, this budget includes structural, social supports that will increase the well-being of Canadians forever. It will strengthen the health and safety of Canadians with the biggest investment in health care in over 50 years. I am talking about the dental care program.

NDP members of the House are proud of their work to bring a universal dental care program to Canadians. Already, the Canada dental benefit has helped more than 240,000 children in this country. In 2023, by the end of this year, coverage will start for uninsured Canadians under 18, persons with disabilities and seniors who have a family income of less than \$90,000. This is important.

There were 700 people in my riding in the month of March alone asking for more information about this dental program. Seniors who were in my office just a few weeks ago talked about the pain they have been in for over two years and could not afford to have a root canal and dental surgery. This is a very important program for Canadians.

I would note that the largest day surgery for kids in this country is for the treatment of cavities. It is just not fair. If there was preventative care, we would have a lot fewer surgeries, and we would have a lot fewer children having to go through those surgeries at such a young age.

Second, there are the investments in health care in this budget, which we can thank the NDP for. There is an immediate \$2 billion Canada health care transfer to address immediate pressures on our health care system. Canadians want this. We are an aging population. Canadians are worried whether they are going to be able to access care.

I am from Port Moody—Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra in B.C., and residents are in my office many times asking about health care and finding a doctor. People are concerned. They want to know that when they need health care, it is there for them. I am happy to see those transfers here, and this budget is important for those transfers.

Government Orders

I want to take a moment to talk about the feminist lens on this budget and how important health care is to women in this country. It underpins the economy and has for a very long time. We talk about the fact that nursing is a very gendered profession. We know that long-term care and child care are very gendered professions.

I also want to take a moment for a shout-out to my NDP colleague for Winnipeg Centre who is fighting right now for decent wages for health care workers as we work through Bill C-35. It is because of their gender that women have been underpaid, undervalued and under-respected in the health care system in this country, and it continues today.

As well, I will take a moment here to shout out to immigrant women who underpin the economy and have underpinned the economy in the health care sector and in child care. They are undervalued, underpaid and under-respected. I really hope that this government will take some action on making sure that there is status for all of these immigrant women who have come here to support the Canadian economy, but have not had access to the benefits and status that they deserve.

We would be supporting this budget on those things alone, which are so important. However, I want to add the piece on murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, again, to put that gender lens on this very important budget.

This budget makes important investments in implementing the national action plan to end the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, including increased funding for indigenous-led projects, for safer communities, helping families access information about their missing or murdered loved ones, ensuring that families and survivors are at the centre of implementing the national action plan, and establishing a standing federal, provincial, territorial indigenous table on murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, which will provide a specific forum to take action on areas of shared roles and responsibilities, including prioritizing a red dress alert system. This was also an initiative of the NDP member for Winnipeg Centre.

- (1905)

This budget should be supported because we need to support indigenous communities and murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. I will mention today on this budget that the member for Nunavut was in the House yesterday talking about the need for more investments for indigenous, Métis and Inuit women in this country. It is not acceptable that this budget has not prioritized more housing.

For all of these investments, the NDP will be supporting the budget, but it does not mean that we are satisfied with it. Despite NDP wins, the Liberals continue to drag their heels when it comes to making other important investments. I refer again to indigenous housing. There is a serious lack of investment in housing for indigenous communities in this budget. The Liberals have not tackled the housing crisis at all in this budget. They have not taken it seriously.

It has been mentioned in this House that reforming employment insurance and modernizing the system is missing in this budget, as is truly addressing disability poverty. As the critic for disability in-

clusion, I will share this message with the government as I am standing in the House today. It was devastating news to the disability community that the Canada disability benefit did not have financial supports for them in this budget.

As I talk about what is missing in the budget, I want to revisit the feminist lens on employment insurance. Employment insurance reform is not in this budget. When employment insurance was first visualized and imagined, the employment rate for women was less than 50%. Employment insurance was built for men; it was not built for women. Now employment rates for men and women are the same in this country, yet women continue to be discriminated against through the system, and it is just not acceptable that a feminist government would not have brought modernization to employment insurance.

I want to go to poverty and disability poverty. We know that almost a million people in this country with a disability are living in poverty. I know there is a one-time grocery rebate in the bill, and the Liberals talk about how it is something that the disability community should be able to rest on. That is not true. It is not acceptable. A one-time grocery rebate is not a structural change in addressing poverty in this country, but the Canada disability benefit is. The government needs to get serious about that income support and reducing poverty among persons with disabilities in this country. We see it happening in our communities every day. More people have to go to food banks.

There was a study out recently on women with disabilities and their ability to earn an income in this country. They are disproportionately marginalized from adequate employment because of their gender and the intersection with their disability. The government needs to get serious about the Canada disability benefit and lifting people with disabilities out of poverty.

I am going to close with the biggest gaping hole in this budget, which is housing. I have mentioned the investments in indigenous housing, but as my colleague, the member for Nunavut, has said over and over again in this House, it is only a tiny chip on what we need in this country with respect to housing. I would say, as the government is sitting here, that housing also needs infrastructure. We have this market-driven lens on housing that is all about how many units of housing we can build and ensuring that the developers are making money. I understand we need a housing supply in this country, but we need infrastructure investments as well so we can get adequate housing built all across the country.

I will close by saying that Canadians will benefit from this budget. The NDP will be supporting it, but let us get real about housing and indigenous housing in this country.

Government Orders

• (1910)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the member's focus and concentration on housing. I would have to differ, though. The national housing strategy has given weighted importance to our affordable housing programs and providers. Many of the programs are specifically for municipalities and municipal non-profits, as well as non-profit housing providers. There is the rapid housing initiative, the housing accelerator fund, the national co-investment fund, and the list goes on, in terms of the programs we have provided to assist non-profit housing providers with social housing units.

I really appreciate the member's advocacy on this issue. Does she not see the benefit in many of the programs that her own riding and her community have benefited from as part of that? I think we are at year five or six at this point now. Those investments have been made all over Canada, specifically for non-profit housing providers. Has she not seen those benefits in her own riding and her own community?

• (1915)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, that is probably not a good question to ask me, because no, I have not. Even though there has been investment in my community, we have lost housing at a rate of 15 to one. Affordable housing has come down, and luxury condos have gone up. Up to 20% of those condos are sitting empty, and our homelessness rate is rising, our mental health impacts are rising and our opioid overdoses are rising. We cannot sit in this House saying we are doing A, B and C, when the results are not happening on the ground, and I will say that the National Housing Council just came forward with a report that said the national housing strategy is not working.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, being from B.C., I know there are many issues the member and I share in many areas. I get lots of people asking about health care. I have asked another member of her caucus the following question, and being from B.C., I think it is important to hear her answer. John Horgan, the former premier, was actually the chair of the Council of the Federation. All the premiers had asked the government specifically not to fund new, expensive, untested and, in some cases, duplicated programs, like dental care, and instead to focus on health care and giving provinces what they need. We saw for the longest time the government did not give any of those things.

How does the member square this expansion of a program, when B.C. already has a program for low-income seniors as well as for children under the age of 12? Why has she said that, instead of funding those important programs, now we have bigger government in Ottawa doing duplicative things that do not actually help people in her riding?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I am not sure, but the member might have missed when I mentioned that just in the month of March, 700 people reached out to my office for information about the Canada dental program. Dental care is health care, and we need to keep people out of the hospital when they can have dental care to proactively look after their health. In the month of March, 700 people in my riding reached out for additional information, in need of dental care.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, currently, when big emitters pay the carbon tax, the money is put aside and is used to finance green projects in the province where the tax was collected. If oil companies do not propose any green projects, they lose that money at the end of the year. This approach encourages them to move quickly.

With Bill C-47, the money would not be lost at the end of the year. Oil companies would keep the money for future projects, which would give them no incentive to hurry to implement green projects that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

What does my colleague think about that?

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I had an interesting meeting today talking to some colleagues across the country just around natural infrastructure, green infrastructure and the way to build infrastructure better in community, and there are a lot of NGOs doing this work. I have actually talked to the infrastructure minister about bringing the expertise of those NGOs together. I think that always relying on corporations is not necessarily the path to this new green economy.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in this House to speak to Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

This is also my first opportunity to address a developing situation in my riding, which is the closure of the emergency room of the Minden hospital. This emergency room serves the community. The population changes in the winter and summer months, and we are approaching the busy tourist season in just a few weeks. That is unfortunately when this emergency room is scheduled to close. Colleagues can imagine the impact this has had on the community itself.

As someone who grew up in Bobcaygeon, I unfortunately have been a client of the Minden hospital on more than one occasion and was always impressed with the service they provided. I do understand the impact this is having on the community. It is not necessarily a decision I support. I do not agree with the closure of the emergency room in Minden, especially the unfortunate timing of it.

Government Orders

The board of directors, I am sure, did not make this decision lightly. The administration, I am sure, did not make this decision lightly. I do not think it is something anybody signs up for, to close an emergency room in a small community when, in recent times, during the pandemic specifically, health care is really valued, not only in rural communities but in this country as a whole. This closure could potentially put pressure on other facilities. Of course, the closest hospital for many would be in Haliburton. Facilities in Peterborough and Lindsay are already stretched, not to mention that at the same time we are seeing growth rates that we have not seen before, many attributed to the fact that people are moving after the pandemic to start a life in what was once cottage country, or what I call paradise. I do not blame them. The area around Minden Hills is scheduled to grow at, I believe, the fastest rate in Haliburton County, so this decision is very emotional for a lot of people, and rightly so.

Immediately after this decision was made public, I was contacted by the media. I offered a few suggestions, which I am going to tie into the debate we are having on the budget today. I have also written to the ministers. That was one of the first things I did after hearing about the closure of the emergency room in Minden. The fact is that there are areas the government could be helping with and could have taken action on many years ago to help mitigate this blow.

The administration is telling us that the closure is due to staffing constraints. I think we can all acknowledge in this place that there is a global shortage in health care professionals. I hear stories all across the country oftentimes that there are shortages of nurses, doctors and PSWs. The list goes on. I think this is a very real concern and a very real challenge that the administration and the volunteer board of directors were having in Minden and that, of course, as I said, hospitals and health care facilities are having across the country.

There were many suggestions I offered about the recruitment of doctors and nurses. There are an estimated 19,000 doctors and 34,000 nurses in Canada who cannot work in their trade because they were trained abroad. There are tens of thousands of health care professionals who want to work, who want to help address this health care crisis and who could be helping communities like Minden, but they are held up by bureaucratic gatekeepers because they cannot get an answer on whether they can practise in their specific field, the field they are trained for.

I asked the minister of immigration to adopt our leader's stance on addressing this and to create a blue seal program, sort of like the red seal program where trades are recognized for their skills. We can do this in the health care field. I do not think the government has taken a leadership role in getting the provinces together to agree on a standardized test where health care professionals can travel. Not only that, but those who are coming to Canada and who have been trained abroad should be able to take a standardized test and within a decent amount of time get a yes-or-no answer on whether they can practise in that field.

- (1920)

If the answer is no, they need to know what to do to get up to that standard. If the answer is yes, that obviously speaks for itself and they can then start to practise in that field. This is a tangible

way the government could have taken action. The government could have looked into this many years ago, because this is not a surprise.

In Ontario, we had hallway health care before the pandemic. We had issues with long-term care long before. Had the government kept its eye on the ball, we might have been able to address this before the crisis and before decisions like that made in Minden. We could have potentially had these bodies, and that is a lot when we are looking at 19,000 doctors and 34,000 nurses.

The blue seal program is one solution we brought to the table, and I spoke to the media about this. Let us start addressing this and getting our health care professionals who want to work and are trained into their field.

The other issue is housing. Many of the speeches that I have been listening to today in this debate have focused on housing, and rightly so. In fact, just a few weeks before this announcement about Minden was made in Haliburton County, the town of Minden had a summit. It was a volunteer group, Places for People, that arranged a housing summit.

Haliburton County is beautiful. It is paradise, and it is probably one of the best places in this country to live, to be, to work and to play. However, in my speech, I actually mentioned the fact that health care professionals who wanted to come to the area could not find housing. Not only was it hard for the hospital to recruit, but the municipality was also having trouble recruiting executives in its leadership circle. We also heard from many tourism operators who were not able to find bodies. Housing was a real issue. The fact is that we, as a country, are not building the amount of housing we need in order to address what is in front of us today, which is a housing crisis.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Canada needs 3.5 million more homes than projected to restore affordability. That is 3.5 million homes just to address the affordability problem that we have.

Many communities say they do not have housing, and that is true. In Haliburton County, it is absolutely true. Housing has been a massive problem. It actually hurt the economy. There was opportunity to grow, but because there was nowhere to house people for businesses that they wanted to start up, to maintain or to expand, it was hard to attract people because they could not find a suitable and affordable house to live in.

Government Orders

That is something the government has failed at. It keeps touting its housing strategy, but the affordability has not gone up. The affordability problem has actually worsened. The average mortgage and rent payment has nearly doubled since the government came into power. When the Prime Minister took office, the average monthly payment on a new house was \$1,400. Today it has gone up to over \$3,100. In 2015, the average rent in Canada for a one-bedroom apartment was \$973. Today it is \$1,760. That is for a one-bedroom apartment. The average rent for a two-bedroom apartment here in Canada was \$1,172; today, it is \$2,153.

In fact, when the Prime Minister took office, someone needed only 39% of the average paycheque to make those monthly payments on that average house. That number has now risen to 62%. By every objective measurement, things are now more expensive and Canadians are taking home less.

The affordability crisis and the housing crisis are two of the biggest problems we have. This is not to mention that when we are talking about building homes and building the economy, we also need to include labour in this conversation. We have a massive labour shortage, especially in the skilled trades, which are the trades we need to build houses.

Something else the government has failed to take into account is the fact that we should be providing more incentives for those who want to get into the skilled trades. I will give the government credit. It did include some incentives for those in the skilled trades in the budget, and I thank it for that. This could have been done long before.

ROYAL ASSENT

• (1925)

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order, please. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Rideau Hall
Ottawa

April 27, 2023

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that on behalf and at the request of the Right Honourable Mary May Simon, Governor General of Canada, the Right Honourable Richard Wagner, Deputy to the Governor General, signified royal assent by written declaration to the bills listed in the Schedule to this letter on the 27th day of April, 2023, at 6:26 p.m.

Yours sincerely,

Maia Welbourne
Assistant Secretary to the Governor General

The schedule indicates the bills assented to were S-214, An Act to establish International Mother Language Day—Chapter 5; Bill C-228, An Act to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act, the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act and the Pension Benefits Standards Act, 1985—Chapter 6; Bill C-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner)—Chapter 7; and Bill C-11, An Act to amend the Broad-

casting Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts—Chapter 8.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1930)

[*English*]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I support Minden's mayor and their call to keep the emergency room at Minden Hospital. I have spent a lot of time in the member's riding. It is a beautiful riding. I have had many summers in Coboconk.

However, I am trying to rationalize the comments that were made earlier. It is a provincial decision. He knocked on doors, likely for the premier and his local member, who sit at Queen's Park where the rally is occurring. How that health care decision to close the Minden emergency ward has anything to do with us after all the resources that we are investing in health care in this budget is beyond me. The member supported the premier who is making the cuts that the member mentioned earlier. How does the member square that?

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am glad my friend across the way could experience summers in Coboconk. It really is a beautiful area.

A few things that the member got completely wrong in that speech include the fact that it was not a provincial decision. It was actually made by the local board of directors. The reason for it was not fiscal, from what we are being told, so he got that wrong. Let us just set the record straight that the decision was made, from what we are being told, because of a staffing issue, with the massive shortage in doctors and nurses right across the country.

I bring it up in this capacity in this chamber because where the government does have responsibility is with foreign-trained doctors and nurses. It can get the provinces to work together and start to develop a standardized test, the blue seal trade program that we are talking about. We can get provinces at the table to agree to a test. It is done in the Red Seal program. It can be done in the blue seal program. We can get them together and get something done, rather than just throwing our hands up.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend for his speech.

Government Orders

On the topic of health, the primary role of the federal government is to properly fund health care. In Bill C-47, there is \$2 billion in unconditional transfers to the provinces. The member for Winnipeg North said that the government would try to remove that money from the bill because it is already in Bill C-46, which was passed by the House.

First, the government is not doing its job properly. It is forgetting to harmonize its own bills. That is not very professional. Second, we believe we need a lot more in health transfers from the federal government. We want this \$2 billion to stay in Bill C-47.

What does my hon. colleague think about that?

• (1935)

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I am a fan of provincial governments having the jurisdiction to operate within their authority. Health care is one of the jurisdictions that specifically belongs to the provincial government.

An area that my friend brought up and refreshed my memory on is the fact that the government spent hundreds of billions of dollars during the pandemic, only half of which, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said, was related to the pandemic itself. The other half was couched in the language of COVID. If it was truly a health care crisis, why was that money not given to the provinces to deal with health care specifically? Why were we starting to build all these other pet projects of the Liberal government? We should have been addressing that crisis at the time, which was health care, but this is something the government failed to do.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I get a real kick out of the Conservatives. They figure conspiracy theories are the best thing that has ever happened to them, because they can blame gatekeepers for everything.

Let us talk about the gatekeepers that have resulted in the staffing shortages at Minden. They are Doug Ford and the Ontario Conservatives. Remember Bill 124 and its attack on nurses' wages? It was so bad, it was found to be unconstitutional. At a time when nurses were leaving the profession in droves, Doug Ford picked a fight with them. The fact is that Doug Ford under-spent \$1.8 billion in health care in Ontario, and it was dead last out of all the provinces.

I think the member has a lot of gall to use the crisis in Minden to promote a conspiracy that there is some kind of bureaucratic gatekeeper when money that is given to the provinces, in Ontario, is not going to frontline health care or to support the nurses who could be doing the work to keep people safe.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure what planet my friend opposite is on.

The member clearly put his fingers in his ears and did not hear a word I said. The decision was made because of a staffing issue, and the staffing issue is all across Canada. It is a global issue. We are talking about health care and the fact that there are tens of thousands of doctors and nurses who are not practising in the field that they are trained in. This is something that should be addressed, yes, by the provinces, as well as the federal government.

Why are we not creating a blue seal program that allows these people to get into the trades they are trained in?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a great pleasure to stand in this place. Tonight I will be speaking to Bill—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I will just allow members to finish their conversations.

As I was saying, it is a great honour to stand in this place to speak on behalf of the residents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. Today, of course, we are continuing the debate on Bill C-47, which is the implementation act for the government's recent budget.

I first of all want to acknowledge many of the challenges my constituents and many Canadians from coast to coast to coast are going through. I understand the challenges that are going on with my residents, whose incomes are not keeping pace with the general rate of inflation. I know the pain they are experiencing every time they go to the grocery store, and that is why I, as the agriculture critic for the NDP, along with my caucus colleagues, have been leading the way, not only in getting a unanimous motion passed in the House of Commons to recognize corporate greed in the grocery sector, but also in leading an investigation at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food to study food price inflation.

I also want to acknowledge that a lot of the anger we see in Canadians when they look at the challenges they are facing has to be juxtaposed with the insane corporate profits we are seeing in so many sectors. The most galling fact of all corporate profits we can see, especially when we compare them to 2019, is in the oil and gas sector. The oil and gas sector, since 2019, has seen a 1,000% increase in its profits. In this place, I continually hear from my Conservative colleagues that Canadians should be jumping up, down and all around about the carbon tax, yet Conservatives make absolutely zero mention of how corporate profits are being raked in off the backs of Canadian families.

During our study on food price inflation, of course a lot of our focus was on grocery profits. We know Loblaw's, Empire and Metro and their role. I also had the chance to ask some economists who appeared as witnesses to talk about the role corporate oil and gas profits are playing in driving up food prices, because we know that everything that arrives on grocery store shelves depends on a truck and other modes of transportation.

For a party that likes to single itself out as standing up for working people to completely ignore the elephant in the room is absolutely quite shameful, and I think it is further indication that the oil and gas companies in Canada do not need a lobby group, because they have a political party that is actively working on their behalf and not tackling the massive profits they are making.

We also know interest rates are affecting people's abilities. They are increasing the amount people have to pay on their mortgages, their credit cards and any kind of bank or car loan. These are putting real strains, and I think that with all the economic indicators that are present, our country very much is staring down the barrel of an incoming recession.

Many of these challenges existed when I was re-elected to this place in 2021, and they got worse over the 2022 year. One of the things we have to do as members of Parliament is decide how we are going to use our time and dedicate our efforts to make life better for our constituents, and one of the things that confronted New Democrats after the 2021 election, which was almost a carbon copy of the 2019 results, was how we, as a caucus of 25, could use our percentage of the seats in this place to deliver concrete results.

We can go and criticize the government, and we can keep on stoking the fires of rage that exist. I want to acknowledge that the anger out there is palpable. It is real and it needs to be acknowledged, but the way we respond to the fear, anger and concern of our constituents is not to keep on feeding it and feeding it without any tangible fixes. What we try to do is use our time here to present concrete solutions to the problems people are facing.

● (1940)

I am proud that our caucus of 25 MPs, over the last year and a half, has been able to do just that. We have been able to use our power and our influence in this place to course correct the Liberals on a number of fronts. I want to particularly single out the win that we had in creating Canada's first-ever national dental care program. I understand that the program is not in place. What we have right now are interim payments, but these are in place as we get the program developed.

Last year, it was for children under the age of 12. According to the most recent statistics that we have, the Canada dental benefit has already helped more than 240,000 children, right across the country, receive the oral health care that they need. That program is being expanded this year. It is now going to include children under the age of 18. It is going to include seniors, and it is going to include persons with disabilities.

Again, these are benefits going to people who often find themselves on the margins of our society. They do not have the luxury of finding extra money to go to the dentist. They are the ones who are struggling with the mortgage payments, car payments and putting groceries on the table. For them, just going to a simple check-up is a luxury they cannot afford.

Our philosophy in the NDP has always been that oral care is health care, and it has never made sense to me that one's health care coverage stops at one's tonsils. It is a significant investment because we know that, when one does not get regular check-ups, there can be serious health issues that might be missed. They might be indicators of future cardiovascular disease. They might be indicators that one has diabetes or other very serious health outcomes. If they are not intervened with in an early period, they can result in excessive costs to our health care system.

This is an example of us using our time in this place to really make a significant investment that will make people's lives better. I

Government Orders

also want to recognize the fact that we are talking about a budget bill, and it is impossible to cover every last detail in a 10-minute speech, but for the small businesses in my riding, we have managed to get commitments from some of the major credit card companies. Merchant fees for small businesses will be lowered.

I know that for the member for Courtenay—Alberni, my neighbour on Vancouver Island, this has been an issue that he has been raising since the 42nd Parliament, when we were first elected in 2015. It is awesome to see that this is a win that we can bring back to our constituents. It is nice, also, to see that, in recognition of the extra costs many Canadians are facing at the grocery aisle, we now have the GST rebate being doubled.

It is nice to see investments being made in housing. Again, I would have to point out some of the things that we would have done differently because there is a huge deficit in the stock of available, affordable housing in Canada.

I look at my community of Langford. There are no gatekeepers in Langford. We have building projects going on everywhere. In fact, the city skyline in Langford is dotted by construction cranes. Despite all of that private-led investment and the market-driven building that is going on, we still have too many families who cannot afford a place to live. We need to make those serious investments, to make sure that people can have a safe place to put their head at night, to have safe and secure shelter.

That is nowhere more apparent than in Canada's indigenous communities. My riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford has a significant indigenous population. I am thinking of Cowichan tribes. Their needs are great when it comes to the housing file. I am proud that we were able to achieve a small win on behalf of indigenous people, but it is obvious that far more is needed.

This is a budget bill where we would have done a lot of things differently. However, with what is in there and what we, as a caucus of 25, were able to achieve and put in there, I am proud to send this off to the finance committee. I will be lending my support, and I am looking forward to going back to my constituents to tell them about the amazing benefits that are going to be offered through the dental care program, which we have been able to achieve.

● (1945)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when I first elected back in 1988, I had two responsibilities. I was the party whip at the time, and I was the housing critic. Now, I say that because I want members to understand that I have a very strong passion on the issue of housing, ever since 1988.

I can tell the member that, if we take a look at the 1990s, we will find that all political parties, including the NDP, Bloc, Liberals and Conservatives, abandoned saying that the federal government had a role to play when it came to housing.

Government Orders

If we take a look in terms of—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would rather the member stood up to ask a question. I would love to hear it because I can only hear half of what is going on.

The hon. parliamentary secretary can back up a little bit.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the point is that, during the 1990s, federal parties inside the House, all political parties, did not support the national government playing a strong role in housing. Now, for the first time, we have a Prime Minister and a government that are investing literally hundreds of millions, going into billions, of dollars into a national housing strategy, and we have a multitude of programs.

However, the federal government cannot deal with the housing solution all by itself. Provinces, municipalities and stakeholders all have to come to the table, but let us be clear, the federal government is playing a very strong leadership role. Would the member not agree that the other stakeholders equally have to come to the table if we are going to deal with the housing crisis in Canada?

• (1950)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, of course there are many sectors in our society that have to play a role, but what I do not appreciate about the member's preamble to his question is his revisionist history.

We are still feeling the effects today from the great axe that Paul Martin wielded as finance minister, and to suggest that all parties were behind that is complete revisionism. The Liberals enjoyed a majority government from 1993 to the mid-2000s. They had full control over policy. They need to wear the responsibility for the mess that we are currently in. While the NDP is around, we will make sure that Canadians do not forget about that sorry history on housing.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the speech tonight included the word “profits” many times. I heard the words “massive profits”, and profits were getting bashed around quite bit there. For someone who has been in business for over 25 years and has been involved in businesses that had zero profits, I know that profits are usually a good thing.

I would like to ask my colleague how we differentiate and when we differentiate between good profits and, as he keeps saying, massive and bad profits. Where do we draw the line? How do we decide on that?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I would throw the question back to the member. I mean, when we see one industrial sector, such as oil and gas, increase its net profits by over 1,000% since 2019, does he not see a problem in that?

I have yet to hear a Conservative stand up in this place to talk about that, and talk about how unfair it is. I mean, that is a resource that is owned by the people of Canada, the people of Alberta and the people of Saskatchewan, yet they are just standing by and letting corporate overlords walk away with it, not realizing what that natural bounty could be doing for the people in those respective provinces.

I would ask Conservatives to stand up for the people they are representing, take on corporate Canada and realize that an insane increase in profit in three short years is completely unfair, completely out of line and needs to be tackled effectively.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and especially for the answer he gave the government member who suggested that all sides of the House supported the Liberal austerity of the 1990s. Not only did the Liberals completely disengage from social housing, which devastated all of Quebec and Canada, but they also made cuts to health care funding. Since then, health care systems across the country have been struggling, including in Quebec.

The same goes for the financing of social services. Since that time, things have been going badly. I suggest that my colleague read the excellent book *Combating Poverty*, which shows that that austerity significantly widened the wealth gap, created huge inequalities and made Canadians much poorer. Quebec picked up the slack for a lot of things, but with half the resources. As a result, there is less poverty and a smaller wealth gap.

Here is my question. Can members imagine what would happen if we had all the necessary means at our disposal?

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Mr. Speaker, I always appreciate my colleague's interventions. I think he and I share very similar thinking on how our taxation system ultimately needs to be reformed.

I do want to say that, in Bill C-47, there are some initial good steps. It is nice to see that the alternative minimum rate is being increased from 15% to 20.5%. That is a step in the right direction, but there is so much more that needs to be done. The member is right. Let us imagine the world we would be in right now if we properly took into account those revenues and applied them to the people who need them.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Barrie—Innisfil, in this case, to speak about the budget. It is not lost on me that game five of the Leafs is on tonight. I understand that the score is 1-1 at the first intermission. I am pretty certain that my mom and everybody in this place are the only ones hearing me speak tonight, because many are watching the game.

With respect to the budget implementation act, it is not going to be a surprise to the other side, and certainly not a surprise to many of the constituents who voted for me, that I will not be supporting the budget. There are many reasons not to, and I am going to highlight just a few tonight, along with how the budget would directly impact the businesses and residents of Barrie—Innisfil.

Government Orders

The sheer magnitude of the numbers speaks volumes about a government whose spending is completely out of control. As a result of the spending, the billions of dollars of deficits and the trillions of dollars of debt being created, future generations are going to be impacted by the decisions that are made today, for many generations to come, including my children. Quite frankly, I am very concerned about their future. I am concerned about the future of many young people in my riding of Barrie—Innisfil, many of whom are becoming despondent. They are angry that they have been lied to and let down by the Prime Minister, who, in 2015, made all these promises, particularly to the younger generation. They are not now finding themselves angry or upset, but despondent, because many of them are not going to be able to afford the types of things that even their parents and grandparents have been able to enjoy. Worse yet, the burden of debt and deficit is something that this generation and future generations will pay for for a long time.

The magnitude of the numbers is just staggering. The numbers are staggering with respect to what this budget sets out, not just as current expenditures but also future expenditures. Cumulative spending for the next five years is at a record \$3.1 trillion. If these numbers are to be believed, remembering that in the fall the Liberals promised a balanced budget, and if they do not add in any more spending for the rest of the term, they would add \$130 billion to the debt with these projected deficits. The national debt would rise to a record \$1.3 trillion, with a debt ceiling, in the Financial Administration Act, that is set at \$1.8 trillion. We are rapidly approaching that debt ceiling. I know many members have spoken about this, but the Prime Minister has actually doubled the debt, more than all previous prime ministers combined, as a result of the spending. That is a scary proposition.

We often talk about the interest on the national debt because it has an impact on services that government provides. It is about \$44 billion today and will rise to \$50 billion in five years if the government's interest rate calculations are correct. This is a government that has not been very good at predicting interest rates. There is the famous video of when the Prime Minister was asked by Glen McGregor of CTV about the potential for rising interest rates. He had almost a stunned look on his face and suggested that interest rates are low and are going to remain low.

We have seen, I believe, eight interest rate increases over the last year, which are having a dramatic effect on affordability for people, whether it is variable-rate loans or mortgages, or mortgages coming up for renewal. We are into a three-year cycle of mortgage renewals and people are going to be awfully shocked when they renew and see how much more those mortgage interest rates are going to cost. In fact, many people are now paying more in interest and not even paying down the principal as a result of renewing, adding to the existing affordability crisis. The projection numbers in this budget are staggering.

I was supposed to make this speech on Monday, but because of some procedural things, here we are on Thursday night. The other day, in preparation for tonight, I had an opportunity to speak with my staff. As members of Parliament, as everyone knows, we are on the ground. We talk to our constituents at events we attend and we see what is happening, but when I am in Ottawa, it is really my

constituency people who are receiving the phone calls and getting the emails from seniors and average, middle-class families in Barrie—Innisfil who are concerned.

● (1955)

I asked them what some of the messages were that people were telling them on the phone. They were very similar to what I hear when I am out in public, which is that paycheques are thinner, that people are not making as much as they once were. A lot of that has to do with increased taxation, but it also has to do with payroll tax increases, increases in the CPP and EI for example, which eat it away.

Grocery prices have doubled. Gas bills have tripled, in large part because of the carbon tax. I am going to speak about that in a second. The other thing they said is that hydro rates have gone up. All of that is adding to the affordability crisis for people in Barrie—Innisfil, not just individuals, families and households, but also businesses. We get phone calls from businesses talking about these increased costs, particularly in the agriculture sector, which forms a large part of my constituency in Innisfil. I have talked to producers and wholesalers, who are telling me about the cost of the carbon tax on their gas bills and how it is increasing their production costs. Of course, those costs are going to be passed on, through the wholesalers and producers, to the end consumers, which means that we are going to continue to see increases in grocery prices down the line.

Social agencies are struggling as well. In Innisfil, we had a tremendous, compassionate individual whose name was Troy Scott. Unfortunately, he passed away as a result of COVID. He was the local Foodland owner. After his passing, the Town of Innisfil decided it was going to honour his memory by having Troy Scott community fridges placed strategically around different areas in the municipality. This is how bad the food insecurity crisis is: As soon as those fridges are filled, they are emptied. There are people coming on a daily basis who, because of the food crisis and the fact they cannot afford to buy food, are seeking food from these fridges because it is free. We have a very benevolent community filling up those fridges, but they are being emptied just as quickly. Other social agencies are struggling. There is something structurally wrong in this country right now, a G7 country, when Canadians are feeling an affordability and inflation crunch like never before, particularly as it relates to food insecurity and housing affordability and attainability. It is a big problem that needs to be fixed.

Government Orders

One of the main reasons why I cannot support this is the continuation of the carbon tax that the budget implementation act calls for. We asked the government to deal with this from an affordability crisis perspective and to axe the carbon tax because of the impact it is having on Canadian families, businesses, wholesalers and producers. In 2019, the government ran on a promise of \$50 a tonne. A year later, it announced that the carbon tax was going to go up to \$170 a tonne by 2030. That is going to increase prices beyond what people can afford in a community like Barrie—Innisfil, with a lack of significant mass transit and connectivity from community to community. We have the GO train, which gets people to Toronto, but most people drive to work. They either drive to work within the GTA or they drive to Barrie. It is costing them money every time they fill up their car or turn on the furnace or the air conditioning in their home. That is adding to the cost of life. Groceries are being impacted by it as well. The government has said it is adding money to the pockets of people, but the PBO has countered that.

The other thing concerns Lake Simcoe. It is mentioned in this budget, but is part of a broader lakes program. We have asked for specific funding. The government, in 2019, stood at the end of Bayfield Street and promised \$40 million for the Lake Simcoe fund. It has not sent a dime yet, which is another broken promise. I am not certain that Lake Simcoe is going to be a priority. I hope it is.

This budget adds a lot more pain than gain to Canadian families, particularly those I represent in Barrie—Innisfil. That is just part of the reason why I cannot support the budget.

● (2000)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Volkswagen and the federal government, working with the province of Ontario, made this major announcement that will have such a positive, profound impact on a number of different industries in Ontario, but also beyond Ontario.

However, we have the leader of the Conservative Party, who is challenged in coming up with ideas that will make a difference and get Canadians ahead, who has come out and said that this is a bad deal. The member is from Ontario. I think he is somewhat familiar with the automobile industry and the importance of thinking forward in terms of where the future is going to be.

Does the member agree with his leader in saying that this is a bad deal for the community of St. Thomas and for Canadians, and that the federal government should not have been getting Volkswagen to agree to come to Canada?

● (2005)

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that anybody on this side is saying that it is a bad deal. We want to know what the deal is. The government has invested \$13 billion into Volkswagen, a foreign-owned company. We do not know the details of the arrangements that were made. If we are going to spend \$13 billion of Canadian taxpayer money, at a minimum, we should know what that deal entails and what we are getting as a result of it.

Members will have to excuse me for being a little cynical because the government made multi-million dollar investments in a

vaccine factory that is now gone. There was a very public announcement made.

We have to see the details to determine whether it is the right deal for Canadians. More importantly, they have to be open and transparent about it, which they are anything but on this deal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. We have been serving together on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics for some time now, and I tend to really value his judgment.

I would like to ask him the following question. In his opinion, with all the experience he has, is this a good budget or a bad budget?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

I tried to lay out, as best I could, the reasons I cannot support the budget. There are many of them, not the least of which is the carbon tax and the disproportionate effect it has on the people and the businesses I represent in Barrie—Innisfil.

One of the things that is extremely concerning for me, which was not really in the budget, related to the Canada summer jobs program. We saw that cut by a third this year, yet we see contracts, to companies like McKinsey and others, to the tune of \$21 billion in total contracts. Why are we taking away from the future and work experience that young people are getting to apply down the line, yet outsourcing and putting a priority on government contracts for friends and connected insiders of the Liberal Party?

I am really disappointed in the Canada summer jobs program and the cut in funding. I know many of those people who would benefit, particular the kids, are really disappointed.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member and I agree that the current government bears a lot of responsibility for the state of the current housing market, which is the worst that it has ever been. I think we differ in some of the ways in which we say the government is responsible for that.

I hear the Conservative leader talk a lot about how government spending is responsible for inflation in the housing market. As New Democrats, we look at housing and we see the role of massive private investment, corporate landlords that are gobbling up buildings with affordable units, superficially renovating them and jacking up the rent. We see real estate investment trusts doing the same. We see a lot of investor activity that is actually driving up prices in the real estate market. I do not see how government spending is playing a role. We know that, in fact, the government is not building enough non-market housing options, and we need to build more in order to address supply.

Can we hear the Conservatives talk about private investment activity in the housing market, the role it is playing and the things the government can do to curtail that as a way of actually getting out of the housing crisis, or are they going to continue to talk about government spending as if that is what is driving the housing crisis when it is not?

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I think the challenge in the question is we hear a lot of announcements about spending, but see very little in the way of actual builds. I have got a great example of that and it deals with the rapid housing initiative.

The member for Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte and I sent a letter to the housing minister. There was a rapid housing initiative, a critical project in Barrie, that was supported by Redwood Park Communities, the City of Barrie, Barrie Police Service and the County of Simcoe, about renovating the Travelodge hotel and making it into affordable housing units.

We supported this initiative. We did not even hear back from the Minister of Housing. I think the County of Simcoe heard back to say the application was being rejected. I do not know what the basis was, but that is an example of great announcements, but very bad and poor delivery.

● (2010)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join the debate tonight on the budget implementation act, BIA, as we always do around this time of year.

First of all, let me simply say that budget 2023 is one that delivers for the country and for communities. We cannot talk about the BIA without talking about the budget.

I will spend time tonight talking about climate change and how the government is responding to that threat. Rick Smith, the president of the Canadian Climate Institute, a respected organization on the environmental side, that is known across the country, said that this “is the most consequential budget in recent history for accelerating clean growth in Canada”. I could fill this speech with the responses of stakeholders right across the country but that really, I think, puts into sharp focus what the budget helps to advance. Certainly the BIA takes that vision and puts it into place in a number of different ways on the climate change side, as it must.

It must because it is the central challenge of our time. We have just overcome the pandemic. We have not overcome it entirely, of course, but what we lived through was the challenge of the moment. The challenge of our time still remains climate change. It is a moral issue, it is a security issue and it is also an economic issue. In my time tonight, I want to focus on the economic aspect and relate it back to the region that I am from, southwestern Ontario and specifically the city of London.

The budget, I think, stands out for a few different reasons. First of all, for me at least, it really stands out because it actually invites the private sector in as a partner, rather than keeping them out as some, maybe on the left, if I can just be general about it, have pushed for, not thinking that there is a role for the private sector. There is in fact a role for the private sector. We have to encourage

Government Orders

that. We can encourage it through various policy mechanisms like the government has done in this budget.

There is a 30% refundable tax credit, for example, that really is historic in this country. It does prompt an agenda that leads to industrialization on the green side. I do not think it is out of place now in democracies, including our own, to talk about a green industrial revolution that is taking shape in front of us. Things like this refundable tax credit that I just mentioned do help in that regard. It can be applied toward investing in new machinery that will be used in the manufacture of clean tech, that will also be used to process and recycle critical minerals. How blessed we are to be a power. I do not think it is out of place to use that word. We are a power when it comes to the issue and the question of critical minerals; lithium, cobalt, manganese, nickel and graphite. All of these are found in abundance in Canada.

A friend of mine put it well the other day. He said that Canada has been blessed with natural resources: under the earth we have wonderful resources and above the earth, in terms of human potential and human talent; we ought to bring the two together. I think this budget allows for that.

This is another crucial point: Accessing the credit will require companies to pay their workers a strong wage. I think that is absolutely vital if we are going to, as a government and as a country, put measures on the table that incent companies to get involved. It is quite lucrative, a 30% refundable tax credit. Then there is an onus on them to do right by their workers, at least in terms of ensuring good wages and good working conditions. This is, as the Minister of Labour himself put it, a worker's budget in many different ways, but this proves the point as well.

In southwestern Ontario, the region I am proudly from, policies like this can help to add to the green transformation that is already taking shape. I point to the community of Ingersoll, just down the road from London, and CAMI, and the incredible work that is happening there to ensure electric vehicle production and delivery vehicles in particular that are being manufactured with the help of this government. It is employing people. It is adding to the economy and, as I say, it is something that speaks to the green transition that is taking shape in the region.

● (2015)

Battery production in Windsor is a project that will unfold between LG Energy Solution and Stellantis. I want to commend my colleague, the MP for Windsor—Tecumseh, for all the work he did to help secure that investment. It was a number of months ago now, but it is still fresh in the minds of those in Windsor who saw an auto sector not collapse but certainly take an enormous hit and have devastating effects on the community of Windsor and the surrounding area. Something like this injects hope again.

Of course we have the example that was announced last week. It was spoken about at length in this House, with merit. It is what happened in St. Thomas with the investment from Volkswagen. That is truly historic for the region certainly and for the country.

Government Orders

Before talking about its significance, I want to thank those at the federal level and the provincial level for making this happen. We need to do all we can to keep up with what the Biden administration is doing, and the Inflation Reduction Act makes it absolutely necessary for governments to show an interest by putting money on the table to get companies to locate to their area and provide jobs through production.

I give thanks to the Prime Minister; the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry; Premier Ford; Minister McNaughton, the minister of labour at the provincial level; Minister Fedeli, the minister responsible for economic development in Ontario; my colleague, the member of provincial parliament, Rob Flack; and the member of Parliament for Elgin—Middlesex—London, who did a great deal to advance this on behalf of her community. I thank Mayor Joe Preston and St. Thomas City Council as well.

St. Thomas is just down the road from London and will certainly benefit. There are 3,000 direct jobs to be created when the plant opens in just a few years and up to 30,000 indirect jobs. Think of the construction possibilities there in a plant that will occupy a space the size of close to 400 football fields. Over a 30-year period, it is expected \$200 billion in overall economic impact will be seen.

This is crucial, and I will end on this point. In the 2000s, the London region and the wider southwestern Ontario region was devastated by plant closures. Ford in Talbotville, which is near Thomas; Electro-Motive Diesel in London; McCormick-Beta Brands, which produced candy; Kellogg's; Heinz in Leamington; Smucker in Dunnville and Dutton; and Lance Canada, which produced cookies in Cambridge, all closed.

It was devastating. Thousands of jobs were lost. Families were not only impacted in so many situations, they were absolutely devastated. Social consequences including a rise in mental health challenges and addiction challenges followed. I cannot say enough about how harmful that was, but now we have hope, an opportunity to turn a corner, and we are doing exactly that.

I am thankful for the opportunity to articulate the interests of my community tonight and the surrounding region. I look forward to questions on what I think is a great BIA and a great announcement in St. Thomas.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always good when a member of Parliament talks about his riding on the national level and provides concrete examples. On the other hand, we need to recognize this budget that the member will support has no plan to get back to a balanced budget. We need to remember in 2015 this party was elected saying that there would be three small deficits, a \$10-billion maximum and then a zero deficit in 2019. This promise was put aside; it was put in the garbage.

Is the member concerned about the fact that we have deficits and debts that one day we will need to pay back? When does he think the government will pay it back? We are living beyond the budget that we have now.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague. However, we disagree on this issue.

Canada's fiscal situation is a very important reality for the House and for our country.

• (2020)

[*English*]

Canada right now, if we look at the G7 countries, has the lowest deficits, has the lowest debt, if we use the debt-to-GDP ratio as the key metric, which we should. The IMF is clear on that, that this is the key metric to look at.

I would look back to previous Conservative governments which, far from balancing budgets, have only run up deficits and added to the debt.

It has been a fiscally responsible approach and we will continue with this. We have a very proud record to look at.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to ask the hon. member, in the budget implementation act, what he has seen that invests in indigenous peoples.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, I have not had a very good chance to get to know the hon. member, but I know that she is held in very high regard by members throughout every party in the House. I have only heard good things about the committee work that she has contributed. I have to say that every question she has put forward, including this one, have been ones that are thoughtful.

If one looks at the overall budget and looks at the BIA as well, they will see a government that continues the effort to advance the reconciliation agenda. We do so by looking at the partnership that exists between the federal government and indigenous communities, who are leading the way in so many different ways.

In fact, one of the reasons that Volkswagen, I think, ended up making the decision to invest, as they did in St. Thomas, is the approach that the overall country and certainly this government have taken to reconciliation, one that puts partnership front and centre.

Other democracies certainly had the ability to attract the investment, but might not be doing what Canada is doing on the reconciliation side. That is something that bears emphasis. There is so much in this budget that pushes the reconciliation agenda further and we need to continue with that.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy that my hon. colleague raised the green investor revolution. I think those were the words he used.

The example he provided was the investment that was recently made into the Volkswagen plant and what will happen in St. Thomas, which is very similar to the investments our government has made in Hamilton as it relates to ArcelorMittal Dofasco and the \$400-million investment we have made to get them off coal and begin their process of making green steel.

I know what that means to my community in terms of employment, tax assessment, all of the spin-offs that come with it, and, of course, there is the environmental benefit.

Government Orders

I am wondering if he could comment on the same in terms of what that investment in St. Thomas means for his community.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from someone who understands his community very well. He served as a city councillor and knows what it means when an investment comes to a community and the spinoff effects that it can have. He mentioned the Dofasco case.

I expect nothing but good things to come from this investment for local businesses in London that already have relied on automotive, as we see transitions from the current situation in terms of the combustion engine toward electric vehicles. Certainly, there will be new businesses that sprout up and existing ones that are able to tap in and be part of that supply chain, not to mention, of course, the workers, who will be able to work at Volkswagen. So many and London will benefit directly.

I am so excited for what is ahead.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, before budget 2023 was presented, our Conservative leader made three demands of it: one, that it end the war on work and lower taxes for workers; two, that it end inflationary deficits that are driving up the cost of goods; and three, that it remove gatekeepers to increase the building of homes in Canada. Sadly, none of these three Conservative demands were met, and for that reason I will not be supporting Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, 2023.

Simply put, all the budget will do is drive up the cost of the goods and interest and taxes paid by the fine residents in my riding, in the communities of Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Canadians are struggling because of this incompetent Liberal government, which has become addicted to overspending.

Here are just a few quick statistics that will surprise those Canadians watching. Those who are watching should please make sure they are seated. I am not making this up.

After eight years, this Liberal Prime Minister has added more debt than all other prime ministers combined. Yes, that is since Confederation in 1867. Canada's federal debt for the 2023-24 fiscal year is projected to reach \$1.22 trillion. If that is not jaw dropping, get this: That federal Liberal debt counts for nearly \$81,000 per household in Canada. Budget 2023 simply provides no path to balancing Canada's budget projections.

The deficit for 2022-23 is up to \$43 billion. That is only \$6 billion less than what we will spend on health care this fiscal year. Even the government's own projections have changed since last November. In her fall economic statement, the Minister of Finance projected a \$4.5-billion surplus for 2027-28, yet here we are six months later and this surplus has been completely erased. In its place, budget 2023 now projects a \$14-billion deficit in 2027-28, with interest payments on our national debt reaching \$50 billion.

These depressing figures make it hard to be hopeful for future generations of Canadians. They also highlight the degree of fiscal mismanagement by this Liberal Prime Minister and his government. For millions of Canadians, it is even more challenging to live through.

Many residents and families in my communities, especially seniors and new Canadians, are struggling mightily with the high cost of inflation on their shelter and groceries, and even higher federal taxes are being implemented. In fact, "Canada's Food Price Report 2023" predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year, which is \$598 more than the \$467 from the so-called grocery rebate they will receive. Members should not be fooled by the Liberal spin. This overhyped rebate is not actually a relief measure at all. It simply gives money back to Canadians that this government already clawed from them through its big tax hikes. This rebate will do nothing to solve the cost of living crisis.

On top of that, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has recently shown that the carbon tax will cost the average family between \$402 and \$847 in 2023, even after the rebates. Further, it is only going to get worse in the near future. By 2030, carbon taxes could add 50¢ per litre to the price of gasoline.

In addition to these fiscal troubles, I am also concerned about what is missing in budget 2023.

There is zero mention of the critically important wine sector support program. This program was designed by Wine Growers Canada and adopted by Agriculture Canada as a trade legal program to protect Canadian wineries from having to pay the expensive excise tax. This program expired last summer, and Canadian wineries, including those in the Niagara region and in my communities of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Falls, badly need this program, or they risk potential job losses and closures.

In last year's budget, the government showed that it would be receiving \$390 million by now taxing our wine sector. Where are those funds going? Our grape growers and wineries deserve answers from the government which created this mess through its introduction of the escalator clause on alcohol in 2017. Do not even get me going on the negative impact the escalator clause is causing to our sector.

However, this Liberal sleight of hand does not just apply to Canadian grapes and wine. It also touches upon the 2,800 tourism-related businesses and the 40,000 workers in the tourism sector in Niagara. In 2019, Niagara welcomed more than 13 million visitors and generated \$2.4 billion in receipts as Canada's top leisure tourism destination.

Government Orders

• (2025)

As many members of this place will know, this week is National Tourism Week and the theme is “Canada: Powered by Tourism”. If members were to examine this budget and the government's commitment to tourism, they would be hard pressed to see its recognition for a sector that at one time reached \$105 billion nationwide and was responsible for one in every 11 jobs created in Canada.

Throughout National Tourism Week, I have been meeting with many tourism stakeholders and receiving their feedback and reaction to budget 2023. In short, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada is disappointed in the 2023 budget and the empty promises, the lack of funding and the money it has cost to build the federal growth strategy. In fact, it has told me its members are still waiting for the millions of dollars in funding that was promised to them and identified by the government in last year's budget.

I have also met with representatives of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, who expressed their concerns that despite improvements over the last 12 months, tourism businesses continue to struggle financially and are carrying significant debt loads. There is also an increasing sense of impatience and concern from the industry by the lack of commitment from the government to provide a firm timeline to introduce the highly anticipated, long-awaited and overdue federal tourism growth strategy.

I also want to note two concerns that I have flagged after reading budget 2023.

My first concern is on the commitment of spending \$50 million on Destination Canada over three years, starting in 2023-24, and yet there is no detail on how these funds are to be allocated. If members were to look at the government estimates, they would see the Liberals have committed \$111 million to Destination Canada this fiscal year. Are any of the \$50 million pledged by the government included in that budget? If so, it is a bit disappointing, considering that \$156 million was spent last year to attract major international conventions, conferences and events to Canada.

As well, what of the \$108 million committed to the regional development agencies over three years starting in 2023-24 to support communities, small businesses and non-profit organizations in developing local tourism projects and events? Again the Liberals' sleight of hand is at work here. When we look at the line items provided in the budget for the three years, we see that the government only shows a total of \$93 million being allocated. Where is the remaining \$15 million? Is this money not being spent from last year's budget from the regional relief fund, or are some of those funds dedicated to indigenous tourism from last year now actually going to be counted for this year?

It is not good enough for the Minister of Tourism to tell the people of Canada's travel and tourism industry that they should simply be happy they were included in this year's budget. The bar needs to be set higher, especially when it comes to discussing an industry that was disadvantaged for nearly three years by the COVID-19 pandemic and the federal restrictions such as ArriveCAN that were implemented.

After eight years of this Liberal Prime Minister, the future of Canada's travel and tourism industry is at risk because of higher

costs and taxes imposed by this reckless and expensive Liberal government. It is for those reasons and more that I will be voting against this legislation.

• (2030)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was very impressed with the recent announcement that we made for funding for the Great Lakes action plan. It was \$420 million to assist with cleaning up the Great Lakes. As a member whose riding borders the shoreline of Lake Ontario, I know how important that investment is in terms of cleaning the environment and cleaning the lakes. That is in large part due to my friend and colleague from Niagara Centre who worked very hard over many years to make that investment happen.

I certainly took into consideration some of the constructive criticism the member provided as it relates to the budget, but can I ask his opinion in terms of what would be considered a historic announcement? He is from the vicinity there, the region of Niagara. I know his constituents enjoy Lake Ontario and probably some of the other Great Lakes. What are his thoughts on that investment? Could he support something like that?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my hon. colleague's questions about the work that the colleague from Niagara Centre has been doing. However, the member for Niagara Centre has been working on that for eight years. Only now, and after pressure from the United States that it was going to stop funding certain aspects of that money that is included in that \$420 million, has this government finally realized it needed to act. In fact, the government and its bureaucrats are still fighting with regard to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission in effectively transferring it over from the Department of Fisheries to the Department of Global Affairs. Why is it taking two years for that to happen? That needs to be rectified, and rectified now.

• (2035)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals believe the budget will balance itself, and the Conservatives believe they can pump out so much oil into the atmosphere that the climate will balance itself.

I want to ask my hon. colleague about the huge subsidies going into the TMX pipeline.

Joe Biden has said that within nine years, 67% of all vehicles in the United States will be electric. That is going to have a huge impact on creating stranded assets. TMX costs over \$30 billion right now, but here is the kicker: In order to be viable, the money gets paid back in toll charges for each barrel of oil shipped, and the Liberals have limited the cost to any oil company to 22% of the cost. That means for every barrel of oil shipped, 78% of the cost will be subsidized by the Canadian taxpayer.

Government Orders

Given the massive profits big oil is making, why are Canadians being told they will pay 78% of every barrel of raw bitumen shipped through that pipeline?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned U.S. President Biden. The largest thing the government had to respond to was the Inflation Reduction Act tabled in the United States. We are talking \$390 billion over 10 years.

Let me note some of the comments we received when I was at the international trade committee on what it takes to respond to that. Catherine Cobden, the president and CEO of the Canadian Steel Producers Association, and Meg Gingrich, with the United Steelworkers union, said the IRA was a game-changer. In fact, it provided a double advantage to those in the United States because it did not have a carbon tax attached to it that companies in Canada now have to pay. The actions the government has taken are still insufficient because those industries still have to pay that tax. In fact, Meg Gingrich, with the United Steelworkers union, was advocating that the carbon tax not be increased.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to see a member of Parliament who knows his riding well and who makes everything about his riding, which is really about wine and tourism.

From what I can see, he is right. The carbon tax raises the cost for people to drive to Niagara and visit the wineries. In this particular BIA, the government is raising the cost of security at airports, so the average airport ticket will be higher. There is a lack of investment because the government is pulling out from the wine sector, and there is the extra excise tax. If there is no more investment in wineries, there is less tourism and fewer places for people to go.

Can the member bring this home and talk about exactly why this particular budget fails on so many of those fronts?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Mr. Speaker, the government, through the excise tax, placed a new tax on our Canadian grape and wine sector. In fact, it showed in last year's budget that it would be generating \$390 million because of this new tax. What happened? Because of its escalator clause, we were forced to pay this tax. It promised a compensation program, a replacement program, but that replacement program of two years and \$166 million has now ended. Where are the funds going that it is collecting? They should be going to our grape and wine sector.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a deep honour to rise and speak in this place.

There is something uniting Canadians right now, and it is not a good thing. It is this emotion, this sense, this pulse that is kind of humming through Canadians. The beat goes like this: spend more, get less; spend more, get less. It is at the heart of family disagreements. It is at the heart of people feeling hopelessness. It is spend more, get less; spend more, get less.

I have to tell members that when I read through the bill we are debating tonight, it reads, "spend more, get less; spend more, get less". I know so many families in my riding that feel this day in and day out. They are living what is in this bill. They are living that increased thump of anxiety with their expenses climbing, as they are spending more and getting less day in and day out. It is this black

feeling of despair. They are looking to us in this place to end the cycle, and it has to start here with this bill.

This bill spends more and gets less, and we have to stop it. I know there are so many people of all political stripes in this place who care deeply about the issues that affect Canadians, but we also have to look at the track record. If anybody came to us and said, "I want a bunch of money, and I am going to spend more, but you are going to get less," we would say, "No, you cannot do that. You need a better plan. You cannot spend more and get less." However, that is what the government has done for so many years. We have given it so many chances, but it has spent more and we have gotten less.

On housing, the government has spent so much money, and we have gotten so much less. Canadians are spending double on rent and double on their mortgage, and there is no big increase in affordable housing stock. We cannot afford to keep spending more and getting less housing when housing is at the core of so many of the social crises facing our country. Without affordable housing, people fall into crime, they fall into addiction and they fall into that thump of anxiety: Where am I going to live? How am I going to pay the bills? It is spend more, get less.

On firearms violence, we are spending a lot more. We are buying back a bunch of firearms. I do not see violence going down. I see gang violence going up. We are spending more; we are getting less.

We are spending a lot more money on the media and not getting more journalists investigating the things we need to see in this place. We are getting fewer journalists, less freedom and less transparency. On so many things, in every area, it is spend more, get less; spend more, get less.

Then what happens? We get more inflation. Our debt goes up and we have to pay the cost on that debt. Then what happens to Canadians as we in this place keep trusting managers who have failed to get more while spending less? When we spend more and get less here with managers who have not figured this out, we get fewer government services, fewer new Canadians' applications being processed, less service on the phone with the CRA, fewer passports and the biggest government strike in two generations. We are spending more and getting less.

Government Orders

● (2040)

Then what happens? What Canadians see, because of that inflationary pressure and because of that debt, is higher taxes and more anxiety when people are trying to figure out if they will be able to pay to fill up their car. We all care about climate change. We all, in this country, want to do our part. However, if we keep spending more on things that are not lowering our greenhouse gas emissions and are not even measuring them, we are spending more and getting less climate action.

I do not have an LRT in my riding. There are 50,000 people in my riding who would love to take the train and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, but they are spending more and getting less, over and over. For so many things, like car payments, we are spending more and getting less. On education, young Canadians are spending more and getting less. We are spending more on debt and getting less.

On labour, I went out for dinner last week to a pub in my riding, and while I was waiting for a tow truck, the server, the only one in the entire restaurant, said she issued 40 T4s last year because she could not get labour. She is spending more, getting less; spending more, getting less. We have to stop it.

I know there are partisan differences in this place. I know there are. I know we all want to solve problems differently in different ways. I know in our hearts that we understand our role, and there are times when the government needs to step in and deliver services. However, we cannot keep spending more and getting less, because we are mortgaging Canadians' futures when Canadians have to spend more and get less today.

Let us think about a young Canadian doing that. How are they going to care for their parents 20 years from now, who have never been able to save for their retirement? I am having that conversation with my kids right now. I am having a conversation with my parents. When we are spending more and getting less, we are spending more and getting less not just now but for the future. That is what we are doing in this country, in this place. We have not stopped and said the management here is not working.

The other thing that concerns me is that the government is doing a lot of things to try to distract from the fact that it has not gotten its team together to crack down on spending more and getting less. It is distracting Canadians.

I was reading some of the coverage on the labour strike happening right now. A couple of the ministers walked out and told Canadians not to expect to get their passports because of the labour strike. The buck stops with them. They spent more and are getting less labour. They spent more and we are getting fewer services. However, they pointed the fault not at themselves but at their employees, who are also spending more and getting less. That is why they are striking.

We need to be standing up for every worker in Canada in the private sector and public sector, every Canadian. When we keep spending more and getting less, we are not doing our jobs here. We are not holding the government to account and saying that we can do better. We cannot let it keep dividing us with these sorts of tac-

tics. They are not productive. Again, everybody in this place has a responsibility to do that.

There are some people who are spending less and getting more, and that is a big problem when everyone else is spending more and getting less. That is why it is so important for us to hold the Prime Minister to account when he has big ethics breaches. He has had some pretty big ones that show a big lack of judgment. When everyone else is spending more and getting less, he should not be spending more of our tax dollars and getting more for himself personally. I have a big problem with that, and so do many other people in my community, because it says that the government is not serious, from the top down, on fixing the structural problems causing us to spend more and get less.

We can feel the anxiety from Canadians. For that reason, I implore my colleagues here not to support this bill. We need to make the government go back to the drawing board. The NDP cannot allow the government, a failed management team, to keep spending more and getting less.

● (2045)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I totally disagree with the member across the way. She can say, "spending more, getting less" and try to make a tune out of it all she wants. The reality is quite the opposite. We are spending more, yes, billions and billions more, but we are also getting results.

She gives the impression that spending the billions of dollars on dental care, and seeing that for 250,000 children under the age of 12, is not a result. Those are results. When we spent billions of dollars in child care, and we got all provinces and territories signing on and supporting the program, and therefore providing \$10-a-day day care, reducing the costs for parents and ensuring that there are higher wages for child care workers, those are results.

When we talk about investing the billions of dollars of additional money into health care, one is seeing tangible results. Premiers are going to be able to provide better health care services as a direct result of spending more.

I think she has got the wrong tune. We are spending more and getting real results, something that Stephen Harper was never able to do.

• (2050)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, this government has spent a lot on climate. Our greenhouse gas emissions are going up. We do not have substitute goods for high-carbon products and practices. We are not meeting our climate targets. They are not even measuring results of the program.

On housing, we do not have affordable housing stock.

On health care, people are waiting in emergency rooms.

Everybody feels that tune, and they have got to stop trying to deceive Canadians.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, well, yes, there is spending more and getting less. There is spending more and getting less at the gas pump. That is Imperial Oil. That is Shell.

There is spending more and getting less at the grocery store. That is Loblaws. That is Empire. That is Metro. There is spending more and getting less with one's mortgage payment. That is CIBC, RBC and TD.

I appreciate the member's concern on this issue. I just think that her arguments are misplaced. It is capitalism. It is corporate greed. If we start taking that on, we will get results for people.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, I have questions about Canada's grocery oligopoly. I do. However, the government has racked up so much debt. That money has caused an inflationary crisis, including food increases.

With regard to energy, of course we need to address climate change. While we do that, why are we lining the pockets of autocratic countries? Why are we not investing in our own energy security?

It is just that mindset that deflects away from the decisions that those parties have made in a supply and confidence agreement and how that affects real Canadians. It is just pinning it on striking labour workers, somebody's vaccination status, what their gender is, or corporate or whatever.

The buck stops with them. They are in a coalition agreement, and they have a plan that spends more and gets less. It has got to stop.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I certainly enjoyed the member's technique of punching her fist in her palm to keep time with her frustration. I often do that with the sound of my head banging on my desk as I listen to conspiracies, slogans and MPs who get up to read something for the first time because one of their staffers wrote it and they do not get the words right.

I congratulate the member for being able to speak on her feet and think independently at times, although I do not always agree with her. I would like to go to her question about the Treasury Board president. There is the Nick Cave song that starts:

Where is Mona?
She's long gone

The Treasury Board president said she released a public letter. That is not how one negotiates a financial agreement. She seems to

Government Orders

think that this public letter would work. We have to get people back to work. These are workers who are getting hammered by inflation.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague what she thinks we need to do to get the Treasury Board president to do her job.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, oh, boy, I agree.

They have got to get back to the table. The government also has to stop trying to trial balloon things, saying that this strike is the union's fault, because what that does, and what it is trying to do, is pit public sector workers against private sector workers and against everyone.

We have to unite as a country. There are a lot of people who do not want us to be united, and the government cannot be doing that. Yes, it has to fix this mess that it created. It has got to have a little more compassion.

To my colleague, and I know that he and I have had long chats before, but I would just ask him this: Why is he propping up this government? It is not the jam of the NDP. It is not the jam of the NDP 20 years ago—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Give us somebody besides Pierre.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Mr. Speaker, that was a bit of a hot mike for my colleague.

We have got to be compassionate for Canadians and feel what they feel. We have got to stop spending more and giving them less.

The Deputy Speaker: I need to remind members who are on Zoom to keep their mikes off when it is not their turn to speak. As much as we want to have—

• (2055)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I certainly would never unmute myself deliberately to intervene in someone else's statement, but I was so excited to be part of that conversation that I did not notice I had pressed the unmute button, so I just want everyone to know that I did not do that deliberately.

However, if I were to do it deliberately, I would let you know that I did it deliberately and take responsibility for it, so I want to take responsibility for not taking responsibility.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the clarification from the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay. It always makes it exciting on these long evenings.

Continuing debate, the hon. member for Essex.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to stand in this place to represent the great folks of Essex.

Government Orders

We are here this evening to speak to Bill C-47, the budget implementation act. We have heard a lot of discussion, and I have been listening keenly to both sides of the aisle, as to what truly is the direction for Canada and the path forward to sustainability and success. While I was drafting out my talking points today, I got thinking about local examples.

The first one I am going to start with is a young woman from Essex County who goes to school at St. Clair College. She has a part-time job and lives at home with her parents. She drives back and forth about 30 minutes to school. Her part-time job is at a veterinary clinic, and she wants to be a veterinarian. Her parents have paid into RESPs along the way.

I found out this morning from this young lady that she has to pay \$942 this year in income tax. She makes under \$15,000 in her part-time job to pay for some of her schooling. I guess the question is this: How is that even possible in Canada? We talk about affordable housing. We continue to talk about making things easier for Canadian families. How can a young woman who is 20 years old, who goes to school full time and has a part-time job, have to pay \$942 in taxes and be expected to save any money at all for a home going forward?

Saturday morning I had breakfast with the mayor of Kingsville in a local greasy spoon that serves one of the greatest breakfasts in Essex County. We met the owners of the restaurant. The amazing woman told me that they have lost about 85% of their senior customers because they can no longer afford to eat out. Then she went on to cry as she told me that she was in a local Zehrs, which is a grocery store, and ran into a senior who was trying to figure out what she was going to eat that night because she was looking at Kraft Dinner.

Then we look at this budget, and we are supposed to celebrate a \$234 one-time payment per person. Last night I went to the local grocery store here in Ottawa and bought half a bag of groceries for \$36, that was just for myself, so this one-time payment might be great for one month, yet the government wants to celebrate it.

I want to speak about the 2023 federal budget submission of the Windsor-Essex Chamber of Commerce. I will go through it quickly.

The first point it makes is with respect to the employment insurance rate freeze. It stated:

the bill for these emergency programs is being unfairly placed on businesses. Businesses have for years been concerned with the fact that employers pay an additional 40% on-top of matching the employee contributions. The \$0.05 increase per \$100 of earned income means that employers are paying even more. The additional \$0.05 increase to take effect in 2024 and 2025 means that employers are going to be bearing the burden over years for programs not beneficiary to them.

It speaks about the capital cost allowance for vehicles, stating:

The current amount of \$30,000 is well short of the current average vehicle price in Canada, which is approximately \$54,000 for a new vehicle and \$36,000 for a used vehicle. This low limit prevents businesses from properly being able to account for the depreciation of the asset, which is the primary goal of the CCA.

• (2100)

They talk about allowing international students to participate in the Canada summer jobs program. In my riding of Essex, we got about \$720,000 less this year for the Canada summer jobs program.

There are a lot of folks have benefited from that program who are not too sure if they are going to be able to keep their doors open, such as those at the Kiwanis camp down in my area.

They talk about the delay of the CEBA loan repayment over one year.

They talk about bringing in a new workforce and increasing the pace of immigration, which is something that Conservatives have been calling for and talking about for a very long time.

There are the non-Canadian housing purchasing ban, immigration with accreditation and covering transition costs. We hear an awful lot about housing in this House, ironically. For that young woman I was talking about, or perhaps a young man who is working full-time who cannot find a home, and if he can find a home, he cannot afford it, the government loves to pound the drum that it is doing so much for housing. The problem is that the government cannot even plant a tree, so maybe the problem is the lumber to not build the homes. Nine in 10 young people do not believe they will be able to afford a home, and that is unacceptable.

When I ran for this place in 2019, I said that I would do my darnedest to ensure that I leave the world a better place than I found it. I am the eternal optimist, and today I stand here to say that I am a bit of a pessimist. Because of the failures of the government, it is certainly not in a better place in 2023 than it was in 2019.

With respect to skilled labour, the government has been, again, pounding the drum. With respect to the Volkswagen plant, it is fantastic. In housing, this is excellent and, quite frankly, a great investment. It is wonderful, as are the five and a half billion-dollar battery plant in Windsor and the Gordie Howe International Bridge.

However, there is something really interesting about this when we talk about all these investments. By the way, regarding the Volkswagen plant, they talk about 3,000 workers. The truth of the matter is, that it is probably closer to 1,000, but in the event that it is 3,000, that would be great.

Here is what is really ironic. Where are the skilled trades people going to come from? If the government truly cared about skilled trades, why did it not take my private member's bill, Bill C-241, and put it into this budget? It would have been done overnight, and then we would have people who are mobilized across Canada.

I want to talk really quickly about the doctor in Michigan. Dr. Amster lives in Michigan, and he has 1,200 patients at his family practice in Amherstburg, which is in my riding. His current C10 work permit expired on March 28, and nobody will give him a renewed work permit.

Government Orders

Tomorrow morning, I am very excited to host grade 11 and grade 12 students of Cardinal Carter, where I went to high school. What do I tell them? How do I explain to them that what we are doing here is fighting for their future when the budget, quite frankly, falls so short for them?

• (2105)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members likely will detect, there are a number of flaws in the member's comments. The one that comes to mind is that he started off by talking about the grocery rebate, and he is being critical because it is not giving enough.

The Conservative Party supported the passage of Bill C-46. Bill C-46 ensures, through legislation, that we will be able to give that grocery rebate. To the very best of my knowledge, not one Conservative MP came to the government saying that we should be increasing the rebate amount. The Conservatives had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to have their support for the rebate. In fact, one of the reasons that particular clause is in the budget debate is that we did not know we could even get the Conservatives to agree. We are grateful for that.

If the member believes it is not enough, why did not one Conservative MP come over to make the suggestion to increase the grocery rebate?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I will answer a question with a question: Is that question good enough for the senior standing in a Zehrs grocery store crying because she cannot figure out what healthy food she can eat? If the member thinks that a one-time payment of \$284 is sustainable, then that is pretty darn disgusting. Our seniors deserve more than this.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I was just reflecting on some of the comments that the member for Essex made about the importance of a skilled workforce, and I could not help but recall that when I worked for the Manitoba government, Manitoba had the provincial nominee program, which was a very successful program and worked very well to attract skilled workers to Manitoba. At the time I was there, that program was on track to start bringing in over 10,000 skilled immigrants every year to the province of Manitoba, but the Harper government put an arbitrary cap of 5,000 on those who could come under that program. It was puzzling at the time. I wonder if the member has a sense of the deficit of skilled workers in Manitoba today because of the decision of that government then.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, it has honestly been really good to work with the New Democratic Party on trades. Of course, NDP members did support Bill C-241, so they understand it, unlike all but one member of the Liberal Party.

I have been across Canada, from the east coast to the west coast and everywhere in between, and do I ever know that there is a major deficit of labour. I do not think that there is any one of the 338 members in the House who would disagree with me on that front. However, it is really unfortunate that when we have major hang-ups in the immigration system, all these skilled trades that are coming through are being backlogged, put into a file and not being dealt

with to support our industries and businesses. It goes back to the government.

My question for the member would be this: If it is that detrimental, and if NDP members have all the answers, why do they continue to prop up the Liberals?

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's speech, and it was great. Also, I must say that his mother is a very good cook, so a shout-out to Helen out there.

We have the GST rebate, which the Liberals call, in a gimmicky way, the "grocery rebate", but is not the real solution to making life more affordable getting control of this government's out-of-control spending, because the more this government spends, the more life gets unaffordable for Canadians?

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, and I am sure mom is watching tonight. She makes excellent chocolate chip cookies.

This is all about, and can only be about, a vision for the future. Everything we do today in the House has to ensure that life is more affordable and that spending is reined in. However, that same spending that we are doing is enabling and allowing our young men and women in the workforce to go forward to start their own lives.

• (2110)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I think that Bill C-241 would have fit very neatly in Bill C-47, the budget implementation act. There are many sections in the over 429 pages of Bill C-47, but there is one that goes directly to the issue that the hon. member has put forward in his private member's bill, which is a tax discount on tradespeople's tools. I wonder if the member saw that section and if he sees it as encouragement that perhaps the Senate, like the House, will pass Bill C-241.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Mr. Speaker, yes, I certainly have seen it, and I am very much aware of the \$5,000 tool tax credit. It is a great start, but it does not go far enough.

The Deputy Speaker: Before we move on, I just want to remind members that when they are banging on their desk it does transmit into the microphone, and those who are doing the interpretation have a hard time with that sometimes.

Continuing debate, the hon. member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to stand in this House representing the great hard-working people of Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan.

As parliamentarians, we sometimes have to deal with unpleasant situations, like today, when unfortunately I have to critique the Liberal government's latest inflationary budget. Let me state the dismal facts that confront Canadians. This budget is set to increase the national debt to a record of \$1.3 trillion. The interest payments alone on this debt will reach \$50 billion, which is \$10 billion more than Canada spends on national defence.

Government Orders

The government's revenue, or taxes on Canadians, has nearly doubled since the Liberals took office eight years ago. In other words, the finance minister has managed to create a budget with both record revenue and record deficits. This record spending will only throw gasoline on the inflationary fire that Canadians are already struggling with. It will not help people who are struggling to get by.

Our party had three demands of this budget, none of which have been met. First, we wanted to help Canadians bring home better paycheques with lower taxes and for the government to scrap the carbon tax. Instead, the Liberals tripled down on higher taxes by tripling their carbon tax earlier this month.

As the PBO reported, this tax will cost the average family far more than what they get back in rebates. Here is the simple equation. In Saskatchewan, the average household will spend an additional \$410 this year beyond the \$1,781 they get back. Let me say that again. In order to get \$1,781 in rebates, they will need to spend \$2,191. I have to ask if this is the new math kids are doing in school, because it does not work.

Let me state the facts. The government is putting a price on people with this carbon tax. Liberal inflationary spending has also caused the price of food and groceries to skyrocket. One in five Canadians is skipping meals. People are going to food banks who have never gone before. We are blessed to live in a country with an abundance of natural resources and agricultural goods, and this should never happen.

“Canada's Food Price Report 2023” predicts that a family of four will spend over \$1,000 more on food this year. That is nearly \$600 more than the grocery rebate announced in this budget. Here is the equation: spend \$1,000 and get \$400 back. It is bad math.

Let me be clear. Not everyone qualifies for this rebate; most do not. Add to the equation I just shared that a large majority of Canadians will continue to struggle with the cost of food, along with the ever-rising carbon tax, with no help from the government. This compounds the cost of living crisis all Canadians are facing. This is after yet another hike in payroll taxes. Overall, the average Canadian will see another \$305 deducted from their pay. They take home less and pay more.

Canadians are slowly getting their pockets picked by the Liberal government. The government's grocery rebate is simply giving money back to Canadians that has already been clawed away from them with tax hikes. It will not solve the cost of living crisis. The government is forcing Canadians to be dependant on it. It taxes them and gives them rebates when it sees fit, instead of trusting Canadians with their own hard-earned money.

Conservatives demanded that the government end inflationary debt and deficits that drive up inflation and interest rates. Obviously, this condition was not met, and I would have been absolutely stunned if it had been. After all, the Prime Minister has added more debt than all other prime ministers combined and has no plan to balance the budget and control his inflationary deficits.

• (2115)

Our national debt this year is projected to reach \$1.2 trillion. To put that in perspective, that is nearly \$81,000 of debt per household. The fall economic statement tabled just a few months ago projected a \$4.5-billion surplus in 2027-28. Now that is all gone, with more massive deficits years into the future.

In last year's budget, the finance minister said that Canada's debt-to-GDP ratio was her fiscal anchor and that this number must decline for Canada's finances to be sustainable. She said:

...let me be very clear: We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline. Our deficits must continue to be reduced. The pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe and solvent must—and will—be paid down.

This is our fiscal anchor. This is a line we shall not cross. It will ensure that our finances remain sustainable.

According to this budget, our debt-to-GDP ratio is set to increase from 42.4% to 43.4% this year. The finance minister herself knows that her inflationary debt and deficits are unsustainable. Let us relate this to a household budget in which someone is putting tens of thousands of dollars each year on their credit cards while only paying the minimum amount. We all know this is unsustainable, and this is happening year after year. We cannot borrow our way out of debt. We cannot spend our way out of debt.

Conservatives' third demand was to remove government gatekeepers to free up land and speed up building permits to help build homes people can afford. The dream of home ownership for young and new Canadians under the government has died. Nine in 10 people who do not own a home say they never will. Over the past eight years, the down payment needed to buy a home has doubled. The average monthly mortgage and rent payments have nearly doubled in the same time. What used to cost \$1,400 eight years ago is now over \$3,000.

When the government took office, someone needed just 39% of their average paycheque to make monthly payments on the average house. Today, that has risen to 62%. We should remember that on top of that 62%, we are still facing the cost of living crisis, with the cost of groceries skyrocketing and the carbon tax increasing the cost of everything. Things are more expensive and Canadians are taking home less.

Let us talk about what this budget has, or rather does not have, for Saskatchewan. If we look through the document, Saskatchewan is mentioned only five times, and where it is mentioned is in paragraphs bragging about announcements made as far back as the summer of 2022 and some with little or no involvement of the federal government at all.

Government Orders

Our agriculture industry is barely mentioned as well, although this is hardly surprising with our current minister's abysmal track record in supporting our agriculture producers. What our agriculture sector needs most is relief from the punitive carbon tax. If the government was not so focused on trying to impress its European friends, it would know that our farmers are already tremendous stewards of the environment. Forcing them to pay obscene amounts in carbon tax means that they are less able to spend on needed new equipment that would lower their carbon footprint.

Thankfully, my friend from Huron—Bruce is working to fix that. His bill, Bill C-234, has passed the House, despite opposition from the government and the agriculture minister, and it is now making its way through the Senate. I pray that common sense will prevail and our farmers will see tax relief soon.

This budget has failed to do anything to help Canadians. It has failed those who are struggling with higher taxes and inflation. It has failed those who want to some day buy a home. It has failed our agriculture sector. It has failed Saskatchewan, and it has failed Canada. The cost of living crisis is real and it is hurting Canadians. The price of gas in Moose Jaw has risen over \$1.60 after the government tripled its inflationary tax. This is not an environmental plan; it is a tax plan. The Prime Minister has said that he has put a price on pollution, but the fact is that he has put a price on people.

This is a bad budget, and I will not be supporting it.

● (2120)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as to this theme of gatekeepers holding up housing, we know that the housing supply is controlled by municipalities and provinces. What the member and other members who have talked in the House this evening and other days as we have debated the budget have neglected to talk about is affordable housing. I know that our government, as I outlined earlier tonight, has a number of programs that have helped not just housing issues and homelessness but providing affordable housing in municipalities across Canada.

Can I ask the member why consistently Conservatives get up and talk about housing and housing supply but neglect to talk about affordable housing investments and why they are so averse to supporting any program that has to support housing providers who are assisting with social housing units?

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Mr. Speaker, I was the mayor of Moose Jaw. The biggest challenge that I faced while the Liberal government was in power was accessing infrastructure dollars to help my community grow. Anything that the Liberals have touched has created problems and this budget does not help small communities like the city of Moose Jaw or communities in my riding.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned a little bit in his speech about how much Canadians are struggling. I am hearing that in my own riding. I would like him to maybe talk a little bit about his area. I know that for the residents of Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte that our food bank is getting overwhelmed. Recently, I had discussions with the executive director of the Barrie food bank who told me that many residents who were once good donors

to the food bank are now actually going in and having to use the food bank, which is just a terrible situation.

Maybe he could tell me what is going on in his area of Canada if that is a similar situation or how it is.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Mr. Speaker, I know that my hon. colleague and I have a shared heritage in history, in being part of municipalities and supporting municipalities.

I have seen a rise in those using food banks in my community. It has been challenging. The way that we have tried to offset that has been to actually create jobs to attract people. The challenge that municipalities face with the oversight of the federal government makes it very difficult. That is a challenge that we are facing. That is because the Liberal government's policies are failing the people of our communities and raising the cost of living, which makes people need the food banks, disappointingly.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to join my friend from Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan virtually.

We are debating the budget tonight. I do not want to be too finicky about it. It is really weird, of course, that we have already voted on the budget. Like him, I voted against the budget. I could not support this budget after reading the 429 pages of Bill C-47.

I do not blame him as everyone is doing this. They are treating this debate as if it is about the budget, but the budget implementation act does not do anything about carbon pricing. It does not do anything about fossil fuel subsidies. Those were in the budget.

One thing I found in Bill C-47 that I really want to vote for is taking Russia and Belarus off the most favoured nation tariff treatment. I would have thought we would have done that a year ago, but I wonder how my hon. colleague feels about this. If he votes against Bill C-47, he will be voting against taking Russia off the most favoured nation list for our trade relations. It is peculiar, but I just wonder what his thoughts are on that.

● (2125)

Mr. Fraser Tolmie: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that my colleague is not voting in favour of this budget either. Obviously, as I stated, this is a challenge that we sometimes have to face. We have to face difficult decisions.

One of the things that I have always thought about leadership is that there are tough decisions to be made. Normally the first thing is to take ownership, but I have not seen that with the government. Second is to make tough decisions, not bad decisions. Third is to remember that this is about serving others, not oneself. Four is to leave a legacy and not leave a mess behind.

This is a difficult decision but I will not be supporting this budget.

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and make my own contribution to the debate on Bill C-47 tonight.

Elsewhere, I have spoken more at length about some of the things I think are commendable in the budget, including another doubling of the GST rebate, which is an important way to help Canadians who are struggling the most with the cost of inflation without returning more money to the pockets of Canadians for whom extra spending might be inflationary. A lot of private sector economists have recognized the virtue of this approach the NDP pioneered and has managed to extend in the budget here.

I have talked about the importance of dental care and the good it will do for millions of Canadians to be able to finally access dental care when they have not had that privilege before. It is something that should not be a privilege, but should be a right for every Canadian wherever they are in the country.

I have talked also about an important step, not a step that meets the need in any way for indigenous people, who are struggling, like other Canadians, with the housing crisis, but in an even more acute way with more challenges for how to deliver housing properly. Over \$4 billion was invested in the last 12 months to an indigenous-led strategy where indigenous people themselves will be making decisions about how better to house their people in urban, rural and northern areas.

There are some important labour conditions on federal funding for the new energy economy, ensuring that public dollars that are invested in that new energy economy do not just go to large corporations and get siphoned out of the country, but actually go to Canadian workers, by requiring those companies to pay prevailing wages, not just the hourly wage but the wage package, which includes benefits and pension amounts, to their workers in order to qualify for that federal funding. There will be two seats for labour on the board of the growth fund that the Liberal government is establishing to ensure that workers and their interests are represented in the investment decisions of that fund.

Those are just some of the things the NDP has pushed for in the budget, which we think are going to make a positive difference in the lives of Canadians.

I have also talked about many of the things that are not in the budget that ought to have been, including urgent reform to the employment insurance system, which the Liberal government has promised now for close to eight years and has not done. In the meantime, it has actually revolutionized the EI system and completely changed it, and then it came back full circle to the EI system that the Harper government left in 2015. We have made no progress, despite years of promises and a demonstration that the government can do it.

The Liberals did do it. They had a minimum benefit. They had one universal qualifying threshold with low hours. They had a higher income replacement rate for many people on the program. They had a lot of the things EI needs in order to be a successful program that is there for Canadians when they most need it, which incidentally is in a period of recession, which the budget says is coming.

When will the employment insurance reform come? The Liberals know where the account is, because they took \$25 billion of CERB debt that does not belong there and plunked it right in there, ensuring the premiums for workers and employers will go up consistently for the next seven years, trying to pay down a \$25-billion debt that does not belong there in the first place, so it is certainly not because they do not know about EI or they do not know where to find the account.

Up to now, over \$60 billion has been taken out of the EI operating account by successive Liberal and Conservative governments. As far as I am concerned, adding \$25 billion of debt is another expenditure that does not belong on the EI account, and we are now in the territory of about \$85 billion the Liberal and Conservative governments have taken from EI ratepayers they never had any right to in the first place. The EI account would be in very good shape and perfectly capable of sustaining the kinds of reforms we need to have for the sake of Canadian workers if that money had not been taken out of there in the first place.

That is a perfect example of what is not in this budget that ought to be, and Canadians can count on New Democrats to continue to press the government to get the job done, just as it should get the job done on housing. I talked a bit about a modest plan, when it comes to indigenous housing, in terms of allocating some funding in the budget. It is nowhere enough, and that is just for the needs in indigenous communities, never mind the amount of non-market housing we need to build in order to meet the needs of people right across the country from coast to coast to coast.

● (2130)

It is not just about spending money. It is also about taking regulatory action in order to constrain the investment activity that is happening from private actors with deep pockets all over the country that is driving up the cost of housing, whether it is driving up the cost of rental housing for Canadians who need affordable rental housing or whether it is driving up the cost of a home that Canadians would aspire to own. In either case, it is a problem. We need to see a government that is willing to take action. I have talked elsewhere about the kinds of things New Democrats believe can be done by the government that would not cost a dime to taxpayers, in order to relieve some of that investment pressure that is driving up houses in the real estate market.

There has been a fair bit of debate tonight about the budget, rightly so. We have heard a lot about the carbon tax and inflation. These are important debates and I respect how people are being affected by inflation, certainly. I see it in my own community.

We are not in any way immune to the rise in the use of food banks and people having to make tough choices, but I do want to talk a little bit about the nature of inflation, because when we listen to Liberals and Conservatives debate inflation, there is something that never comes up.

Government Orders

Again, this is what they share in common with housing. They do not want to talk about the role that deep-pocketed investors are playing in driving up the cost of housing for Canadians. When we talk about inflation more generally, they do not want to talk about the role that corporate Canada has been playing in jacking up prices for Canadians.

There have been reports out, more than one, that say that up to 25% of the inflation that Canadians have experienced is related precisely to excessive profits by corporations.

What do we mean by excessive profits? We mean profits over the prepandemic baseline, an increase in the rate of profit for these companies. The oil and gas sector is a good example. It has seen outsized increases in its profits over the last couple of years. It has seen a 1000% increase in its profits. That is a lot of money.

What do we mean when we say excess profits? We mean expanding one's profits by a 1000% over two years, because who pays for that?

Conservatives are quick to talk about how every penny that is raised in taxes comes out of Canadian pockets. Well, guess what? Every penny that is raised at the pump comes out of Canadians' pockets too. I am not just talking about the pennies that go to the government and the carbon tax or the gas tax or whatever else. I am talking about the pennies that go to provide that 1000% increase over two years in corporate profits for oil and gas.

That is why New Democrats have been advocating for an excess profits tax. We forced the Liberals to do this when it comes to banks and insurance companies. We have also said that this should also apply to oil and gas companies.

What do we hear from the Conservatives when we talk about that? They say, oh, well, they will charge it to the consumer. They will just pass that on to the consumer. There is probably some truth in that. That is why the member for Windsor West has done an excellent job talking about how we should have a formal body that regulates price increases so that Canadians can be sure that they are getting a fair shake at the pumps. We have done this for decades in Manitoba with the public utilities board, in respect of auto insurance rates and Manitoba hydro rates and gas prices for heating one's home.

This is not something out in left field. This is something that provinces do with respect to important price controls, something that the member for Windsor West has done a lot of great work on.

The other thing that they neglect to mention is what happens if one removes the carbon tax. For some reason, they think that if there is additional tax, they will just pass that on to the consumer, but if by lowering a tax, we create more disposable income, they somehow think that oil and gas companies are not going to raise their prices to gobble that up too. We have a problem. Yes, the oil and gas companies win, it seems, no matter what one does.

That is why the member for Windsor West is bang on in talking about a real way to control oil and gas prices, but they best believe that by reducing those kinds of taxes in a period where the oil and gas companies have been jacking up their prices and making a

1000% increases in their profits over two years, they are going to gobble that up too.

That is why targeted tax relief, like doubling the GST rebate, has been praised by private sector economists as a good way to provide relief to Canadians who need it the most without contributing to inflation and that broad-based tax relief, of the kind that the Conservatives advocate for, is seen as something that would contribute to inflation. B.C., Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and the Northwest Territories all have their own carbon pricing system imposed provincially. Getting rid of the carbon tax is not going to make a whit of difference for people who live in those provinces.

We have a broad-based tax measure proposed that economists say will be inflationary and only provides relief to people in about half the country. That is not a plan. That is just a talking point.

● (2135)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's contribution tonight, although I have to disagree with some of the flaky theories he has.

For example, provincial jurisdiction allows for price controls or for information systems to basically force gas companies to post ahead of time what their prices and inputs are. That is something the provinces can do right now. However, in my home province of British Columbia, the NDP government has chosen not to. In fact, it has backed away from all the big talk about excess profits and people being gouged.

The member continues to say that if we just had another tax, we would make all this money go to the people. It used to be government asking the big oil and gas companies to hire lots of people, expand their projects and invest back into it. However, at the end of the day, they cannot because of NDP and Liberal policies that have made it impossible for them to do so. What does the member have to say about that?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would say that if times were so tough for oil and gas companies, they would not have seen a 1,000% increase in their profit over two years. I think the member should look at the numbers and give his head a shake.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is nothing flaky about standing up for people who need affordable housing support. I really respect the member's interventions every time he gets up and speaks in the House.

I would ask the member about the comments he made on real estate investment trusts and the issue we are dealing with as it relates to the commodification of housing and the impact it is having on people in terms of rising rents, renovations and other things. I really respected the fact that he got up and talked about it a number of times. Could he expand on it in terms of what that means for renters and what the government needs to do to provide assistance regarding the same?

Government Orders

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, one of the things the government could be doing is working to establish a non-profit acquisition fund. A lot of non-profits have great experience running housing complexes and know how to get the job done, but they find out too late that a building with affordable units might have been available or on the market. Corporate landlords, who are better connected and have deeper pockets, find out sooner; by the time there is more public knowledge of that building coming up on the market, it has already been scooped up. Therefore, providing a notice period for that kind of sale and making funds available for competent non-profits to be able to swoop in and compete with some of these big corporate landlords is a really important piece of the puzzle.

Also, we can look at the idea, as they have done in New Zealand, of having escalating down payments. As a person owns more properties, they would be required to put up more instead of just leveraging equity out of their existing properties for the same amount of down payment. This is another way to try to have a bit of control over really excessive investment activity in the residential housing space.

These are just some of the ideas out there about what government could do. The non-profit acquisition fund, obviously, does involve some government investment, but different rules around escalating down payments do not. Therefore, that is an example of something the government could be doing right now that does not cost money and could help have a cooling effect on the residential housing market.

• (2140)

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to listen to the member for Elmwood—Transcona.

I want to ask the member about that grocery rebate. Why does he think the government decided to call it that instead of a doubling of the GST?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, it is kind of a curiosity, is it not? I think that “doubling of the GST rebate” is very clear and very honest in terms of what it is. The “grocery rebate” branding has caused some confusion.

We had finance department officials at committee just recently, and I had the opportunity to ask them about that. They confirmed that, from a technical perspective, there is no difference at all. Therefore, it is just another doubling of the GST rebate, as we have been happy to talk about on this side of the House.

I asked if the tax officials in the department moonlighted as branding specialists and maybe recommended to the minister's office that it be called a grocery rebate. They did not say that was true. In fact, they said that they could not say, because those are privileged conversations. However, I felt that astute political observers could probably put two and two together and figure out that the Liberals are sad that the NDP has been getting credit for a good thing, and so they came up with a term to try to get more credit, as is the wont of many folks around this place.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour and a privilege to be able to rise in the House of Commons on behalf of the great people from

southwest Saskatchewan. I would be remiss if I did not start off by congratulating all the ranchers who have just made it through another calving season, or are at the very end of the season.

I also mention our farmers, who are about to begin their spring plant, with the spring thaw that is going on. We have a bit more moisture this year than we have had in years past. I know a lot of folks are really excited about that and are also more than happy to wait a couple of days to start. I know everyone is anxious to get in the fields back home, so I want to wish everybody a safe and happy spring planting season.

Here we are talking about budget 2023. The budget is a great opportunity for the government to take a step back, have a little self-reflection and really hone in on the needs of Canadians. That is something that has been lacking for the last number of years. Instead, we are seeing a continued coalition with the NDP, who are keeping the Liberals in power and helping them repeat scandal after scandal.

We have seen the NDP bring up some of these scandals from time to time, but at the end of the day, it is still voting for them. We know the NDP will vote for this budget because it has to. We have heard some great comments from NDP members criticizing the government. At the end of the day, it is kind of useless and meaningless because they are just going to prop the Liberals up and vote for it anyway.

The Liberals are running a government that is quick to announce massive amounts of spending without figuring out where the money is going to come from to pay for it. Most recently, we saw the government massively subsidize Volkswagen in Canada. We still do not know the upper reaches of the total compensation of the package, but we do know that it is going to be in excess of \$13 billion. We still do not have a lot of information, but that is a ton of money, and it is appropriate for us to be asking a lot of questions about it.

It gets even worse. Volkswagen is the only automaking company in Canada to be charged under CEPA for violations against the environment. There were 60 counts against it. What was its reward for that? It was \$13 billion of taxpayers' money. This is from a government that says it prioritizes the environment. However, the only company to actually violate the Canadian Environmental Protection Act gets massive subsidization as a reward for its behaviour.

Government Orders

The Liberals will go out of their way to defend all this spending. They will say they have to spend a lot of money so that we can get a bit out of it. Let us be real. There is no plan to get a complete battery industry here in Canada. We have heard many times in this place, in committee or in meetings with stakeholders, that Canada has all the resources and minerals required to have a very robust battery supply chain. However, we simply do not have the extraction and refining capacity to do what is required. To make matters worse, there is way too much red tape and over-regulation of the sector, preventing private sector investment into our country. Again, we have the raw materials to work with, but they are literally stuck in the ground.

We would think that with all the abundance of natural resources that we have, private companies would be lining up at the door to invest their money in Canada. As it stands right now, if someone does not have massive government subsidies, there is nothing being built or done in this country.

The investments of these companies would bring jobs, service companies and spinoff industries, such as restaurants and service-and-repair shops, not to mention the royalty revenue that builds our communities and invests in our rural communities. It still makes rural Canada a viable place to live.

If it were not for rural Canada, urban Canada would not have all the luxuries it enjoys. If we think of the food that is eaten, it is all grown, harvested and produced in rural Canada. There is all the lumber and building materials required to build the housing that we talk about so much in this country. Where does it come from? It comes from rural Canada. We have to prioritize the rural areas. We are not seeing that from the government.

We should also mention the opportunities that exist for the first nations people of Canada to be able to partner with these private companies, make investments and sign these partnerships. This will bring about opportunities for jobs and education for their people as well. That is missing because of government inaction.

Natural Law Energy is a company from my riding. It tried to partner with TC Energy to invest in Keystone XL, and the government chased that off. That was an opportunity for six or seven partnering first nations to have jobs and opportunities, and the government said no. That is the terrible direction that we have been heading in.

However, it is always possible to change course and direction. Budget 2023 presented the government with such an opportunity, but the government has a shocking level of disrespect for how it is handling Canadians' money.

• (2145)

Here is a straightforward example: On page 223 of the budget book, the Liberals have a graph showing that we will not be on track to balance the budget until 2060. How can they possibly pretend that it is a responsible plan for the national finances to be left like this if it is going to be a few decades before they even have a plan to get it back into fiscal balance? It is a complete mockery of all the people who work hard and pay taxes in this country.

How are they choosing to spend this money, the millions or billions of dollars at a time? The Liberals continue to give massive subsidies, as I mentioned earlier, to such things as a battery plant for giant companies that, quite frankly, could afford to pay for and do this on their own. However, as I said, the Liberals will also decide to spend millions and billions of dollars without worrying where that money is coming from, which is from the taxpayers and ratepayers of this country.

The Liberals' policies are preventing us from developing our natural resources across the board, but they save their worst treatment for demonizing the oil and gas sector here in Canada. In the budget, it says that the government is forecasting the price of oil to be around \$82 a barrel. That is actually not too bad. At that price, if the government could choose to support the idea, Canada could balance its budget within a couple of years and not a couple of decades. The Liberals would still be able to invest in all the social programs that Canadians have grown to like, enjoy and appreciate and be able to afford to do so by supporting natural resources development in this country.

We have even had a few countries come to Canada looking for LNG, but the Prime Minister said no, that there is no business case for it. However, other countries around the world continue to beg for our resources. Instead, we are driving them off to other countries, such as Qatar. Therefore, we miss out on those opportunities to grow as a country while making the world a better place because of the high standards that we have here in Canada for human rights and for environmental protection.

I proudly represent a rural riding where we have our own way of life, and the government does not understand it. Rural Canada is far from having the majority of our population, but as I was saying earlier, we produce all the things that people in urban Canada need to have the luxuries that people enjoy there. In return, too often, the Liberal government leaves us behind and forgets about us. Sometimes, the Liberals impose things on rural areas. They will make it harder, if not impossible, to continue to live there.

Has anyone heard of the carbon tax? That is one of the biggest issues that people talk about that is driving up the cost of living in urban Canada, but predominantly in rural Canada, the place hardest hit by the carbon tax.

For right now, the Liberals have been busy talking about a so-called just transition for oil and gas and for coal, even though they are still failing to make a just transition happen, whether they are located in the Prairies or the Maritimes. That is something that we also learned from a recent audit done by the Environment Commissioner. Since then, not much has been moving. We do not even see a budget item yet for the just transition for these communities. We are only seven years away from the end date for some of these coal mines and some of these coal power plants that the government is going to force off coal, and yet the government does not even have a plan or an allocation for how to deal with that. It is shameful.

Government Orders

For the Liberals, it is not on their radar. I asked the minister what he planned to do with the people from coal-producing communities like Coronach and Rockglen in my riding, as well as in the Souris—Moose Mountain riding. As much as the minister tried to sound as if he would support rural areas, his answer and his examples actually suggest that rather than staying in the communities and working where they are, people are going to end up moving to other places, such as Regina, northern Saskatchewan, Calgary, Edmonton or the east coast.

The Liberal minister might think that Regina is part of the rural area, even though it is the capital city of Saskatchewan. Regina is a great place. It is a fantastic place, but that is not where the people from Rockglen, Coronach, Willow Bunch or Assiniboia want to be. They want to stay in the places where they currently are, in their communities. The government is doing absolutely nothing to make sure that happens after it has mandated away the number one industry in their communities.

I will just quickly mention that there is one thing I definitely appreciate in this budget, and that is the tax credit for tradespeople when they purchase their tools. Again, we are talking about a housing crisis in this country. How are we going to get there? We want to build houses. We need more workers. We need to incentivize people to be able to go to trade school and to want to work in these industries. That tax credit is going to help a lot of people as they enter into the trades.

The Liberals also could have supported a Conservative private member's bill, Bill C-241. It has passed this place, but the government could have been proactive and provided that in the budget. However, it did not do that. The Liberals missed an opportunity there.

• (2150)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard the word “shameful”. I want to focus on that issue in terms of what is shameful. What I find shameful is that when we make historic investments, whether in housing, the environment, manufacturing or jobs, Conservative members who voted against these initiatives show up to cut ribbons and show up with a shovel for the ceremonies that are taking place in communities across Canada. What I find interesting is that we have heard consistently today that the party opposite is obviously opposed to the historic investment we have made in the Volkswagen facility in St. Thomas. Does the member know whether the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London has shared her opposition to that investment with her constituents?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, after eight years, what we continue to see is the Liberals spending record amounts of money to accomplish so little. They value and rate their success by how much they spend, not by how much they have been able to accomplish. They can spend all the money they want on housing, but they have not been able to properly develop housing in this country because they cannot get out of the way to allow developers to get to doing what they do best, which is to build housing for people.

Volkswagen has a lot of money. It could invest in building this battery project without the government dumping \$13 billion into it, which my great-grandkids, quite frankly, will be paying for. The

Liberals are not spending their money. They are spending the money of my great-grandkids. That is whose money is at stake here. They need to remember that because without taxpayers they do not have any money to spend.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to build on the previous question, if I could. I am going to give a secret away to the Canadian people. Those folks on the other side do not have any money, not a penny. That is taxpayer money. In order to give something, something has to be taken away from someone. The Liberals are taking credit for taking other people's money. That is not cool. Does the member agree?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree. The Liberals are spending the money of future generations. I was talking in my speech about how on page 223 of the budget the Liberals are not even on track to balance the budget until 2060. I will be a grandpa. That is when they will balance this budget, when I am a grandpa. That is absolutely crazy.

We want to make sure we have a plan to develop the economy. That is why we talk so much about natural resources. Our critic from Lakeland does a fantastic job of speaking on behalf of the industry, and my colleagues from across the country do that as well. They know that when companies invest in Canada we are better positioned to be able to invest in our people and our environment, and then we are able to share our riches with the rest of the world. We do that by attracting investment and because the private sector has invested in Canada, not because the government took money away from its citizens to invest in things that are not producing great results for people.

• (2155)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I hear Conservatives expressing concern about inflation. With what is going on at the grocery stores, where is the outrage against Loblaws, Empire and Metro? With what is happening at the gas pumps, where is the outrage against Imperial Oil and Shell, which have seen profits go up by 1,000% since 2019? When people are paying more on interest rates for their mortgages, where is the outrage against CIBC, Toronto Dominion and RBC?

For Conservatives to stand in this place and manufacture this outrage but completely ignore the insane levels of corporate profit, they are just doing a disservice to their constituents.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, one of the things that is really fascinating is that we do not see any outrage from the NDP about the record revenue the government has been bringing in because of the extra taxation. We would think with all that extra money in revenue it is bringing in the government would be able to get results with the money it is spending, but it is not. It is spending insane amounts of money and not getting anything done.

At the end of the day, we want to see businesses investing in Canada, creating jobs and creating investment. That will bring money into government coffers, but it is also going to bring more power to people's paycheques so that people can invest in the goods they want in their homes.

I just want to make one point quickly. If the member wants to talk about transparency at the grocery store, the prices should show how much carbon tax is charged on each item on the shelves. We do not see that. That is why Conservatives continue to advocate to scrap the carbon tax, because it is not marked on every good, yet it is applied to every single good and is paid by every single person multiple times over.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, we often talk about budgets as if we are just talking about money, as if it is just a spreadsheet full of cash, but we have to take a step back and ask where that money came from and why it is being spent. The answer to that, of course, is people. The money came from people and is supposedly being spent in support of people. Interestingly enough, it is the same people who pay in as benefit.

When we talk about this, we are talking about the nation of Canada. We are talking about the people who call this place home. The government is entrusted to take their money and spend it on their behalf for things that are supposedly supposed to benefit them, so let us talk about the people.

When I think about the budget, I think about Raelene, one of my constituents. She goes to the University of Lethbridge. She studies really hard, takes a full-course load and works a part-time job. She is optimistic about her future because she is confident in herself. She is confident in her skills and abilities and in her work ethic, but when she thinks about her future in terms of finding a job or being able to purchase a home, she begins to have doubts, because the government has done little to nothing to remove the gatekeepers or to bring down the cost of living that would prevent her from being able to buy that first home.

I think about John, who is a local beef producer in my riding of Lethbridge. He lives in the county and operates with his sons. He hopes to pass his business down to his family and, in the meantime, is looking to not only make ends meet, but hopefully generate a bit of a profit and be able to provide jobs. That is not to mention that he is producing food not only for our area but for the world. When I think about John, I think about the red tape that has been put in place and the language that is used against him as a farmer. I think about the carbon tax and the implications that it has on him and his business. I think about the overall lack of gratitude and the misconceptions that are put toward him.

I think about Tannis. Tannis is a mom to two young children. Tannis just started a new business in the last few months and she is hoping to make a go of it, but she recognizes that the input costs are only going up. She wonders whether or not it is feasible to keep going, but she still dreams of big things and has a fantastic work ethic. She will continue to work hard and hopefully she will make a go of it, but she is worried. She is worried about affordability issues, whether it is putting gas in her car, being able to heat her home or being able to put groceries on the table for her family.

I think about James. James wrote to me with regard to Bill C-11. He is a digital first creator. He wonders about his future and whether or not he can make a go of it. He knows that under Bill C-11, the government is going to look to control what people can see and hear and post online. He knows that this is censorship, that it is a far overreach of the government. James is worried about his

Government Orders

future because the government is, in effect, building a firewall around him and preventing him from being able to reach the global audience that he hopes to reach. James wonders about his future.

I think about Marj and John, an elderly couple who came into my constituency office not too long ago with their heating bill in their hands and tears coming down their faces. The image will forever be in my mind. Why? Because Marj and John are people, people who are trying to make ends meet on a fixed income. Marj and John are having to make a choice between filling their prescriptions, heating their home or eating proper meals. That is not a choice someone in their late seventies should have to make when they are supposedly supposed to be enjoying their golden years.

I think about Allan. Allan is a law-abiding firearms owner in my riding who enjoys hunting with his buddies. He enjoys putting deer in his freezer to be able to feed his family and maybe being able to share an elk steak with friends. I think about him and his responsible use of his rifle, and then I think about the government demonizing him, as if he is the criminal. Meanwhile, the government turns a blind eye to our borders and very basic security. I think about the fact that crime has gone up by 32% since the Liberals took government. I think about the fact that street gang murders have gone up by 92%, and yet Allan is the one being treated like a criminal.

These are just a very few of the people and faces that I think about when I consider this budget and its implications for Canada.

• (2200)

Budgets are about people. They are not about a spreadsheet. They are not about a number. They are not about a percentage. They are not about debt. They are not about GDP. Yes, all of those factor in, but at the end of the day, the budget is about people. It is about whether the government understands what is required to support the people of this country.

Imagine we have this wad of cash in our right pocket and someone comes along and takes it out and puts a few nickels and dimes into our left pocket, and they expect to be applauded as if they have just done us a favour when in actuality we are far worse off. Budget 2023 feels a little like that. It feels like the government is wanting accolades for taking a wad of cash out of the pockets of Canadians and replacing it with a few nickels and dimes, as if it has done the Canadian population a big favour.

Meanwhile, the affordability crisis continues. Meanwhile, the housing crisis continues. Meanwhile, crime continues to skyrocket. Meanwhile, business investment is being driven out of our country, yet the government stands back and says, "Applaud us. Look how well we have done."

The government forgets where that money came from. It forgets it took it out of the right pocket to put it into the left pocket. Of course, not all of it went back into the left pocket; only a few nickels and dimes did. The government forgets the people who entrusted it to govern. In doing that, it has lost sight of the most important things.

Government Orders

In this budget, Canadians were looking for lower taxes. In this budget, Canadians were looking for spending to be reined in. In this budget, Canadians were looking for effective measures around housing prices and affordability. That is what Canadians were looking for in this budget.

Instead, what Canadians received was a government that decided to pour gasoline on a fire, and that fire is called inflation. We already have the highest rates of inflation in 40 years. That has to do with our Prime Minister and the fact he made the determination to incur more debt than every other prime minister combined. In all of Canada's history, all debt combined, our Prime Minister, the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada, managed to spend more, and so inflation continues to rise. As inflation rises, so does the cost of living, and as the cost of living rises, Canadians become less and less hopeful.

The government likes to brag about its grocery rebate. I suppose some might call it the sexy item of the budget. It is the thing the government was hoping would save it and Canadians would applaud the government for. Again, take a big wad of cash out of one pocket and put a few nickels and dimes into another. "Applaud us, applaud us," the government says.

Let us talk about the grocery rebate, shall we? Let us talk about the fact that because of inflationary measures groceries are going up by about \$1,100 per family this year. Let us talk about that grocery rebate and the fact it is less than \$500 for that same family. Do the math. The government is making decisions that is driving up the cost by \$1,100 and giving \$500. Are Canadian families better off? Absolutely not.

"Applaud us, applaud us," the government says. "Send accolades our way," it says, while it takes the wad of cash from the right pocket and puts a few nickels and dimes in the left.

What the government does not understand is a healthy economy, where people are working, thriving and contributing, cannot be replaced with government spending. Canadians deserve so much more. They are the problem solvers, the solution makers and the wealth generators this country needs, and they are the ones—

• (2205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, where I agree with the member is that budgets are about people. For example, the grocery rebate is going to assist 11 million Canadians. The dental program has already provided benefits to close to a quarter of a million children under the age of 12, and now it is going to be expanded to include seniors. In many different ways, this budget is all about people, yet we find that the Conservative Party does not want to support people. In fact, we knew how the member was going to vote before the budget was presented, because the leader of the Conservative Party indicated that the Conservative caucus would be voting against the budget. I am wondering if she could explain why it is that the Conservative Party does not support the people of Canada.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, again, what I am hearing the member saying is that we should applaud the Liberals while they take a wad of cash out of the right pocket and put a few nickels and dimes into the left pocket. They call that support. They call that being for the people.

What is interesting to me about the government is that its measure of success is the number of dollars it spends. It forgets where those dollars came from. They came through taxation because government never has money of its own; it can only take it from the people. Meanwhile, the government applauds itself because it is really good at spending and it likes to use that as its metric, so it spends on this and spends on that, and say to the Canadian public, "Please applaud us." What is accomplished with that money? What does the government accomplish with all of its spending? Nothing, zero, is what it accomplished. That is the measure that Canadians shall use to know whether the government has been and is effective.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just have a question about what the Conservatives believe is the right way forward with respect to the dental care plan. When we look at the fact that a quarter of a million children have received benefits from this and the fact that this year we are now going to expand it to seniors, to persons with disabilities and children under the age of 18, will the Conservatives commit to keeping this program in place, or are they going to go back to the status quo that used to exist, where low-income families with no insurance coverage basically had to fend for themselves and it was the law of the jungle with respect to their oral health?

• (2210)

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, I would remind the hon. member where all the money comes from, which, once again, is the Canadian people. I would also remind the hon. member that there is nothing about the supposed dental program that requires the money to be used on dentistry. It is actually just a cheque that gets written should someone want it, so I would have a question for the member with respect to accountability and whether it is actually accomplishing what he wants it to accomplish, or whether it is just cash being piped out. Again, I would remind him that money does not grow on trees. I would also remind the member that the government has no way of generating money of its own. It has only the money that it takes through taxation, so to take a wad of cash from the right pocket and put a few nickels and dimes into the left pocket is absolutely atrocious and never praiseworthy.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, the late congressman Tip O'Neill said once that all politics is local politics. That is exactly what we heard in that fantastic speech from my colleague from Lethbridge, giving examples of real people with real problems created by the Liberal government. May I ask the member for Lethbridge to explain to us the impact of the Liberal carbon tax on the farmers in her riding?

Government Orders

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Madam Speaker, I have the privilege of representing a fantastic riding where there is a small urban centre and an incredible rural area around it. My constituents are hard-working men and women who are growing food and raising animals in order to feed not only our nation but also the entire world. Unfortunately, there are a few things that the government has done against them. First, it has used language that is incredibly demonizing. Second, it has applied a carbon tax to them, which has driven up their costs. Third, it has put in a slew of red tape, including around fertilizer. It is absolutely atrocious.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, today we are talking about budget 2023, the budget that the Minister of Finance had signalled would be a budget of restraint. Let us take a look at what “restraint” means for our Minister of Finance. This is what it means: \$63 billion in new spending. That does not look much like restraint. To put it into a number that people can understand, that works out to about \$4,300 per average Canadian family, and I do not think that is what the average Canadian family identifies as being restraint.

The Minister of Finance will tell us that this spending is coming at a time when most of the prepandemic jobs have returned and most Canadians are working. I agree. Unemployment is down to 5%. I think most economists would call that full employment, and that is good news, of course. When people are working, they are paying taxes, and when they are paying taxes, the government is receiving revenue. Therefore, one might think that it is circumstances like these that would present the government with an opportunity to present a balanced budget, or maybe even a surplus budget, to pay off some of that extraordinary national debt we accrued during the COVID pandemic years.

However, if that is what members are looking for, they will be disappointed, because that is wrong. What we have here is another deficit budget, to the tune of \$40 billion. Even in times of full employment and good government revenues, the government is still making no effort to balance the budget. So much for restraint; it was nothing but empty words.

When we are talking about the economy, a logical question is whether we can trust the Prime Minister to deliver on his commitments, so let us take a look at his track record. In 2015, when he was the leader of one of the opposition parties and was vying to become the Prime Minister, he promised the Canadian people that, if he became Prime Minister, he would have some small to medium deficits for three years, but in year four of his mandate, 2019, he would deliver a balanced budget. We got the deficits and we got the debt, but we did not get the balance. What we did get was a new concept in economic theory presented by our Prime Minister, which was that we should not worry about the deficit, because budgets balance themselves. He has never explained what that meant. It is still a mystery to us. Maybe it will be in his soon-to-be-released memoirs. I am looking forward to it.

The same Prime Minister also said that, with an extra \$20 billion a year in the civil service, his government would be able to deliver better services that Canadians need and rely on. We got the spending, but we did not get the services. What we did get was a very unhappy public service, which is now on strike. There are 155,000 public service workers on strike, fighting for better wages that keep

up with the inflation that the government's inflationary spending has caused. The Prime Minister also said that he could build the Trans Mountain pipeline for \$7 billion. This is after he scared away private investment money that was quite happy to build a pipeline, but the investors abandoned ship and the Prime Minister had no choice but to pick up the pieces, and the latest estimated cost for completing the project is now at \$30 billion.

Therefore, no, we cannot trust the Prime Minister on his commitments. Once again, this year, the Prime Minister gets an A for announcements and an F on delivery.

We cannot separate talking about the 2023 budget from talking about inflation, which is at a 40-year high. People are struggling to pay their bills. Food prices are up over 10%, and one in five Canadians is skipping meals. There are 1.5 million Canadians who are regular food bank users. The average rental rates stand at roughly \$2,200 a month, and the average mortgage payments are now at \$3,300 a month. These numbers are about twice what they were when the Prime Minister took office eight years ago.

These are not just numbers thrown around by economists; these numbers represent people's lives and the pain people suffer. This is especially true for our young Canadians who are just getting started. Nine out of 10 people under the age of 25 believe that they will never own a house. This has always been the Canadian dream, but it is disappearing. Inflation is also particularly tough on seniors who are on fixed incomes. They cannot go on strike for inflation-adjusted wages.

• (2215)

However, inflation also affects what government can and cannot do. We have an accumulated debt now of over \$1.2 trillion, and it is growing, to the tune of \$40 billion this year, and that debt needs to be serviced, just like the family mortgage does. As the Bank of Canada hikes up interest rates to combat inflation, the government's mortgage payments go up as well, to about \$43 billion this year. That is money that goes to wealthy bondholders and, consequently, is not available for government programs, like dental care, for example.

The government may think that it does not have to worry about deficits, and we are still waiting for the Prime Minister to explain that economic theory. Maybe he does not think that this is a danger, and maybe we will continue with deficit budgets into the future. The inflationary cycle continues.

Government Orders

However, there is hope. A Conservative government would turn all this hurt into hope. It would ensure that Canada's economy works for those who do the work. A Conservative government would demonstrate with actions, not just with words, that future generations, young people and immigrants can realistically hope for a secure future. We would bring common sense back into the budgeting process to ensure that taxpayers get value for their money.

I want to turn back to comments that the Minister of Finance made about a year ago, in relation to the 2022 budget she presented. At that time, she adopted a fiscal anchor: maintain a GDP ratio at a manageable level and keep it shrinking. She noted that our debt-to-GDP ratio is not worse than that of other nations. It is a pretty soft compliment to say that we are not as bad as other people, but she also noted that Canada has a fundamental economic problem: lagging productivity metrics when compared to our major trading partners.

It is a well-known fact that, for every dollar that an American worker pumps into their economy, their Canadian counterpart contributes about 67¢ to our economy. This does not mean that we are not working as hard as Americans; we are probably working harder than they are, but our economy is just not as productive. We do not have the tools, we do not have the scaled-up companies and the efficiencies that go with that, and we have too many gatekeepers. This is not what the Minister of Finance said; this is what our leader has been saying. We have too many gatekeepers, who are getting in the way of productive Canadians and money that is looking for a good place to be invested. They are scaring investment away.

However, the Minister of Finance does acknowledge, at least, that we have a productivity problem. She calls it Canada's Achilles heel. Her predecessor, Bill Morneau, agrees. In his recently published book, he noted his frustration with his boss, the Prime Minister, over his not being interested in economic and fiscal policies and the real challenges that face Canada's economy. Mr. Morneau says of his former boss, the current Prime Minister, "So much time and energy was spent on finding ways to redistribute Canada's wealth that there was little attention given to the importance of increasing our collective prosperity—let alone developing a disciplined way of thinking and acting on the problem".

When we think about the national debt, it is not sufficient to talk just about the debt-to-GDP ratio. We also need to look at our collective ability as a national economy to create the wealth that will service that debt, that will eventually pay down that debt, to secure Canada's future for future generations. Canada's abilities in that regard are severely challenged due to the Prime Minister's mismanagement of our economy. It is time for a Conservative government to take over the keys and fix what the Prime Minister has broken.

• (2220)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we hear the Conservatives talk in terms of an inflationary budget. What I would like to bring to the member's attention is the fact, which I know he knows, that there was a worldwide situation caused in part by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Inflation rates all over the world have been going up. However, if we compare Canada to the rest of the world, including the U.S. and Germany and many other European countries, Canada's inflation was

actually lower than in those nations. Today, after this budget, we have actually seen a decrease in Canada's inflation. Does the member not agree that the Conservatives are being somewhat disingenuous and misrepresenting what the budget actually is? What it is not is an inflationary budget.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, we were pointing out early on, during the pandemic debates about the economy, that inflation was a real threat. The Minister of Finance said, well, no, it is not, that deflation is the bigger threat and that, as a matter of fact, it would be irresponsible for the government not to engage in deficit spending because, after all, money is free or almost free and it would be ridiculous and irresponsible not to spend.

The member for Carleton pointed out time and time again that inflation was a real risk and that there were not new rules for the economy. The economy was functioning on the same rules then as it does now. Inflation needs to be managed, and the government plays a very important role in that.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague, who I appreciate a lot, mentioned the hard-working public servants who are part of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. We see them across the length and breadth of the country working hard every day on behalf of Canadians.

We have seen, sadly, from studies that came out just a few days ago, that they really have not had a wage increase since the beginning of the Harper regime, which is nearly 15 years ago. They are still earning the same wages, comparatively, as they did then if we take into account inflation. What they are asking for is very reasonable, but I have yet to see the member for Carleton or any member of the Conservative caucus join in solidarity with those hard-working public servants.

I contrast that vividly with when the convoy took over downtown Ottawa and caused such misery. Families were cut off from being able to sleep, seniors were cut off from their groceries, people with disabilities were cut off from their medications and Conservative MPs were all over that.

The public service and public servants need the support of all members of Parliament. Why have the Conservatives not joined those public servants?

• (2225)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the fact that public service workers feel they have to go on strike to fight for inflation-adjusted wages just goes to show us the insidious harm that inflation can inflict on the people of Canada. That is why it is so important that the government manage the economy in a way that is going to bring inflation down.

It is no answer to say that, well, every other country in the world has a problem too. We are talking to our Prime Minister. We are talking to our government. It is their problem to fix. If they cannot do it, we will happily do it for them.

Government Orders

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the hon. member raising the Trans Mountain pipeline and the ballooning costs. They are not referenced in the budget, but they went, in one year, from \$21 billion to now \$30 billion.

I cannot blame the Prime Minister for the escalating costs. However, I can blame the Prime Minister and the former minister of finance for just about falling off the turnip truck and buying a pipeline that was not worth what they paid for it. Now the taxpayers are going to be forced to build it.

What does the hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove think about a \$30-billion pipeline that was billed to Canadians as costing \$5 billion?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, the hon. member and I might not agree on the importance of having this pipeline built, but we agree that the government has mismanaged it. It is inexplicable that costs have risen from \$7 billion to \$30 billion. The government should just get out of the way. It does not know how to run a business.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure and honour to rise in this House. Of course, today we are speaking about the budget implementation act, Bill C-47.

Before discussing the substance of this act and why I, and I believe most Canadians, must oppose it, I have to explain the broader economic context in which it falls. I will endeavour to explain the challenges that our country is facing. Those challenges are significant and numerous. From there, I will discuss why the BIA is flawed and why it should be defeated, and finally, I will discuss a new path, a better path, one that leads to prosperity.

I hope that with this speech, I will not only engage Conservatives but engage members and supporters of independent parties, of the Liberal Party, of the New Democratic Party, of the Green Party and of the Bloc Québécois, because Canada's problems are really quite serious. I am not exaggerating. We have significant challenges. Quite frankly, we are going to need everyone, Liberals, New Democrats, Green Party members and members of the Bloc Québécois, to pull together to fix this country.

It starts with acceptance. We have to face the facts. All is not well in our great country. In fact, it is far from it. Over the past eight years, we have seen a Liberal government that is perhaps not bereft of good intentions and in fact may well be full of good intentions. However, what it has failed to deliver is results for Canadians.

Announcements have been frequent. They have been grand. Many a fine word has come from the Prime Minister's mouth and from members of the Liberal Party. However, the reality is that Canada is in economic decline, and that is not just me saying that. It is world economists, the OECD, the World Bank, the IMF and economists from coast to coast. The failed leadership and policies of the Liberal government have risen to such a level that they have put its very competence in question.

Let us go through some of those issues and describe the picture.

Our country has been ravaged by the impacts of high inflation. Not all inflation is equal. Things like energy prices are sometimes beyond the control of a particular country, but there are key core elements that are basic and national in nature. One of them is food, which is a critical element, and we have seen 10 months of double-digit food inflation. That has translated into a real impact on Canadians. Quite frankly, it is shameful that 1.5 million Canadians have visited food banks, and it is a sign of a country that is unfortunately in economic decline.

The high price of houses has had a significant impact on Canadians. There are far too many 30-year-olds still in their parents' basements desperately dreaming of the day they can own a home. Mortgage payments have doubled to over \$3,000 a month. Rent has increased to over \$2,000 a month, doubling over the past eight years. What is even more sad than the 30-year-olds dreaming of moving out of the basement is that nine out of 10 young people have given up the dream of home ownership, which once again is a sign of the failed policies that are putting our country on a path of economic decline.

We have more structural problems that the government has exacerbated over the past eight years. We have among the lowest capital investment rates. In fact, the OECD predicts that over the next 20 years, we will be last with respect to capital investments out of the entire OECD. We also have low innovation scores, and our number of patents is below that of most of our peer countries.

Our productivity numbers are once again near the bottom of the OECD. The productivity of a nation, or, in other words, what a country makes in terms of goods or delivers in services, is the very engine that drives the economy. When productivity is not right, the economy cannot be right, and that puts the whole economy in decline.

● (2230)

We can print as much money as we want, and the government certainly printed enough during COVID and post-COVID, but ultimately it is about the production of goods and what dollars buy. We can have as many dollars as we want; it does not increase the prosperity of a nation. What increases the prosperity of a nation is the ability to produce goods more effectively and efficiently than its peer countries, and we are falling behind.

We have tremendous challenges when it comes to productivity. It is amazing to me that this can happen, because we have what I believe is the best workforce in the world here in Canada. We have great post-secondary education, and we have a highly educated, highly motivated, hard-working population. However, somehow the government is squandering that opportunity and having us produce lower and lower results. This is not the fault of the Canadian people; it is the fault of the Liberal government.

Government Orders

Our inability to produce not only affects us but affects our allies as well. We left our allies literally out in the cold this winter, even though we have the energy not only to make ourselves independent but to supply other countries. We force countries such as Germany, Poland and France to depend on dictator oil, on Vladimir Putin's natural gas, when we have the ability to export liquefied natural gas from our very own coast. Our allies were literally begging us for our resources, but we could not get out of our own way. Once again, the fault does not lie with the great Canadian people; it falls to the Liberal government and its failure to get out of the way of the great people of Canada.

There can be no doubt that we in Canada are facing perilous economic times, and the Liberal government is responsible for many of those challenges. One might expect this after eight years of failed policies and continued poor results. Once again, this is not me saying this and it is not the Conservatives saying it. It is the OECD saying that we are one of the lower-ranked countries among our peers with respect to productivity, with respect to innovation and with respect to capital investment, over and over again. The government is too boxed in by its own ideology to acknowledge the realities going on out there in the world.

Ultimately, the driver of an economy is not the government. The government does not create value. It can certainly share value, and there is an important role for government to do that. It can also protect value through the military and through the police. However, it does not create or generate value; that is for the private sector. However, when we burden the private sector with overtaxation and over-regulation, we limit and inhibit the ability of that engine to drive the type of prosperity we need.

This is not a case of multi-billionaires getting away. The Liberals have let enough of their multi-billionaires get away through the Panama papers. However, who are they taxing? Do members know that many Canadians who earn less than \$50,000 a year pay a marginal tax rate of over 50%? That means for every dollar people who earn less than \$50,000 earn, between clawbacks and income tax they will be paying back to the government 50¢. Do members think it might be a barrier to having someone work when they know they will only be able to keep 50¢ of every dollar? Let us keep in mind that rent is now \$24,000 a year on average or more, maybe \$30,000 a year, and that food prices have increased. Then the government thanks them very much for going to work, and they have an annual salary of \$50,000. I do not think anyone in this place is going to call that rich, and they are paying over 50¢ per dollar.

The challenge is clear, and this budget is not even close to getting it done. However, I believe we can change things, that Canada has a tremendous opportunity and that together we can build a Canada where opportunity abounds, where freedom is ever-present, where achievement is celebrated and where prosperity and not poverty is the norm. Canadians want to leave these eight years of despair, of stigmatization and of division behind. They want to start a new chapter filled with unity, prosperity and achievement. That is why I must vote against this budget, and that is why the voters of Canada will decide to go in a different direction in the next election.

• (2235)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not believe the member. I do not believe he can show me a T4 slip from any of his constituents that would show they have a gross income of \$50,000 and \$25,000 of it went to taxes. I am going to challenge the member to demonstrate that and prove that I am wrong.

Speaking of facts, can the member explain this to me. If he is so passionate about the middle class, why is it that when we brought in a tax reduction for Canada's middle class and put in a special tax hike on Canada's 1% wealthiest, the Conservative Party, the party he belongs to, voted against the middle-class tax break and voted against the special tax for Canada's wealthiest persons?

I anxiously await that T4 slip. I hope I get to see it sometime in the next 12 months.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I am disappointed in that member. I would direct him to the C.D. Howe Institute. You can look at the reports, and they will show the numbers. Does the member know what the clawback is for the GIS? It is 50¢ on the dollar. That is just the GIS alone, sir. You are so far off, it is ridiculous—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. member he is to direct questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the member.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, he is so far ridiculous. I will walk him over today, and I will show him my calculations on the Ernst and Young calculator that shows, with clawbacks and with the income tax, that many Canadians are paying over 50¢ on the dollar. The fact that he does not know that shows how out of touch the government is and why we need a new direction and a government that will make life easier for Canadians.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to know what the member would say to his constituents about all the benefits that all the different populations of people in his riding in Northumberland—Peterborough South are going to be getting. There is dental care, the GST rebate being doubled and the grocery rebate. What is it about these benefits, which are going to his constituents, that he is so against?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, the challenge is that those benefits do not come from air; they come from taxpayers, and my constituents are tired of paying the bills for the government. Not all that money comes back to Northumberland. There are sticky fingers here in Ottawa that keep a large portion of that money. That money is better to keep in the pockets. I believe that a Canadian can spend the money better on themselves than any bureaucrat in Ottawa.

• (2240)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to ask my hon. colleague about the carbon tax. He did not talk too much about it, but I know the carbon tax is a massive driver of inflation here in Canada, and I was just wondering if he has any thoughts on what we should do with the carbon tax.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, Tiff Macklem, in response to my question, wrote to the finance committee and said that half a percentage point of inflation was directly related to the carbon tax. That means that if we want to reduce inflation by 20% today, we can get rid of the carbon tax.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I will not dispute it, but I deeply disagree with my friend from Northumberland—Peterborough South. I wanted to ask him a question on something I know we agree about, and that is the failure of the budget to invest in Via Rail. Can he comment on whether, particularly in his local area, enough is being done to get passenger rail back on track?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, it was an absolute pleasure to work with that member on the rail caucus. I think we are doing great work there. I can tell members that because of those last eight years, just listening to several experts from Transport Action Canada, the rail system with Via and otherwise is in a state of disrepair because of the government's inability to get anything done.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to get up on my feet today and thank the fine people I represent in my riding of Red Deer—Lacombe in central Alberta. They are some of the hardest-working people we will ever find.

Red Deer, for those who may not know who are watching, is Alberta's third-largest city. It is in a tier of communities, after Edmonton and Calgary, which are, of course, cities I think everybody in this country has heard of. However, places like Red Deer, Lethbridge, Fort McMurray and Grand Prairie would be the next tier of cities that we have in Alberta. Red Deer is the epicentre of central Alberta with a quarter of a million people. The city services that community all the way from Maskwacis to Ponoka to the north; down to the Olds-Didsbury area in the south; to Stettler, in my friend from Crowfoot's riding to the east; and, of course, the Rocky Mountain House community that I used to represent to the west. That is colloquially known as central Alberta, with all the communities and people that are there.

I was on Facebook earlier today and I saw that the Viking pipeline and Viking Projects in central Alberta is closing its doors and there will be a liquidation sale early next month. Every time I see these things happen in my constituency, I think I age a little more, because I know these people. They are my friends and my neighbours. One of my dearest friends had a very successful oil field trucking company. He fought to hang on through the eight years of this Liberal Prime Minister, and through four years of Rachel Notley as the premier of Alberta. He hired numerous good people, paid taxes and grew our hometown. We live in Lacombe, and these are the stories that are all too common.

It is really a shame that even though Albertans seemingly are working harder than ever, and it seems that Albertans have never worked so hard, they have a feeling that they just cannot get ahead. That is because the dollars they earn, the jobs they have, the businesses that they try and keep afloat in the middle class, and those desperately trying to cling to it, simply do not have the purchasing power, and their dollars do not go as far as they did even though they might be working harder. Of course, I do not have to go too far

Government Orders

back in history to give examples in my constituency where people doing the same job just a few years ago are getting paid substantially less for the same job today, because the profitability and the viability of industries, such as agriculture, oil and gas, manufacturing and technology, are simply not as valued by this current government as not only the previous Conservative government, but might I even say the previous Liberal government.

It seems like the only time that we face economic and political crises in Alberta in the context of Canada is when we have a Liberal government with a prime minister that holds a certain last name. Members would be surprised to know that as I go and talk to people in my riding, of course, they certainly miss the policies of the previous Conservative government, which rewarded hard work, innovation, those who took a risk and those who were willing to work hard to get ahead, but even the previous Chrétien-Martin government is remembered somewhat fondly in the context of the Kyoto protocol and everything else that was not necessarily good for the industries in Alberta.

I just wanted to give that context to those who might be watching at home today, because as hard as Albertans are working, as optimistic as we remain, as strong as the Alberta spirit is, it is still very difficult for many people in my constituency.

● (2245)

We hear the stories in this country, but there is simply nobody in my riding talking about this. The budget was tabled on March 28 and it was a two-day story. Nobody is talking about anything because people realize their lives are still just as difficult as they were before the budget. Little do they know that their lives could get more difficult.

I want to talk about our position. Contrary to what others are saying in this place, we made our decision. We had conditions. The leader of my party had conditions of three things to be met. We wanted to bring home powerful paycheques with lower tax and scrap the carbon tax so that hard work would pay off, and that is certainly something we can relate to in central Alberta. We wanted to bring in homes that people can afford by removing government gatekeepers to free up land and speed up building permits. We wanted to bring home lower prices by ending inflationary debt and deficits that drive up inflation and interest rates. It is because none of those things are happening in this budget that we are voting against it.

I want to talk about the carbon tax and the effect it has had, the anti-energy policies the current government has had in Alberta and the massive closures we have had. Some of my colleagues touched on this earlier.

Government Orders

When Stephen Harper became the Prime Minister of Canada in 2006, the year I came to this place after being elected, we virtually inherited nothing insofar as major energy projects from the government. Of course, it was involved in the Kyoto protocol and its discussions.

We left the government that is in place today a balanced budget after going through the recession of 2008-09. We left the government in a strong fiscal position with fiscal anchors and decreasing debt-to-GDP ratios that had gone down from the mid 20s to low 20s during that tenure.

We also left the legislative framework here, notwithstanding the fact that prime was going down. The Bloc Québécois and the notion of separatism in this country and alienation in parts of this country were at an all-time low. There was relative peace and political harmony in this country, notwithstanding all of the bluff and bluster from the other side. During that time, things were pretty darn good in Canada. People were generally fairly happy and we certainly were not talking about the myriad of scandals and problems that we are talking about today.

In 2015, the government inherited numerous pipeline projects. It inherited the northern gateway project. It inherited the energy east project. It inherited Keystone XL. It inherited the Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain expansion.

All of these projects were proposed and going through the regulatory process with private money. It was money from shareholders, money from investors and money from risk takers. They were creating jobs. They had partnerships with indigenous communities where those pipelines happened to go.

During my time on the NATO Parliamentary Association, I had frank conversations with members of Parliament from Europe who were keen to have a conversation with me and with our Canadian counterparts every time we went to Brussels, every time we went and had these conversations, because they wanted to have the option to remove their dependence on Russian energy.

They had an interesting policy because they understood that part of keeping peace was creating economic prosperity on both sides. They wanted to have that ability. The government inherited over 15 LNG export projects, but one of the first things it did, which is why we cannot balance a budget and we do not even try any more in this country, was it clamped down on the most profitable and prosperity-generating industries this country has. Our number one export industry was the oil and gas industry. That is what it did.

I look forward to answering some well-articulated questions on the absolute economic disaster the government has caused the people of central Alberta.

• (2250)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member cannot rewrite history. The facts speak for themselves.

He wants to talk about Stephen Harper. Stephen Harper inherited a multi-billion dollar surplus and even before the recession kicked

in, he had already turned that into a multi-billion dollar deficit, from a surplus to a deficit.

The Conservatives had a multiple-billion dollar trade deficit which we have actually converted into a surplus. The member himself needs to recognize that his reality of the past is not necessarily accurate when we take a look at the facts. The facts clearly demonstrate that Stephen Harper's policies of constraint and cutbacks, including reducing national defence spending to less than 1% in one of his years, is something which one should not be overly fond of or proud of.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I guess what my colleague is saying is that he is grateful for the fact that Stephen Harper signed so many trade agreements that we finally erased the Liberal trade deficits that we inherited from the previous administration in 2006. From that perspective, if he wants to say thanks, I will tell him he is welcome but he does not get to change the facts.

The first several years of the Harper administration, yes, we did inherit a surplus and then when Stephen Harper became the prime minister, the first couple of years, the first budgets that we had, we continued to actually pay down the debt because that was the responsible thing to do.

Then 2008 and 2009 came along. Liberals begged and demanded. I remember Rodger Cuzner screaming at the top of his lungs in this place demanding that the Conservative government spend more, do more, spend more, borrow more money. Now the member across the way is complaining that we gave them a yes for an answer at the time.

The heights of hypocrisy never cease to amaze me where Liberals are concerned.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was not here during the Harper years, so it is always great to hear some of the stories of the glory years of Canada. I know that Alberta flourished under those years. I know that Conservatives have worked hard to bring down taxes all across the country. I am wondering if he has any other good stories about the Harper years of bringing down taxes.

• (2255)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I remember writing an op-ed, after, I think, we had reduced taxes 160 times. We reduced taxes for individuals. We reduced taxes for businesses. We reduced taxes virtually across the board. We reduced the GST from 7% to 6% to 5%.

I wrote an op-ed in the Red Deer Advocate and somebody wrote back saying, "Sure, you did. Please list these 160 taxes." I did. I wrote a letter back to the Red Deer Advocate. It took so many words for me to list all of the taxes the previous Conservative government had cut that I actually got into a fight with the folks at the Red Deer Advocate. They did not want to print the entire list of 160 different tax cuts, so the Red Deer Advocate and I finally agreed that in my response they would put a link to a website that contained all of the information that made life better for everybody in this country.

Government Orders

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am reminded of some of the “wonderful”, and I put that in air quotes, things that Harper did and it reminds me of all of the incredible people they say they supported, but what about seniors? What about when their OAS, their GIS and their pensions were cut, when they had to rely upon OAS only at the age of 67 instead of 65? What about those people? Maybe he should talk about seniors.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, my colleague has asked a question about a topic that is near and dear to my heart.

The riding of every single member of Parliament in this place has a community of seniors in it. The seniors in my constituency were, by and large, very happy because they had income splitting. They had a tax-free savings account they could have moved their money into that was \$10,000 a year and moving up, but has been clawed back.

We moved the age they would have to withdraw money from their RRSPs or LIRAs. Seniors who did not have to make those withdrawals could keep their savings a little longer. Their purchasing power when Stephen Harper was prime minister was so good that they did not even need to go into their RRSPs and LIRAs at the rate they need to today.

That is what our record was when Conservatives were in government and it is a far cry from the government's record today.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is great to be able to follow the speech from the member for Red Deer—Lacombe, who is one of my mentors in this place and one of the first members of Parliament I ever met.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: That's scary.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, the Liberal member across the way is saying that is scary. I am not sure who his mentor is, but I assure him the member for Red Deer—Lacombe has been a great mentor to me in this place, and I want to thank him for that.

I do not say this often, but the Liberals have got something right in this budget. Members might be surprised to hear that from me. I hope the people at home will stay on to listen a bit longer to my speech, because the Liberals got something right on page 92. If one checks out the budget booklet that was handed out in this place, page 92 mentions “Getting Major Projects Done”. I cannot agree more with that.

This country has a deficit of major projects getting built. Under Stephen Harper, under the Conservatives, there was a great focus on developing our natural resources, on building things and on being a country that made things, built things, got our resources to market, that ensured our grain was moving on trains, all these kinds of things.

The Liberals are finally admitting in the latest budget that this is a country that cannot get things built and they are going to need to pay special attention to getting major projects built. A case in point is the Trans Mountain pipeline, a pipeline that was approved under a Conservative government. It is a pipeline that was ready to be built. A private company was going to use its own money to build it. The Liberal government came along and said it would buy it, so it bought the pipeline for \$6 billion and figured it would cost another

\$6 billion to build it. We are now at over \$30 billion spent and that pipeline is not built. This is a case in point that the Liberals cannot build major projects.

We have seen over 15 different pipeline projects and LNG projects that were ready to be built and going through the approval process back in 2015 when Conservatives were in government all disappear off the books one by one as companies took their money and looked elsewhere.

In my own riding of Peace River—Westlock in northern Alberta, the Carmon Creek project was a major oil sands development by Shell. It was a \$5-billion project, if my memory serves me well. Shell, in 2015, had already spent \$2 billion on that project and cancelled it. It walked away from the \$2 billion it spent in northern Alberta, took the rest of the money and invested it in a new project. It was fascinating to watch. A week after it cancelled the Carmon Creek project, it announced it was pursuing an oil development project in Kazakhstan.

That just goes to show the world noticed Canada was not open for business. Since then we have seen a dramatic reduction in the production of all the things Canada produces.

I want to point out the way Liberals think. It is an interesting way of dealing with things. Their measure of success is how much money they spend on things. It sounds good. I get it. The Liberals will say they spent a certain amount of money on something. Especially when it is in the billions of dollars, one thinks that if that much money was spent, it is great, but what they never reference is what we get for that.

A case in point brings me back to the Trans Mountain pipeline again. That pipeline was going to be built by private money with no money from the government. The Liberal government bought the pipeline and is now spending taxpayers' money to build that pipeline. The money that was spent there is not a success at all. We could have had that pipeline built in Canada by a private company that would be paying tax revenue to Canada. The amount of money the government has paid to build pipelines in this country is not a success. No matter how big the number is, it is never going to be a success. It uses that for a whole host of different things.

When we point out to the Liberals that our border is not secure, they say they are spending more money than the Conservatives ever did on security. It is a fascinating thing that the border used to be much more secure. We did not have problems with people running across the border when the Conservatives were in power. When the Liberals came to power, that became a problem. They have spent more money on border security and have less of a secure border. That is not success. It is paying more and getting less. That is the worst.

Government Orders

● (2300)

I once made a speech in this place about what kind of car we are buying. The Liberals will tell us that they spent x amount of dollars or lots of money buying a particular car, but they never tell us what kind of car they bought. If they bought a Rolls-Royce for that kind of money, we might say “Oh, good job”, but if they bought a K-car, we would say “Oh, we are getting ripped off here.” They never tell us what kind of car. They never want to talk about that side of the equation. That is really what we are after here.

We have also seen record 40-year highs in inflation. I want to note that the member for Winnipeg North was saying that since this budget was introduced, inflation has gone down. If we are driving away from town at 100 kilometres an hour and we slow down to 80 kilometres an hour, we are still moving away from town. The inflation rate is like the speed we are going at. Therefore, when the member says that the rate of inflation has slowed down, that is great, but the inflation would actually have to go negative for a time in order for us to return and get the prices of things back to what they were two years ago. We would have to go to a negative inflation rate. Therefore, when they say that the inflation went from 6% or 9% down to 4% or 5%, it is great that the inflation is heading in the right direction, but it actually has to go negative for a time before we are going to get the prices of things going back.

If we want to head back to town, we actually have to stop, get to zero kilometres an hour, turn around and head in the other direction. It is quite misleading when the Liberals say the inflation is going down. The inflation is the speed of things or the rate of things; it is not the direction in which we are going. We need to turn the inflation around. We need to ensure that Canadians' paycheques can buy the things that Canadians need to live. Money is the measure of things and not necessarily the value of things. Probably the fundamental difference between Liberals and Conservatives is our view of money.

I also want to talk a bit about the carbon tax and its inflationary impacts on Canadians. I have talked to folks from across the country, and particularly in my riding, about how the carbon tax is just killing everybody's ability to get to work, buy groceries and heat their homes. I talked to people at the big lumber production facilities in my area, and the amount of carbon tax they pay in a single month is just astounding. Some of these facilities use a lot of electricity, and the carbon tax on that is astronomical. Therefore, when the Liberals say that most Canadians are getting back more than they pay, that is not true. Even if that were true, still the major industries that we deal with in this country are paying the carbon tax on electricity that our competitor countries that are producing the same products are not. We are importing those products across the border without charging that carbon tax on them. We are putting ourselves at a massive disadvantage.

Finally, I want to talk a bit about the strike that is happening right now. The Liberal government has increased the public service dramatically. It nearly doubled the cost of the public service over that last eight years. Never before have we seen such a big strike in Canadian history. We have never had the public service go on strike like this before, so we are very concerned about the fact that the government would spend so much more money on the public service and yet still continue to get a strike out of the deal. We need to

support our public servants. We need to back them up. We need to not use them as fodder for political scandals that happen in this place. We have seen, over and over again, that when the Prime Minister runs into trouble with his own ethical scandals he throws some public servant under the bus and skates away from the issue.

Therefore, we will be opposing this budget. We will be putting forward a Conservative vision of Canada and we look forward to facing the Canadian public in the next election.

● (2305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is no surprise that the member is voting against the budget. We knew that even before the budget was produced, because that is what the Conservatives said they would do.

It seems that the later it gets, the more the Conservatives are trying to rewrite history into this Harper wonder world of reality that did not exist. The member who spoke before him, his mentor, indicated that the Harper government signed more trade agreements, which is just not true. No government in the history of Canada has signed off on more trade agreements than this particular government. That is the fact.

Then we get the member saying that the Harper government invested in natural resources and the Conservatives built things. They did not even build an inch of pipeline going to coastlines. The Trans Mountain pipeline, which the member referenced, was completely collapsing. Then the member talked about LNG. In one of the biggest agreements with the private sector and government sector, working with the NDP in the Province of British Columbia and the national government, we have LNG in B.C. I wonder if the member wants to rewrite this, and what else he has to say.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I had many more things to say, and one of the other areas I wanted to talk about was the crime rates in this country. Under Stephen Harper, the crime rates had fallen to historic lows. Violent crime was down to places it had never been before. If we look at graphs of violent crime, there is a distinct downward trend until 2015 and since then it has gone exponentially up.

After eight years of this Liberal government, Canadians do not feel safe on their own streets.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I came in halfway through the member's speech. He was referring to this mythical time in Canada when there were manufacturing, jobs and value added. I could not understand what he was talking about until I realized he was talking about the period of the Harper regime.

Government Orders

I was there and saw the softwood lumber sellout and with all of the related sellouts of the Harper regime, how manufacturing collapsed in this country. British Columbia went from having a vibrant manufacturing industry to raw log exports. We saw minerals that were transformed before the Harper regime becoming exports of raw minerals. There was the export of raw bitumen. We saw health care being slashed and cut. We saw seniors being forced to work years longer in hard, physical labour because the Harper regime decided people could not retire at 65 anymore.

My question is very simple. Why are Conservatives so delusional about the years of the Harper regime?

• (2310)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I want to point out that currently in northern British Columbia, logging companies are shutting down mills. Under the Liberal government, logging cannot continue in this country. It also has a lot to do with the NDP government, which is a do nothing—

Mr. Peter Julian: It has the best economy in the country, the best job creation—

Mr. Arnold Viersen: —make sure nothing is happening in this country, make sure that our natural resources do not get developed, make sure—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby had an opportunity to speak. There might be another opportunity to ask another question, so I would ask him to hold onto any questions he may have.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I want to point out that under an NDP government, sawmills in northern British Columbia are being shut down and the Liberal-NDP coalition seems to be fine with that.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, this is a factual rebuttal. I know facts are difficult for Conservatives to come by.

British Columbia, under the NDP government, has the best economy in the country, the best job creation record in the entire country, the best investments in terms of health care and education. The member should know this. If there is any model to look at in Canada, it is the B.C. economy and the B.C. NDP government.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, whatever the member is talking about is cold comfort to the over 600 people who have lost their jobs in Chetwynd and Houston, British Columbia. We know that the NDP-Liberal coalition is terrible for resource development.

A Conservative government will ensure that our resources get to market and that people get paid a fair value for those resources.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in this place and add my voice and those of the constituents I represent in raising concerns with both the budget and Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

This bill is the legislation by which certain provisions in the budget will be implemented. We have already voted against the budget, which includes over \$40 billion in additional spending that will have to be paid for by taxpayers through taxes. It demonstrates the

subject failure of the government to address the affordability crisis it has created.

Earlier this week, I stepped into an elevator with a Liberal member of Parliament who, in making small talk, asked me, “How are things in Saskatchewan?” If I had had more time, I would have told him about my spring tour, which I held during our recent riding weeks. While we cannot go everywhere in two weeks, we visited 19 communities and toured a number of businesses. It was great to visit with hundreds of residents from Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek over a cup of coffee. If I had had more time, I would have shared with that MP the issues that were raised, over and over again, that relate to this budget discussion, but one floor up did not allow for all that, so I am going to share them now. I guess I could have given him the one-floor elevator speech, which is that the consensus in my riding is that everything is broken.

The first concern is the huge federal debt and the ever-present, ongoing Liberal deficits. People are absolutely blown away by the figure of \$1.22 trillion in projected federal debt, a figure that has ballooned under the current Prime Minister, causing the highest inflation in 40 years by doubling the national debt. Additionally, people are gravely concerned by the \$43.9 billion, which is the amount projected to be the cost of servicing Canada’s national debt this fiscal year, a figure that has almost doubled in one year. They understand that this amount is only likely to increase, as more of Canada’s low-interest debt matures and Canada is forced to renew those loans at higher interest rates.

Deficit spending, inflation and higher interest rates are a big deal to seniors living on fixed incomes, families struggling to make ends meet and young people desperately looking for an affordable place to live. Unlike the Prime Minister, who does not think about monetary policy, Canadians who do not have a trust fund are very engaged on the ramifications of the Liberal government’s poor management of Canada’s economy. The actions of the current government are having a direct negative impact on their quality of life, which brings us to the ever-present and ever-increasing carbon tax.

For residents of Saskatchewan, especially those living and working in rural Saskatchewan, this Liberal tax is a source of deep frustration. Besides increasing the cost of everything, the carbon tax is a symbol in the minds of rural Saskatchewanians of the incredible disconnect between the reality in which we live and the Liberal elites and their ideological policies.

Government Orders

They also understand that the carbon tax is a tax plan and not an environmental plan, which is why a commonly asked question I have heard is this: “With the Liberals having spent us into such a deep hole, will a future Conservative government be able to afford to cut the carbon tax?” While I do understand the question, I remind them that a Conservative government will absolutely axe the carbon tax.

I also had the opportunity to visit with mayors, reeves and councillors. They, too, noted the negative impacts of the Liberals' carbon tax and inflation-inducing policies on their budgets. They expressed concern over how federal infrastructure programs are designed with big cities in mind and with a win/lose lottery-style methodology. They confirmed that municipalities need stable, reliable funding programs enabling them to do their work rather than dictating the infrastructure priorities the federal government wants to fund.

We also discussed the housing crisis. CMHC data for January 2023 showed that new housing starts were at the lowest level since 2020, and while they are down in large urban centres like Toronto and Vancouver, we are feeling the housing shortage in smaller communities in Saskatchewan as well.

• (2315)

Constituents and elected representatives also brought up labour shortages, rural crime and the Liberals' soft-on-crime policies, as well as Bill C-11 and the government's unrelenting focus on controlling what Canadians watch and post online. I again want to thank the hundreds of residents for coming out to share their thoughts and concerns with me.

For the purposes of this evening's debate, I also want to address the mismanagement of our country's finances, which has led to incredible waste at the expense of Canadians. Canadians are rightly asking what exactly the government has been spending their money on, and it is their money, as the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition pointed out. They are also asking what they are getting for the money the Liberals are spending, whether life is getting easier or getting better, and whether they are getting ahead. The resounding answer is no. Never before has a government spent so much to get so little.

Let us just take a look at a few examples. There were CERB cheques going to prisoners and organized crime, and \$94 million was spent on hotel rooms for asylum seekers in the last eighteen months. There was a \$237-million contract for ventilators given to a Liberal insider and \$54 million for the “ArriveSCAM” app. There is the Phoenix pay system. It has been seven years since the Liberals launched the Phoenix pay system, and it has been a disaster.

In my role as the shadow minister for public services and procurement, it has become all too clear that the government has very little respect for Canadians and their tax dollars. While it is necessary for the issues with the Phoenix pay system to be fixed, there is an additional \$1 billion dollars in the budget to continue to address the Phoenix pay system, and there is no end in sight. That is on top of the hundreds of millions of dollars paid out in damages for the government's mismanagement.

What was the Liberals' solution? It was to hire their friends at McKinsey, giving them a contract, which after three amendments,

reached a value of almost \$28 million. What was the result after McKinsey was contracted? The backlog increased.

The continually increasing outsourcing by the government while it rapidly expands the public service is incoherent. One would think that, if the public service is expanding, outsourcing would be needed less. Instead, it increased just as rapidly, and when we have asked for answers on the extent of the outsourcing in our efforts to ensure that Canadians are getting good value for money, we are stonewalled by Liberals on committee, ministers and their departments.

The Liberals have found great friends and partners in the NDP. At a time of record spending and 40-year highs in inflation, Canadians are struggling to pay their bills, while well-connected Liberal insiders have never had it so good. There are 1.5 million Canadians visiting food banks. One in five Canadians is skipping meals because food is too expensive. With mortgage payments and costs associated with buying a home doubling, home ownership is an elusive dream now for nine out of 10 young Canadians. Rent has doubled as well.

The reality is that the country is worse off after all the government's reckless and wasteful spending. Seniors, families, young people, farmers, business owners and workers all know this is true, and the NDP just keeps supplying the Liberal government with more shovels to dig a deeper hole for Canadians, all while claiming it is holding government to account.

As I said, Canadians are struggling, and they need hope. They can count on Conservatives to turn the hurt that the Prime Minister has caused into hope. It is time for a change, and we are ready.

• (2320)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, parts of that were really hard to listen to in terms of some of the revisionist history as it relates to support for municipalities and for housing.

I think the member opposite was part of the previous government. I was a city counsellor during that time. There was no support for infrastructure for municipalities in her time in office. There was no housing support for municipalities. The Conservative government relied on trickle-down economics, hoping that someone, somewhere in the private sector would help with affordable housing. That did not happen. Our national housing strategy is doing that and providing support.

What was she doing for all those years she was in office? Why could she not provide consistent support to municipalities and housing providers?

Government Orders

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do not know where that member was back in 2008-09, but we created Canada's economic action plan that saw Canada enter the recession in a less deep way than other countries did. Our infrastructure projects and funding saw us go into the recession in a less extensive way than other countries did. Our projects were timely, and they were targeted. The funding that we provided ensured that shovel-ready projects were built.

The government has failed young Canadians. The dream of owning a house is slipping out of reach for them because of the failures of the Liberal government, supported by the NDP.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I also found the speech interesting. In terms of revisionist history, I just wanted to clarify with the member across the way. I am not saying the Liberal government has done a good job of putting forward and using the Phoenix pay system, but I am pretty sure the Harper government brought that system forward.

Could she explain that for me?

• (2325)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, it was actually the Liberals who launched the Phoenix pay system back in 2016. They need to take responsibility. We can go back and listen to the testimony that we heard in OGGO committee; it was actually whistle-blowers in the bureaucracy who warned the current government that it should not go ahead with the Phoenix pay system.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I also remember that 2009 was when the Stephen Harper government launched an initiative to replace our 40-year-old payroll system, in which I do not think anyone ever failed to get paid, with what was described at the time as a modern, off-the-shelf commercial system. A different corporation, IBM, signed a contract in 2009 with Stephen Harper's government. They made out like bandits, and they built us a lemon.

It is quite true that the Liberals decided to start trying to drive that lemon, but both governments deserve a fair share of the blame. I really do not think it is fair to say the blame is even. Harper steered that ship and started by laying off all the staff in all the different payroll groups in every department.

Tellingly, the Treasury Board and finance never got rid of their own finance systems. They let all the other departments get stuck with the lemon. There is a lot of blame to go around. I hate to say it because everybody hates when we say it was all Stephen Harper's fault. However, that is what the history tells us, and that is what I remember.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I do not really have a response for that. That is what she remembers, and she is entitled to her memories. As I said, we have heard from experts who have actually identified the Phoenix pay system and the fact that there were individuals working in the bureaucracy who warned the government that it should not go ahead and launch it, but it did anyway.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, tonight I would like to speak about the idea of freedom in Canadian politics because I think, underneath

the debate we are having about this budget, there is a deeper debate about the nature of freedom.

What is freedom? Freedom, in the modern context, in common usage, has the sense of describing a reality in which the individual has a broader range of decision-making space. An individual who is free can make more decisions about his or her life, and an individual who is less free has more decisions made for them by others. That is freedom at a general level. Freedom is the general ability to make unencumbered individual decisions, at least as freedom is commonly colloquially discussed today.

I think it is important to notice that, within that general concept of freedom, there is significant divergence among political actors about what kinds of decisions are most important for individuals to be free to make. Every political party has a concept of freedom that comes from identifying different areas of life in which that range of choice making that is available is more or less important.

Obviously, not all decisions are equally important. Certain kinds of decisions are more important than others. To speak of whether a person has the freedom to, say, run a red light, is obviously a trivialization of the concept of freedom because a person who is prevented from running a red light is still substantially free insofar as he or she can still make for themselves all of the decisions that truly matter.

Here is another example. Whether justified or not, a restriction on the ability to purchase alcohol is a lesser infringement on freedom than a restriction on the ability to purchase books because, objectively, the decision to read whatever one wants is more important than the decision to drink whatever one wants.

Therefore, the building of a robust concept of freedom requires a certain prioritization of goods and a sense of what kinds of choices are more important for an individual to be able to make. Every society, for practical reasons, limits the kinds of choices that people can make in certain respects, so a society must decide what choices are more fundamental and what choices can be more reasonably restricted in order to realize other goods.

Another example of this is helmet regulation. I support the limitation on freedom associated with requiring people to wear helmets when riding motorcycles because the choice to not wear a helmet is relatively trivial, and there are other more important considerations. However, I also support religious exemptions to helmet requirements because the freedom to practice one's faith is very important and therefore, in the case of a helmet requirement, it is much more than a trivial limitation to individual freedom. Therefore, in that case, uniquely, it is not justified.

Government Orders

Those who believe in the value of freedom generally believe that limitations on freedom can be justified to the extent that the limitations are trivial and also to the extent that a limitation on freedom produces some other harm. Within that general framing, let us look at the two rival concepts of freedom advanced by Canada's two major parties.

The Liberals came to office with a bit of a freedom agenda. They legalized marijuana and have since decriminalized fentanyl and other hard drugs in B.C. They legalized and have since expanded the space for euthanasia, and they continue to promise a certain kind of expanded individual freedom associated with increasing public spending and subsidy. The idea, from their side, being that people who are given more money by the state have the freedom to do things that they would not otherwise be able to do. These are the areas in which Liberals have emphasized freedom as being most important.

On the other hand, Liberals have actively attacked freedom of conscience through efforts to impose ideological values tests for eligibility for certain government programs. They have limited people's freedom to work in cases where those people do not want to make certain medical choices. They have also imposed effective limits on freedom to work for those who work in certain sectors by imposing onerous regulatory constraints on those sectors and effectively trying to transition those sectors out of business. They have limited people's effective economic freedom by presiding over higher taxes, higher home prices and higher levels of regulation. Most recently, they have limited Canadians' freedom through the passage of an online censorship bill.

With this government, one is freer to take drugs, choose death and collect money from the government, but less free to follow one's conscience; work; make medical choices; keep one's own money; buy a home, given the state of housing prices; start a business or hear contrary ideas online. That is one approach to the issue of freedom.

• (2330)

Conservatives have, generally, a different set of priorities when it comes to what freedom should look like. Again, this is not just because Conservatives think that freedom is important. It is because Conservatives believe in a hierarchy of goods and an essential character to the human person that leads us to prioritize particular kinds of choices as part of our doctrine of freedom.

Most fundamentally, Conservatives believe in freedom of speech, association, conscience and religion. These are the most important freedoms. We believe this because we believe that individual human beings are most fundamentally truth and meaning seeking creatures. Freedom of speech, association, conscience and religion are the means through which we find truth and meaning. Therefore, intervention in our lives by the state that limits these freedoms is particularly harmful and dangerous.

Close behind these concepts in terms of importance is the freedom to work, to build and to voluntarily share the fruits of one's labour with others. Protecting the freedom to work, build and share is fundamental to economic prosperity, but actually, the freedom to work, build and share is about much more than just the pursuit of material abundance.

Economic freedom is not just about creating a more prosperous society. It does create a more prosperous society, but there is more to it than that. This freedom, too, is about the freedom of an individual to seek meaning. In order to be able to pursue meaning, individuals must be free to build things that are beautiful and then to look at those things with happiness, happiness in both what has been accomplished and happiness arising from the new thing that now exists. The freedom to build and work is intimately tied with the pursuit of meaning and happiness.

Protecting people's freedom to build businesses, build into their jobs, build things with their hands as part of their jobs and build up strong families and communities is fundamental for human happiness.

Happiness measurement literature actually shows that people who are employed are generally happier, not because of the money they get from working but because of the satisfaction and meaning they get from working.

Incidentally, the loss of satisfaction is why I am so strongly opposed to government policies that pay people more for not working than they pay people for working. Poorly constructed benefit programs have robbed so many Canadians of the opportunity to feel the satisfaction and meaning that comes from work while still being able to provide for their families. It is terrible that people have been forced to choose between having enough money to provide for their families and working by government programs that effectively pay them more to not work than they are able to receive through working.

As someone recently asked me, what is the essence of being Conservative? I thought about it and I came back with this: The essence of being a Conservative is to believe in building beautiful things that last.

Liberals have a hard time with the "building things that last" part, often relying on the insecure foundation of deficit spending, but, more fundamentally, Conservatives understand that unleashing a free economy in which people can build things that they want is not just about prosperity. It is also about the happiness that accrues to individuals for being able to invest of themselves in creating something new and beautiful.

Conservatives are champions of the idea of freedom, but a particular kind of freedom. The concept of freedom that we are championing is human freedom, freedom rooted in an understanding of what is important in human life and of the kinds of pursuits that lead to meaning and happiness.

Sadly, this budget does not advance our vision of human freedom. It doubles down on the belief that higher taxes, higher spending and a kind of behind-the-scenes prodding but still highly interventionist industrial policy is going to produce the kind of country that we want.

I was particularly struck by chapter 3 in the budget. The ineffective so-called affordability measures at the beginning of the budget read to me like a kind of late-stage add-on for political reasons by the government.

Government Orders

I think the heart of where the government wants to go with this budgetary policy is in that later chapter.

It is its belief that they can push the economy toward its preferred vision of an economy of the future through massive public spending and through selective privileges for certain sectors while piling on additional barriers for other sectors that are not preferred.

This is still the steel hand of the state picking winners and losers but trying to wear a velvet glove in the process.

I think what our country truly needs is a budget rooted in this concept of human freedom that I have outlined, a budget that seeks to give people more space to create beautiful things that last.

Canadians are sick of a government that is content to let people choose drugs and choose death, but does not want to let them choose to keep more of what they have worked for and built on their own.

We need a government that gives people the space, the encouragement and the freedom to build beautiful things that last.

● (2335)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to give an example and maybe the member could provide his thoughts on this issue. That is the issue of Volkswagen.

There is a difference. There is a contrast. The Government of Canada believes that by investing in St. Thomas and the people in the surrounding area, by getting Volkswagen and working with Premier Doug Ford, at the end of the day, Canada will benefit immensely.

Yes, there is a substantial cost to doing that and that cost will be better known as we see the type of production, but it is all about an industry that is going to make Canada a leading force in the world with electric vehicle batteries, not to mention all of the different spinoffs, whether it is a lithium mine possibly in Manitoba, or other spinoffs.

Does the member see that as a freedom thing or does he believe that his leader is actually on the wrong side of the issue and that the Conservatives better do a flip-flop and support this particular initiative?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, let us answer the question in terms of freedoms.

If we look at the many projects that have been proposed for this country, various kinds of development projects in various regions, in various sectors, I think of many examples, in particular in my part of the country, of projects that have been entirely viable based on private sector funding, would have created massive numbers of jobs and the government, in some cases, piled regulatory barriers on those; in some cases shut them down directly at a late stage. We have certain kinds of projects where the government is shutting them down even though they are viable in terms of private sector investments and other areas where the government is pouring massive public subsidies in order to get some kinds of developments to take place.

I want Canada to be a country where any business can invest in any sector and grow without the kinds of barriers the government has been putting in, but where the government is not presuming to say this sector is one we like and this sector is one we do not, but where in fact the opportunities and the benefits are available for all sectors.

● (2340)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittij*, I guess another aspect of freedom is what we do and how we ensure that we ourselves practise in our country our own freedoms and how we ensure countries are safe. For example, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is not allowing a lot of Ukrainians to be safe, to be free.

The budget implementation act talks about amending the customs tariff to remove Belarus and Russia from the list of countries entitled to most favoured nation tariff treatments. I think that this is going to be an important measure to make sure that we are doing better, to ensure that countries like Ukraine are getting the support that they need to achieve the peace that they need.

I wonder if the member can comment on voting against this type of provision in the budget implementation act.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, obviously this omnibus budget implementation act contains many different kinds of measures. We are going to find pieces here and there where we say, yes, we agree with that, but we have to vote overall on the direction of the budget.

I think there has been a great deal of unity in this House on many issues to do with Ukraine. In fact, where we have been critical of the government with Ukraine is where it granted exemptions to sanctions, where it failed to be tough in moving sanctions forward early enough or implementing them fully.

For one example, we spent a long time trying to push the government to rescind a waiver it gave to Gazprom, effectively allowing the export of turbines that would have facilitated the export of energy from Russia to Germany. We think it would have been better to be promoting the export of Canadian gas to Europe to relieve their dependence on Russia, rather than the government's decision to grant a temporary waiver that could have helped Russia export its gas to Europe and, at the same time, not acting to allow Canadian gas exports to Europe.

There has been a substantial measure of unity. If anything, certainly, we have been pushing the government to go further in its response to these events and, in particular, recognizing the role Canada can play in supplying the world with clean, secure, stable energy.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was listening earlier to a number of people, and I think one thing we all agree on in the House is that it is an honour and a privilege to serve the people who elected us to be here.

Government Orders

I want to thank the people of Niagara West, and I do not think I could ever thank them enough. I would never take that for granted. I was reminded of that as a number of my constituents were in Ottawa today, whom I had a chance to meet and get caught up with, from various parts of my riding, such as St. Anns, Wainfleet, West Lincoln, Grimsby and Jordan. It was great to have them take the time to come up here.

I rise today to talk about this year's budget. As we all know, every year the budget is one of the most important items we discuss in this chamber. It is important because it is a road map for our country's finances for the next year and beyond. It is important because it is an opportunity to support families and businesses, and to grow our country's economy.

Each year, many of my constituents look forward to reading the budget to see how this country's finances will be managed. Currently, our country has several crises the Liberal government is unable to address. The first is the overtaxation of families and businesses. The second is inflation-inducing spending. The third is the cost of living crisis we are in. Last, but not least, we have a major housing crisis.

The folks in Niagara West and, frankly, millions of families from across Canada, are not happy with how things are going financially for them. Families and businesses are struggling. I truly do not believe the government is addressing the needs of Canadians and Canadian businesses. I have said that many times in the House over the past eight years. I get many phone calls and correspondence from constituents saying that their paycheques are no longer covering their monthly expenses. That means they have to go deeper into debt each month to pay for the essentials, whether that is for food, heating their home, putting gas in the family vehicle or other necessities.

Seniors on fixed incomes in my riding are also expressing the same concerns. As prices for everything increase, on what seems like a weekly basis, household budgets are not just strained, they are broken. This is something that is extremely concerning to me. My constituents have made it clear to me that their quality of life has become worse under the Liberal government. At this point, my constituents do not trust the Liberal government to ensure their money is well spent or that it will deliver on its promises. From the Liberal promise that the carbon tax rebate would cover the cost to families, to the promise that the deficit this year would go down, my constituents simply cannot rely on the Liberals to be honest. I have had to tell folks who were calling my office that the reason gas for the family vehicle went up again on April 1 is because of the carbon tax, which added another 14¢ per litre this year.

Driving kids to school and hockey is not the only thing that will be more expensive with a yearly rising carbon tax. Every year the Liberals hike the carbon tax, they also make it more expensive for families in my riding to heat their homes and get to work. Let me put it this way so the folks who are listening will understand what is really happening: Every time the Liberal government increases the carbon tax, virtually everything we purchase and pay for gets more expensive. It is that simple. Out of the many misguided fiscal policies of the last eight years of the government, the carbon tax is especially devastating to family budgets. Believe me, the Liberals know it. I am just not sure they care.

They promised the carbon tax scheme would be revenue neutral. They promised that what Canadians pay through the carbon tax would be returned in rebates. They promised that Canadians would not pay more. The Liberals broke that promise. Who is paying more? Canadian families around the country. Folks feel like they have been scammed, but for how much? The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that the average Canadian will spend at least \$1,500 more in taxes than what they get back in rebates. At the end of the day, Canadian families realize that the carbon tax is a tax plan and just another tax. The government was disingenuous when it said it would help the environment. Why is that? It is because it has not hit a single emissions target yet. What did it do instead? It implemented the tax, which increases every year on April 1 and leaves families, on average, \$1,500 poorer each year.

Ultimately, the carbon tax is not an environmental plan, as the Liberals continue to falsely claim. It is a costly tax plan that is especially damaging to Canadians, especially those on fixed incomes or living in rural Canada. I have heard colleagues tonight talk about the differences and challenges of living in rural Canada. We do not have public transit. It is not easy to get around when we need a car for everything we do. We should have that choice.

The government continues to have this false idea that it can spend and tax its way to prosperity. That is a fundamental mistake that is costing millions of families across Canada thousands of dollars a year, and it will only get worse. The government is unable and unwilling to rein in its spending, so it will just increase taxes to cover its extra expenses. Its out-of-control spending is pushing up inflation. It knows it, and we know it. At this point, everyone is feeling it and knows it.

● (2345)

The Liberal inflationary spending has caused the cost of food and groceries to skyrocket. As a result, one in five Canadians are skipping meals and people are literally going to food banks asking for help to end their lives, and not because they are sick but because they just cannot afford to eat. This is actually happening right here in our country.

Let me repeat this because I do not think it can be stressed enough: People are going to food banks, asking for help to end their lives and not because they are sick but because they cannot afford to eat. By the way, food bank usage is at its highest levels ever.

Government Orders

In the meantime, the government talks about its grocery rebate. Sure, it is giving a rebate; that is true. However, the rebate would give \$234 for a single adult to cover the rising cost of food that the Liberals' inflationary deficits helped create. They are giving with one hand and taking with another, so that kind of reminds me of the Liberal government's view of the economy and it can be summed up in a few short phrases: If it moves, they tax it; if it keeps moving, they regulate it; and if it stops moving, they subsidize it.

In fact, Canada's Food Price Report 2023 predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year. That is almost \$600 more than the \$467 rebate they will receive. That is why it is difficult to hear the government members consistently repeating falsehoods, misinformation and disinformation with respect to how good they think Canadians have it, especially when I hear folks in my riding struggling because of the Liberal government's misguided and flawed approach to the economy.

More inflationary spending and increased taxation will put our country in increasingly worse shape, year after year. The interest rate alone on the debt that the Liberals are racking up is mind boggling. Most Canadians are not aware of the astronomical amount of debt that our country owes and the enormous interest payments that have to be made on this debt. For the folks watching at home, Canada's federal debt, as was mentioned earlier by my colleague, for the 2023-24 fiscal year is projected to reach \$1.22 trillion. That is nearly \$81,000 per household. The cost to service Canada's debt this year is projected to be at \$43.9 billion. Imagine that: almost \$44 billion just to service our national debt. These kinds of numbers are almost impossible for people to relate to and easily understand; perhaps that is the Liberals' intention.

Look, it is quite straightforward. At a time when Canadians are facing rising costs of living, thanks to inflationary deficits, families and small business owners cannot afford to pay more and especially not more taxes like the carbon tax. Our party, the Conservative Party of Canada, when we form government after the next election, is committed to scrapping this monumentally flawed tax. We believe that we should protect our environment with technology and not with ever-increasing taxes that clearly do not work. We do not believe in punishing working people for heating their homes and driving to work.

If you will allow me, Madam Speaker, I would like to discuss another topic that I find particularly troubling. Everyone knows and even the Liberals acknowledge that we are in a housing crisis. There are just not enough houses for Canadians and houses on the market are ridiculously expensive. The average rents are almost out of control.

We are seeing the dream of home ownership disappear for young new Canadians under the current government. A staggering statistic is that nine in 10 people who do not own a home say they never will. That is because since 2015 when the Liberal government came to power, the down payment needed to buy a house has doubled. The minimum payment has gone from an average of \$22,000 to \$44,000 across Canada. Forty-five thousand dollars is almost impossible to save for a down payment. In 2015, the average monthly payment of a new house was \$1,400. Today, it has gone up to over \$3,100. In 2015, one needed only 39% of the average pay-

cheque to make monthly payments on the average house. That number has risen to 62%.

These numbers are clearly unsustainable. These numbers indicate that there is something immensely wrong with how the Liberal government has approached housing since being elected in 2015. What is even more concerning is that there is no end in sight. My concern is that we provided solutions to the Liberals' failures, but they are not listening. It seems like they are not listening because the ideas are coming from the other side of the House. I think I can speak for my Conservative colleagues when I say that we stand ready to provide effective ideas to get Canada back on the right financial track. If the Liberals do not take us up on this offer, we will have to clean up their mess after we form government in the next election.

• (2350)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, some of the narrative tonight is a bit stranger than fiction. I have been keeping a mental note in terms of some of the criticisms that have been levelled against the budget and the investments that we are making.

We heard, this evening, the reference to transit and that we should be doing more. We have heard housing has been a consistent theme. We have heard about infrastructure. We have even heard about support for private investment. We have had lots of discussions tonight about our investments in Volkswagen, which is incentivizing the private sector to create jobs and assessment for municipalities. We have talked extensively about our national housing strategy and all the programs that we have and so we are making those investments. For whatever reason, there is an ignorance on the other side of the House as it relates to recognizing that all the things the members are complaining about are in the budget and there is support there for all the sectors they have complained about.

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, Hamilton East—Stoney Creek is right in my neighbourhood.

Fundamentally, the difference between Conservatives and Liberals is that Liberals like to take the money from people who actually earn it and work for it and then like to give it back out in the ways they control. Conservatives believe moms and dads, people who work hard for their money, actually know how to spend their money best. That is the basic difference in philosophy. Liberals are talking about all this grandiose spending they are doing. In reality, what they are doing is bribing people with their own money.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Niagara West and I have been long-time friends, but gosh darn, when he throws out these figures, he is neglecting some of the most important figures of how the Liberals have followed bad Conservative management.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Parliamentary Budget Officer tells us that over \$30 billion a year goes to overseas tax havens. These are largely tax treaties that were signed by the Harper regime and that the Liberals have continued. If we take the numbers over the last 15 or 16 years, we are talking about half a trillion dollars that went to overseas tax havens.

Here is another number: Between the two of them, the Liberals and Conservatives together have provided well over \$866 billion in liquidity supports to Canada's big banks to increase their profits; that is nearly a trillion dollars. We put those numbers together, and we realize Liberals have basically followed bad Conservative habits.

Will the member admit Liberals are much closer to Conservatives than is the NDP, which is providing good fiscal management?

• (2355)

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, it would appear to me, based on the relationship in the House, that the NDP is actually closer to the Liberals than the Conservatives are. It has been popping them up through all these times.

The member talks about offshore money that needs to be collected. We agree with these things. As Conservatives, what we tried to do when we were in government was to create an environment where companies wanted to come and invest. We were moving towards this. At the end of the day, companies wanted to invest their money in this country, not taxpayers' money. There was still a lot of work that needed to be done on that, but we lowered corporate taxes, we spent money on infrastructure and we looked at dealing with immigration, where we helped to bring people in for jobs that were here.

At the end of the day, the difference in philosophy is that we want to create the environment for people to want to invest in this country versus needing to pay people to come here.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, am I then to assume the reason the member and the Conservative Party do not support the Volkswagen deal is that there are federal dollars involved in ensuring we can have that battery plant?

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, at this point, the reason we have not given a full approval or not had much of a comment is that we do not understand what the actual deals were. If one thinks about the whole process of what we have gone through over the last couple of weeks, it was very hard to get any kind of information on what dollars were spent. Now we are trying to figure out what they are for and what will be created; we need more details before we can offer any kind of judgment.

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this budget and budget implementation act are so fantastic, I could go all evening on them, well into the night.

As I have sat here listening to our colleagues across the floor, I think we have read separate documents, because all I see are really positive things, both for constituents in Cloverdale—Langley City and for all Canadians. This budget really builds on the positive measures and budgets we have had previously. We have done some really big things in Canada as a Liberal government. We have introduced child care, and I heard just today from Trevor, in my riding,

about how our child care initiatives are saving his family over \$1,000 a month right now. This is putting money right into his pocket.

This budget is going to continue to be transformative for Canadians. It would invest almost \$200 billion in improving health care funding to the provinces. This would allow us to make all sorts of improvements. It is a top issue I hear about when I am door knocking and talking to constituents in Cloverdale—Langley City, and we would be making the investments that would actually make a difference in the lives of Canadians.

However, there are other big things. The budget would continue work on the implementation of the dental care program. Figures show that over 240,000 children are already benefiting from this program, and as we get into the implementation of this budget, more families and individuals would benefit. Children under 18 would benefit, seniors would benefit and persons with disabilities would benefit. The budget would also have families earning under \$90,000 benefiting from this program, and this is because the Liberal government saw the need. We are implementing this to make it real and meaningful for Canadians right now, and that is fantastic news.

I would say that there are also some other big initiatives. Addressing climate change is so important, and we recognize that. We are investing in building a sustainable economy, fighting climate change and creating new opportunities for businesses and workers. I would like to say that there are also a lot of small actions that build on these huge and transformative actions. Some of the small ones that would put money into the pockets of Canadians again and be really meaningful as we continue to fight inflation and deal with higher costs of living are the grocery rebate we have heard about tonight, and as I said—

• (2400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is midnight, so the debate has to stop now.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government has a habit of prioritizing the interests of its well-connected friends by giving money to consultants that could be better spent on helping and supporting Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

For a number of months, Conservatives have been highlighting the government's approach to McKinsey, in particular. McKinsey was led by Dominic Barton, someone who at least the Prime Minister and the finance minister said were friends of the Prime Minister. Dominic Barton said, no, they are not friends, that he barely knows these people. However, the finance minister spoke about how closely connected he was with the Prime Minister and that he was someone who was very accessible and could be reached on the phone at any time, and so forth. We have some contradiction there about who were or were not friends.

In any event, Dominic Barton, this person who worked closely and was closely associated with the Prime Minister and finance minister, was leading McKinsey and since the government has taken office, McKinsey has gotten over \$100 million in contracts from the government, over \$100 million, which is a massive increase.

We have seen, by the way, substantial increases in spending on the public service, but, at the same time, massive increases in spending on outsourcing. There is the expenditure issue there, the fiscal propriety question of all the money that was spent on McKinsey, big questions about what it actually did after giving money to this external management consultant that was run by Dominic Barton.

There is also this question of who McKinsey is. What are the ethics of this company? What are the values this company upholds and represents? It claims to be a values-driven company, so-called. This is a company that fuelled the opioid crisis in the United States, Canada and elsewhere. It fuelled it by advising Purdue Pharma on how to turbocharge opioid sales. It advised it to do things like pay bonuses to pharmacists in cases where there were overdoses. It advised it to develop a system of circumventing traditional pharmacies through mail-in pharmacies. This is the kind of company that McKinsey is.

McKinsey did a report for the Saudi government on what Twitter accounts were most vocal in criticism of the Saudi government. That report was subsequently used for the harassment and repression of dissidents.

This is a company, frankly, that has been implicated in corruption and scandal all over the world, at least in dealing closely with governments or individuals that were highly compromised.

It was hired here in Canada to provide advice on immigration. It was hired in the U.S. as well to provide advice on immigration. Apparently, in both cases, it provided what the governments wanted, even though that advice was contradictory. In Canada, it said to massively increase immigration as it is a great economic opportunity. In the United States, it advised the Trump administration to cut spending on food for immigrant detainees. This is the kind of company that McKinsey is, run by Dominic Barton, who the Prime Minister and the finance minister suggested was a friend, but he said he was not a friend, in his view. His company benefited significantly.

What I find particularly striking now is the revelation that the government is actually planning on joining B.C.'s class action lawsuit against McKinsey. The government has indicated that it plans on joining B.C.'s class action lawsuit against McKinsey precisely

because of its role in the opioid crisis. The government has, across departments, hired McKinsey to do over 100 million dollars' worth of work for it, but there is a tacit acknowledgement of the ethics problems because now, at this stage, after doing nothing for a long time, following pressure from the Conservative leader, it finally said it would join this lawsuit against McKinsey.

Which is it? Will the government recognize that it should stop dealing with McKinsey and that it should stop spending all this money on outside consultants?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always find it somewhat interesting to do a late show with the member opposite given the twist he puts on things. He is like a hound out here sniffing for scandals of any sort. Whether he finds something genuine or not, he is quick to jump to his feet, try to make connections here in there and try to make something look as bad as possible.

When the member was talking about McKinsey, he was saying how bad it is and that the Government of Canada should not be supporting McKinsey after having contracted with it. However, in the same four minutes, he said that not only is Canada doing this, but the United States has contracts with it. He changes the issue: In one situation McKinsey is emphasizing a certain direction, and in Canada it is emphasizing another direction.

The point is that McKinsey has contracts with many countries in the world. When we think of the reason for the contracts, I am not too sure if the member is not in favour of the government contracting out to consultants in order to provide the independent input that is often needed to establish good government policy.

Throughout the pandemic, a great deal of money was spent, and we had already increased the size of the public service. There were great demands on the public service at the time. There is a need for governments there. That should not surprise anybody, because at the end of the day, governments of all different levels and of all political stripes do participate in the contracting out of contracts. That is done for a multitude of different reasons.

We can look at the other issue the member tries to say is bad, and that is the so-called relationship. He constantly wants to bring up Mr. Barton and give the false impression that the Prime Minister and Mr. Barton are the best of buddies and good friends. We know that is not the case. We do know that. Whether it is Mr. Barton or others who are affiliated with McKinsey, we are very much aware of it, so trying to make some of these connections just does not fly.

Adjournment Proceedings

At the end of the day, I think the member needs to move on to some other subject matter and maybe give this one a bit of a rest. Yes, we have concerns with McKinsey and the Province of B.C. The member has made reference to that. Ottawa is always doing its due diligence in making sure that the best interests of Canadians are, in fact, being served, and we will continue to do so. However, let us not fool anyone here. At the end of the day, as Stephen Harper did and as other governments have done in the past, going to and using outside consultants is done on a regular basis, as I indicated, whether it is by different levels of government or different political parties.

I think the member needs to take the fishing rod out of this particular hole and look for another hole to dip it into.

• (2405)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I do not think my friend across the way really understood the question. Aside from dipping fishing rods in different holes, the question was about McKinsey getting over \$100 million in contracts from the government. The member says that I try to make things look as bad as possible. Respectfully, it is not very difficult in this case. This is a company that literally advised on how to turbocharge opioid sales. It paid over half a billion dollars in compensation for its involvement in the opioid crisis.

The question is quite simple: Why did the government give over \$100 million in contracts to this Liberal-connected firm with such an obviously shady track record? Why?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, first and foremost, the member is wrong to try to give the false impression that it is a Liberal-friendly firm. The company the member is referencing has had dealings with Conservative-minded governments.

This is about the idea that governments of all political stripes, at different levels, recognize the value of using consultants. It has been very effective in many different ways. With regard to the specifics of the negatives the member has highlighted, I can assure the member that the government takes them very seriously and will ensure that due diligence is done when contracting out. There is a process in place.

• (2410)

HEALTH

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am here late into the night because when I asked the government why it has not followed through with its promise to convert the Canada caregiver tax credit to a refundable benefit, it responded with answers that were not even related to the tax credit. Its members talked about health care transfers and paid workers. This worried me, because it appeared the government did not know about its promise to support unpaid caregivers, so let me remind it.

The mandate letter the Prime Minister gave the finance minister back in 2021 tasked her with converting the Canada caregiver credit to a refundable tax-free benefit that would put money back in the pockets of unpaid caregivers.

The current health care crisis puts growing pressure on families to care for their loved ones, and those caregivers are incurring extra costs, yet those costs cannot be recouped with the current non-re-

fundable benefit if one is not earning enough income or does not owe taxes. This is gender discrimination. The important job of caring for aging parents, grandparents and children is most often done by women, and that work is unpaid. The government can support caregivers by immediately making the Canada caregiver credit a refundable tax benefit to put money back into people's pockets.

In addition to that, the House of Commons finance committee included this measure in its list of recommendations to the government ahead of the current budget, yet still no action has been taken.

I ask again: Why is the government delaying this benefit for those who care for our loved ones?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I want to recognize the very important role that caregivers have been providing, especially during the pandemic. There is a great reliance, and we recognize that, at the end of the day, whether it is seniors, individuals on sick leave or children, in many situations the caregivers provide an absolute necessary service for the betterment of the lives of those individuals they are providing care for.

There are different ways in which the government can actually provide support. I appreciate what the member is asking. She referenced a mandate letter. I am not too sure about the election promise, but maybe she could expand on that particular aspect in her follow-up question. However, what I do know is that the government has been spending a great deal of money over the last number of years in the whole area of supports for seniors, supports for health care and looking at ways in which we can enhance wages.

In fact, this is a little off topic, but today, in the province of Manitoba, through national initiatives of supporting child care, there is going to be an increase for child care workers, who are predominantly women. I believe it is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 6%, which is going to be taking effect, I believe, on July 1.

Recognizing that there are many areas in which government can invest in or should be looking at investing in, I would suggest the member look at how we can support caregivers. The Department of Health, with the money transfers that we have made, has also made it very clear in terms of provincial and territorial governments needing to come to the table and be more supportive of our providers.

The interest is there. We are almost halfway through a mandate where we can likely revisit this issue. The member made reference to the mandate letters, and I suspect it is one of those issues in which we hope to be able to make some progress in.

As I said, how can one not recognize the valuable contributions that caregivers provide to individuals, and through that, to our communities as a whole? In looking at ways in which we can provide that support in a timely fashion, there are all sorts of considerations that have to be taken into account.

I wish I could provide more specific details to the member at this point, but that is the best I can come up with right now.

• (2415)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I think that the response tonight and even the fact that there was not a representative from the minister's office dealing with it just magnifies the gender discrimination that comes along with anything that has to do with care, the very gendered reality of care in this country that really underpins the entire economy.

I would just say back to the member that we know that people died in long-term care homes because their family members and that unpaid work could not bring them water. This is a serious issue that deserves serious attention. Unpaid caregivers are saving this country \$25 billion a year.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the federal government is very much aware of the critical role that unpaid caregivers have provided. I would not want the member to give a false impression that the government is not looking into all different options.

At the end of the day, we talked about looking at long-term standard policies and how the federal government is going to be able to improve upon some of the things that we had seen during the pandemic. For those who were providing care, in particular to loved ones, or those who had been volunteering, it is important that we recognize them. I think that we have. I am sure the member would like to see more immediate action taken. Unfortunately, at times, we have to work within what we have been provided.

I am hoping that we will be able to move forward on this issue. I assure the member that we are genuinely concerned about ensuring that our loved ones are getting the care they need. We recognize there are many care providers who need to be looked at, in terms of how it is we can support them.

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, as the member of Parliament for the Ontario riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I begin my comments by recognizing Canadians struggling with high food, fuel and tax bills from a broken federal government.

During question period in the House, I made a direct request to the Prime Minister and his socialist coalition: give Canadians a tax break. Cancel the carbon taxes. The carbon tax is not an environmental policy, regardless of what the NDP-Liberal coalition falsely claims. The carbon tax is a tax policy. As a tax policy, the carbon tax is making life unaffordable for Canadians. While the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance is not prepared to be honest with Canadians about the fact that the carbon tax is making life unaffordable for average Canadians, moments later during the same question period came this astonishing admission of failure from the Minister of Agriculture.

She said and I quote, from the March 30 Hansard, “Canada's...official food policy...is designed to...support the creation of more food banks.” She even bragged that this was Canada's first official food policy. Food banks are policy failures. It is an admission of failure.

Adjournment Proceedings

The need for food banks, thanks to rising Liberal carbon taxes, is not something to be proud of. No Canadian in a country as rich and blessed in natural resources as we are should have to rely on food banks to meet their daily nutritional requirements.

Food insecurity in Canada is a direct result of carbon tax policy, a bad tax policy that is intended to change the behaviour of residents who have no alternative when it comes to how they heat their homes or how they get to work. The Parliamentary Budget Officer shows that the carbon tax will cost the average family between \$400 and \$847 in 2023, even after the rebates, but to justify the carbon tax, the Prime Minister falsely claims that carbon tax opponents do not care about the environment. This is a bit rich coming from someone who bills working Canadians \$6,000 a night to stay in fancy European hotels.

Just how out of touch is this Prime Minister with the struggles of ordinary Canadians?

Canadian taxpayers paid \$160,000 just for security and staff for his most recent Caribbean vacation with billionaire and family friend Peter Green. Green has also made a large donation to the now discredited Pierre Elliott Trudeau family foundation that is mixed up in the Communist China election interference scandal, but \$160,000 is cheap compared to the \$247,000 taxpayers were forced to shell out for an earlier Caribbean vacation at the Aga Khan's private island in the Bahamas.

This Prime Minister is out of touch with just how destructive his policies are to average Canadians. When the Liberal Party in general and the Prime Minister in particular talk about the environment, or man-made global warming, the Prime Minister uses a propaganda technique called paltering.

Paltering is the use of truthful facts to deceive. It might not feel like lying but it is. An example of paltering is, well, we know that climate is changing. That is fact. That is then followed up with some form of deception like climate alarmism. Climate alarmism, which is used by some climate extremists to justify carbon tax policy, omits the fact that climate science is still developing. Climate models are being made to say what they do not say: truth and deception. Using climate alarmism to deceive is the default excuse for every government failure, including the need for food banks as a substitute for real food security for Canadians.

Adjournment Proceedings

This is all being done to justify higher and higher carbon taxes. Paltering is being used by the government to try to sell rightfully skeptical Canadians not only on the policy for carbon taxes but a need for carbon taxes to keep increasing at a higher and higher rate.

● (2420)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member can be as critical as she likes, and she has been very critical in regard to the price on pollution. Many countries around the world have incorporated that as a policy in order to protect the environment. Here in Canada, what they will find is that 80% of the people who are paying into the price on pollution, as we all do, are receiving more money than they actually pay. That is something that was highlighted by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Therefore, when the Conservatives say that they would get rid of the price on pollution, what they do not tell us is that they would also get rid of the rebate portion of the price on pollution. In Winnipeg North, the riding I represent, 80% of my constituents get a net gain from the price on pollution. They would literally be taking money out of their pockets.

Now the Conservatives will say that if we look at this factor, this factor, this factor and that factor, there is a net cost. I would argue that if they take a look at the cost of no action and the impact that the environment is going to have on Canadians, there is going to be this factor, that factor and this factor and that is going to increase the costs. The bottom line is that x number of dollars are going into the collection of the price on pollution and x number of dollars are going out. Eighty per cent of my constituents are receiving more dollars coming in than they are paying out. That is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer said.

In regard to the ongoing character assassination of political figures inside the chamber, it is interesting when the member makes reference to the Prime Minister when he goes overseas. I was around when former prime minister Harper was in India. He paid a million dollars to fly a car over to India so that he would have a car to drive around in. They have cars in India, but he wanted his car from Canada. Imagine paying a million dollars for that.

If the member wants to talk about the Conservative Party's current leader, he spends thousands and thousands of dollars on his monthly water bills in the government-paid house when he is not that far from his own house. This is not to mention the thousands of dollars for cooking and the \$100,000-plus in order to keep the premises clean. If she wants to throw rocks, I would suggest that the member not throw them in a glass house, because what she will often find is that even in the past leadership and the current leadership of the Conservative Party, there have been a number of things that the public would be somewhat concerned about.

I can assure the member that as the Conservatives want to focus attention on being critical and on character assassination, what they will find is that the Government of Canada and in particular the Prime Minister will continue to focus their attention on Canadians and the needs of Canadians and those issues that are important.

That is why members will see within this budget things like the grocery rebate. They will see things like the dental support program. They will see things that have not even been talked about

that much, including things such as doubling of the credit for tradespeople who need to buy the type of equipment that they need and the tools that they need, from \$500 to \$1,000.

There are so many good things out there and Canadians should be aware that as much as the Conservatives will continue to be critical from a personal point of view, we will continue to deliver for Canadians.

● (2425)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, paltering is used to deflect from food bank usage by promoting a grocery rebate that would not even begin to cover inflationary policy that is raising the cost of food and rebates on the carbon tax that do not cover the cost of the carbon tax. Not content to tax Canadians \$40 a tonne, the carbon tax went up to \$65 a tonne with the latest April Fool's Day increase. The real cost of rising carbon taxes is the need for more food banks, according to the Liberal minister of food insecurity.

Conservatives believe we should protect our environment with technology, not taxes. We do not believe in punishing working people for heating their homes and driving to work. Food banks should not be a government food policy. It is time this out-of-touch Prime Minister and his costly coalition admit that carbon taxes are hurting Canadians.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member made reference to the grocery rebate. It is interesting. I do not know exactly where the Conservative Party is on it. We had Bill C-46, which passed the House, from what I understand, unanimously, implying that the Conservative Party actually supports the grocery rebate, but we hear some members who will be critical of the grocery rebate.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: They should not have taken the money in the first place.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member says that we should not have taken the money in the first place.

I would argue that at the end of the day, when we look at the taxation policies from the very beginning where there was the 1% wealthiest in Canada having to pay a little extra in support of Canada's middle class, supporting seniors and supporting children, taking people out of poverty and providing things like the grocery rebate and the dental program have been of great value to Canadians and the people whom both she and I represent.

Adjournment Proceedings

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopt-

ed. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until later this day at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:29 a.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, April 27, 2023

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Committees of the House

Public Accounts

Mr. Williamson 13523

Foreign Affairs and International Development

Mr. Ehsassi 13523

Petitions

Firearms

Mrs. Gallant 13523

Vaccine Mandates

Mrs. Gallant 13523

Corporate Social Responsibility

Mr. Morantz 13523

Ethiopia

Mr. Morantz 13523

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Boulerice 13523

Opioids

Mr. Boulerice 13523

Corporate Social Responsibility

Mr. Boulerice 13524

Nigeria

Mr. McKay 13524

Air Transportation

Mr. Lamoureux 13524

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux 13524

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1

Bill C-47. Second reading 13524

Ms. Sahota 13524

Mr. Steinley 13525

Mr. Trudel 13526

Mr. Garrison 13526

Mrs. Roberts 13526

Mr. Lamoureux 13527

Mrs. Vignola 13528

Mr. Desjarlais 13528

Mrs. Gallant 13528

Mr. Trudel 13528

Mr. Fergus 13530

Mr. Vis 13530

Mr. Masse 13530

Points of Order

Alleged Unparliamentary Language

Mr. Champoux 13531

Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1

Bill C-47. Second reading 13531

Mr. Bittle 13531

Mrs. Roberts 13532

Mr. Masse 13533

Ms. Bérubé 13533

Mr. Williamson 13533

Mr. Noormohamed 13535

Mr. Barsalou-Duval 13535

Mrs. Atwin 13535

Ms. Ashton 13536

Mr. Vidal 13537

Mrs. Atwin 13538

Mr. Masse 13538

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) 13540

Mr. Lamoureux 13540

Mr. Trudel 13540

Mr. Weiler 13541

Mrs. Atwin 13542

Mr. Morantz 13542

Mr. Morrice 13543

Mr. Morantz 13543

Mrs. Atwin 13544

Mr. Desjarlais 13544

Mr. Barsalou-Duval 13545

Mr. Lake 13545

Mr. Morrice 13545

Mr. McDonald 13546

Mr. Melillo 13547

Mrs. Vignola 13547

Ms. Kayabaga 13547

Mr. McKinnon 13548

Mr. Lake 13548

Mrs. Vignola 13549

Mr. McCauley 13549

Ms. Taylor Roy 13550

Mrs. Vignola 13551

Mr. Desjarlais 13551

Mr. Desjarlais 13551

Mrs. Atwin 13552

Ms. Rempel Garner 13553

Mr. Trudel 13553

Mr. Redekopp 13553

Mr. Gerretsen 13555

Mrs. Vignola 13555

Mr. Caputo 13555

Mr. Simard 13556

Mrs. Shanahan 13557

Ms. Gladu 13557

Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... 13558

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Retirement Congratulations

Ms. Yip 13558

Human Rights

Mr. Lawrence 13558

Battery Plants

Mr. Kusmierczyk 13558

Petit Théâtre du Nord

Mr. Desilets 13559

National Tourism Week

Mrs. Shanahan 13559

Simon Fraser University Football Program

Ms. Findlay 13559

Ottawa Initiatives

Mr. Naqvi 13559

Firefighters

Mrs. Valdez 13559

Organ and Tissue Donation

Mr. Berthold 13560

Vancouver Chinatown Foundation

Mr. Noormohamed 13560

The Environment

Mr. Ellis 13560

Canada Infrastructure Bank

Ms. Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk) 13560

La Nuit sur l'étang

Ms. Lapointe 13561

Honorary Doctorate Degree

Mr. Bachrach 13561

International Workers' Day

Ms. Chabot 13561

Liberal Party of Canada

Mr. Bragdon 13561

Tree Planting in Kitchener—Conestoga

Mr. Louis 13561

ORAL QUESTIONS

Government Priorities

Mr. Poilievre 13562

Mrs. Fortier 13562

Mr. Poilievre 13562

Mrs. Fortier 13562

Mr. Poilievre 13562

Mr. Boissonnault 13562

Natural Resources

Mr. Poilievre 13562

Mr. Wilkinson 13563

Mr. Poilievre 13563

Mr. Wilkinson 13563

Democratic Institutions

Mr. Therrien 13563

Mr. LeBlanc 13563

Mr. Therrien 13563

Mr. LeBlanc 13563

Labour

Mr. Boulerice 13563

Mrs. Fortier 13564

Women and Gender Equality

Ms. Gazan 13564

Ms. Ien 13564

Labour

Ms. Lantsman 13564

Ms. Gould 13564

Ms. Lantsman 13564

Ms. Gould 13564

Mr. Hallan 13565

Mr. Boissonnault 13565

Carbon Pricing

Mr. Hallan 13565

Ms. Gould 13565

Labour

Mr. Deltell 13565

Mr. Boissonnault 13565

Mr. Deltell 13565

Mr. Boissonnault 13566

Official Languages

Mr. Beaulieu 13566

Ms. Petitpas Taylor 13566

Mr. Beaulieu 13566

Ms. Petitpas Taylor 13566

Mr. Trudel 13566

Ms. Petitpas Taylor 13566

Housing

Mrs. Kramp-Neuman 13566

Mr. Hussen 13567

Mr. Aitchison 13567

Mr. Hussen 13567

Mr. Aitchison 13567

Mr. Hussen 13567

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Ms. Kwan 13567

Mr. Fraser 13567

Transportation

Mr. Bachrach 13567

Mr. Alghabra 13568

Air Transportation	
Mr. Scarpaleggia	13568
Mr. Alghabra	13568
Democratic Institutions	
Mr. Berthold	13568
Mr. Lamoureux	13568
Mr. Berthold	13568
Mr. Lamoureux	13568
Government Priorities	
Mr. Kram	13568
Ms. Joly	13568
Ethics	
Mr. Calkins	13569
Mr. Lamoureux	13569
Labour	
Ms. Chabot	13569
Mrs. Fortier	13569
Foreign Affairs	
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe	13569
Ms. Joly	13569
Public Safety	
Mr. Brock	13569
Mr. Lametti	13569
The Environment	
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	13569
Mr. Alghabra	13570
Justice	
Mr. Caputo	13570
Mr. Lametti	13570
Mr. Généreux	13570
Mr. Lametti	13570
Health	
Ms. Lattanzio	13570
Mr. Duclos	13570
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship	
Ms. Rempel Garner	13571
Mr. Fraser	13571
Government Priorities	
Ms. Gladu	13571
Mr. Boissonnault	13571
Mr. Mazier	13571
Ms. Gould	13571
Climate Change	
Mr. Chahal	13571
Ms. Jaczek	13571
Foreign Affairs	
Ms. Mathysen	13572
Ms. Joly	13572
911 Service	
Mr. Lemire	13572
Motion	13572

(Motion agreed to)	13572
Business of the House	
Mr. Scheer	13572
Mr. Lamoureux	13572
Ms. Gould	13572
Red Dress Day	
Mr. Lamoureux	13572
Motion	13572
(Motion agreed to)	13572

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1	
Bill C-47. Second reading	13572
Mrs. Gallant	13572
Ms. Sahota	13574
Mr. MacGregor	13574
Mr. Ste-Marie	13575
Mr. Erskine-Smith	13575
Mr. Ste-Marie	13577
Ms. Zarrillo	13577
Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13578
Mr. Thériault	13578
Mr. Villemure	13579
Ms. Sahota	13579
Ms. Zarrillo	13580
Mr. Gaheer	13580
Mr. Davidson	13581
Mr. Ste-Marie	13581
Mr. Blaikie	13582
Mr. Anandasangaree	13582
Ms. Dancho	13583
Mr. Ste-Marie	13583
Mr. Blaikie	13583
Ms. Dancho	13584
Ms. Michaud	13585
Ms. Kwan	13586
Ms. Sahota	13586
Ms. Kwan	13586
Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13588
Mrs. Gray	13588
Ms. Zarrillo	13588
Mrs. Gray	13589
Mr. Albas	13590
Mr. Ste-Marie	13590
Mr. MacGregor	13591
Mrs. Stubbs	13591
Mr. Gerretsen	13593
Mr. Villemure	13593

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Copyright Act	
Bill C-294. Report stage	13593
Mr. Patzer	13593

Motion for concurrence	13593	Mr. Deltell	13618
(Motion agreed to)	13593	Ms. Idlout	13618
Third reading	13593	Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13618
Mr. Blaikie	13596	Mr. Baldinelli	13619
Mr. Lamoureux	13596	Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13620
Mr. Lemire	13596	Mr. Angus	13620
Mr. Lamoureux	13596	Mr. Albas	13621
Mr. Lemire	13597	Ms. Rempel Garner	13621
Mr. Masse	13599	Mr. Lamoureux	13622
Mr. Albas	13600	Mr. MacGregor	13623
Mr. Chahal	13602	Mr. Angus	13623
Message from the Senate		Mr. Lewis (Essex)	13623
The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès)	13602	Mr. Lamoureux	13625
		Mr. Blaikie	13625
		Mr. Lawrence	13625
		Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	13625
		Mr. Tolmie	13625
		Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13627
		Mr. Shipley	13627
		Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	13627
		Mr. Blaikie	13628
		Mr. Albas	13629
		Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13629
		Ms. Mathysen	13630
		Mr. Patzer	13630
		Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13632
		Mr. Lawrence	13632
		Mr. MacGregor	13632
		Mrs. Thomas	13633
		Mr. Lamoureux	13634
		Mr. MacGregor	13634
		Mr. Deltell	13634
		Mr. Van Popta	13635
		Mr. Lamoureux	13636
		Mr. Julian	13636
		Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	13637
		Mr. Lawrence	13637
		Mr. Lamoureux	13638
		Ms. Idlout	13638
		Mr. Viersen	13638
		Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	13639
		Mr. Calkins	13639
		Mr. Lamoureux	13640
		Mr. Viersen	13640
		Ms. Mathysen	13641
		Mr. Viersen	13641
		Mr. Lamoureux	13642
		Mr. Julian	13642
		Mrs. Block	13643
		Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13644
		Ms. Mathysen	13645
		Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	13645
		Mr. Genuis	13645
		Mr. Lamoureux	13647
		Ms. Idlout	13647
		Mr. Allison	13647
		Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13649

GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1	
Bill C-47. Second reading	13602
Mr. Lamoureux	13602
Mrs. Stubbs	13602
Mr. Steinley	13602
Ms. Michaud	13603
Mrs. Lalonde	13604
Ms. Idlout	13605
Mr. Ste-Marie	13605
Mr. Steinley	13605
Mr. van Koeverden	13606
Mr. Angus	13607
Mr. Blaikie	13607
Ms. Zarrillo	13607
Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13609
Mr. Albas	13609
Mr. Ste-Marie	13609
Mr. Schmale	13609
ROYAL ASSENT	
The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès)	13611
GOVERNMENT ORDERS	
Budget Implementation Act, 2023, No. 1	
Bill C-47. Second reading	13611
Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	13611
Mr. Schmale	13611
Mr. Ste-Marie	13611
Mr. Angus	13612
Mr. MacGregor	13612
Mr. Lamoureux	13613
Mr. Shipley	13614
Mr. Ste-Marie	13614
Mr. Brassard	13614
Mr. Lamoureux	13616
Mr. Villemure	13616
Mr. Blaikie	13616
Mr. Fragiskatos	13617

Mr. Julian	13649
Mr. Lamoureux	13650
Mr. Aldag	13650

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Public Services and Procurement

Mr. Genuis	13650
------------------	-------

Mr. Lamoureux	13651
---------------------	-------

Health

Ms. Zarrillo	13652
Mr. Lamoureux	13652

Carbon Pricing

Mrs. Gallant	13653
Mr. Lamoureux	13654

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>