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Thursday, December 14, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, December 14, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

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

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I present the 55th report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, entitled “Speaker's Public Participation at an Ontario Liberal Party Event”, I want to take a moment to thank our clerk Mike. I appreciate the hours put in and the speed at which our analysts Andre, Sarah and Isabelle moved. I also appreciate members from all parties, including the Liberals, the Conservatives, the Bloc and the NDP. I would like to thank the witnesses who arrived in short order and the behind-the-scenes crew, including for IT, food and maintenance. The list goes on. I thank especially interpretation and translation services, which worked around the clock to return this report to the House in the time the House gave us.

I also have to give a shout-out to team members from all teams. They were there with us every single minute of the way, not necessarily by choice but because they had to be. We appreciate everything they have done.

When committees move at the pace at which we were moving, it is often our constituents who are left behind. I know constituents in the riding of Waterloo were not able to have meetings with me because I had to cancel them. I want them to know that I appreciate them.

[*Translation*]

I want to wish everyone happy holidays. We will see each other next year.

[*English*]

Hopefully it is not before then. I would really appreciate not seeing anyone in this place until 2024 because I would like to be in my riding of Waterloo.

With that, I have the honour to present this report in both official languages. I am sure everybody will be reading it profusely.

Mr. Speaker, Merry Christmas and happy new year.

• (1005)

The Deputy Speaker: Merry Christmas and happy new year to you as well.

We have a dissenting opinion from the Conservatives.

The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a dissenting report from the Conservative members on the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

There is a long-standing tradition and expectation that the Speaker be impartial and non-partisan. That expectation was shattered by the current Speaker when he engaged in partisan commentary no less than on three occasions in the span of a week. This demonstrated not only a lack of judgment but a betrayal of the trust of all hon. members in this House.

I would note that both the official opposition and the third party, comprising nearly half of the members in this House, have called on the Speaker to resign. I would submit that it is untenable in the circumstances that he continue in his high office. In order to restore the trust and confidence of all hon. members in the speakership, it is with regret that Conservatives call on the current Speaker to resign.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it was with great sadness and a sense of regret that we prepared a dissenting opinion—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member needs unanimous consent to speak.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent.

Routine Proceedings

The Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member have the unanimous consent of the House?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, I will not talk for long because we have important work to do.

It is with regret and some sadness that the Bloc Québécois is presenting a dissenting opinion, but the impartiality of a Speaker is really very important to us. There must be zero tolerance for bias.

We are of the opinion that the Speaker's mistake is unforgivable and that he must resign. In our dissenting opinion, we provided a detailed explanation as to why we asked him to make the right choice and step down, because he failed in his duties.

We want the House to run smoothly, and the best way to make that happen is to have a Speaker who has the full confidence of all the elected members of the House.

[English]

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, entitled “In Demand Yet Unprocessed: Endemic Immigration Backlog”.

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

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as vice-chair of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, I have the honour to table today a Conservative supplementary opinion to the report on backlogs and delays.

Eight years of Liberal-NDP leadership in the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship were described by one witness as “nothing short of a dumpster fire”. The main report includes many Conservative contributions and recommendations that we proposed to the committee. That said, some common-sense recommendations were rejected by the NDP-Liberal majority while other recommendations could not be accepted by the Conservatives. For example, the Liberals are moving toward a “click for your citizenship” system, while Conservatives believe that taking the oath of citizenship should be treated with gravity and respect and be done in person, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

After eight years, we know the Prime Minister is not worth the cost, and his Liberal-made immigration backlog is causing more chaos in the department, as well as destroying the faith of Canadians in our immigration system. However, they should have no fear because soon a common-sense Conservative government will be here to restore faith and clean up these backlogs. Let us bring it home.

• (1010)

CANADIAN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS DAY ACT

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce an Act to establish a national day to honour Canadian women's contributions to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to introduce a private member's bill entitled “An Act to establish a national day to honour Canadian women's contributions to science, technology, engineering and mathematics”.

While I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

The Deputy Speaker: If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1055)

(The House divided on the motion, which was agreed to on the following division:)

(Division No. 611)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Freeland

Routine Proceedings

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Gainey	Garrison	Cooper	Dalton
Gazan	Gerretsen	Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Gould	Green	Deltell	Desbiens
Guilbeault	Hajdu	Desilets	Doherty
Hanley	Hardie	Dowdall	Dreeshen
Hepfner	Holland	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Housefather	Hughes	Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Hussen	Hutchings	Falk (Provencher)	Ferreri
Iacono	Idlout	Fortin	Gallant
Ien	Jaczek	Garon	Gaudreau
Johns	Joly	Généreux	Genuis
Jones	Jowhari	Gill	Gladu
Julian	Kayabaga	Godin	Goodridge
Kelloway	Khalid	Gourde	Gray
Khera	Koutrakis	Hallan	Hoback
Kusmierczyk	Kwan	Kelly	Khanna
Lalonde	Lambropoulos	Kitchen	Kmiec
Lametti	Lamoureux	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Lapointe	Lattanzio	Kurek	Kusie
Lauzon	Lebouthillier	Lake	Lantsman
Lightbound	Long	Larouche	Lawrence
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	Lehoux	Lemire
MacAulay (Cardigan)	MacDonald (Malpeque)	Leslie	Lewis (Essex)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada	Lloyd	Lobb
Masse	May (Cambridge)	Maguire	Martel
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty	May (Saenich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
McLeod	McPherson	Melillo	Michaud
Mendès	Mendicino	Moore	Morantz
Miao	Morrice	Morrison	Motz
Morrissey	Murray	Muys	Nater
Naqvi	Noormohamed	Normandin	Patzer
O'Connell	Oliphant	Paul-Hus	Pauzé
O'Regan	Petitpas Taylor	Perkins	Perron
Powlowski	Qualtrough	Plamondon	Poilievre
Robillard	Rodriguez	Rayes	Redekopp
Rogers	Romanado	Reid	Rempel Garner
Rota	Sahota	Richards	Roberts
Saks	Samson	Rood	Ruff
Sarai	Scarpaleggia	Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schiefke	Serré	Schmale	Seebach
Sgro	Shanahan	Shields	Shipley
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Sorbara	Small	Soroka
Sousa	St-Onge	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Sudds	Tassi	Stewart	Strahl
Taylor Roy	Thompson	Stubbs	Thériault
Turnbull	Valdez	Therrien	Thomas
Van Bynen	van Koeverden	Tochor	Tolmie
Vandal	Vandenbeld	Trudel	Uppal
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NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers

Nil

PAIRED

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I regretfully have to inform the House that there is evidence of another partisan activity that the Speaker was engaged with. I have, in my hands, a picture of the Speaker at an event with the hon. member for Pontiac, which was labelled and advertised by the Liberal Party as *un cocktail militant*.

Government Orders

The Instagram post for the hon. member reads, “This week, I had the privilege of participating in a remarkable event in the company of my colleague [the Speaker]. In this time when the political sphere is in full swing, supporting our colleagues is crucial. I want to express my gratitude to my provincial counterpart and friend André Fortin, as well as his liberal team, for organizing a stimulating evening focused on political discussions, both provincial and regional.”

This is not even the Speaker's riding. This is a neighbouring riding. It is billed as a cocktail, with activists and volunteers.

I would like to seek unanimous consent to table these documents. If any member of Parliament has ever said anything about the importance of the independence and integrity of the Speaker, they should allow me to table these documents and they should have allowed the debate on the Speaker to continue today.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, we certainly did listen to what the House leader from the Conservatives had to say. If you would perhaps provide us with an opportunity to review, reflect and provide comments on that before making a ruling, we would really appreciate it.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, the whole point of tabling the documents is so that you can read them.

The Deputy Speaker: We are not going to have a debate on this. The information is apparently public now. People can go and have a look at it.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

(Bill C-58. On the Order: Resumption of debate:)

November 27, 2023 — Resuming consideration of the motion of Mr. O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors), seconded by Ms. Ng (Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development), — That Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, be now read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear, for those who are following the parliamentary calendar, that the government is making last-minute changes to the projected order of business, but I am nonetheless very happy to speak today to Bill C-58 and address the government's profound failures when it comes to workers, and talk about the excellent work that the Conservative Party has been doing and will continue to do to support workers here in Canada.

Our priority is creating powerful paycheques for Canadian workers, supporting jobs and opportunity for Canadian workers. In that process, our leader, the member for Carleton, has been travelling across the country meeting with workers, and hearing about their priorities and their concerns. I can tell members that the number one priority for the workers he meets with, and all of us on this side

of the House are meeting with, is around jobs and opportunity. It is to have an economy that works for working people, an economy that puts the interests of working people ahead of those of the well-connected insiders the government has so persistently tried to prioritize.

We see this profound disconnect in so many different ways. We see the way that the Liberal government is focused on the interests of well-connected insiders and how it loves shovelling money out to consultants who specialize in encouraging companies to fire more people. These are the kinds of relationships the government is cultivating. These are the kinds of people the government is trying to serve, whereas Conservatives are focused on jobs and opportunity for workers, and creating the kind of economy where more people can work, prosper and succeed.

There are many different aspects in the government's agenda in this regard. We see the context, for instance, of its unjust transition plan. The government, in fact, is now admitting that its so-called just transition rhetoric is unpopular with workers. I was very struck by the fact that the labour minister got up in the House fairly recently and said they do not use the terminology of just transition anymore because workers do not like it. It is true that workers do not like it, but it was not the name that they had a problem with. It was the substance of the government's agenda.

The government talks about so-called transitioning workers as if what workers wanted was to be able to not work. A big part of the reason people work, yes, is for the paycheque, as that is a critical piece of it, but it also comes from the satisfaction they get from being able to accomplish something significant. This is what is so important about work for workers. They appreciate the ability to both earn a paycheque for their family and be able to participate in the creation of value. Both of those things together are important.

The government says to workers that it wants to transition them out of their jobs, but it will have social programs for them on the other end of it. First of all, I think members are rightly skeptical about whether those promises will be delivered on. Second, the people in my riding who work in the energy sector and other sectors are not looking for easy money. They are looking for the opportunity to be able to work hard and build themselves up, along with their families and their communities in the process.

This is the dignity inherent in work. The paycheque is critically important, but it is not just about the paycheque. It is about the satisfaction that comes from work, and this is something that the government just does not understand. This is an essential piece of why the government's unjust transition agenda is so unpopular with workers and calling it something else is not going to change the picture.

Government Orders

In the midst of this larger discussion about workers and the failure of the government to support or respond to the needs and concerns of working people, we have it bringing forward this legislation on replacement workers. I would say what is quite curious about the government's approach to this is that at the same time as it is championing its legislation allegedly dealing with the issue of replacement workers, the government is signing massive corporate subsidies to companies that are, in fact, bringing in foreign replacement workers. That is another example of the duplicity that we see from the other side.

• (1100)

We have been working on this issue at the government operations committee and wearing down a Liberal filibuster.

Conservatives came to the committee saying that we had evidence that over \$40 billion in corporate subsidies was being used, not to hire Canadian workers, not to create jobs and opportunities for workers in Canada, but to subsidize companies that are bringing in foreign replacement workers. By the way, over \$40 billion is a massive amount of money. It is a big number overall, but if we break it down it is \$3,000 per family. That means that all the Canadians who as we speak are at home glued to CPAC, and I salute them for their dedication, and watching this are on the hook for \$3,000 because of these subsidies.

• (1105)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. When the member is taking into consideration his calculation, does that include Premier Doug Ford's contribution also?

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order, but a point of debate. As we get to questions and comments, I am sure the hon. member can ask it at that time.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, that obviously was not a point of order, but, in a way, it was revealing the way the member spoke about it. He thinks when different levels of government spend money it comes from the individual, that when the Government of Ontario spends money that it is Doug Ford's money or when the current government spends money that it is its money somehow. There is only one taxpayer: the people of Canada. Whether it is through provincial, local or national governments, the people of Canada are paying for this. We are talking about very large sums of money individually, so Canadians have a right to ask what value they are getting for this spending. If they were to find that a very large portion of those subsidies was going to subsidize foreign replacement workers, I think they would have a right to be concerned.

Conservatives have taken a very moderate and reasonable approach on this. We just want to get the information, so we asked the government to show us its work. We think Canadians should be able to see the contracts. It is interesting that every time we bring this up, that Canadians should be able to see the contracts, members of the government say that these are great deals, the best that members have ever seen for workers. I would not say that these are the best deals we have ever seen because we have not seen them. We do not know if they are the best deals we have ever seen because we cannot see them, so let us see them.

If the government is so proud of what it is doing it should show us its work. Maybe we will be surprised, but I doubt it. Maybe we will be pleased and say that these contracts are fantastic. Maybe once they are submitted to the committees we will look at them and say that the government has done a great job. We probably will not, but maybe we will be shocked and they will be good. Maybe we will find that the government did not include any protections for Canadian workers. Either way, we want it to show us its work, not to say that it was the best essay it ever wrote but the dog ate it before it could hand it in to the teacher, or that it cleaned it up so well, but somehow the dog got in and no one can see it. What absurdity from the government. If it did the work well, if the workers are protected, then it should show us the contracts. If the government is proud of its approach, if it thinks it has done good work for workers, then it should show us the work.

I believe that in questions and comments we are going to hear members stand up and say that these are the best deals we have ever seen. Enough of the best deals we have never seen. Let us see the deals. Let us see what \$40 billion got Canadian workers. Did it get workers anything?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Come to Windsor and see the battery plant getting built.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the member across the way said that I should come to Windsor. I would love to come to Windsor. I will come and door-knock vigorously in Windsor in the next election. We will be there. When we door-knock in Windsor we will tell workers that they have the right to a member of Parliament who wants to show them the work. We will tell them to vote for a member of Parliament who is not going to hide that work, that they deserve a member who is not going to go to committee to filibuster and fight to cover up the work the government is doing. They deserve a member of Parliament who is going to show them what it accomplished, not someone who does not want to show them the work.

Therefore, I challenge the members across the way, if they care about Canadian workers, to let them see the work and release the contracts.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that my hon. colleague should come to Windsor and see the hundreds and thousands of workers who are building the battery plant right now. I would love to introduce him to every single one of them. There is a sense of tremendous optimism in my community, because we know we are going to have 2,500 great-paying jobs in Windsor. They will be for local, Canadian, unionized workers to build batteries, and not just for years but for generations.

Government Orders

Eight years ago, I remember, in Windsor, under the Conservative government, we had 11.2% unemployment. The Conservatives lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Windsor was ground zero for that. The Leader of the Opposition would remember that as well, because he was the minister of employment, or as I would like to call it, the minister of unemployment. A big part of that optimism is what the unions bargained for at the bargaining table: huge pay increases for workers.

When will Conservatives support unions? When will they support workers? When will they support Windsor? When will they support the bargaining table and Bill C-58?

• (1110)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, it would seem that I correctly foresaw exactly what the member's question and comment would be.

He got up and said that this is the best deal we have never seen. He said that it is unbelievable how good a deal this is for workers. However, he did not address the fact that he is going to the government operations committee and filibustering to cover up the release of these contracts. Actually, it is worse than that, because the NDP flip-flopped. There was a little filibustering from the Liberals, and the NDP said, "Okay, we will fold to the pressure from our colleagues in the costly, corrupt, cover-up coalition, and we will agree to hide the contracts."

I agree with the member on one point. He said there was an incredible sense of optimism in Windsor. I have seen the rallies and the number of people who have come out to hear the member for Carleton speak in Windsor. It is incredible. People in Windsor know that, after eight years of NDP-Liberal rule and of this corrupt government, hope is on the horizon with the member for Carleton.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind hon. members that, if we keep our questions and our answers concise, everybody can participate in this debate.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it was wonderful to hear all the arguments that were in no way connected to Bill C-58. It was a thing of beauty.

I am going to ask the member a clear question. Bill C-58 is intended to prevent the use of scabs in the workplace so that proper negotiations can take place in the event of strikes and lockouts.

We must prevent the use of scabs. This still happens. At the Port of Québec, longshore workers have been locked out for over a year, and there are scabs coming in to do their work. That is unacceptable. We have failed to correct that situation here for over 50 years. I would like my colleague to tell me whether the Conservative Party is for or against Bill C-58.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I think what I was talking about in my speech was very clear. That is the reality of how the government, in the midst of talking about the issue of replacement workers, is actually bringing in foreign replacement workers.

The member for Windsor—Tecumseh said I should visit and meet with the people who are going to be working on these projects. Actually, I would love to be able to go to Korea and do that.

The Liberal government is bringing in foreign replacement workers. It is trying to bury and hide the contracts. The NDP is now complicit. To their credit, the Bloc has been working with the Conservatives to try to expose these contracts. It is the costly cover-up coalition that wants to hide the contracts from workers.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan mentioned the fact that there is a single taxpayer, and the Conservatives often like to bring that up. I just wonder whether the member and his party will be supporting the NDP's pharmacare proposal. If we made it a federal program, it would save the single taxpayer across this country billions of dollars a year. It would save money for provinces, corporations and individuals. Will he support us?

• (1115)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, this is a good opportunity to talk about how we are getting to the end of the year, and we are well over the NDP's red line. Do members remember the NDP convention, where the New Democrats said that they would ensure their plan is supported by the government? Then they said, "Oh, it is actually flexible." The New Democrats continually cave to their coalition partners, the Liberals. I would say that the member should first focus on trying to get his coalition partners onside for whatever the New Democrats are proposing. There is a long history of the NDP putting forward things that would allegedly save us money; to be charitable, I will say that it does not always—

The Deputy Speaker: Continuing debate, the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased and proud to be able to rise in this debate on Bill C-58.

It should go without saying in this country that workers deserve respect, fair wages and safe working conditions. However, success in achieving those things has depended largely on the free collective bargaining process. The success of every business, every enterprise and every government program depends on all the workers involved: Those who clean, those who provide security, those who drive and those who provide child care. None of our economy functions without all of us working together. In fact, I would speculate that if the top CEOs and directors stayed home for a day, their businesses would continue to function, because workers would carry on providing those services to the economy and to the public.

Government Orders

However, we should also recognize today that increasing inequality will eventually undermine social stability in this country. We have had the spectacle of Galen Weston, a CEO, appearing before a House of Commons committee and saying it is “reasonable” that he earns, in one year, 431 times his average worker’s salary. I would say to Mr. Weston that it is reasonable only in some other universe than the one the rest of us live in. In fact, it is actually even out of scale for the top 100 CEOs, who only, on average, earn 243 times what their average worker does.

A study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives demonstrated to us that, in a typical year, and we have a new year coming up, before the end of the second day, the top 100 CEOs will earn more than their average worker in the entire year. By my own calculations, by the end of that year, the CEOs will have earned more than their average worker will earn in a lifetime. Therefore, we have a serious problem with growing inequality in this country, and one of the only ways that we can, on a practical basis, see progress is through free collective bargaining.

We face huge challenges in our society, and I could spend time talking about the challenge of climate change. We face huge challenges, as I said, in inequality. We face all kinds of challenges in our workforce, with labour shortages. How do we address them? We certainly are a wealthy and well-educated country. We have a dedicated workforce, and if we all work together, and everyone pays their fair share, we can meet those challenges. We know what we need to do.

I would cite the NDP dental care plan as an example of how we can meet the challenges we face. This is a health challenge, in particular, for many seniors I hear from in my riding. They worked very hard all their lives but did not necessarily have a job in which their health benefits continued into retirement, if they had them at all. I have had many people approach my office to say that the quality of their life is really impaired by their inability to afford dental care. How is this relevant? If everybody pays their fair share, we can afford dental care for all Canadians.

Some of my Conservative friends have said, “Well, you always support spending. Why is that? You will just support deficits.” I try to correct them by saying that, as a New Democrat, I do not support deficits; I support fair taxation. If we apply the principles of fair taxation, including a wealth tax in this country, we can afford to take care of each other, which is an important principle.

However, where did that principle of taking care of each other come from? It came from trade unions and collective bargaining, where workers joined together and said, “Let us not have some of us succeed at the cost of the rest of us in the workplace.” They negotiated contracts that provided fair benefits, fair wages and better working conditions for everybody in the bargaining unit, and the employers could not just reward those they favoured in the workplace.

I will tell members a door knocking story from an election campaign. I went out one Saturday morning, too early for me and obviously too early for some of my constituents. A gentleman came to the door and said, “Oh, you’re the New Democrat. I can’t support you.” I said, “Why can’t you?” He said, “You’re way too close to the unions.” I said, “What day is it?” He said, “What do you mean,

what day is it?” I asked again, “What day is it?” He said, “It’s Saturday”, and then he looked at me and said, “I see where you’re going with this.” I said, “Yes, you’re home on the weekend because collective bargaining got people weekends off, which made it a standard in our society.” He said, “Oh, next you’re going to talk to me about health care and all kinds of other things unions got.” I said, “That’s absolutely what I’m going to talk to you about.” He said, “I still can’t vote for you”, and shut the door. I did not succeed in convincing him that day, but even he understood that a lot of the benefits he enjoyed as a non-union worker came from the work of trade unions.

● (1120)

Why am I giving all these examples when we are talking about anti-scab legislation? We know the importance of collective bargaining. We also know, if we stop to think for a minute, that most collective bargaining processes do not lead to strikes or lockouts; the vast majority of them do not. I have seen various statistics. In some sectors, up to 90% of contracts are completed successfully without any work stoppage at all.

What happens when replacement workers get involved? Again, the studies will tell us quite clearly that if replacement workers are hired by an employer, two things happen. One is that the strike, on average, will last six times longer than if replacement workers were not involved. The second thing the use of replacement workers does is to introduce an element of hostility and division in the community, because workers who are on strike see replacement workers as a threat to their livelihood. Quite often, replacement workers are hired through employment agencies or other ways in which they have no idea that they are being sent into such a position of conflict as a replacement worker.

What I think is really good about the legislation is that it would bank this practice. British Columbia and Quebec have already had this kind of legislation for years. Of course, the NDP has been trying to get it introduced at the federal level. We have introduced a bill eight times in the last 15 years. The last time we introduced it, in 2016, both the Liberals and the Conservatives voted against anti-scab legislation.

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The Conservative Party leader likes to talk about working people and how he is a friend of working people. I would say that the bill gives him a chance to demonstrate that concretely. His previous record does not show that. His party voted against minimum wages. His party, I guess I would say, has never seen back-to-work legislation it did not like. The record is clear on one side. If the Conservatives want to change that record, the legislation before us gives them an opportunity to demonstrate that they really are friends of workers and friends of progress, in terms of our economy.

Who are the workers most affected by the use of replacement workers? I am going to make a strange argument here, but quite often it is actually the non-union workers, because it is unionized companies and unionized sectors that set the standard that employers have to meet, even if those standards are not legislated. When we talk about the people who work in the lowest-paid, non-union jobs, they would actually be protected by the legislation as well, because it would allow unions to have shorter work stoppages and to negotiate better conditions, which would eventually spread through our economy.

Once again, I am back to the point I want to make. We hear a lot about how society and Parliament in Canada are suddenly dysfunctional. I do not believe that is true. I believe what we have are the choices that we are making. We make choices in the economy. It is not inevitable that we have great inequality. It is not inevitable that we have homelessness in our society. We make policy choices that have real outcomes that disadvantage many Canadians. We can make better choices and we can make different choices.

When we are talking about whether the House of Commons can do that, if the House of Commons appears dysfunctional to people, I believe that it is currently the result of choices being made by one party in the House to make the House of Commons appear dysfunctional and to make sure, as the party's leader declared, that we cannot get anything done anything in the House. He said he is going to grind the House to a halt, and we have seen him trying to do that. What is the impact of that on workers? It means we cannot get to legislation like the bill before us. It means we cannot get to a fair bargaining process for workers in the federal sector across the country. I represent a riding where there are lots of workers in the federally regulated sector. I know that this is important to them because they know it would shorten labour disputes and result in less hostility around the picket lines.

One last thing I want to talk about is that the improvement this legislation would make over what exists in B.C. and Quebec is that it considers the issue of remote work. One of the challenges we have now is that, in many industries, if there is a picket line, there is no need for employers to get someone to actually cross a physical line; they can hire people to work remotely. The federal legislation would actually be an improvement over what exists in British Columbia and Quebec, and I look forward to being able to vote in favour of it.

• (1125)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's intervention, particularly when he was talking about how a lot of the established practices in the workplace have come through negotiations with unions over the years. I would agree with him completely.

Toward the end of his speech, he was talking about the obstructionary practices of Conservatives in the House. We did some calculations this morning, and, in fact, in the fall session alone that is wrapping up, in one out of every three days in the House, there was some obstructionary practice by the Conservatives. Conservatives will say that is their job, and I would say that it is not; their job is to hold the government to account, but not to grind the place to a halt, which is what they are trying to do. One can hold the government accountable without having to turn this place into a road show.

Would the member not agree with me that the Conservatives have failed in their responsibility?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I do think that all of us come here with the idea that we are going to do what is right for Canadians. It is unfortunate when we head to the ditch of obstructionism. An example is that right now, the justice committee is working on a bill called the miscarriage of justice act, which attempts to deal with the fact that many indigenous and Black Canadians have been wrongfully convicted and have spent long times in jail unnecessarily. Because of the carbon tax, the Conservatives are filibustering the miscarriage of justice act. This just makes no sense to me.

In the four terms I have been here, I have seen some bitter disputes over something that was actually before the House, but it is the first time I have seen disputes flowing into all the committees about something that is absolutely irrelevant to the work those committees are trying to do for Canadians.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the NDP a question specifically on the issue of replacement workers.

Originally, the Conservatives, the NDP and the Bloc were working together to try to bring to light contracts signed by the government that seemed to allow foreign replacement workers to be brought in on publicly subsidized projects. In fact, the NDP leader asked a question in the House in which he expressed the view that these contracts should be made public. However, since then, the NDP has flip-flopped, voted with the Liberals to bury the contracts and suggested that we just do an ATIP request instead. We all know the problems associated with the ATIP system. Parliamentary committees have a right to request unfettered access to documents.

Why did the NDP flip-flop, abandon workers, give in to the Liberal filibuster and agree to support the government's efforts to bury the contracts?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, the member has just given a perfect example of what I am talking about: the Conservatives' attempting to make the House dysfunctional. The question he is asking has nothing to do with the topic of the bill before us; it has nothing to do with the work we are trying to do in the House today, so it is a perfect example of the Conservatives' trying to make the House look dysfunctional.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his work.

I know that the NDP has wanted this bill for a long time, and the same goes for the Bloc Québécois. We introduced anti-scab legislation at least 11 times over the years. We have been waiting for this for a long time. We think it is essential that this legislation come into force quickly. In my opinion, the government has had a lot of time to work on this and come up with a very good version of the bill.

One of the things that bothers me is the 18-month delay for the coming into force after royal assent. If, much like us, the New Democrats think that enough time has been spent on developing a near-perfect version of the bill, I wonder how they can agree to this 18-month delay. I am wondering whether they will work with us in committee to ensure that the bill comes into force immediately after receiving royal assent.

● (1130)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy working with the member, and her questions are always as they are today: to the point.

One of the concerns I have about the bill is the 18-month delay before its implementation. New Democrats are supporting the bill at second reading so it can go to committee, where there would be a fulsome debate. I too am hoping we can convince the government that the 18-month delay is too long.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to this morning to speak of workers, the labour context, industrial relations and replacement workers. One of the main factors to consider in today's debates is the Liberals' mismanagement over the past eight years. Liberal mismanagement has raised the cost of living for all Canadian workers.

The Liberals' disastrous mismanagement and astronomical deficits sent inflation and interest rates soaring to levels not seen in 40 years. All these factors combine to put pressure on Canadian workers. People have their working conditions and their wages to count on, but when everything is going up, when the price of rent and housing doubles, when people go to the supermarket to feed their family and are forced to spend \$150 more each week for the same groceries but their pay stays the same, they can no longer make ends meet. The math is simple.

The Liberals constantly preach at us. My colleagues will no doubt remember how, just after it was elected, this government said it was there for the middle class and those working hard to join it. We even had the joy, the pleasure, of witnessing the creation of a new minister of middle-class prosperity. What a joke. That position no longer exists. As we can see, the government's actions yielded the opposite effect, making the middle class poorer. This is what is happening today.

Furthermore, during the past eight years of Liberal mismanagement, labour disputes in Canada have surged. In recent years, Canada has experienced over 300 labour disputes. This is unprecedented. All this was caused by current conditions. People are struggling to stay afloat. They are at their wits' end. Food banks are overwhelmed with record demand. Two million people are visiting

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food banks every month. I even see it in my region near Quebec City, where everything usually hums along and people have a good standard of living. Now, queues of people line up for food boxes every Thursday. This is unheard of.

There is so much pressure on workers, and that is causing tension and unrest. That is what we are seeing in Quebec nowadays, but that is a different debate. That is for the Government of Quebec to deal with. Public sector workers are striking, people like nurses and teachers. The same thing is happening at the federal level. The federal government created negative economic conditions in Canada that have led to unrest. Workers are struggling. They are anxious and worried, and for good reason.

I have no choice but to blame the government, because those are the facts. The facts are the facts. Certain actions were taken. The insane spending that has been going on in recent years has doubled the country's debt. As we know, we are going to have to pay \$50 billion a year in interest on the debt, the equivalent of 10% of all federal funds. Ten percent of all federal revenues will go toward paying interest to banks in New York and London. This creates a situation where workers can no longer make ends meet. That is untenable, so workers ask for more. Employers are also experiencing inflation. They, too, have to cope with rising costs. The entire market, every industry, is affected by the decisions made in recent years by the Liberal government, decisions that have had a negative impact on everyone.

Other decisions that are entirely inconsistent with the current intention are those relating to Stellantis, Northvolt and Volkswagen. We have learned that Stellantis, which will receive \$15 billion in public funds, will be using foreign replacement workers, most of them from South Korea. At first, there were supposed to be 1,600 of them. We now know that about 900 foreign workers are coming to work in Canada.

● (1135)

They are bringing in replacement workers from abroad to take Canadians' jobs. Some will say that these are specialized jobs. I understand that new technologies sometimes require workers with special knowledge to come explain how they work, but not 900 of them. The proof is that, when we first started asking questions, the Prime Minister said there would be no foreign workers. Then one of the Liberal ministers said that there would be a few, and then the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry said that there would only be one. At some point, they changed their minds. They realized that 900 Koreans would indeed be coming to Canada to take jobs away from Canadian workers.

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Let us not forget that this is an investment of \$15 billion in public funds. If a private company sets up shop in Canada and pays for staff from outside the country with its own money, that is its prerogative. However, this is taxpayer money that the Government of Canada is investing in a business with an unproven track record. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that it was going to cost far more than anticipated. They are not even sure that it will be profitable and that they will get their money's worth. Regardless, foreign workers are being brought in to work in Canada.

It is the same thing with Northvolt, the company that is setting up in Quebec, halfway to the leader of the Bloc Québécois's riding. This company is also going to bring in foreign workers. The situation is not clear and we are trying to find out more. We asked to see the contracts. We understand that contracts for services with governments contain business-related clauses and they have to be careful, but we are entitled to find out some basic information about the number of foreign workers and their conditions.

Let us not forget that it is taxpayers who are paying for this. We are investing tens of billions of dollars in these projects. These are not small investments. We should have access to this information. The government must find a way to give this information to the opposition parties so they can determine whether it is a good agreement or not. The government does not want to be transparent. This once again creates conditions that make Canadian workers turn around and ask for protection.

What is going on? On the one hand, the government says it wants to protect its workers. On the other hand, it brings in foreign workers, even paying companies to do so. It is being inconsistent. This creates conditions that make people suspicious about what is going on and the way the federal government operates in Canada. They are right to be suspicious.

That has repercussions on the Canadian economy. The COVID-19 pandemic caused severe supply chain disruptions, and the recovery has been difficult. Canada lacks synergy and efficiency in terms of rail, marine and air transportation. We need more consistency, efficiency and predictability. That is what is lacking now in Canada. Other countries are worried. Companies and marine carriers are wondering whether they should be going through Canada to reach the United States because they never know how the trip will unfold.

These worries were created by the government. We saw it during the strike at the Port of Vancouver. The government knew months in advance that there were issues to address. The minister was not able to foresee the situation and find solutions to avoid a conflict. The conflict caused half a billion dollars in losses. It could have been settled ahead of time, and all that could have been avoided.

There are several factors that must be taken into account when it comes to workers. Right now, the main problem is inflation and interest rates, which put pressure on workers, who are worried. Another problem is that the government does not appear to understand that it must ensure effective management and orchestrate public investments. In the case of companies like Stellantis and Northvolt, the government should avoid bringing in foreign replacement workers and give preference to Canadians who are willing to take on the work.

• (1140)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is another example of the pattern I talked about the other day. We are seeing the MAGA Conservatives, led by the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, taking this approach. What they want to talk about is Stellantis and the Volkswagen deal. I get it. MAGA Conservatives do not like it when the government invests in industrial expansion in areas that mean a great deal, with literally thousands of direct jobs, not to mention the indirect jobs.

Why have the Conservatives fallen so dogmatically to the idea of MAGA conservatism that they are bringing it almost on a daily basis into the chamber? What is wrong with the Government of Canada recognizing the potential of an industry? Batteries and the electrification of vehicles are things of the future and they are happening today. We have an opportunity to see that industry grow in Canada. Why does the Conservative Party today not support the growth of that industry?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, first, I am sick and tired up of hearing my colleague ask questions based on the premise that we work the same way as in the U.S.

We do not work the same way as in the U.S. As I mentioned in my speech, our concern is clear. We want a coherent policy and to take coherent measures to ensure that Canada is more effective when it comes to transport and energy. As for development, the future in the environmental sector is obviously batteries and the electrification of transportation. We agree on that.

The fact remains that the federal government is making investments and spending tens of billions of taxpayer dollars. We have legitimate questions about the foreign workers coming in, but the government does not want to talk about that. I do not see how that is akin to American politics. We are talking about Canadian workers. I am in Canada. I am not in the U.S. I ask questions on behalf of Canadian citizens.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Quebec for his speech, but I do not understand what his actual position will be when we vote on Bill C-58, which aims to protect striking and locked-out workers by preventing employers from using scabs during labour disputes. We have had anti-scab legislation in Quebec since 1977. Federal governments of all stripes have dragged their feet when it comes to adopting such legislation.

Bill C-58 will protect workers' strike and lockout rights and, during labour disputes, prevent employers from hiring scabs. Is my colleague's party for or against Bill C-58? That is what I want to know.

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Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, right now I am voting to protect Canadian jobs. Right now, we have a problem with foreign replacement workers and we are not getting any answers. I am more than happy to talk about Bill C-58, but we want answers. We are taking advantage of this debate to ask the government why companies will be hiring foreign replacement workers. In our opinion, that is the same thing as bringing in scabs. We are bringing in people from outside Canada to fill Canadian jobs. That is what we want to know today.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, right now across Canada we are seeing a cost of living crisis, and this bill would do something important. It would ensure a level playing field, giving workers the power to negotiate as equals with their employers.

We know the Conservatives have supported back-to-work legislation repeatedly, so I am wondering on which side the Conservatives are. Are they on the side of the workers or the side of the CEOs, who make so much when workers make so little?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Mr. Speaker, I think my speech was clear. The current situation in Canada is unprecedented. This government has put our public finances in a very bad state, and has caused unprecedented inflation and interest rate hikes. Workers can no longer make ends meet. They do not have enough money to pay their rent and their other bills at the end of the month. That is the problem. All of the opposition parties need to work together to stop the government from continuing to spend recklessly.

* * *

• (1145)

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

BILL C-59—PROPOSAL TO APPLY STANDING ORDER 69.1

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with the patience of the House, I have a point of order. It is in response to the application of Standing Order 69.1 to Bill C-59, better known as the fall economic statement.

I am rising to respond to the point of order raised on December 12, 2023, respecting the application of Standing Order 69.1 to the provisions in Bill C-59 that were announced in the fall economic statement but not referenced in the 2023 budget.

Let me quote the standing order in question, which reads:

(1) In the case where a government bill seeks to repeal, amend or enact more than one act, and where there is not a common element connecting the various provisions or where unrelated matters are linked, the Speaker shall have the power to divide the questions, for the purposes of voting, on the motion for second reading and reference to a committee and the motion for third reading and passage of the bill. The Speaker shall have the power to combine clauses of the bill thematically and to put the aforementioned questions on each of these groups of clauses separately, provided that there will be a single debate at each stage.

(2) The present standing order shall not apply if the bill has as its main purpose the implementation of a budget and contains only provisions that were announced in the budget presentation or in the documents tabled during the budget presentation.

The legal title of the bill reads, “An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 21, 2023 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023”. I can confirm to the House that the significant majority of provisions in Bill C-59 would implement measures announced and articulated in the 2023 budget. The fall economic statement was designed to respond to affordability challenges facing Canadians, and these measures reflect a minority of provisions in the bill.

The key to the standing order is the ability for the government to provide a compelling rationale as to why there is a common element or theme that connects the various provisions. In my intervention on that matter last week, I stated that the provisions to implement the legislative measures announced in the fall economic statement were linked to a common theme of affordability for Canadians. This intervention therefore allows me to provide in greater detail how these measures demonstrate a clear link to addressing the affordability concerns of Canadians.

Before I review the measures that were only referenced in the fall economic statement, I would like to point out that many of the measures identified by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle were referenced in the 2023 budget.

Clauses 1 through 95 relate to proposed amendments to the Income Tax Act that in principle would ensure the robustness of Canada's tax system to provide benefits to Canadians, to create good-quality jobs and to build an economy that works for everyone. There is only one measure in these clauses that was not announced in the budget, that is, the information-sharing provision between departments to facilitate the provision of the government's dental benefit program. I would note that the dental benefit was a budget 2023 measure, and this provision was a technical fix to ensure the smooth operationalization of the benefit. This measure, along with the corresponding technical fix, is clearly a measure to address affordability challenges faced by Canadians who are eligible for the benefit.

Clauses 96 through 128 would establish a digital services tax, which was announced in the 2023 budget and articulated in budget documents. Therefore, it should not be subject to separate votes at the second and third reading stages.

Clauses 129 to 136 relate to proposed amendments to the Excise Tax Act that are designed to ensure that businesses in Canada and Canadians are fairly and properly affected by the excise tax, to enhance Canada's reputation as an investment destination and a great place to do business, and to support Canadians' participation in the labour market. All measures contained in clauses 129 to 136 were announced in the 2023 budget and articulated in budget documents, so they should not be subject to separate votes at the second and third reading stages.

Points of Order

● (1150)

Clauses 136 to 144 also relate to proposed amendments to the Excise Tax Act, which would ensure that businesses in Canada and Canadians are fairly treated by the excise tax. These measures would enhance Canada's reputation as an investment destination, which not only creates excellent job opportunities for Canadians, but also contributes to the revenues to strengthen Canada's social safety net. A significant majority of these measures were announced in the 2023 budget and articulated in the budget documents, so they should not be subject to a separate vote at the second and third reading stages.

There are three measures that were not announced in the 2023 budget, but their purpose is clearly designed to address affordability challenges for Canadians. These include a measure that would exempt psychotherapy from federal tax, which would not only reduce the cost of therapy for Canadians, but also contribute to their well-being so they can productively contribute to the labour market. The second measure involves provisions to ensure that co-operative housing units are eligible for the 100% GST rebate on purpose-built housing, which is a real and significant investment to help build homes for Canadians and address affordability challenges for Canadians to find a place to call home.

Clauses 145 to 167 concern the taxation of vaping products and cannabis products in Canada. These revenues provide investments for Canada to strengthen our social supports, and provide a price signal to Canadians of the health effects of the abuse of these products, while also providing for a fair and stable taxation of vaping and cannabis products.

Clauses 168 to 196 would amend the laws governing financial institutions, which are designed to strengthen the governance of Canadian financial institutions. They are important to keeping Canadians' money and investments, as well as our financial institutions, safe and secure. All of these measures were announced in the 2023 budget and articulated in the budget documents, so they should not be subject to separate votes at the second and third reading stages.

Clauses 197 to 208 relate to proposed leave entitlements related to pregnancy loss and bereavement leave, which are designed to support workers. Canadian workers are the backbone of the economy, and anyone who faces the tragedy of pregnancy loss deserves rightful access to bereavement leave. Ultimately, this measure would ensure that Canadians who are dealing with this tragedy are not also burdened by the loss of income. Again, all of these measures were announced in the 2023 budget and articulated in the budget documents, so they should not be subject to separate votes at the second and third reading stages.

Clauses 209 to 216 relate to the establishment of a Canada water agency, which would create good jobs for Canadians and protect Canadians' access to fresh, clean water. It would also restore, protect and manage bodies of water of national significance. Canadians should be able to count on access to clean water. In an era of increasing climate disruption, an independent Canadian water agency, which would be located in Winnipeg, would help to protect our bodies of water. This measure was announced in the 2023 budget

and articulated in the budget documents, so should not be subject to a separate vote at the second and third reading stages.

Clauses 217 and 218 relate to the proposed amendments to the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act, which would provide the government with the authority to develop and implement tobacco and vaping cost recovery frameworks. It would also limit the cost burden on taxpayers for the funding of federal tobacco and vaping activities. In essence, these measures would ensure that Canadians are not on the hook for paying for the development or regulatory frameworks related to vaping, which would not only free up funds that could otherwise be spent on the investments and supports Canadians rely on, but also provide Canadians who use such products with additional disposable income to spend on the essentials of life.

● (1155)

Clauses 219 to 230 propose amendments to the Canadian Payments Act to make the Canadian banking system safer and more secure while delivering more innovative services for Canadians. The purpose of these amendments is to ensure that Canadians' hard-earned money is safe in the financial institutions they rely upon.

Clauses 231 to 272 would amend the Competition Act to help increase competition, most notably in the grocery sector where Canadians have experienced rising prices that have impacted their ability to feed their families with healthy and nutritious foods. These amendments are designed to make life more affordable for Canadians by lowering prices and providing more choice, which in turn stimulates competition to compete on pricing and encourage the development of more innovative products and services for Canadians.

Clauses 273 to 277 would exempt post-secondary education institutions from the laws governing bankruptcy and insolvency. By educating our young people and conducting world-leading research, post-secondary educational institutions play a critical role in Canada's social, scientific, and economic development. These amendments would help protect the solvency of Canadian post-secondary institutions.

Clauses 278 to 317 relate to amendments to address—

The Deputy Speaker: The NDP House leader is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for your indulgence. I know the member can speak with some passion. If he could liven this up, it would be to the benefit of everybody in the House. We have been working very hard, and we need some motivation. Reading in a monotone does not provide that.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, my question is quite simple. I am wondering if this will be included in the member for Kingston and the Islands's calculation on obstruction of the business of this place. He seemed to be finding out how to do some math on the subject earlier. I am wondering if this would be included in that—

The Deputy Speaker: That is getting into debate, and I was just wondering if there was some filibustering going on.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader can continue. I know there are a few more pages to go.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, in fairness, there was a point when I talked about the water agency, and I did go a little off-script. I said that was something that was happening in Winnipeg, which was somewhat spontaneous on my part, to try to liven it up a little. I will stick to my script so I can get right to the point. I am very close to being done.

Clauses 278 to 317 relate to amendments to address anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism, and the threats they pose to the safety of Canadians and the integrity of our financial system. These threats have real costs for the Canadian economy and for Canadians. Not only will these amendments help keep Canadians hard-earned money safe, but also keep our financial system sound. These measures were announced in the 2023 budget and articulated in the budget documents, so they should not be subject to separate votes at the second and third reading stages.

Clauses 318 and 319 would require the publication of information relating to the transfer of payments to the provinces. The federal government provides transfers to the provinces and territories that help deliver the services Canadians rely on, such as child care, which is a key measure to ease Canadians' affordability concerns with respect to the care of their young children, and importantly to help deliver the health care that Canadians need when they are at their most vulnerable state.

Clauses 320 to 322 would amend the Public Sector Pension Investment Board Act to ensure that workers are represented in the governance of the public sector pension investments by giving a voice to labour representatives in making investment decision for workers' retirement benefits. These amendments would contribute to stronger investments that would support jobs for middle-class Canadians.

The final clauses referenced by my colleague are clauses 323 to 341, which would clarify the department mandate of Infrastructure Canada to include powers, duties and functions of the department to take a lead role for improving housing outcomes, and to enhance its activities and powers in relation to public infrastructure. These proposed amendments will assist the department in helping to deliver on Canadians' desire and need for housing in a more efficient and effective manner.

In conclusion, I submit that a significant majority of the provisions in Bill C-59 were announced in the 2023 budget and, as such, these measures should not be subject to separate votes at the second and third reading stages. The minority of amendments in Bill C-59 that were announced in the fall economic statement were designed to ease Canadians' concerns about affordability. These provisions,

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which seek to advance measures that address affordability concerns, represent a common theme and should be grouped as such, as provided for under Standing Order 69.1.

I thank the Speaker and all members for their patience in getting through that.

• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member was adding to the point of order that was raised earlier. I appreciate the additional information, and certainly we will take it under consideration.

* * *

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to speak to things that matter to my constituents and to myself.

I did want to take this opportunity first of all to congratulate Tehadas Leo. He is not in my constituency now, but he grew up there. He actually used to be my sons' French tutor. He was just named on Amazon's 2023 best Canadian podcasts of the year list, so that is very exciting. He does tremendous work and talks about the indigenous realities. I really appreciate his work and wanted to acknowledge him today.

We are in this place, so close to the end, talking about a bill I am particularly passionate about, Bill C-58. This is about prohibiting the use of replacement workers and modifying the business continuity process. The reason this is so important to me and to the riding I represent is that we all appreciate the amazing work unions do.

In the House, I talk a lot about there being a bar of dignity in Canada. I feel the bar of dignity is sinking. We need to raise it up so all Canadians have a level of dignity that is acceptable, which means one just has enough to exist and get by without being afraid every day about one's future.

I really need to thank unions. Part of the reason we have all the social programs in this country is the hard work of labour unions. They remind us again and again to work for one another, to care about one another and to make sure that, when people work, they are treated with the dignity they deserve.

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This bill is so important because it really is about looking at the system we have in Canada and understanding that, all too often, workers lose their power because replacement workers are able to go in and fill those positions when they are doing their important work of standing up against employers on issues that really matter.

The reality is that we know workers across this country deserve a lot more respect. They are working hard every day doing what is best, and they are still falling behind. This is an epidemic we are seeing in this country that needs to be dealt with. We need to see better wages, and we need to see better working conditions. The NDP has a long documented history of always working on the side of workers and listening to those voices.

In fact, when it comes to this legislation, the NDP is in an agreement that forced the Liberal government to move forward with this meaningful piece of legislation. We know this because the NDP introduced anti-scab legislation in this place eight times in the last 15 years. In fact, the last time it came up for a vote, the Liberals and the Conservatives voted against it. This just tells us that there is a long history of the NDP being here, and we took what power we had with 25 members to make sure workers are better represented in this country and have more power in this country, and it is about time.

Like unions, and like workers across Canada, we did not give up. We kept working diligently. We know the fight is hard and significant. We know that because right now, across this country, people cannot afford the food they desperately need to exist. As that is happening, grocery stores are making some of the biggest profits, especially those big box ones. It is not those local ones in our communities, which often do so much for the community, such as pay for sports clubs and help out. An example of this is Quality Foods in Campbell River and what it does with the fireworks every Canada Day. It is those big box stores that are taking home huge profits at the expense of workers.

We know, for example, that Galen Weston makes 431 times the average of the workers who work for him. Those folks who work every day on the front lines are interacting constantly with people. They are seeing people who cannot afford the groceries they have in their carts and need to put items back on the shelves. Often, workers in those grocery stores cannot afford to shop at the grocery store they work at. They have to go to food banks to make ends meet, and Galen Weston is making over 400 times the amount those workers are. That just tells us one of the things we need to address in this country is that growing inequity. It is happening. We can see it.

• (1205)

There is a lot of research showing that the top 1% continue to make more money and pay less in taxes while everyday workers work hard, get paid about the same and, knowing that inflation is impacting their income, keep working hard and paying their fair share in taxes. I hope that we, as a place that understands the bar of dignity for all Canadians, start considering that. Even though Galen Weston makes that much, the average these top CEOs are making is 235 times what their workers are making. I think that is totally unacceptable. It is something that all of us in this place should be addressing, and this is one step toward doing that.

What is a scab? A scab is a person hired after the notice to bargain has gone out. These people are coming from other employers to work in a facility as contractors not already hired by the employer until a strike action happens. As a member who represents a more rural riding, I can say that right now the impact this has on community is profound. We see people we grocery shop with out on the line every day standing up for their rights as workers and see others walking past that line to work somewhere. Some have to keep fighting and are not getting paid or getting the supports they need and it decimates communities. It is really profound. That is why we are fighting for this.

We also know that corporations are getting more tricky. They may have people out on the picket lines while getting people to work remotely. This legislation matters because it is for all of Canada. I recognize that both Quebec and B.C. have anti-scab legislation. We know where that came from in B.C.; it was definitely the New Democrats. However, it has to be across the country and it needs to be more fulsome so we can protect workers.

Is it not time we started to protect workers in a more meaningful and profound way? We know that workers have waited long enough. How many more years do they have to wait? How many times has this promise been made and not followed through with? We are going to make it happen and we are really happy to do this.

What this means for people is protection against replacement workers, which gives workers more power in negotiations and helps to have a more balanced bargaining table. That is incredibly important. We know that using scabs again and again creates unforeseen things. We have heard stories of the violence that often lingers in communities much longer than the labour dispute. We know that workers have even been injured or killed as a result of these tensions. When people are doing their very best to survive and see other people limiting their ability to do that, it raises a lot of concerns, and we do not want to see violence increase.

Of course, whenever workers are replaced, it means employers get to continue on like nothing is wrong, not acknowledging safety issues and issues around how much people are compensated. These things become difficult and this legislation is going to make all the difference.

Government Orders

I want to thank the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, Bea Bruske, who said, “We have seen years of record corporate profits while workers’ pay lagged far behind. Workers are rightly demanding fairer wages, better safety standards and respect from their employers.” She went on to say, “If we ban the use of scabs once and for all, we can take a real step towards less labour disruptions, avoiding work stoppages and building a more balanced economy—while increasing the benefits and respect workers deserve.”

We need to see a country that focuses much more on workers and looks at the power they need and rightfully should have. What we want to see in this place is more cohesion so we can support those workers. We know that often disputes last six times longer when employers use scabs than when there are no scabs. That, for me, is enough. We need to make this right.

Again and again in this place we have seen back-to-work legislation come forward and both the Liberals and the Conservatives have supported it. It is absolutely time to stop that. Let us get it done by having this in place.

• (1210)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been listening quite carefully to the speeches coming from members of the NDP. I notice they keep using the term “fair share” of tax.

I wonder if the member could articulate for the House what exactly they mean by “fair share”? Is there a percentage? We know that high-income earners in Canada pay between 50% and 55% of their income toward income tax depending on which province they live in, so what percentage is the right percentage? What do they call fair?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I am so sad to hear that lack of understanding and awareness in this place, and I really encourage the member to do research. We know that people who have the—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There are opportunities for questions and comments. If members have questions and comments, they need to wait until the appropriate time. A member has already been recognized, and I would ask others to wait to ask a question at a different time.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, thank you for that. It is unfortunate that members feel so defensive that the only result is to yell while I am giving a simple answer.

Fairness is not a reality in this country. We know that the top 1% earners are getting so much more. They are paying less tax because they are using every tax loophole. In fact, some are hiding their money overseas. These are policies that the Liberals and the Conservatives have continuously supported. That is unfortunate but it is the reality.

I encourage all members to talk to everyday working people, who pay their fair share of tax, about how it feels when other people do not pay theirs. I also want to remind the Conservative Party that the Conservatives in the U.K. acknowledged this by having a

windfall tax and making sure that money went back into communities to support them during very trying times.

We know this is a reality. There are a lot of graphs out there. I encourage them to do their research.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, anti-scab legislation has been an important personal issue for me for many years, dating all the way back to 1988 and 1989 in my first few years as a parliamentarian. I was really glad when the Prime Minister incorporated that into our last election platform, and I am really glad that three political entities in the chamber are committed to getting anti-scab legislation through.

What I find interesting is that the Conservatives have yet to say how they are going to vote on the legislation, yet out in the communities, they are telling people that they are for the workers.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, we honestly do not know where the Conservatives are on this very important bill, which would bring more balance to workers. This bill focuses solely on workers and it is an opportunity. We know that the corporate-controlled Conservatives have a hard time working for people. They like to say things, but when it comes to workers, they do not do them. We have seen that in how they vote for back-to-work legislation repeatedly.

• (1215)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her clear message today that we need anti-scab legislation and for her reminder of how critical this legislation is for workers’ rights and for fairness for workers and all of us. It is a historic moment, as we are seeing the NDP once again standing up for workers, standing up for Canadians and fighting back. However, we have the Conservatives, in a party that has revamped itself recently and is pretending to defend Canadians who are struggling, who are refusing to get behind anti-scab legislation.

Can my colleague share her views on why the Conservatives are refusing to stand up for Canadian workers?

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, that is a really important question. My grandma used to always say the proof is in the pudding. We know that actions speak louder than words, and what we have seen again and again with the corporate-controlled Conservatives is that they choose their corporate friends over hard-working Canadians. They can say they are about the working class, but again and again their actions show that that is not their focus and it is not what they do. It is one thing to say something; it is a completely different thing to do it. The NDP will continue to do the work that matters so much to workers across this country.

Government Orders

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it has been interesting to observe the debate that has been taking place in the chamber here today on Bill C-58. I would note a couple of observations, if I could, because I believe they provide important context to the conversation we are having.

One observation that I note to members and to the many Canadians who I am sure are watching is the flip-flops we are seeing in this regard. We have the Liberals desperate to keep the NDP outside, yet it seems like the New Democrats are quick to sell out when it comes to holding on to the thread of power they feel they have. We hear the New Democrats talk tough against the Liberals in one sentence; then they walk down the street to committee.

The leader of the NDP said in the beginning that committees would not be affected by the confidence and supply coalition agreement, yet we see the New Democrats capitulating to the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order from the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, this is completely irrelevant. We are talking about anti-replacement worker legislation, and a member cannot get up and just talk. If he has not read the bill, I would suggest he read the bill and get the information, but he has to speak on topic.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that there is some flexibility during speeches. However, hon. members do need to ensure that their speech is related to the bill and should mention the bill from time to time during their speech, if possible, or aspects within the bill.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I am always glad that the New Democrats are paying such close attention. If they would pay such close attention to Canadians, they would see how far off base they are with average workers, who I am speaking to from coast to coast to coast and who are attending the rallies of the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Carleton.

This is an interesting observation and it does connect closely to Bill C-58, and I am glad that the NDP member is paying attention. What we are hearing increasingly is that workers across this country feel abandoned by left-leaning parties in this country. They feel abandoned by an ideological focus on things that are shifting the conversation away from Canadians being able to prosper.

When it comes to the bill we have before us, the New Democrats are taking credit for it, yet I have seen them time and time again stand up and declare all the problems that exist within it. For example, they have stated that they do not agree with the 18-month window for its coming into force. We have heard from the minister who introduced the bill that there is some ambiguity as to who it would apply to. We see that it affects federally regulated sectors but does not affect the public service.

There are many holes in this legislation, and it is unfortunate the New Democrats seem to be so quick to sell themselves out for this slight grip on power they seem to have. We saw that obviously, which relates directly to the conversation we are having, when the leader of the NDP, only a number months ago when facing a confi-

dence vote at his convention, drew a red line. The members of that party said that if they did not have pharmacare by the end of the year, the deal was done.

We see once again that we simply cannot trust what the New Democrats promise. We simply cannot trust what they say they are endeavouring to accomplish. The Liberals, in this coalition agreement, either have had some of the worst negotiations we have ever seen or are simply playing along with this tenuous idea of power or security, as they may be afraid to face the electorate in this country.

The member proved my point about how angry the New Democrats are about this. They seem angry about everything the Liberals are doing, yet they are the ones who continue to prop them up. That is no more true than in the situation we find ourselves in. We are debating a bill on replacement workers, yet we see the New Democrats supporting the government in bringing in thousands of foreign replacement workers on government-subsidized projects. Tens of billions of dollars are being spent to subsidize battery production facilities.

I will take a brief detour, if I could. I believe fully that a huge economic opportunity exists when it comes to energy in Canada, whether it is in traditional forms of energy or new clean tech. What I find absolutely tragic is that the ideological Liberals are so blinded by the idea that they have to be in control that they refuse to allow our economy to prosper. They refuse that of my constituents.

I am proud to be in the beating heart of Canada's energy industry. In fact, 87% of Canada's crude oil transits through a little town called Hardisty in my constituency. That may be an embarrassment to the left-leaning parties in this House. The reality is that when it comes to the energy that powers our nation, that can power the world and that provides not only good-paying jobs to the folks I represent but the revenue and taxation to so much of what we have come to depend on in our country, it is an absolute embarrassment that the Liberals and the NDP have abandoned these hard-working Canadians for this ideological fantasy that is simply not worth the cost.

Let us get back to the foreign replacement workers. The situation we have before us is that the Liberals are quick to brag about the deals they have signed. However, what is very troubling is that while they brag publicly about the deals, they refuse to tell us what those deals are.

● (1220)

They talk about the number of jobs they are creating, but the misinformation, the disinformation and the competing information we get from the Liberals makes the Prime Minister's math that budgets balance themselves seem to be of top quality when compared to the scope of differences that exists between the different estimates we have seen on the number of individuals who will be brought into Canada, subsidized by Canadian taxpayers, and the dollars being sent to workers who are not from this country.

Government Orders

What is tragic about this conversation is that, in the beginning, it was a leader of the opposition who stood up in his place to share his outrage. He was outraged about the revelation of these foreign replacement workers and said that he was going to get to the bottom of it, that his MPs were going to fight for that every step of the way, yet it only took a couple of short weeks—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I hate to call a point of order because it only prolongs how much longer I have to listen to this, but do you think you could ask the member to at least return to the subject? You have already asked him once and stressed the importance of that. Perhaps he could return to the subject of the bill that we are debating today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Although there is some leeway, I also was wondering when the hon. member would actually get to the bill itself. I would remind the member that he is to speak to the content of the bill. Yes, he can add some other content, but he should be focused on the bill that is before the House.

I have another point of order from the hon. member for Provencher.

• (1225)

Mr. Ted Falk: Madam Speaker, on that point of order, I was listening very closely to the member giving his speech. He was talking about the replacement workers coming to the Stellantis battery factory from South Korea. This is a piece of legislation about replacement workers, and he was directly referring to the replacement workers that the Liberals authorized to come—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. member adding to the conversation. The hon. member added a very minimal quality, but I want to make sure that the debate is on the bill itself.

I do want to allow the hon. member to finish his speech. He has almost three minutes.

I have another point of order from the hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, if we are going to talk about the topic of this bill and use the term “replacement workers”, I would just like to point out that they are temporary foreign workers, however people feel about them. I happen to think that temporary foreign workers are a good addition to our economy. However we feel about them, they are not replacement workers under this legislation. Either the members are confused or they are deliberately—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I apologize. I had to turn up the volume on my speaker because I could not hear the hon. member that well, but I did get the gist of it. That would actually be a point of debate.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, it is certainly always interesting, when I speak the truth in this place, the level to which it triggers the left in this country. The response is certainly astounding. While we debate the concept of a bill that would supposedly ban replacement workers, although there are some clauses that we could drive an electric vehicle through, it is quite fascinating to lis-

ten to other parties here, in particular the NDP. This emphasizes the point I was making. I think it has to do with the credibility the NDP is claiming on this legislation. While the NDP's leader and its members stood strong, demanding answers, it took only a couple of weeks for them to back down.

I wish I were kidding here, but instead of demanding that a parliamentary committee get the answers, get the contracts in this case and see the contracts, so that Canadians could know for themselves exactly what we were talking about, such as the number of replacement workers and what was negotiated on behalf of taxpayers, what did the NDP do?

This is not just a private company or private individuals. This is a minister of the Crown and a government department negotiating to the tune of tens of billions of dollars in tax dollars. That is not the government's money. That is Canadians' money. Instead of demanding accountability, although they feigned outrage in this place, what did the NDP do at committee? The NDP backed down and said it would just file an ATIP. Instead of demanding answers, the NDP would just file an access to information request. The government has repeatedly refused to abide by the most basic measures of accountability to provide the answers that Canadians deserve.

When it comes to the subject matter we are debating today, it comes down to the idea of trust. For the NDP, I do not know how its members can continue to trust the Liberals. For Canadians, it is increasingly clear that they cannot trust the left-leaning coalition that governs this country. When it comes to the best interests of workers, it is crystal clear, whether unionized or not, whether a new sector in the economy or a traditional one, the left-leaning coalition in this country does not have workers' backs. The good news is that Conservatives do. We are going to bring it home for Canadians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, this is the third time that my Conservative colleagues have mentioned the use of replacement workers, or foreign workers, in factories in Windsor or in battery factories.

Bill C-58 deals with something else entirely. That is crystal clear. Although the bill refers to “replacement workers”, I think that the Conservatives know that it is intended to prevent the hiring of scabs in the event of a labour dispute. Its aim is to finally prevent employers from using scabs during a strike or lockout and allowing the dispute to go on forever. That is unfair. We have had anti-scab legislation in Quebec since 1977. The question is clear. We are talking about scabs.

Will my colleague vote for or against Bill C-58?

Government Orders

• (1230)

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the Bloc has been willing to partner with the official opposition in the sense that we are demanding answers, unlike the New Democrats who have abandoned their principles and sold out their ideology to simply attain some tenuous grip on power—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. deputy House leader that I just reminded others a while ago that, when someone else has the floor, they should please wait until the next turn for questions and comments if they wish to contribute.

The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that they are demanding answers on this. It bears a close connection and comes down to the very fundamental idea of trust. We need to look closely at the legislation before us, but can we trust those who have proposed it?

When it comes to workers, whether it is farmers in my constituency or energy workers or manufacturing in Ontario or coastal port workers, it is time for a party that supports workers and prosperity in this country. Unfortunately, they have been abandoned by Canada's left. However, they should not worry because Conservatives are here to bring it home for all Canadians.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is my first opportunity to speak on Bill C-58, so I will first put on the record that the Green Party supports this very important legislation. It is time for Parliament to act to protect workers' rights.

I used to practise in the area of labour law with a firm in Halifax back in the day that represented trade unions, specializing in labour law. I would ask the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot to clarify why we are spending so much time on this debate.

I know he and other Conservatives have been told by the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke and the hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville that there is no connection in this bill whatsoever to having foreign workers come to any plant in Canada or any workplace in Canada. This bill is specifically to protect the right of collective bargaining and the rights of workers who have gone out on strike to not have what are called scab workers. That is a replacement worker. The workers at the Stellantis battery plant are not scab workers. Does the member agree?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I wish the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands well. I know she has had some health challenges. In the midst of a heated debate, although she and I would probably disagree on many things, I wish her well. I wish her a very merry Christmas and hope that her health continues to improve.

My response is simple. If we had the answers to these very basic questions by being able to see the contracts and understand what labour negotiations were included in the contracts with Stellantis or the number of other major contracts that the government has signed

but refuses to provide details on, we could definitely say exactly what the member is suggesting. The problem is that because the government refuses to give us the details, we cannot definitely say that is not the case and it is unfortunate that the NDP, especially, will not join us in demanding that accountability.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): On a point of order, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I am following up on the point of order from the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle this morning.

I have images of fundraisers that were conducted by a Speaker. I would like unanimous consent to table the images of these fundraisers involving a Speaker. It is the former Speaker, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, and three partisan fundraisers that he was involved in as Speaker. I would ask for permission to table those documents.

• (1235)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am hearing “no”, so there is not unanimous consent.

On another point of order, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, earlier, the Conservative House leader was asking to table documents of a Speaker and what he classifies as inappropriate behaviour. Now the Conservatives are saying no to tabling a document that shows inappropriate—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I have already asked and we have gotten a “no”. This is now going into debate.

On a separate point of order, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities.

* * *

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and I believe if you seek it you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on Motion No. 44 to concur in the first report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair and at the conclusion of the time provided for debate or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred pursuant to Standing Order 66.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All those opposed to the hon. parliamentary secretary moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

Government Orders

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, today we are speaking to Bill C-58, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, otherwise known as the anti-scab legislation that workers from across the country have been calling for since time immemorial.

The NDP has put forward this legislation eight times in the last 15 years, and it has been defeated by Liberals and Conservatives alike. We are very happy and proud that we have forced the Liberal government to table the legislation this year; we look forward to seeing it become law as soon as possible.

Workers around the world have only one power to balance the relationship with employers. That is their work, the labour they provide to make the products or provide the services that give their employers their profits. The withdrawal of that labour or even the threat of withdrawal is the only thing that levels the playing field in labour negotiations. When negotiations break down and workers feel that a strike is the only option left to them to obtain a fair collective agreement, if the employer brings in replacement workers to break that strike, the playing field is tilted steeply in favour of the employer. Employers have no real reason to bargain in good faith, or at all, with the workers.

Labour relations in Canada have a long and deep history, and some of the most important moments in that history happened in my riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay, in the Rossland mines. In the late 1800s, there was a mining boom across my riding, with gold mines in the South Okanagan and silver in the Slo-can. Some of the richest mines were in Rossland.

In 1895, the Rossland miners formed the first Canadian local of the Western Federation of Miners. That local went on to advance many of the first labour laws in British Columbia and Canada, laws that brought in the five-day work week and the eight-hour workday, as well as laws enforcing safe workplaces, the first workers' compensation act.

Unrest in the mining camps resulted in the Canadian government sending Roger Clute, a prominent Toronto lawyer, to Rossland in 1899. He reported back that compulsory arbitration would be less effective than conciliatory measures, and after another trip to Rossland, his reports led to the federal Conciliation Act of 1900. That helped create the Department of Labour and the Canadian system of industrial relations. Rossland, and the miners of Rossland, helped build our system of labour relations across the country.

When everyone in this place goes home for the weekend; when everyone in the country goes home at five o'clock, after an eight-hour workday; and when every worker in Canada knows they have the right to a safe workplace, they can thank the members of the Rossland local of the Western Federation of Miners.

That is the benefit of having a healthy and fair system of labour relations. At the centre of that system is the right of workers to withdraw their work. Replacement workers, or scabs, destroy that system. Not only does hiring scabs take away any power that workers have to undertake fair negotiations, but it also often tears communities apart, especially small communities that have few other opportunities for good work. If workers go on strike in that situation and the company hires scabs, those replacement workers are taking away jobs from their neighbours and relatives. This increases tensions within the community, sometimes escalating into violence.

Using replacement workers was common during early strikes, including in the mines of British Columbia, and there are too many stories of violence from those days. One of the worst stories, though, comes from relatively recent times, when the workers at the Giant Mine in Yellowknife went on strike in 1992. That gold mine had been the mainstay of the Yellowknife economy for many years, but a new owner demanded cuts from the union, then locked the unionized workers out.

The company then hired replacement workers to keep the mine going and to keep the profits rolling in. Hostilities quickly rose, pitting neighbours against neighbours; this culminated in a bombing within the mine that killed nine miners, nine replacement workers. It is one of the worst mass murders in Canadian history.

● (1240)

This is why we need anti-scab legislation. This is why British Columbia and Quebec introduced anti-scab legislation and have had it for decades. Critics say that this legislation may allow strikes and lockouts to drag on; in fact, it usually has quite the opposite effect.

What impetus does the employer have to end a strike if they can use workers to keep things going, to keep those profits rolling in? If anything, outlawing replacement workers speeds negotiations up because both sides are on an even footing. The employer is losing profits, and the unions are losing pay. They both want to end the dispute as soon as possible. Many of the longest labour disputes in Canadian history have been those involving scabs, because the employer has no reason to bargain with the unions.

This law would take effect in federally regulated industries, such as ports, railways, airports, telecommunications and banks.

Government Orders

We recently had a dispute at the Port of Vancouver, and we are studying that issue in the international trade committee right now. Some witnesses have tried to paint a picture that labour is the cause of a declining reputation in Canadian supply chain reliability, that the unions dragged out negotiations and caused this strike. What we have heard at committee is exactly the opposite.

First, this is the first strike at the Port of Vancouver since 1969. Most people in this chamber were not even alive then. The collective bargaining system has been working very well there.

Second, delays in bargaining were clearly the fault of the employers or, rather, their association, the BC Maritime Employers Association. The BCMEA represents the employers at the bargaining table, but it had no mandate to make decisions. The union would respond with a counter-offer to the employers' offer within a day, but the BCMEA would take a week or 10 days to come back with its counter-offer.

Negotiations dragged on. The strike began, and it took 13 more days to come to an agreement. If it were not for the delays and intransigence of the employers, we could have easily reached that agreement before strike action was necessary.

We must remember that there are two sides to every labour dispute. The best, fairest and often shortest negotiations are those in which both sides have an equal balance of power. That is what Bill C-58 brings to the federal labour scene.

The NDP is, of course, very much in favour of this legislation. We have worked hard and long to improve it and will continue to do that when it goes to committee.

Our big concern now is the provision, within this bill, of a delay of 18 months before the legislation comes into force after passing through Parliament. We have heard no good reasons for this delay, and we will be making the case in committee to amend that part of the bill.

If the use of replacement workers is illegal, that provision should come into force immediately. I can see no reason that corporations or unions need 18 months, a year and a half, to get their heads around this change to Canadian labour law.

I remember one of the first debates I took part in in this place, a debate on an NDP private member's bill, in 2016, that was essentially the same bill we are debating today. I was so encouraged that we could be making such a big difference for workers, but I was profoundly surprised and disappointed when the Liberals and Conservatives defeated that bill.

I have since, unfortunately, gotten used to disappointments in this place. However, with this bill, we have the opportunity to take a step toward hope. I hope we can pass this bill at second reading quickly, have the committee debate it in detail and pass it so that all Canadians can enjoy better labour relations across the country.

With that, I would like to wish everyone here and everyone in the wonderful riding of South Okanagan—West Kootenay a very happy Christmas and a peaceful holiday season full of love and good cheer.

• (1245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to just pick up on the member's last comment, in regard to the importance of the legislation and how wonderful it would be to actually pass it through to the committee stage. The Conservatives like to go around the country telling Canadians that they are pro-worker, that they are there to support workers. I think it would be a very strong, powerful message, collectively, from the House and all political parties, if we could see this legislation ultimately collapse the debate. Then, we could allow for it to actually go to committee before Christmas.

Would the member not concur with the thought that sending this, in a unanimous way, to a standing committee before Christmas would be a wonderful gift for the workers in Canada?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I often say this, but in this case, I am very happy to agree with the member for Winnipeg North that we should move this forward. This may mean including it in one of our famous omnibus unanimous consent motions that happen at the end of sessions, but we should be passing this soon, for all the reasons I outlined.

I hope the Conservatives will join us in that effort. They try to make it sound like they are on side with the workers of Canada, but every time we have debate and a vote in this place on workers' rights, they vote against it. I cannot remember any single instance of them voting against back-to-work legislation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I appreciated my colleague's speech. As everyone knows, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of this bill.

Quebec has had anti-scab legislation since 1977. It is not a new thing. Sometimes we say that we are wasting our time here, constantly waiting for the federal government to take action. Here is another good example of that. Quebec has progressive measures and protects workers' rights, but the federal government is once again dragging its feet and slowing us down.

Earlier, my colleague from Winnipeg North said we should send this bill to committee right away and get it passed fast. I would like to remind my colleague that, in 2021, special legislation was invoked to end the Port of Montreal strike. The Liberal Party introduced that bill with the Conservative Party's support. So much for today's little shenanigans. The Liberals think they are standing with workers and defending workers' rights.

Here is my question: Should we get rid of the 18-month delay as soon as possible once this bill goes to committee?

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. There has been anti-scab legislation in Quebec for decades. We have had anti-scab legislation in British Columbia for decades, and it has proven very useful and positive.

It has been a disappointment, as I said at the end of my speech, that the federal government has not done the same until now. It looks as though we have a chance to move this forward. I hope we can get it to committee, where we can make some important changes such as getting rid of that 18-month delay, which I know the Bloc Québécois supports as well. I fully support what he had to say.

• (1250)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, with the labour shortage right now, having a stable workforce is seen as one of the best assets going forward. This would help provide some more strength to having a stable working environment and strong conditions to attract investment. In fact, that is one of the cases we are hearing significantly from areas of labour shortages, so I would like my colleague to reflect on that. Reducing labour shortages and actually having less turnover and more stability in the workplace is a competitive edge for all of Canada. Could my colleague provide a sense of how important this is for the economy?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I totally agree with my colleague from Windsor West. I tried to make the point in my speech that this legislation, getting rid of replacement workers, would speed up labour negotiations, shorten strikes when they happen and really balance the system, so we have labour peace in this country. That is what we need.

I was very disappointed when the Canadian Chamber of Commerce came before our committee and asked us to vote against this. It did not seem to understand it was voting for more and longer labour disputes, which is something it does not want. We do not want that either, nor do workers or corporations. Therefore, let us get this bill passed.

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place and talk about the issues of the day. I understand that Bill C-58 was not originally on the agenda, but it is still a great opportunity to speak about it.

Prior to becoming the critic for the Conservative Party on housing, I had the honour of being its critic on labour. I worked directly with our current critic, the member for Essex, who, I think, is doing an amazing job. I was reflecting on the comments he made about this particular bill. Of course, in his riding of Essex, there is a lot of organized labour and skilled trades, and he talks to a lot of people in his constituency. Talking to real people is a great way to learn what is really going on, and I am not sure enough of that has gone on with the current government.

I think about the importance of workers. Any great business owner will tell us that it is the people who make their business work. The best businesses take care of their workers. Of course, Conservatives believe in the right to collectively bargain, which is an important part of the process, but what I am more concerned about than anything is the need for this legislation right now. One of the situations we are seeing in this country is that there is an aw-

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ful lot more labour disruption and more strikes, whether at the Port of Montreal or in Vancouver, and one has to ask why that is happening. I know, from talking to leaders of the labour movement, skilled trades and business, that a big part of the problem facing workers in this country is the cost of living, which is getting out of control. Inflation is driving up the cost of food and the cost of heating our homes, or even of getting a home.

We know that the labour situation affects the housing situation as well. This is one of the things we have been focusing a lot on. CMHC has told us that we need to build 3.5 million more homes in the next 10 years than we would normally build. That is a total of almost six million homes, which works out to 750,000 units a year. The most we have ever built in a year is about 260,000, which was in the seventies, when it was very easy to get things like permits and approvals. Today, the most difficult part of building a home is getting permission to build it. One of the major barriers to getting homes built is labour, the skilled trades. We need more electricians, plumbers and other labour. We have a government that, I guess, did not understand the demographic shift that was going on in our country and did not really prepare for it, but we have a situation today where there is a desperate need for more people to help us build the homes people need.

The inflationary spending of the government is a big part of the reason why we are behind the eight ball on the housing issue. It is why people cannot afford to pay rent. Rents have doubled. In the eight years of the photo-op-happy, talking-points government, home prices have doubled and rents have doubled. With respect to mortgage rates, over this last year, we have seen the fastest increase in interest rates that we have seen in 40 years. Of course, the impact of this is that the people who were hoping to get into the market are now that much farther behind and are never going to have a chance.

What the people who own a home are struggling with, and I can see the member is going to rise on a point of order, because—

• (1255)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member predicted that I was rising on a point of order.

He is talking about the budget, while the bill before us is about anti-scab legislation. This is an ongoing theme with Conservatives; they are not staying on topic. Perhaps you could ask the member to get back on topic as you did with the previous—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): As I have indicated, there is some leeway. I want to remind members who are speaking to bills to make sure they reference the bill from time to time and relate their speech to it.

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The hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, I will explain to the member, because he clearly does not quite get it. Part of the reason we have more labour strife in this country is, in fact, the inflationary spending of the current government. The excessive borrowing is causing everything to go up in price, and people in organized labour, like everybody else, are struggling to put food on the table. That is why I am referring to these issues. It is why I am referring it back to an issue that is completely connected to organized labour, and that is housing, which is the foundation of society: a warm, safe bed to sleep in at night. There are people working all across this country, whether they are in a union or not, who are struggling to make ends meet. That is causing labour strife.

My point about Bill C-58 is that it is the government's attempt, along with its coalition partners, to deflect from the real issues and from its failures as a government, including the massive borrowing and spending it has done for the last eight years, that is causing everything to go up in price and causing labour strife. If the Liberals understood the impact of their inflationary policies, things like Bill C-58 really should not be the top priority. It is an important discussion to have, but what we really need to do is get the cost of living down in this country. We need to make life more affordable for Canadians. Whether or not it is their inflationary borrowing and excessive spending, I know that the Liberals believe that the best way to solve any problem is to hire more bureaucrats and make the government bigger. However, in fact, the best way to make life more affordable for Canadians is to get out of their pockets and give them a break.

Bill C-58 is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that there is no opportunity for cross-debate at this point. There is just an opportunity for questions and comments after the speech.

The hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, I am not sure whether the two members are familiar with *The Muppet Show*, but they remind me a bit of Waldorf and Statler right now. That is okay.

Bill C-58—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind members that when they are describing members of the House, they should be respectful.

The hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Honestly, Madam Speaker, that was respectful. It was meant in jest, and I think it was a very positive thing. Only one of them is offended, so they are actually playing the role very well, which is great.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka could get back to his speech and the debate that is before the House, that would be great.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, absolutely I will.

I would like to point out that the cost of living issue that I have been talking about is directly related to Bill C-58 and the fact that there is more labour strife in this country. We have seen a lot more of it. Obviously, I am just trying to make the point, tie in the point and help them understand, across the aisle, that, in fact, the Liberals' inflationary borrowing and spending and their big-government solutions to everything are part of the reason we are having more labour strife in this country. If the Liberals understood the implications of their disastrous policies, they would understand why it is important to point that out when discussing things like Bill C-58.

It is also interesting to note that Bill C-58 would ban the use of replacement workers in federally regulated workspaces, such as banks, airlines and rail, which are all very important. Of course, the government is making sure that this would not apply to federal workers, just federally regulated workspaces, so it is one of the classic double standards of the Liberal Party where it wants to make sure that it looks to be doing the right thing, but we are not sure that it really is. It is just one more example of a government that is good on talking points and long on photo ops, but not really great at delivering results.

I am sure there will be some really insightful questions from across the aisle.

I would just say, in reference to the cost of living and the issues that Canadians are facing today, that, as this will be the last time I speak in the House before the Christmas break, I would like to wish everyone a happy Christmas and a happy holiday, and remind them to be thinking about their neighbour this holiday season. Lots of people are struggling. If people can support their local food bank, I ask them to please do that. Our neighbours need our help, this year more than ever.

• (1300)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I actually feel sorry for the member. I genuinely believe that he is one of the more progressive ones in his party, yet somehow he seems to have been sucked down the rabbit hole of the member for Carleton and his talking points.

I genuinely do not believe that the member thinks that the inflationary impact has to do with government spending. He must know that it has more to do with global issues such as the war in Ukraine and the fact that every other country in the developed world is also experiencing inflation. Can he not, perhaps, at least agree that there are other factors that contribute to inflation?

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, I would note that my Liberal friends like me a lot more when I agree with them, but the member is patently wrong in this particular circumstance. We have heard from the Governor of the Bank of Canada that inflationary borrowing and spending are exacerbating inflation. They are not the only reason; I will grant the member that. We have also heard from a former Liberal finance minister on the same topic, that excessive borrowing and inflationary spending are making things more expensive. We have heard from Scotiabank economists.

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I am not making it up. I know that the member despises the member for Carleton, but the member for Carleton is absolutely correct, and he is not quoting his own numbers; he is quoting numbers we are hearing from the experts. I do not know why the Liberals do not agree with the experts, but the facts are there. I wish they would listen to them as opposed to their own Liberal talking points from the PMO.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague, who is almost from the north, but not quite.

The problem is that the Conservatives pretend that inflation just happened. I am looking at inflationary jumps that have happened for some time. For example, when the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was Speaker, he held fundraisers for \$125 a plate, including cigars, but four years on, it was \$175 a plate with cigars. This is a huge inflationary jump—

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, the member's comments are neither on the member's speech nor on the bill. I question the relevance.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would again remind members that speeches and comments should be related to the matter before the House. If the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay could make the link, that would be great.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I am trying to raise questions about the Conservatives' use of inflation to jump up prices for tickets when the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was Speaker and holding fundraisers. There was a dramatic increase, and that needs to be explained. Were those global figures? Was it the Liberals, or was it the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle who—

• (1305)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do not see the relationship to the bill before the House.

I do not know whether the hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka wishes to weigh in on this, and whether he is able to relate it to the bill.

The hon. member for Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, it was a little jumbled; I will grant you that, and I think you are quite justified in being confused by what the member was talking about.

The fact of the matter is that inflation has definitely been far worse over the last few years of the government. It has spiked because of exactly what I have been talking about. While inflation has always existed, it is certainly a lot worse now and has been exacerbated by the government.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would ask the member to talk a little more about inflation and how it is affecting people, particularly working men and women right across this country, unionized or not. Maybe there is a message that he would like to share, especially in relation to the message from the member for Carleton, to let working people know there is some hope around the corner.

Mr. Scott Aitchison: Madam Speaker, the labour strife that exists in this country is, in large part, because life is too expensive.

While the rights of workers to bargain collectively are important, it is also important for workers to be able to afford to put food on the table, heat their homes and drive to work if they need to do that, and the government is making these things more expensive with its inflationary spending and its carbon tax on everything.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House. I am certainly very proud to rise on Bill C-58, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, to end the practice in federally regulated workplaces of being able to bring in scab labour. This is something that New Democrats and the labour movement have fought many years for, and we are determined to make this a reality.

At the outset, I want to thank the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay who spoke about the history, because history is important. He mentioned the history of the Rossland miners and the Western Federation of Miners, and the transformation they brought across this country.

I am proud to be from Cobalt where the 17th district of the Western Federation of Miners was formed under Big Jim McGuire. The fact that the fight for the eight-hour day began in the mines of Cobalt on April 28, the international day of mourning for workers killed on the job, relates directly to the Cobalt Miners Union winning the right to workers' compensation in 1914.

My grandfather, Charlie Angus, died at the Hollinger Mine, and my other grandfather, Joe MacNeil, broke his back underground at the McIntyre Mine. Both were members of Mine Mill and then the Steelworkers. When I was growing up, anybody who came from a mining town had a relative who had been injured or killed on the job. However, organized labour fundamentally changed that.

The right of labour to organize, the right of labour to fight for a better future, is the history of our country and of the United States. They talk about the birth of the middle class in the United States as being the 1938 sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan where the auto workers were not going to put up with precarious work—

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member is mentioning the United States. We are dealing with Canadian legislation here. Why is he bringing up U.S. situations?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind hon. members, and I have mentioned this on a number of occasions, there is some leeway. As long as members bring it back to the bill and relate to the bill somehow, there is some leeway in the speeches.

On another point of order, the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I think you are going to see a pattern during the speech of the member for Timmins—James Bay. He is going to give a speech that is on topic, and we are going to see Conservatives stand up on bogus points of order. I would like the Chair to pay attention to this pattern.

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That was more a point of debate. I want to remind members that, when they rise on points of order, it would be best for them to point out the standing order they are bringing a point of order on.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I am not surprised that they are trying to shut down a discussion on labour rights. We know the deep, anti-labour history of the Conservatives. If they do not want to know history, they can go have a walk around the block.

We know that the modern middle class was formed in Canada in 1945 at the Ford Windsor strike. That was a follow-up to what happened in 1938 in Flint, Michigan. What happened in Flint, Michigan, matters to Canada. Conservatives do not understand that, but it matters because it was the piece of Detroit that established the post-war consensus of labour, capital and government that started the biggest transformation of wealth and success in the history of the world. The movement of the working class from precarious crap jobs to stable housing, proper wages and pensions, came out of out those strikes.

In my region in 1941, the Kirkland Lake gold miners' strike was a brutal strike that won the right to collective bargaining. In 1973, it was the steelworkers going on strike again and again, and the wild-cat strikes. Those were illegal strikes in Elliot Lake that forced fundamental changes to the workers' compensation acts everywhere. Health and safety became a fundamental issue because workers were dying on the job and they were not going to take it anymore.

This is our history. This is the history of New Democrats. This is the history of my family. The other history is a dark history and it begins in 1980 when we saw the planned destruction of the modern working class, middle class that was put in place by the gurus of the Conservative movement, like Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek. Friedrich Hayek was so opposed to the growth of wealth of the North American working class that he wrote an essay calling for a planned depression. He wanted to force a depression on North America in order to break the backs of the working class. That was picked up by Ronald Reagan. That was picked up by Paul Volcker of the Federal Reserve. It began in January 1980 with massive increases in interest rates that led to millions of jobs lost across the United States, and that spilled over into Canada.

What we saw then was that Ronald Reagan targeted the union movement and from then on, we started to see the loss of rights of workers, the loss of wages and the loss of security. In Canada, that effort was undertaken, but thankfully, we had the solid backing of some very strong labour leaders. At the time, Bob White and United Auto Workers, before it became Canadian Auto Workers, came out with a no-concessions policy. Under no circumstances were they going to give concessions. They stood up to Chrysler. They stood up to GM. They stood up at factory after factory to defend the rights of workers. We know that modern Conservatives would not support that. Bill Davis, who was an old-style Conservative, actually sided on a number of occasions, with the auto workers along the 401 belt to say that they did have rights, even at a time of massive job losses.

We saw the damage that was done from the 1980s on. We can count it in the lost wages and lost security. The neo-liberal attack

on worker rights was so overwhelming. Let us talk about the RAND Corporation. Under the present Conservative leader, one might think the RAND Corporation is a rabid lefty, but it actually usually works for the U.S. military. The RAND Corporation did a study of economic inequality to deal with the issue of democratic instability in the United States.

Certainly, we have seen what is happening with MAGA, and the issue of economic precarity, the loss of the North American working class, and the creation of economic instability and political instability. From the period around 1980, when the attack on organized labour in the United States began, to what followed in Canada, we have, in the United States today, a Black worker making \$26,000 less than they would if the 1980 wages remained constant. A college-educated worker is earning between \$48,000 and \$63,000 less a year. All that wealth, according to the RAND Corporation, was plundered directly for the benefit of the 1%.

What we are seeing is that it identified the loss of wages, pension security and benefits to be in the order of \$50 trillion of lost money that belonged to the working and middle class. It was then was hoovered up and put in the pockets of the 1%. That is what created the political and economic instability of our age. In the United States, that loss of income means that for every worker, it lost \$1,114 a month, for every single month for the last 40 years. That is what created MAGA.

● (1310)

Although we hear the Conservatives talking about inflation and how hard it is, we have seen no efforts by the Conservatives, ever, to stand with workers, ever to stand up on these issues, but this is the issue that has to be dealt with. This is why workers came to us again and again, to talk about anti-scab legislation so that we could restore the balance of negotiations with labour and management, the right of workers to have a seat at the table.

I want to quote Paul Mason from his book, *Postcapitalism*. This is a really instructive statement that:

the destruction of labour's bargaining power - was the essence of the entire [right-wing] project; it was a means to all the other ends. Neoliberalism's guiding principle is not free markets, nor fiscal discipline, nor sound money, nor privatization and offshoring - not even globalization. All these things were byproducts or weapons of its main endeavour: to remove organized labour from the equation.

That was the whole Milton Friedman, Stephen Harper, Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan agenda for the last 40 years. Guess what? Those days are over, because what we have seen in this past year is unprecedented victory for workers' rights.

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Remember, just a few years ago, Bill Morneau, the privatized pension king in Canada, “bill no more”, told young workers to get used to it and that they should suck it up as precarious, crappy, gig jobs are the new normal. That was the new normal for Bill Morneau. Then what happened? We got COVID. We had to break up supply chains and we had a young generation of workers who said they were not going to put up with crappy work. They started to walk off the job, to refuse to take the job or to organize.

In this past year, the UAW, in their strikes against the big three, ended the tiered wages that were forced on them in the eighties and the nineties. Unifor won the biggest wage increase in their history of negotiations with Ford. When the Hollywood writers went on strike, everyone they thought they would cave. They did not. They won three times the original offer that was put on the table.

We are seeing young people organizing at Tesla, Amazon and Starbucks. They know they cannot count on right-wing governments to protect their interests. They are going to organize; they have a right to be at the table.

The worst thing that we can do is to allow scab labour to come into our workplaces to try and undermine their rights to restore balance and to have proper wages, proper pensions and proper housing. That is going to be fought by organized labour. This bill has to pass. We support it as New Democrats.

● (1315)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I believe that anti-scab legislation will promote more harmony in our labour force, which will help out in terms of issues like inflation. I know the member is concerned about inflation because earlier today he posed a question in regard to inflation. I did not quite catch the reference he was making. Could he expand on the reference when he was talking about the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle and the issue of inflation?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, it was a question that was raised as my colleague from Burnaby had attempted unanimous consent to bring forward documents about fundraisers done by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle. I had noticed a pattern of increasing prices for what he was charging, such as \$175 for a dinner and shooting and, back by popular demand, cigar and scotch tasting, a great chance to chat with fellow Conservatives while sampling fine scotches and cigars, and of course shooting guns. That was our former Speaker, being very partisan.

I am concerned about the inflationary aspects because the price of his fundraising dinners as a former Speaker certainly jumped up to be pretty high in price.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not quite sure how that relates to the bill before the House. I know there was a reference to being inflationary, but I do want to remind members to try to stay on topic.

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, neither the question nor the answer was relevant to what we are discussing, but I was listening carefully to the member's speech and I appreciate his historical narrative. He rightly said that the things that affect workers are inflation and high interest rates.

Why has he, as a member along with the NDP, supported the Liberals' inflationary policies of spending; increasing our debt; creating an excess of cash in our economy to make the things that money buys cost more? Why has he not stood up against what the Liberals are doing in creating inflation, resulting in high interest rates?

● (1320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I am not quite sure how that relates to the bill before the House, but I will allow the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay to respond to that, if he wants to.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I want to wish my colleague and his family a very merry Christmas.

He does ask a legitimate question. How can we trust the Liberals? I do not know how many times, on anti-scab legislation, it has been like Lucy and the football. The Liberals would come out and tell everybody in the labour movement to not worry and that they had their backs, and then my God, as soon as the vote came, they would all sneak out by the backbench and leave.

That is a really important question. How can we trust Liberals? We cannot, but the great thing is that, as we are in a minority government, they are going to have to work with us if they want to keep their jobs, so we got dental care. I know the Conservatives do not want dental care, but we got that. We got anti-scab. We are going to get pharmacare. It is a good point that one cannot turn one's back on them for a minute. If one falls asleep in the boat with the Liberals, one will be waking up swimming with the fishes. However, we are going to hold them to account.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I noticed during the debate today that there has been a certain amount of avoidance from the Conservatives to talk about Bill C-58.

Going back to the Stephen Harper days, I can remember those two private members' bills. One made it harder for unions to certify and one subjected unions to more stringent financial controls than businesses ever had to deal with, as well as all of the back-to-work legislation. I am just wondering if my hon. colleague could talk about his time during those dark days and how the Stephen Harper government went after unions, went after workers with a vengeance, and how we still see some of the same crowd here today.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, history is important. It tells us how we got here, and I certainly we remember Stephen Harper and his continual attack on workers.

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What worries me today is that, when we see investments such as those in the Stellantis plant, the Conservatives are always speaking up about it as though it is scab labour. Investments at Stellantis are not scab labour. We need to invest in a new battery economy or it is all going stateside to the United States. If we do not invest in this new economy, we are going to be left behind, so I am always shocked the Conservatives are undermining the new EV technology, which is going to have a big transformative effect, and the Conservatives are using it in speeches on scab labour. Someone is going to have to give them some basic lessons in labour.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is certainly a great honour to join in this debate in the chamber. Before I get into the meat of the issue with Bill C-58, I would like to extend, to all the people who work in this chamber and also those who will be working in the other place after, a very merry Christmas. It is that time of year. While there does not seem to be a lot of charity in this room right now towards one another, I do hope that, when we are back in our ridings and have had a moment to acclimatize ourselves to our communities, we have that spirit.

A previous member talked about the need to help support people who are experiencing massive inflation and how difficult it is for many of our residents, whether they be pensioners on fixed incomes, families that have work or families that do not. This is a very tough economy. Right now, as we see with the food banks, this is a very tough time. I would encourage all Canadians to do what they can, if they are in a position to help.

Prior to writing down a few comments from my notes on this debate, I took some time to review some of the other comments in Hansard on this particular topic. It was very interesting to note that, when the Liberals had a majority, from 2015 to 2019, they had very little enthusiasm for a bill of this nature. More so, recently, since the Liberals have had a sudden interest in this bill, I have noticed a pattern. Often, when a Liberal member speaks to this bill on the topic of replacement workers, that conversation quickly shifts to what the leader of the official opposition, the Conservatives, has to think or say about this bill.

In reading the comments from various Liberal members, it is almost as if the bill is more about what the Leader of the Opposition would do then it is about banning replacement workers. Never before has the Liberal government appeared more obsessed with wondering how the opposition leader will respond. Further to that, I could almost hear some tears from the Prime Minister's office when they learned the opposition's view on this bill. We keep getting questions from people on the other side about it. We have been taking our time to study the legislation because this applies to every single category under federal workers.

I have not seen, in my time as a member of Parliament, a massive strike at a federally regulated bank. Nor have I seen it in some of the other sectors. Let us just bear in mind that, of the total workforce, this legislation would only apply to roughly 10%, or less. We might lament that there are not more federally regulated workers, but each one of those workers is important. Many of them might ask if the legislation would materially affect their situation.

We might have different views or perspectives from different industries, including the nuclear industry. I have not done that outreach with those folks who are federally regulated and who would be expected to work under this. It is probably because it has not been number one on their minds.

However, what I have heard in my own riding, and I am sure many are federally regulated workers, particularly those who are, we would say, middle class and those who are working hard to join it, is they find themselves in a precarious situation. Why is that? Interest rates have gone up. Those who are fortunate enough to have a home are asking if they can maintain that home as their mortgage comes due for renewal. That is a difficult decision because, even if someone has to sell their home, where do they go? Right now, rents have doubled under the Liberal government. Regardless of whether people work where the applications of Bill C-58 would apply to them or not, that is not going to help them materially with that decision.

There are other people who are working and who do not have a home. They are either subject to precarious situations, where they are renting, oftentimes putting themselves there just so they can put a roof over their head, not knowing when that will come due. Many of them are young and have dreams of home ownership. That has been washed away by this economy under this particular government. They see and hear articles, and little snippets oftentimes online, where the Governor of the Bank of Canada says that inflation could be better if there was not contrary monetary policy to fiscal policy.

• (1325)

Fiscal policy is the direct area of the government. People wonder if their government is really on their side. The Liberals can put up things like Bill C-58 to say that, but that still does not materially help people deal with it.

Again, there is the issue of gas prices and the issue of groceries, and we all know that the carbon tax affects that greatly. We have all heard about that Ottawa mushroom farm and the \$100,000 carbon tax bill. The Prime Minister has been asked five times about how that bill gets paid, and he cannot answer. The rest of us all know that the bill simply gets handed to customers. Many of them are those very same workers that the government—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I have not seen any news that says that there is a strike at that mushroom farm, so I am not sure what the member is talking about. We are dealing with anti-scab legislation and not mushroom farms.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate and not a point of order. I would remind members that, when they rise on points of order, they should indicate which standing order they are rising on.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.

Government Orders

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, when it comes to the mushroom farm, we know that the bill simply gets handed down to customers and makes those Ontario-grown mushrooms that much more expensive, which is causing the issue that we see today in Canada's labour market where, right now, when there are open negotiations, unions are rightfully saying that the cost of living has gone up. Of course, there is pressure for those workers to receive more. That is the reason we are here today. It is because the current government ultimately has created an environment where it does not work.

Instead of actually addressing the issue by reducing its inflationary deficits, and instead of getting rid of its plan to quadruple the carbon tax, essentially raising it by 62¢ a litre, which are things that would tangibly affect every single Canadian, including those who are federally regulated under this particular piece of legislation, Bill C-58, the Liberals just decided to throw this out. It is something that they opposed long before. That is why we cannot let workers and Canadians and families fall behind. We know that the always-spending Liberal-NDP costly coalition will continue to be part of the problem and not the solution.

Getting back to the bill, this legislation would potentially impact some of Canada's largest airports and ports far more severely in big cities like Montreal than it would in any city in my riding. That is not to say that labour disruptions in federally regulated sectors do not have an impact across our country, as they most certainly do. However, I am just recognizing that some of Canada's largest cities, most often represented by MPs from the government side, will typically deal with a federal labour disruption first-hand far more than those of us who have rural communities in our ridings.

Therefore, as a B.C.-based MP who represents some federally regulated workers, I do ask these questions about the government's approach. Instead of addressing the main concerns about the inflation that we are suffering, why are the Liberals not addressing the root causes instead of just finding these small bills that affect only a very small amount of our population? Increasingly, with the Liberal government, we see that it is totally out of touch with where Canadians are struggling. When I see Canadians, particularly the citizens in my riding, in coffee shops, they will often simply say, "Where are my tax dollars going now? Are you getting good value for money?" The answer is that we just do not know.

For example, in Ontario, there are two different electric vehicle plants. I, as a Conservative, love to see different competing technologies fight to see who has the best mousetrap to serve the population. However, when we suddenly add the extra element where the taxpayer and the government are writing big cheques to subsidize certain activities, we start to come to the place where people resent that they do not know the business case, do not know what the contract is for these large deals and that we are bringing in people from outside of Canada. In my province, when B.C. LNG was proposed, I met with union representatives who said their members were prepared to work and have the expertise, even though they had not done one before. They included boilermakers, etc. They all wanted those jobs, yet we are not in the position for that today.

Rather than working for Canadian jobs and Canadian know-how, putting it to work and using tax dollars for a better outcome, what do we get? We get a government that is focused on the wrong things and not giving those opportunities to Canadians. Instead, its

members are hiding at committee with the help of other parties, such as the NDP, to block those contracts from being presented. I lament that. I do hope that we have another chance to debate this bill so we can get into the meat of it.

● (1330)

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), it is only the government that can bring bills for debate.

In her statement on Thursday last week, the government House leader stated that the government would give priority to bills in the House "in their final stages of debate" including Bill—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is this another point of order?

I am going to see where the hon. member is going with this. I will come back to the parliamentary secretary as soon as the hon. member is done.

The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, the government House leader said that they would give "priority to the bills that are now in their final stages of debate in the House, including Bill C-57", so you can imagine my surprise—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Can the hon. member again indicate which standing order he is speaking on? Is this a unanimous consent motion? Is this a point of order on something that arose in the House?

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, it is Standing Order 30(6), which sets out that the government is the only one that can call bills for debate. I have a point of order on that.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. I need to hear the point of order. The hon. member has not told me if he is looking for unanimous consent yet. Is the hon. member asking for unanimous consent?

● (1335)

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order and then I am going to move a motion.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to get an understanding of what the hon. member is asking. If he is tabling a motion and asking for unanimous consent, he needs to be careful not to go into a lot of detail.

I will go to the hon. member so I can have an understanding of what he is asking, because I am not quite sure yet.

Government Orders

The hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I am trying to get there, but I keep getting interrupted by members of the Liberal Party.

I was saying that only the government can choose bills to come forward for debate. It has stated that Bill C-57 is a bill it urgently wants to be concluded in the House. It has not called it for debate today, so—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member can bring a unanimous consent motion.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I am now going to, assuming that I have the unanimous support of the House, move that, notwithstanding any—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. Hold on.

The hon. member is able to move a unanimous consent motion if he wishes to. I will allow him to ask for unanimous consent. If there is none, then we will move forward and continue with the debate.

I would ask the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon for the unanimous consent motion.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Madam Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is already no unanimous consent. It is obvious that somewhere along the line something went wrong. I would ask members who are looking for unanimous consent to make sure they have it from all parties before they come to the House.

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.): Madam Speaker, the member made reference to patterns. One of the patterns that I have seen is with respect to the Conservative Party having adopted the MAGA politics, which are coming from the south into the office of the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada.

Conservatives say one thing, for example, that they support workers, yet none of them stood up to say how they were going to—

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member opposite is bringing U.S. politics into something that does not even relate to what we are discussing here today, so—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we all know the degree to which there is a lack of respect for organized labour from the MAGA right. This is something on which we have been challenging the Conservative opposition party.

What will Conservatives do with respect to Bill C-58? Will they or will they not support the legislation? They have not been able to answer that question. I suspect, if it has anything to do with their pattern, it is because of the MAGA movement from the States that is coming to Canada via the Conservative Party.

Can the member say whether or not he is voting in favour of the bill?

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, when I start talking about the very real concerns of federally regulated, provincially regulated and average, non-unionized workers, the member somehow tries to make it some sort of conspiracy theory. When the member starts spouting what seem to be conspiracy theories about how this is connected to this group and this group is connected to this group in the south, it sounds a little crazy to me.

If we cannot clearly express what our constituents are going through, the challenges they have and whether the government legislation is meeting the real needs of the people I mentioned, what else do we have to talk about here?

The member can keep asking those kinds of questions in disrespectful ways, or he can start to listen and not name-call.

● (1340)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, the question as to whether our Conservative colleagues are in favour of this bill to prevent the use of scabs in the event of a labour dispute, strike or lockout is certainly relevant. It is a simple question.

The reason this bill is under consideration now is that, for decades, the Bloc Québécois has been lobbying for governments to pass anti-scab legislation. This is also happening because thousands of workers are pressuring the government.

We have had similar legislation in Quebec since 1977. In Canada, however, it took significant pressure for this bill to see the light of day.

Will you tell workers that you support the anti-scab legislation proposed by Bill C-58, yes or no?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the hon. member that she must address her questions and comments through the Chair, and not directly to the hon. member.

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would like the record to show that the member for Dufferin—Caledon tried to have the House pass Bill C-57, the Canada-Ukraine free trade deal, and the Liberals refused to pass it. That is what Conservatives were putting forward.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Number one, Madam Speaker, that is not a point of order. No such question was put to the House. I would suggest the ruling on the member's point of order is that it is not a point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): This is becoming debate.

Government Orders

If hon. members want to continue having a conversation about this, they should take it into the lobby, please.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola.
[*Translation*]

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, my command of the French language is not the best, but I will try to answer the Bloc Québécois member's question.

With regard to Bill C-58, what is important for me, as a western MP, is to fully understand how this works in Quebec. That is a question I will be asking Conservative Party members from Quebec. I hope I will have a clear answer for the member.

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind members that when someone else has the floor, it is nice to give him the attention he deserves, especially when he made such an effort to respond in French. Members on both sides of the House were having conversations, and I would remind them to respect those who have the floor. It is good to hear what they have to say because members may have other questions for them.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, once again, I find it very hard to connect the member's speech to the subject in front of us. I suspect that is because the Conservatives do not really want to take a position on the anti-scab legislation because they are busy posing as friends of labour.

By talking about inflation, is the member actually saying that it is workers' wages that are driving inflation? The Conservatives have been arguing all the time that it is the carbon tax. When we look at what is driving inflation, we find it is the war in Ukraine and the increasing greed of corporate profits in the gas and oil industry.

Is the member, by focusing on inflation, saying it is the workers' fault inflation is happening?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please.

I am sure the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola has been in the House long enough to be able to answer without having anybody else try to do that for him.

The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola has the floor.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, I like how you think.

I would simply say to my fellow member from British Columbia, first of all, I understand he is not going to be running for re-election. I have always respected his contributions to this place, and I just want to put that on the record and wish him a merry Christmas when we go.

On the inflationary deficits, the carbon tax, the addition of things where we have plastic bans that are now being looked at for the packaging of foods, we have a government that seems to always

have one dial, which is to spend, spend, spend. As we know from listening to macroeconomists, adding more fuel to the inflationary fire is not going to help deal with inflation. In fact, the government seems intent on doing that, which is why we have continued to press the government to address those core issues.

If I am not considered a friend of labour, I want to be. I try to listen to all views, whether they come from my riding or not, and I want to put all Canadians to work in meaningful and safe work.

• (1345)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to rise in the House of Commons today to speak about Bill C-58, the bill that would ban the use of replacement workers.

What this legislation would really do is strengthen workers and unions by strengthening one of the pillars of people power, the bargaining table. I come from a proud union town, a proud union town that knows how to build things. For over 100 years, we have been building cars and machines and tools for Canada, and we are darn good at it. What our unionized workers, brothers and sisters, have also built is a strong community of resilient and caring people who look after each other, and not only look after each other but fight for one another.

One of the ways we have been able to build this caring and generous community is through the bargaining table, with hard-won victories that improved wages, working conditions, health and safety and workers' rights and that provided time off to be with families.

In 1945, 14,000 Windsor auto workers at Ford went on strike. For 99 days they protested layoffs, unfair wages and working conditions, and after 99 days, they prevailed. Those Windsor workers stabilized the labour movement in Canada and provided the labour movement in Canada with a gift. It is called the Rand formula, which establishes and protects a union's right to collect union dues.

Every September, thousands of residents march in the Labour Day parade to celebrate all of the hard wins of the past and all of the hard wins of the present, while also recommitting to the next fight on the horizon to improve the lives of workers. I was proud to walk with Unifor, LiUNA, IBEW, the millwrights, teachers, nurses and so many others who work hard to provide for their families but also work hard to build their communities.

Government Orders

I want to take a moment to thank the Unifor bargaining committee that entered tough negotiations with Ford, Stellantis and General Motors just this October. Those were tough negotiations, tough bargaining, and our unions came away with the largest wage and pension increases in generations. Those hard-fought and hard-won improvements not only lift our auto workers but they lift our entire community.

That is the power of the bargaining table, and that is the power we are protecting here today with Bill C-58. It is the power of the bargaining table that we are strengthening.

In the last two years, our Liberal government has worked hand in hand with unions and workers to deliver some of the biggest wins in the history of our community of Windsor—Tecumseh. It is true solidarity. Together, we delivered the EV battery plant, which is just one example, the single-largest auto investment in the history of our community of Windsor—Tecumseh.

To understand the significance of the battery plant investment and to understand the importance of labour and the bargaining table and working together in that partnership, one has to understand the road my community has travelled—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt the member, but I have an important UC request for a motion on Bill C-57 that I think the House will want to hear: That, notwithstanding any standing order—

Some hon. members: No.

• (1350)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would again ask members that if they want to table unanimous consent motions, they should be conferring with all other parties ahead of time to ensure that, when they bring a motion for unanimous consent, they are getting unanimous consent.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, to understand the significance of the battery plant investment and to understand the importance of the partnership with labour and the importance of the bargaining table, we have to understand the road that my community has travelled these last 10 years. It was a hard road.

Eight years ago, when the Conservatives were in power, Windsor had an unemployment rate of 11.2%. Unemployment for young people was in the high twenties. Families were leaving Windsor for Alberta to find work in the oil sands. Under the Conservatives, Canada lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Of course, our community was ground zero for that devastation.

I remember those days. I remember the shuttered storefronts, the empty downtown, the “for sale” signs everywhere and the not-for-profits and charitable organizations struggling because they could not find volunteers because the donations had dried up. The Leader of the Opposition also remembers because he was the employment

minister at the time, or as I like to call him, the minister of unemployment.

The battery plant that our Liberal government delivered, together with unions, workers and industry, is the single most important investment in the history of our community, with 2,500 full-time jobs for workers, 2,500 Canadian, local, unionized workers. It is our future. It is our hope. It is powered by strong unions. It is powered by strong workers. It is powered by—

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

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, the member referred to our leader as “the minister of unemployment”. That is false. There is no such title. What is he talking about?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate. It is an interpretation. I understand what the hon. member is raising, and I want to remind members that it causes disorder in the House.

I would ask the hon. member to not use that framing again. It does cause disorder in the House.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, I will rephrase that by saying there are members in my community who refer to the Leader of the Opposition as “the minister of unemployment”. That is what members of my community—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I understand what the member is saying, but it is causing disorder in the House.

This happens on both sides of the House, and I would ask members to please be respectful and judicious when they are speaking about other members. There is a standing order that specifically says we should not be speaking disrespectfully about members in the House.

The hon. member for Northumberland—Peterborough South is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, with respect to those comments, first, if you check Hansard, you will find that the Speaker did rule, in accordance with Standing Order 18, that there would be no false titles in this House. That is clear. Second, the member did directly what you told him not to do. That is grounds for being expelled.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We are at the end of the session. I know it has been a long session and I know that everyone wants to go home and be cheerful. Let us finish this on a really good note.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

• (1355)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, investment in the battery plant in Windsor is just the start. There are international companies right on our doorstep right now looking to invest \$3 billion and to create thousands of more jobs. They want to supply the battery plant here.

This is why we are partnering with local unions to do everything we can to fight the Conservative campaign of disinformation. That campaign has one goal and one goal only, which is to erode public support for these investments and ultimately to pull the plug on the battery plant and pull the plug on the electric vehicle industry. The Conservatives do not believe in climate change. They do not believe in the transition to electric vehicles. They see electric vehicles as an existential threat. What is more, they call this federal Liberal investment “corporate welfare”.

Dave Cassidy, the president of Unifor Local 444, was on Parliament Hill two weeks ago. He represents thousands of auto workers, and he will represent the 2,500 workers who will be building the batteries at our EV battery plant, these Canadian, local, unionized workers. He said on Parliament Hill that if it were up to the Conservatives, the battery plant would never have been built in the first place. Thank God it was not up to them.

Liberals believe in climate change. We believe in the transition to electric vehicles. We believe in investing in workers and battery plants like ours. We believe in investing in manufacturing communities like mine. Most importantly, we believe in a true partnership with labour, with workers and with industry to attract game-changing investments that are creating a future for manufacturing communities like ours in Windsor—Tecumseh. However, it all begins by listening to workers, by making sure that workers are not just at the bargaining table but at every table to provide input on the policies that impact them.

Our Liberal government listens to workers. It is why the first thing we did when we were elected was to scrap two Harper Conservative pieces of legislation whose sole purpose was to weaken unions: Bill C-377 and Bill C-575.

We listened to workers when we introduced \$10-a-day child care and 10 days of paid sick leave, and when we invested \$1 billion in apprentices to train the next generation of skilled workers. We doubled the union training and innovation program, and we committed to the first-ever labour provisions for clean-tech tax credits, which will make federal investments conditional on companies paying a prevailing union wage, and to making sure that at least 10% of the work goes to apprentices.

We listened to unions when we introduced the labour mobility tax credit for up to \$4,000 in travel expenses for workers having to travel to a job site away from home. It is why last week we established the union-led advisory table to inform government decisions on all issues impacting workers. It is also why we introduced Bill C-58, something that workers in Canada and in my hometown of Windsor—Tecumseh have been asking for, have been fighting for, for generations.

This is the right thing to do. Strong workers and strong unions are powering our prosperity. A strong government that is a strong partner stands with our unions, with our workers and with labour every step of the way.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order from the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Statements by Members

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, there were consultations among the parties about a motion to expedite the vote on Bill C-57 so that the House can pronounce—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That was ruled on already. This is the third or fourth time.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is obvious that those who have been trying to move unanimous consent motions have not followed the proper procedure, which is going from party to party to gather unanimous consent. I would ask members to do that prior to bringing their unanimous consent motion to the House.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is investing in Volkswagen. The Government of Canada is investing in Stellantis. These two companies are going to literally create tens of thousands of jobs, both directly and indirectly.

It is setting a new industry standard—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know the hon. member has a good voice, but I am not able to hear what he is saying. When members are doing statements, there is no opportunity for questions and comments. I would ask members to please be respectful.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

* * *

ELECTRIC VEHICLE INDUSTRY

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is supporting Stellantis. The Government of Canada is supporting Volkswagen and the battery plant. Think about that. This is going to be one of the largest manufacturing plants in North America. We are talking about the creation of tens of thousands of direct and indirect jobs.

We know that the MAGA Conservatives across the way do not support government investment in industries, and this is a very important industry for all Canadians. It is going to provide good, solid middle-class jobs.

My question for the Conservative Party is this: When are the Conservatives going to get behind Canadians and support good, solid middle-class jobs?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Statements by Members

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member can ask questions, but there is no opportunity for questions and comments. I want to remind members that during statements, it is not time for debate. I would ask members to please be respectful and quiet while others have the floor.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal-NDP government, Canadians are arguably worse off than they have ever been before. In fact, the government would rather penalize a single mother for commuting to work to earn for her family than face the fact that its carbon tax is not working, not for the environment and certainly not for Canadians.

The consequence of the Liberals failing to work with the facts is that the cost of everything is skyrocketing: the cost of gas, home heating and groceries. Everything is going through the roof. Farmers are being punished just for growing crops and feeding Canadians. Meanwhile, indigenous folks are taking the government to court, suing them because the carbon tax is incredibly punitive and discriminatory in nature.

Our ask is simple. It is that we pass Bill C-234, unamended. This would serve Canadian families best. It would be for the sake of families, for the sake of first nations and for the sake of farmers. At the end of the day, we are asking that Bill C-234 be passed and that we axe the tax to get Canadians back on track.

* * *

SITUATION IN ISRAEL, GAZA AND THE WEST BANK

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice the concerns of constituents of Halifax West who have written to me about the heartbreaking humanitarian situation in the Middle East. Some of them have close family members, like parents, brothers, sisters and grandparents, who are trapped in Gaza.

I have spoken about this with the Minister of Immigration, and I want to echo the voices of my constituents who say that we should expand the definition of immediate family in IRPA to give them eligibility for emergency evacuation so that family members with close ties to Canadian citizens can get out safely. Many of them are highly educated, financially independent and blessed to have familial support here, and to welcome them would be entirely consistent with our commitment to humanitarianism.

This is the holiday season, a time we share with the families we love. I want to wish everyone here, in Halifax West, in Canada and in the entire world peace and love.

* * *

● (1405)

[*Translation*]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND HOLIDAY WISHES

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 2023 was not at all restful at Parliament. However, we made it to the end

thanks to the dedicated staff; our own, of course, in other words each of our own teams to whom we owe so much, but also the exceptional House of Commons staff.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to thank each of these individuals from the bottom of my heart. We thank the clerks, the law clerks, the analysts and the pages. We thank the interpreters, who put their health at risk to give francophones the representation they deserve in this Parliament. We thank the essential and quietly effective maintenance team. We thank the food services staff for their warm hospitality. We thank the computer technicians for their support, both here and on telework. We thank the Parliamentary Protective Service officers, who ensure our safety, in addition to being the first to greet us every time we come to work.

All these people work day and night to serve democracy in their own way. We wish them all a Merry Christmas and a happy 2024.

* * *

AGRIBUSINESS SUCCESS STORY

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the agriculture and agri-food sector is a powerful economic force in Canada. It is a growing industry that employs 2.3 million people and single-handedly generates approximately 7% of our GDP.

Aliments Ouimet-Cordon Bleu is a Montreal-based company celebrating its 99th year in operation this year. The company uses its investments to support product development. Cordon Bleu's success hit new heights last spring when it was honoured as Quebec's SME of the year at the Les Mercuriades awards ceremony, sponsored by the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec.

I congratulate and salute the Cordon Bleu executives who are here in Ottawa today, and I encourage all Canadians to keep supporting the vitality of our agri-food businesses.

* * *

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the PM said he values indigenous people most, but that is only true when they agree with him. After eight years, indigenous leaders fight the NDP-Liberals' anti-private sector, anti-resource, anti-energy agenda.

There are 130 Ontario first nations that will take the NDP-Liberals to court over their colonialist carbon tax. It does what Conservatives warned. Everything is more expensive. Those who can least afford it are hurting the most. Rural, remote and northern indigenous, and all, Canadians can hardly survive. They are forced to choose between heating, eating and housing.

B.C.'s Lax Kw'alaams sued over the NDP-Liberals' export ban, Bill C-48, to make its own decisions about jobs, energy and fish. Alberta's Woodland Cree sued over the unconstitutional "never build anything" bill, Bill C-69. Five years ago, Conservatives warned both bills would hurt indigenous people. The Liberals ignored that; it is death by delay.

Indigenous leaders oppose the emissions cap to cut production and the central plan of the just transition bill, Bill C-50, to kill the Canadian jobs and businesses where indigenous people work the most. The Liberals block indigenous-backed pipelines, the oil sands, LNG and roads to the Ring of Fire. They stop all the deals for education, recreation, health and wellness.

It is no wonder that the NDP-Liberals censor and cover up their costly anti-Canada collusion. Common-sense Conservatives will turn hurt into hope for indigenous and all Canadians.

* * *

BARRHAVEN FOOD CUPBOARD

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 2023 has been tough for many families in the Nepean riding, with the higher cost of living. Thanks to the team led by Ken McCarthy, George MacDonald, Dawn Lilly, Brian Double and John Falkingham, Barrhaven Food Cupboard addressed food insecurity faced by about 400 families.

About 160 volunteers, including board members Matt Triemstra, Bill Halstead, Mara Watson, Gordon Crumpler, Cyril Tiwari, Glenn Schumacher and Aaron Lemieux, reached out to individuals, families, schools and local businesses in Barrhaven, raising over \$180,000.

For over 30 years, Barrhaven Food Cupboard's mission has been "neighbours helping neighbours". I would like to recognize the volunteer team at Barrhaven Food Cupboard for their dedicated service. They are a source of inspiration and positive role models for all of us in Nepean.

* * *

LET'S TALK SCIENCE

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's future prosperity depends on embracing science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM. The problem is that young people tend to lose interest in STEM by the time they finish high school.

Since 1993, London-based organization Let's Talk Science has tried to address that challenge by providing vital programming and resource support for teachers who bring science to life, making it interesting, fun and, most importantly, relevant to daily life.

Statements by Members

The organization also works with early years centres, community organizations and parents. With the help of volunteers, almost always drawn from post-secondary institutions, it has been able to reach no fewer than 1,500 communities right across the country.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the donors whose support makes all this work possible, as it is free of charge, and the work of founder and president, Bonnie Schmidt, along with the staff and board. Bonnie is a testament to learning in Canada, to education and to giving back.

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● (1410)

LEADER OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, back in 2015, it was the Liberal Prime Minister who told Canadians that better was always possible. However, after eight years, when it comes to housing, literally everything is worse. Many cannot find homes they can afford. Worse, there are now many in homes they can no longer afford.

It is small wonder that millions of Canadians have tuned in to watch the Conservative leader's "housing hell" video. People are increasingly desperate for housing solutions, and only our Conservative common-sense plan offers them a clear plan to fund results instead of promises.

The NDP-Liberal government wants to talk about spending, but it is not getting results or being accountable for that spending. This is why, all too often, the NDP votes in committees to cover up Liberal corruption. That misspending is part of the problem.

I am proud to stand behind a Conservative leader who supports common-sense solutions, and many Canadians are now joining in as well. Why? It is because they know the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

* * *

IAN LAING

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on November 29, Chief Ian Laing of the Central York Fire Services passed away. I truly treasured my relationship with the chief, which dated back to the time when I was mayor and continued to this day.

Statements by Members

Chief Laing served our community with dedication, pride and an unwavering commitment to excellence. He dedicated 48 years to firefighting, 14 of those as the chief of the firefighting service in New Market. The chief took immense pride in the people of CFYS, the community they served and the building of station 4-5, the first under his leadership. Chief Laing was a consummate firefighter; he was dedicated, proud of his chosen career and absolute in his resolve to provide his community with the best service.

I will miss the sparkle in his eyes and the stories told by a gentleman I was proud to call a friend.

* * *

[Translation]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, Canadians cannot pay their bills. Everything costs more.

The Bloc Québécois is no longer a party of the regions. Bloc members support the Prime Minister in imposing the second carbon tax, which applies to Quebec and adds 20¢ per litre of gas. They really do not understand the reality of the people in my region who need their cars and trucks to get to work. There is a reason why the Bloc members are shouting loud and clear that they want to drastically increase the carbon tax on Quebecers.

Voting for the Bloc is costly. The Bloc-Liberal coalition must stop putting pressure on Canadians and picking their pockets. According to a published report, a family of four will pay \$700 more next year for food. What is more, some food banks can no longer provide food, but there is hope. A Conservative government will restore common sense by abolishing the carbon tax so that Canadians can have full bellies and a full fridge.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, farmers work tirelessly to feed Canada and the world with some of the highest quality produce available, yet the NDP-Liberal government continues to punish them at every turn.

Instead of giving them a much-needed break on the carbon tax through common-sense measures like Bill C-234, the Prime Minister is quadrupling the carbon tax, hurting the livelihoods of the very farmers who are putting food on the tables of Canadians. One farmer in the regional municipality of Estevan is paying over \$150,000 in carbon taxes a year. Once quadrupled, this will go up to over \$600,000 annually for his 15,000-acre farm. How does the Prime Minister expect him to cover this cost: by raising prices on Canadians, cutting back his acreage or bringing in more costly food from polluting foreign farms?

Conservatives know that if we tax the farmer who grows the food and tax the trucker who ships the food, Canadians have to pay more to buy the food. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians know that the Prime Minister is simply not worth the cost.

• (1415)

[Translation]

CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Conservatives showed that they oppose funding the Economic Development Agency for the Regions of Quebec. They oppose the aerospace regional recovery initiative. They oppose providing assistance to help communities rebuild after hurricane Fiona. They oppose support for festivals and for tourism businesses.

The Conservatives will always put big polluters ahead of Quebec's economic well-being. Our government knows that, to support job creation in Quebec, we have to invest in Quebec businesses.

* * *

[English]

NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, national dental care is finally becoming a reality. This is the biggest investment in public health care in 60 years, and New Democrats made it happen.

In 2019 and 2021, we went door to door to ask people what they wanted from their politicians. Again and again, I heard from young mothers who could not pay to get their kids' teeth fixed. I talked to senior citizens who could not pay their dental bills. They gave us this mandate in Parliament, and we delivered. This year, children and senior citizens will be able to apply; by the end of next year, over nine million people will be eligible.

Let us compare this record of success with the Conservatives' record. This past week, the Conservatives tried to block a national suicide hotline and funding for clean water on reserves. They did their best to block badly needed support for the people of Ukraine. They would cut dental care in a second if they could, but that is not going to happen on our watch. New Democrats are in Parliament to fight for the people of Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

CHRISTMAS ANGELS

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, members of Parliament and all of the staff of the House are preparing to finally leave Parliament Hill for the holidays. However, for many Quebecers, this will not be a time to rest and celebrate. Instead, they will be working hard, far from their families, just because their employer cannot do without them.

In addition to these nurses, truckers and service workers, there are also essential volunteers. I am talking about hundreds of designated drivers for Operation Red Nose, people who volunteer at our food banks and soup kitchens, and all those who give of their time so that seniors will have a nice Christmas or so that the most disadvantaged members of our society can at least have a Christmas. It is the dedication of all of these Christmas angels that enables all of us to have a happy holiday season.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to sincerely thank them. I hope that they all have the merriest Christmas possible under the circumstances and a very happy new year filled with good health and prosperity.

* * *

[English]

CARBON TAX

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, sadly, the Prime Minister wants to punish farmers for being incredible optimists and doing the fantastic work they do every day on our behalf. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, farm input costs are ballooning out of control. Bill C-234, a common-sense Conservative bill, would reduce the cost of food for Canadians by removing the carbon tax on farmers. I spoke to farmers in my backyard, who said that any of those major inputs have just been skyrocketing in price, with almost double the fuel bills, as well as fertilizer that has doubled, if not tripled, in price.

On annual expenses of \$2 million, almost 20% or \$400,000 is due to the punishing carbon tax. That will mean \$1.6 million when the Prime Minister quadruples the tax. The other concern is that the tax is so hidden that this estimate is probably low.

Does the Prime Minister think that farmers need to raise prices on Canadians, or should Alex cut back production so that Canadians are forced to import food from polluting foreign farms?

* * *

UKRAINE

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Ukraine is running out of ammunition. President Zelenskyy was in the United States this past week, pleading for more military assistance. However, he was blocked by politicians on the American far right. It is important to realize that Russia did not just attack another country; it launched a full-scale assault on the international legal order. That is because the heart of that order and the UN Charter is the principle of non-intervention. One country cannot just attack another country.

Russia must not and will not win anything, as any such victory moves us dangerously closer to the world as it was prior to World War II: a world where, basically, “might is right”. Voting against assistance for Ukraine, as a certain party in the House has done repeatedly over the last week, shows not only a lack of empathy for the suffering of the Ukrainian people but also a disregard for the principles that have basically kept our world safe since 1945.

This Christmas, let us unite in support of Ukraine. Merry Christmas.

Oral Questions

Slava Ukraini.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[Translation]

FINANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told us he doubled the national debt so that Canadians would not need to increase their debt. Now we find out that after eight years of this Prime Minister, Canadian families are spending a bigger portion of their budget on servicing their personal debt. It is at a record high in Canada. In fact, Canadians are spending more on their household debt than Americans did before the 2008 financial crisis.

Will the Prime Minister finally put a stop to his inflationary taxes and spending so that Canadians can buy food and housing instead of paying for their debt?

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the Conservatives continue to denigrate the Canadian economy, I would like to take this opportunity to remind them of some of the results of our economic plan. For example, our GDP is currently at 4.1%, exceeding prepandemic levels. More than 1.1 million jobs have been created since the beginning of the pandemic.

These results cannot be achieved with slogans, not at all. Our economic plan is working and the results prove it.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the economy has been shrinking per capita for five quarters now. Our economy is smaller per capita than it was five years ago. What is more, after eight years, this Prime Minister is not worth the cost of housing. According to the Bank of Canada, housing costs are now the highest they have been in 41 years, and rents are rising faster than ever. It is an all-time record.

When will the Prime Minister stop driving up inflation and creating bloated bureaucracy to allow affordable housing to be built?

Oral Questions

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition. However, for Canadians watching at home, one number the Leader of the Opposition forgot to mention is that, in 2023, Canada ranked third in the world for attracting foreign investment, behind the U.S. and Brazil. We are talking about record investments such as Northvolt in Quebec, Volkswagen in St. Thomas, Stellantis in Windsor, BHP in Saskatchewan and Dow in Fort Saskatchewan.

We have a plan for the green economy of the 21st century, and that is how we are going to create jobs for generations to come in this country.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we already knew that the Prime Minister is not worth the price of food after eight years of inflation, but yesterday he could not answer how a mushroom farm in my riding is supposed to pay its \$100,000 carbon tax bill.

He did send the farm a Christmas present: a new bill. This is the November 9 to December 6 bill: federal carbon tax, \$16,050. That is for one month, and it is not even winter yet.

How would the Prime Minister like this farm to pay this \$16,000 monthly bill? Should it raise food prices?

The Deputy Speaker: I have to warn people about using props in the House.

The hon. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to allow the hon. minister to start from scratch.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, I was in Dubai at COP28, in good company with the Premier of Alberta, Danielle Smith; with the Premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe; with representatives from almost all the Canadian provinces; and with business leaders from all across the country, working to ensure that our kids and grand-kids have a future, which is something that, unfortunately, the Conservatives fail to understand.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is more high-flying, high-cost, high-tax hypocrisy from the minister of carbon taxes.

We learned that he spent \$150,000 on one weekend of travel and charged it to taxpayers. Is it not interesting that it is exactly how much the government is charging the Carleton Mushroom Farms in carbon taxes for a year?

Can the minister please tell us this: The Carleton Mushroom Farms is going to spend this year, now, about \$150,000 on carbon taxes; will that just pay for one of his junkets?

• (1425)

The Deputy Speaker: I remind members to use the proper names of ministers.

The hon. minister has the floor.

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to hypocrisy, I refer back to Neville Chamberlain when he referred to Czechoslovakia's invasion by Nazi Germany. He referred to Czechoslovakia as a “faraway” land. In reply to that, Sir Winston Churchill gave one of his greatest speeches, a speech of impunity that Roy Jenkins said was one of his greatest, in which he called Chamberlain an absolute coward, a capitulator. We should learn from such great men, not just about hypocrisy but also about keeping our solemn oaths to freedom and democracy in this world.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for the Prime Minister to pass himself off as Winston Churchill after he gave detonators for mines to the Russian military so it could use them against Ukrainians, and after he allowed the Iranian-linked IRGC to operate legally in Canada, 700 of its agents, by the way, who are also linked to Russia, operating in our country and terrorizing our people, is not Churchillian.

This is hypocritical, political grandstanding by a Prime Minister trying to distract from his failed carbon tax.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is another great Englishman who would say to the Leader of the Opposition, “Thou dost protest too much, I believe.” I would ask whether any of the Conservative members have the courage of their conviction to stand up to the bullying the Leader of the Opposition is imposing on them.

In fact, there is one. The member for Lethbridge is the only Conservative MP who voted in favour of the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement on Tuesday. I would ask whether there any other Conservative members who have the courage of their conviction to stand up for freedom and democracy, and against the bullying of the Conservative—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec has made its stance on dental insurance very clear.

Quebec's minister responsible for Canadian relations said, “Quebec is prepared to negotiate an agreement with the federal government to improve the plan in a way that respects jurisdictional considerations”.

In other words, Ottawa can transfer the money, and Quebec will use it pay for its dental care priorities. Unfortunately, Ottawa would rather give the money to a private company than to Quebec's public health care plan, the RAMQ, which has the expertise.

Why choose Sun Life over Quebec? Why go private in health care at the expense of the public system?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our choice is clear. Our choice is to provide dental care for everyone everywhere in Canada, in every province and in every territory.

We have nine million people without access to dental care. Our dental care system will give every person in every part of our country access to dental care. That is the important thing here.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we expect this government to improve employment insurance, yet it twiddles its thumbs. We expect it to fix the Phoenix fiasco once and for all, but once again, paying or insuring its own workers is asking too much. We expect this government to foot the bill for asylum seekers, but no, they will not budge.

However, when it comes to interfering in Quebec's jurisdictions, it is always first in line.

Instead of creating a private dental care plan, is the government going to reach an agreement with Quebec and transfer the funds that Quebec needs to enhance its own public plan?

• (1430)

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we are going to work with Quebec. We are going to work with each province and territory to ensure that everyone gets the dental care they need to stay healthy. That is our goal, and we are going to work with every province across the country to achieve it.

* * *

[English]

GROCERY INDUSTRY

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, families are having to take turkey off their Christmas dinner menu because of sky-high food costs. What are the Liberals doing? They are letting their grocery CEO friends off the hook, while the corporate Conservatives just want to block a national school food program to feed our kids. Both have lost the holiday spirit.

What does the minister have to say to Canadians who are cutting back this Christmas because he will not stand up to CEOs?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish the member had been in the meeting. She would have said that we were the first government in history to stand up to the CEOs of the grocery sector in this country.

For the first time in history—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne: Mr. Speaker, they can yell as much as they want.

Oral Questions

One thing we have done is that we called them to Ottawa and expressed the frustration of millions of Canadians. We asked them to do their part. We talked to the large manufacturers. With the reform of competition, with the grocery code of conduct and with more information for the consumer, we are going to help stabilize prices in this country.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the minister would have a starring role in *Olivier Twist*: “Please, sir, I want some more.”

With holidays around the corner, parents are being forced to choose between family dinner and gifts for their kids. Do people know who is not worried? Canada's grocery CEOs, who are gifting themselves Christmas bonuses, are not. The Liberals continue to let corporate greed go unchecked. Meanwhile, the Conservatives play the part of Scrooge, as they just voted against a national school food program.

Will the minister start cracking down on corporate price gouging, or will he let the CEOs continue going unchecked?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for suggesting another career I could pursue.

One thing I will do is always fight for Canadians. It is always a good day to fight for Canadians. That is what I have done with the CEOs. That is what we will continue.

If the member wants to do something to help Canadians, he could help us to apply pressure to have a grocery code of conduct in this country. In talking to the independent grocers in this country, we know that this is one of the best ways to stabilize prices, have more transparency and make sure the small and medium-sized producers would have more equity in the negotiations with the larger grocers.

* * *

[Translation]

FINANCE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the media is reporting that requests for food at a Quebec City food bank, La Bouchée généreuse, have doubled in the past two years. After eight years in power, this Liberal government's legacy is going to be a Canada where people go hungry.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois calls himself the adult in the room, but he likes to insult the other party leaders. On top of that, he is calling for a radical tax increase. This adds insult to injury. Will the Prime Minister follow our common-sense plan and eliminate the inflationary taxes and deficits so that Quebecers can put food on the table?

Oral Questions

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are well aware that it is our Liberal government that is taking action to support Canadians.

I think Canadians can see right through the Conservatives' empty rhetoric. Just a few days ago, the Conservatives voted against the national food policy. If they really had the interests of Canadians at heart, they would not have voted against them.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians and Quebeckers know is that Christmas is coming next week. They also know that they do not have enough money to buy groceries, so does the government really think that they have enough money to buy their children presents? That is what Canadians and Quebeckers have come to realize after eight years under this Liberal government.

What is more, on the other side of the House, our Bloc Québécois friends are asking the government to drastically increase the tax on groceries. Is there anyone in the House who can see clearly and who understands that there comes a time when enough is enough with the taxes? Will the government commit to cancelling its inflationary taxes so that people can put food on the table and have a good Christmas?

[English]

Hon. Anita Anand (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is shocking, coming from that member, who was himself a member of the armed forces, that last week, he and his party voted against military aid to Ukraine and compensation to the Canadian Armed Forces.

On the subject of Ukraine, let me clarify all of the \$1 billion in aid that we have provided to Ukraine: Carl-Gustaf anti-tank weapon systems, 155-millimetre ammunition and armoured vehicles, and we have trained over 40,000 members of the Ukrainian armed forces. We will stand on the side of democracy every single time.

* * *

• (1435)

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quattro Farms near Bow Island grows spearmint, peppermint and dill, then distills those crops into essential oils. The 10-week harvest and distillation process, this fall alone, cost them \$107,000 in carbon taxes. That carbon tax will rise to well over \$400,000 when this government quadruples it.

How does the Prime Minister suggest Quattro Farms pay this \$400,000?

Will it be by raising prices on Canadians or should Quattro Farms cut back on its production so that Canadians are forced to import their food from polluting foreign farms?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it came to action, my hon. colleague and the Conservative Party of Canada voted against every program that would support agriculture. It is a shame. I have talked to agricultural producers right across the country; they cannot un-

derstand why an opposition would vote against the on-farm climate action fund to help farmers adapt to climate change, which adds to the price of groceries.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reason we voted against them is that we voted non-confidence in this government.

Medicine Hat and the area is home to numerous greenhouse operations like Big Marble Farms, which grows fresh vegetables like cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes. This year alone, Big Marble Farms will pay over \$500,000 in carbon taxes. That will rise to over \$2 million when this government quadruples it.

How does the Prime Minister suggest Big Marble pay this extra \$2 million?

Will they raise the prices on Canadians or should Big Marble cut back on their production so that Canadians are forced to import their food from polluting foreign farms?

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am a farmer and I talk to farmers across the country. They cannot understand why the opposition party would vote against so many programs that assist agriculture across the country.

Also, farmers find it very disappointing and cannot believe that one would vote against support for Ukraine and for democracy. They were ashamed.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, unlike that minister, I actually spoke to farmers from Dufferin today. One farmer, from Burnett Farms, is going to pay \$40,000 in carbon taxes this year alone. After this incompetent Liberal-NDP government quadruples the tax, it will be \$160,000.

They do not need another government program. They need the carbon tax cut.

How is this farmer supposed to pay for it? Should farmers cut production or will they have to import food from polluting foreign farms?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what many Canadians are puzzled by is the fact that, in the age of climate change, where the impacts of climate change are costing our farmers hundreds of millions of dollars every year, the Conservatives have nothing to say to them, no plans to support them in the transition that will be necessary in the 21st century, to continue being a provider of food for Canada and the world.

The Conservatives have no plan to help our farmers, no plan to fight climate change and no plan to support the future of our kids and grandkids.

Oral Questions

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with that statement, this radical carbon tax-loving environment minister has basically proven the point. His carbon tax has not stopped any of the effects on farms. Instead, farmers are left paying this punishing carbon tax.

A chicken farm pays \$15,000 for one barn this year in carbon tax. After this ideologically obsessed minister quadruples the carbon tax, it will be \$60,000 for one chicken barn.

What is this farmer supposed to do to pay it, raise prices or force Canadians to import their food from polluting foreign farms?

• (1440)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is ironic, coming from the party that voted against supporting chicken farms just last week.

Is it radical to be in favour of fighting for the future of our kids and grandkids? I do not think so.

Is it radical to ensure that we invest in jobs of the 21st century and our communities across the country? I do not think so.

What is radical is to ignore one of the world's most defining issues of our time and have nothing to say about climate change. This is unacceptable. This is immoral.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government owes Quebeckers \$460 million for welcoming asylum seekers. They are the federal government's responsibility. The federal government does not want to pay, and it even has the arrogance to keep bluntly stating that it is not an ATM. However, it is our money inside that ATM, not the federal government's. It is taxpayers' money, much of it from Quebeckers. We are entitled to it. That means we have a big problem. The ATM is not working and we cannot access our money.

Will the Minister of Finance thank Quebeckers for their generosity and reimburse Quebec?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with over 100 million people displaced around the world, there are refugees everywhere. The migration crisis is global, and Canada is no exception. I can assure you that this is on our Minister of Immigration's radar, and I am quite certain that he will reach an agreement with Quebec's immigration minister. Yes, we recognize that Quebec has done more than its share, but we are here to contribute too. In recent years, we have transferred up to \$450 million to Quebec just to house asylum seekers. I am absolutely certain that we will make this happen.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we know that the minister is talking to Quebec about the \$460-million reimbursement for asylum seekers. We would remind her that the money available to the government does not belong to the government. It is the taxpayers' money, including Quebec taxpayers. The difference is that when the federal government is paying, Quebeckers pay their fair share. However, when Quebec is paying, Quebeckers

pay the whole bill. We provide 100% of the services and we pay 100% of the bill. The federal government does not provide services and does not pay a cent. Everyone understands that is not fair.

Will the Minister of Finance reimburse Quebec?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, the Minister of Immigration is in talks with Quebec's minister and I am confident an agreement will be reached. We contribute quite significantly, to the tune of \$700 million every year for welcoming immigrants in Quebec. We have transferred \$450 million over the past few years to house refugees. For the refugees and asylum seekers, we also provide temporary medical coverage, we are processing files more quickly, we are re-settling asylum seekers and we are making it easier to apply for work permits. Yes, we are doing our part.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we have here a difference of opinion. Quebeckers are welcoming half of all the asylum seekers who come to Canada. That is a lot more than our share. Quebeckers are paying 100% of that bill. That is also a lot more than our fair share. It is basically five times too much. We will continue to do our part and be welcoming, but we are not going to go along with being the only ones doing their part, the only ones being welcoming.

Will the Minister of Finance pay back the \$460 million she owes Quebeckers?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I repeat that I am quite confident that our government and the Government of Quebec will reach an agreement. It is true that Quebeckers have been very welcoming. We have worked together. To date, we have transferred \$450 million to house asylum seekers. We are covering the cost of temporary health coverage. We are expediting the processing of files. We are ensuring that work permits are issued quickly so that these people can support themselves. I am very confident that we will reach an agreement.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this Liberal-NDP government, farmers are struggling under the weight of this punishing carbon tax.

Oral Questions

Karen, a chicken farmer from Norfolk, pays \$350 every month in carbon taxes. When the Liberals quadruple the carbon taxes, she will be paying \$1,400 a month. Will the Prime Minister tell farmers like Karen how she is going to pay for the carbon tax hike? Should she charge Canadians more for food or should she produce less so that Canadians will be forced to import food from polluting foreign farms?

• (1445)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, it is a bit rich to hear Conservatives talk about support for farmers when they voted against support for farmers just last week.

As we support farmers in the transition so that they can reduce their dependency on fossil fuels, they can become more competitive in Canada and around the world. What are the Conservatives doing? They are voting against it. They say they are in favour of farmers but, unfortunately, their record speaks the opposite.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon taxes have very serious consequences. Karen deserves answers about how she is going to pay that \$1,400 a month in carbon taxes. The Prime Minister said that farmers are working hard to protect the environment, but instead of rewarding them, the Liberal-NDP government is taxing them into the ground.

Does the Prime Minister expect farmers like Karen to charge more or should she produce less so that Canadians will be forced to import food from polluting foreign farms?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we know that the Conservatives voted against farmers. They voted against taking action on climate change. They also voted against dental care. That means nine million people who they do not want to have access to dental care. We are talking about hundreds of thousands of seniors who they are saying are not going to be able to get dentures replaced if they were in government. They are talking about more than a million kids who they would say no to, that those kids cannot get critical dental care because they want to vote against it.

Their real agenda is cuts. When one looks through their slogans, that is all that is there.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what we did was vote non-confidence in the government as it needs to be replaced.

After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians from coast to coast are desperate for relief. A potato farming couple from Grand-Sault have seen their freight costs of oil rise over \$300,000 a year, due to the implementation of the carbon tax. Now, these Liberals plan to quadruple it, which would cost them \$1.2 million more in freight charges alone a year. How will the Prime Minister advise them to pay for this additional \$1.2 million? Will it be by raising prices on Canadians or should this farmer cut back on production so that Canadians are forced to import food from polluting foreign nations?

Hon. Seamus O'Regan (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the rest of us, at least on this side of the House, can see what is happening here. Those were not votes

against government programs. Those were all just non-confidence votes. "We did not mean any of that."

They think that what they just did there is all they have to do. What we do here is vote on the things. They voted against all the things. We have taped them all and we will be using them in ads, in answers to questions, talking to our constituents on each and every one of them. We will—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, thanks to the NDP, a public inquiry has been called by the government into serious allegations of foreign interference. The inquiry needs to investigate the Indian government, which allegedly ran a global assassination program that targeted and murdered a Canadian on Canadian soil. Other deeply concerning allegations have come up as well.

Does the minister agree with the NDP that the public inquiry should also investigate interference from the Modi government, including in the recent Conservative leadership campaign?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister told this House, this is an extremely serious matter. The safety of Canadians and the integrity of our rule of law is of fundamental importance. Law enforcement, including the RCMP and intelligence agencies, continue to investigate, in close collaboration with their U.S. counterparts. We expect the Government of India to cooperate fully with this investigation.

As it is an active investigation, we will not comment further.

* * *

• (1450)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the environment minister told our committee that "we need to pick up the pace" when it comes to fighting climate change. Notably, this is from the minister who is responsible for the pace in fighting climate change.

At COP28, the world called for a rapid move away from fossil fuels, yet, here at home, fossil fuel emissions are rising, the industry is expanding and this minister's key policy of the emissions cap will not come into effect until 2026. That is far too slow. Everyone knows it.

What will the minister do to pick up the pace?

Oral Questions

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is refreshing to have a question on the reality and the importance of climate change in this House. In fact, we are picking up the pace. When we came into power, in 2015, emissions were going through the roof and now we have been able to reduce emissions levels by 7% below the 2005 level. That is like removing more than 20 million cars, in terms of climate change pollution, from our roads. We know we have more to do and that is why, in the last year alone, we have introduced six new pieces of regulation to ensure that Canada reaches its target in 2030.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Ben Carr (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, indigenous people living in urban, rural and northern areas face unique challenges accessing adequate housing and do not qualify for support that is provided to indigenous people living on reserve. Through budgets 2022 and 2023, the government has committed to the codevelopment of a dedicated urban, rural and northern indigenous housing strategy to address these gaps.

Just last week, the House considered funding for this strategy. That is something that the Conservative leader voted to cut. Can the Minister of Indigenous Services tell us how this funding will be used to address the housing challenges facing indigenous people in urban, rural and northern areas?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week, it was shameful to see the Conservative Party members get up, all night long, to vote against all of the things that indigenous people need, such as health care, education and housing. While the Conservatives play games with people's lives, on this side we are hard at work. That is why it was so exciting to announce the next steps toward rolling out a historic \$4.3 billion toward "by indigenous, for indigenous" housing. That is what working for Canadians looks like.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Haass Acres has been operating as a family farm since 1930. The family farms about 2,000 acres, and this year they will pay \$10,000 in carbon tax, which will quadruple to \$40,000. That may not seem like a lot to the Prime Minister and his trust fund, but it is a lot to the Haass family.

Will the Prime Minister call Brian Haass? Will he explain to him how he expects him to pay this extra \$40,000? Should he raise prices on Canadians, or should he cut production so that Canadians are forced to import food from foreign polluting farms?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, just a few days ago, Conservative members voted against the interests of farmers. Just a few days ago, they also voted against measures to promote women's participation in the economy, against free menstrual products, against funding for sexual misconduct in-

vestigations and against subsidizing child care. What do the Conservatives have against measures that support women?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is classic Liberal deflection. When the Liberals are down, they will deflect at every fact they can.

These are the facts: Under the Prime Minister, housing prices have doubled. Under the Prime Minister, food bank usage is the highest in history. On the OECD, we rank 35 out of 38 in teen mental health. There is suicide.

Who feeds families? Farmers do. Who are the Liberals cutting? They are cutting out farmers. Will the Liberals axe the tax and make life affordable? The jig is up. Everybody knows the Liberals are not telling the truth.

The Deputy Speaker: We cannot say whether someone has been telling the truth or not telling the truth. Members are to be careful on that stuff.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservatives want to talk about deflection, it is because they do not want to talk about the vote they took against the Canada-Ukraine free trade agreement. There is only one member on the other side who has had the courage of her convictions to stand up to the bullying MAGA style of their leader, and that is the member for Lethbridge.

I heard a lot of members try to say that they support Ukraine over the past couple of days, but actions speak louder than words. Just a couple of days ago, the Conservatives voted against Canada's NATO mission in Ukraine. They need to stop deflecting. They should be honest with Canadians about why they are not supporting Ukraine. Is it because there are several members who are MAGA-style Conservatives? It is a question Canadians need to ask.

• (1455)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is embarrassing deflection from the party that sent back to Russia a gas turbine that is funding Putin's war. It is absolutely embarrassing for those Liberals. They have so much to answer for in how they have abandoned Ukraine where it counts.

Darren is a turkey farmer I spoke to today. He paid \$30,000 in the last year in carbon tax. By the time it is quadrupled, it will be almost \$120,000. My questions to those Liberals is simple. Do they expect him to raise costs, or to cut back production so that Canadians are forced to import food from polluting foreign jurisdictions?

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Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to food security, we always have to remember that the breadbasket of the world is a country called Ukraine. I am going to use the name of that country deliberately because, when one cannot—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît on a point of order. There seems to be an issue with the interpretation.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, this is too much. When interpreters tell us three times that it is too noisy to interpret and they are getting hurt, it is time to stop.

It is our last day. Let us be adults.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the members that we are almost done.

[*English*]

Let us try to keep the temperature down so we can get through this. Interpretation is a challenge on occasions when there is a lot of noise in the chamber.

The hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada.

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I use the term “Ukraine” deliberately because, when somebody who aspires to lead this nation is incapable of saying the term “Ukraine” and is calling that nation, which is fighting for its very existence, a faraway foreign land, I find that not just disrespectful to our ally, but immoral.

We, on this side of the House, will stand by Ukraine.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how embarrassing. This week, Liberals abandoned Israel at the United Nations, and the member should know that it is Canadian detonators that are ending up in the fields of Ukrainian farmers. They should be absolutely embarrassed and ashamed of themselves for abandoning the farmers of Ukraine.

When it comes to the cost that Canadian farmers are paying for the carbon tax, here is the reality. For Darren, he has to recoup \$120,000 somehow. This is an uncomfortable question because high prices are a feature, not a flaw, of the carbon tax. How do Liberals expect Darren to pay the bills?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member mentioned Ukraine. It was shameful to see Conservative MPs attempt, not once, but five times, to silence the MP for Etobicoke Centre when he pointed out the Conservative voting record against supporting Ukraine.

Former Conservative cabinet minister Peter Kent—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. We are almost at three o'clock, and the more we attack one another, the louder it is going to get in here. I would suggest that everybody bring it down a notch. Christmas is coming.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Mr. Speaker, former Conservative cabinet minister Peter Kent put it this way, “When partisan politics trumps principled unity and support for a valiant democracy.” He was referring to the Conservative record of voting against Ukraine and free trade. No amount of doublespeak or MP talking points will change that.

* * *

● (1500)

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 2023 has been an extremely difficult year for farmers: rising interest rates, rising input prices, floods, droughts. It is one thing after another.

Meanwhile, the federal government is abandoning them. Ottawa's investments in agriculture do not even amount to 5% of agricultural production value. That is four times less than in Europe.

The government must immediately set up an emergency fund for struggling farmers. We have been saying this for months. Canada also needs to claw its way up from the bottom of the world's agricultural investment rankings.

When is this government going to support our farmers?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I did meet with my hon. colleague yesterday, and I fully understand the concern he has. The program is under what we call the business risk management program, which is put together by the federal government, the provincial government and the territories. The guidelines have been put in place.

As I said yesterday to my hon. colleague, anything I can do to help the farmers in Quebec, I will do, but there are guidelines to follow.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, 2023 was a terrible year for our farmers. Fortunately, there is an easy way to make sure that 2024 is better.

The federal government can push back the January 18 loan forgiveness repayment deadline for the emergency account. That is an easy way to prevent farms from going bankrupt. It is an easy measure that will provide much relief to farmers who are working like mad, but are still walking a tightrope.

Could we please get some good news before the holidays? Will the government push back the January 18 deadline?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as far as the emergency business account is concerned, I would remind members that during COVID-19, our government was there to support businesses with the wage subsidy, the rent subsidy and the emergency account.

There are plans available for repaying the emergency account. Plan A, the business owner has the money, repays the government loan and qualifies for loan forgiveness. Plan B, the business owner takes out a commercial loan, repays the CEBA and qualifies for loan forgiveness. Plan C, the business owner stays with us for another three years and pays 5% interest.

* * *

[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, the cost of food production is at an all-time high. The truckers who transport our grain, deliver the fertilizer and the fuel farmers need, and haul our groceries to the stores for Canadians to buy, pay the carbon tax, but pass it along to the farmer and the consumer.

A trucking company in Swift Current pays \$20,000 per truck, per year, in carbon tax. Once the Prime Minister quadruples its cost to \$80,000, how does he expect it to pay for this? Will it be through raising prices on Canadians, or should our farmers cut back on production so we are forced to import food from polluting foreign farms?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the part that is quite incredible about the position taken by Conservatives under their leader's guidance is that, when they abandoned Ukraine, they were not just abandoning over one million Ukrainian Canadians here in Canada, but countless other east Europeans, thousands if not millions, who are also concerned with pushing back against Russian authoritarianism. Who am I talking about?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I want to make sure people keep it down so the interpreters can hear what they are translating.

The hon. Minister of Justice.

Hon. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, they are abandoning east European Canadians, Polish Canadians, Baltic Canadians, all of whom have a vested interest in pushing up against Russian authoritarianism under Putin. I wish Conservatives would show some support for that—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Lévis—Lotbinière.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have been tricked. After eight years of Liberal incompetence, Canadians are drowning in debt. They have been hit hard by eight interest rate hikes over a period of 18 months. Canadians spend

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more than 9% of their disposable income on interest payments alone. Some gift.

With debt payments rising faster than disposable income, will the costly Liberal-Bloc-NDP coalition take some pressure off interest rates by eliminating the carbon tax so as to stop ruining Canadians' lives?

• (1505)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the Conservatives.

With Christmas just around the corner, what a gift they have given Canadians. They voted against support for the aerospace sector. They voted against support for tourism businesses. Worse still, they voted against the Plains of Abraham. How on earth are Conservative MPs from Quebec going to explain to Quebecers why they voted against the Plains of Abraham? It is crazy.

Here on this side of the House, we are going to fight for Canadians. We are going to fight for jobs. We are going to fight for growth.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the best gift that Canadians could get in 2024 is a Conservative government.

Canadians are falling further and further behind every day under the costly Liberal-Bloc-NDP coalition. Quebecers are also spending more than 9% of their disposable income on interest. That is where voting for the Bloc Québécois in Quebec got them.

When will this government let Canadians choose their future? The options are clear. They can choose a coalition that wants to drastically increase taxes, or a good Conservative government that will put more money in the pockets of all Canadians.

Hon. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the gift came from the Conservatives last week when they put their ideology of budget cuts and austerity on full display. Cuts like those hamper Quebec's economic growth, especially in the tourism industry.

Why are Quebec Conservatives unwilling to make cuts to the tourism growth program on the Prairies, but happy to do so in Quebec, the north or Ontario? The Saguenay Fjord is less important than the Prairies. The Plains of Abraham are less important than the Prairies. The St-Tite western festival is less important than the Calgary Stampede. On this side of the House, we are there for all Quebecers. The Conservatives should be ashamed of themselves.

*Oral Questions**[English]***DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, racism has no place in Canada and never will.

This week, our government launched the renewed multiculturalism and anti-racism program and called for proposals to help organizations build capacity. This funding aims to help organizations have capacity to support their communities and foster inclusion.

Can the minister explain what actions the government has taken to address systemic racism and discrimination and celebrate our diversity?

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is absolutely right, this week we launched the call for proposals for the renewed multiculturalism and anti-racism program to help organizations build capacity.

This is yet another example of our government's unwavering commitment to addressing racism and promoting a more inclusive Canada. I wish I could say the same thing about the Conservative Party of Canada, which voted against Canada's anti-racism strategy and, just last week, voted against funding for the new Montreal Holocaust Museum and the redevelopment of the Jewish Community Centre of Greater Vancouver. It is shameful.

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INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government's billion-dollar green, or greed, slush fund is in a crisis of corruption.

The CEO resigned in disgrace. The Liberal-appointed board chair resigned in disgrace. The Auditor General is investigating. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is investigating two Liberal appointees. This week we heard from whistle-blowers that \$150 million was embezzled by Liberal insiders.

Canadians want to know: Where did the missing millions go, and who got rich?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians watching at home are seeing the Conservative ideology on full display.

These folks are so against climate change that they will go after anyone and any organization that wants to fight climate change, even an organization that was created 20 years ago by Parliament. Now they want to attack the integrity of one of the most respected audit firms in this country.

On this side of the House, we will get to the bottom of this, but we will keep investing in clean technology. We will keep investing to fight climate change. We will keep investing in Canadians.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only Liberals would think shovelling hundreds of millions of dollars into the pockets of their friends is doing anything to fight climate change.

They are under multiple investigations. It is Liberal appointees who are being investigated. It is absolutely despicable. Canadians are lined up at food banks in record numbers, and Liberal grifters and embezzlers are jamming their pockets full of Canadian tax dollars. Canadians want to know who got rich. Where did the missing millions go?

With an Auditor General investigation and two Ethics Commissioner investigations, is the RCMP next?

● (1510)

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know it is Christmas. Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own facts.

It is very clear and Canadians understand that what we are seeing on full display in the House is the Conservative ideology against anyone and any organization, even those created by Parliament. What we are seeing is on full display.

We launched an investigation. We suspended funding. The leadership has resigned. We will get to the bottom of this. We will restore confidence. We will keep investing to fight climate change in this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, friends of the Liberal Party keep getting richer at the expense of Canadians. Shocking whistle-blower testimony has revealed that \$150 million of taxpayers' money was diverted from the Liberal green fund. The Ethics Commissioner has launched two investigations. The Auditor General is also investigating. It does not take an ethicist to see the ethical breach here. Surprisingly, however, the Bloc Québécois voted against an investigation by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics to shed light on the green fund corruption.

Canadians want to know which Liberal friends got rich off their money.

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question because it gives me an opportunity, just before Christmas, to remind Canadians who may be watching of the Conservative ideology that has just been revealed. The Conservative ideology is to attack any person or organization that wants to fight climate change.

Today, the Conservatives are attacking an institution that was created by Parliament 20 years ago, and they are attacking the integrity of one of the country's leading accounting firms.

On this side of the House, we will continue to invest in climate action. We will continue to invest in green technologies. We will continue to invest in Canadians.

* * *

[English]

SPORT

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our children and all Canadians deserve a safe and responsible sport system that reflects our Canadian values of equality, fairness and inclusion. In other words, we need a system grounded in human rights, accountability, integrity and safety.

On Monday, the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity announced important measures that prioritize keeping our kids safe and keeping safe sport at the centre of sport governance and operations. Among other things, she announced the future of sport in Canada commission.

Can the minister share with the House details on the mandate of this commission?

Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the past two years, athlete survivors have bravely come forward to share their stories so that we can learn, so that we can make our processes more safe for our kids, and so that we could get to the point we have. Thanks to them, on Monday, we announced the future of sport commission, a trauma-informed, victims rights and human rights based process. We are going to dig into safe sport and make the entire system better.

* * *

TAXATION

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, big tech companies, like Amazon, Twitter and Uber, make billions of dollars a year and do not pay what they owe to Canadians. The Liberals said they would put a plan in place for a digital services tax by the end of this year, but they are delaying it. Canadians do not trust the Liberals and Conservatives to make big tech corporations pay their fair share, and this at a time when so many Canadians are struggling.

Will the government stand up for Canadians and implement a digital services tax, or will it bow down to American lobbyists?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is supportive of international efforts to end the corporate tax race to the bottom and ensure that the world's largest corporations do pay their fair share. Our priority, of course, has always been a multilateral approach, but we must defend our national interests. We will not accept a delay to the implementation of our own digital services tax without a clear timeline for an implementation with our global partners.

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INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, despite evidence on the misuse of international aid by Hamas, Canada recently pledged \$16.2 million to non-profit organizations

Oral Questions

in the region, including \$10 million to the UN Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, for its Palestinian programs.

How can Canada fund UNRWA when one of its own employees held an Israeli citizen hostage in Gaza? Hamas uses UNRWA buildings to launch rocket attacks. Over 100 Hamas terrorists attended UNRWA schools that teach anti-Semitism and Israel's elimination.

Will Canada review its UNRWA funding and suspend it if the agency is found to be in non-compliance with UN operational standards?

• (1515)

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had numerous meetings with the head of UNRWA, Mr. Lazzarini. The decision to cut funds during an unfolding humanitarian catastrophe is actually counterproductive and jeopardizes the delivery of essential food, medicine and other life-saving materials to those who need it the most. In these crucial times, trusted agencies, like UNRWA, must receive more support, not less.

It is great to see the hon. member use political points against vulnerable people in their time of need. I wish we had more compassion from members of the House like the hon. member.

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[Translation]

SERVICE PRESERVATION AT RADIO-CANADA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): 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:

That the House:

(a) affirm that Radio-Canada plays a crucial role in Francophone information and cultural vitality in Quebec and in Canada's Francophone and Acadian communities;

(b) recognize that the announced cuts could be detrimental to the promotion of French-language culture, at a time when the federal government recognizes that the French language is under threat in Canada;

(c) express its strong reservations of planned cuts at Radio-Canada and that it reiterates that the preservation of the public broadcaster's services in the various regions of Quebec and in Canada's Francophone and Acadian communities must be a priority.

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)

Business of the House

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Twice this week, I tried to table a document that the parliamentary secretary on environment quoted this morning in committee. I am convinced that, now—

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the member but I am already hearing “nays”.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I want to start by thanking everyone in this chamber for their hard work over the last year and share merry Christmas wishes with colleagues and all staff who work on and around the Hill. I also want to wish a special merry Christmas to those in uniform who are serving our country, especially those overseas who will be sacrificing time with family and their usual Christmas traditions in order to serve our country and advance freedom and justice in a troubled world.

I wonder if the government House leader could update the House about the planned calendar of business for the rest of this week and the work when we return. In particular, Liberals have claimed that they want to pass Bill C-57 on Canada-Ukraine free trade as soon as possible. If they are serious, I will propose a motion following the Thursday question to bring the deal to an immediate and final vote.

The motion will be that, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, all questions necessary for the disposal of the third reading stage of Bill C-57, an act to implement the 2023 free trade agreement between Canada and Ukraine, be deemed put and recorded divisions deemed requested and be not deferred.

I wonder if the government House leader could clarify whether the government intends to allow its bill to come to a vote or whether it intends to delay it for political reasons.

• (1520)

Hon. Karina Gould (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see that the hon. colleague wants to discuss Ukraine, because Conservatives have blocked and filibustered on several occasions when it comes to Bill C-57. They have moved concurrence motions several times.

I would also remind the member that I actually think it is really important that the Conservatives reflect over the holidays and perhaps consider changing their position, because it would be really nice to be able to show Ukraine that solidarity and unanimity that the House has always shown Ukraine. I am going to give them the time and space to reflect, to speak to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, to speak to Canadians of Ukrainian origin and to hear from them why this matters and why this is important, so that we can show the solidarity and unanimity that Canada has long been known for, which unfortunately the Conservatives, for reasons that I cannot understand but perhaps because of the right-wing American influence that we are seeing and the MAGA intentions of their leader, have decided not to support, based on falsehoods. Let us let them take the Christmas holidays to do that reflection.

This afternoon, we will continue with the second reading debate of Bill C-58 on replacement workers. Tomorrow, we will proceed with second reading debate of Bill S-9, which would amend the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act, again, another bill that we have not actually been able to debate because the Conservatives continue to move concurrence motions.

I want to take this opportunity to extend my best wishes for the season to everybody who works here on Parliament Hill and to all of my colleagues. I want to express a special gratitude to the employees here in the House of Commons who have done an absolutely tremendous job, even when they were forced to stay here for 30 hours during a marathon vote, which was difficult not just for members of Parliament but particularly for the staff who were forced to work overtime and stay up all night.

With that, I wish everybody in this chamber, and indeed all Canadians, a very merry Christmas and a very happy holiday season.

The Deputy Speaker: There is a point of order from the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I am not that optimistic, but in the spirit of hope and the season, I want to once again seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion—

Some hon. members: No.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member trying to run that, but obviously there is no unanimous consent on it.

Because of the “merry Christmas” that just came from the hon. House leader, I want to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and happy holidays. I look forward, believe that or not, to seeing members again when we come back in January.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River has a point of order.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Mr. Speaker, if you will indulge me, I thought I would share this gracious moment of kindness to express the NDP's wishes to everyone. I wish a very joyful and healthy holiday to all the people who work in this place.

We always owe a special thanks to the interpreters and translators, who work so hard to make sure we understand one another. I want to thank the PPS, which is always there to protect us and let us in the front way. I also want to thank the amazing Sergeant-at-Arms and their team for the tremendous work they do to keep all parliamentarians safe.

Of course, we cannot help but thank the dedicated maintenance, food services and IT staff, as well as the clerks at the table, who do tremendous work both here and in the committees. They do a stellar job every day.

Government Orders

I thank the analysts and the law clerk, who make sense out of a lot of things we sometimes find confusing, and the tremendous pages and their supervisors, who do great work around this place. I also thank all of the political teams who work in this place. They serve our caucuses and look after all of us in the best way.

I want to wish every Canadian a very safe and healthy holiday.

Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah and happy holidays to everyone.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Mr. Speaker, when my colleague from Manicouagan rose in the House, she eloquently commended all House staff and all staff responsible for procedure.

Now it is my turn to wish a happy holiday, a merry Christmas and a happy 2024 to everyone who helped simplify our work and who gave us their support along the way. There is no denying that the past parliamentary period has been difficult. I primarily want to thank my fellow whips, the government whip, the official opposition whip and the NDP whip. Despite everything, as my colleague said so well, we all work together to make Parliament run smoothly.

We hope that 2024 will be another positive year. I wish everyone health and happiness as they gather with their loved ones.

I wish the same to you, Mr. Speaker.

• (1525)

The Deputy Speaker: I want to thank everyone.

I think we forgot to thank all the staff in our offices, who work so hard every day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*Translation*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today on behalf of the Bloc Québécois to applaud Bill C-58, the anti-scab legislation. People have been waiting decades for this bill.

I am a Quebecker, and our anti-scab legislation was already in place when I was born. Now, a bill has been introduced. I would not go so far as to say that I was hoping for this back when I was two, but I will say that I have been waiting for it for decades.

The Bloc Québécois has been waiting for it, too. The Bloc Québécois has introduced several bills in the decades since 1990. My colleague from Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, who is still in the House, introduced the first bill on this subject. He was actually my MP at the time. Since then, 11 bills have been placed on the Order

Paper, evidence that the Bloc Québécois is determined to protect workers and protect the right to negotiate.

I want to thank all the Bloc Québécois MPs and teams before us who strove to advance the issue of justice and workers' rights. I would also like to thank my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville, who introduced Bill C-276 at the start of this Parliament. Her bill also seeks to ban the use of strikebreakers. My colleague worked tirelessly, just like the others I mentioned earlier. I commend her. She is persevering and willing to collaborate, someone who believes in social justice and who has a lot to teach the members of my caucus and, I hope, the other members of the House and all the people she meets and talks to about labour issues in particular.

There is an expression that I like a lot, and I use it whenever I can, although it is not mine, of course. It is the idea that, whenever we do something great, we were often building on the work of those who came before us. We are often dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants, if I may use a mythological or fairy tale image. We owe a lot to our predecessors. There are also other people who worked to pave the way for what we have achieved at this moment in history.

There are other political parties. I would like to acknowledge the work of the NDP on this matter, as well as the unions. When I say unions, I also mean workers. They are the giants. They are the ones who came to us and showed us the value, the necessity, of passing laws to protect the right to negotiate. I would like to thank all the people who got us here today. I hope that this will move faster through the House than it has in recent decades. It is urgent.

At the start of my speech, I mentioned that Quebec has had a law on the books since 1976. I am sure we can come up with something equivalent for areas under federal jurisdiction. Time is of the essence.

A bill has been introduced. We were waiting for it. In the current context, we are theoretically two years away from an election. We would like the work to move forward, for things to happen quickly. Of course, there is filibustering in the House, but we hope that within the next two years, the bill will be passed, will receive royal assent and will come into force immediately. However, the bill has an 18-month time frame. Why 18 months? We have been waiting for a bill for 50 years. Why can it not be implemented immediately? That is the first question. I think it is an essential question that we are asking.

Government Orders

• (1530)

We are also concerned about the part of the bill that sets out exceptions. We are still wary of the exceptions. Of course, it is relevant, but we still have to define what a “threat to the life, health or safety of any person” means. At first glance, it looks like it is intended to provide protection. We are not against virtue, but we also do not want this clause to become a kind of catch-all clause that allows employers to circumvent the bill and get out of having to uphold workers' right to freely negotiate.

Those are two elements I wanted to mention. The Bloc Québécois sees them as red flags. We would like to get answers very quickly. I presume that could be done in committee. If we can deal with these two elements that we have concerns about, we think the bill could be passed very quickly. I repeat, we want it to be passed and to receive royal assent, but we also want it to come into force as soon as it receives royal assent so we can protect as many workers as possible by defending their rights.

I spoke about equity and rights, and I would like to touch on that again. Reduced to its simplest expression, the bill simply aims to level the playing field. If one of the parties to the negotiations has all the power, it is difficult for the other party to assert their needs, desires and rights. I think it is almost a truism, it is so obvious. What we want to do is to restore the balance of power so that workers can also participate in the negotiations. This will allow them to reach a compromise solution quickly and effectively at the bargaining table, which would be a win-win. It is good for workers, but also for employers, which, in my opinion, have everything to gain from a law that will allow the parties to sit at the table and settle disputes quickly.

I have managed to address only three of the 10 points I wanted to get to, so I will pick up the pace.

I would remind members that the holidays are approaching and that the Bloc Québécois has always been a workers' party. We have always tried to defend workers. Manicouagan is a riding where there are a lot of workers under federal jurisdiction, in particular in the air and rail transport sectors. There are also a lot of people who work for the post office. There are workers under federal jurisdiction everywhere in Quebec and Canada, but there are a lot in my riding. I think about them, about the people in Quebec City and the dock workers at the Port of Québec, for example, who have been in a labour dispute for more than a year now. This dispute has been going on for a long time and it cannot be settled, precisely because there is an unfair power relationship. The employer has more power than the employees.

I would also like to remind my colleagues in the opposition of the following. I do not want to put words in the mouth of my colleague from Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, but I think he said earlier that he was worried that workers would cause inflation as a result of their demands in the negotiations for a new collective agreement. I find that kind of talk dangerous. I would like him to discuss the matter with his Conservative colleagues from the Quebec City region, who are likely, if I am not mistaken, to join him in voting against this bill. They would be voting against the people in the ridings adjacent to the Quebec City region, who have already been paying the price for more than a year because MPs do

not want to vote for a bill that would level the playing field in labour negotiations.

I will conclude with this. I hope that the Conservatives will get around to telling us their position on the bill soon. That being said, the Bloc Québécois will give the bill its full support, because we care about workers.

• (1535)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the issue of anti-scab legislation has been important to me and I know to many of my colleagues for many years. It is encouraging to have the legislation before us. It was an election platform issue for the Liberal Party, and inside the chamber we have substantial support for it from the Bloc and the NDP. Even the Conservatives, when they go around the country, often say they are there for the working person. I think we have a wonderful opportunity here to see this debate collapse and send the bill to committee.

I wonder if the member could share her thoughts on my perspective. How nice would it be to see the debate collapse today so the bill will at least have a chance to go to committee sooner as opposed to later? I think that would be a wonderful gift at Christmas for the labour movement in Canada. Would she agree?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I have a few things to say to the member for Winnipeg North about his comment.

First, there is a difference between words and actions. Yes, that was part of the Liberal Party's election platform. However, it is important to consider the number of years that the Liberals were in power over the past 40 years and the number of years that they formed a majority government, when they could have implemented such a bill but did not.

I understand that it can be a long process, but results have to be achieved at some point. That is often what happens with minority governments. It is a bit like being at the bargaining table. When one person does not have all the power, then we can negotiate and make compromises and find solutions for people.

Of course, I agree with my colleague that this would be a nice Christmas gift. I, too, would like to be able to say that the Liberal Party kept its election promises regarding employment insurance reform. I know a lot of people in my riding of Manicouagan are going to be facing the spring gap this year. I am sure that is also true for other people across Canada. For 40 years, since Lloyd Axworthy's time, the government has been promising reforms to help people who have to face the spring gap.

That would be an excellent Christmas gift, and so I am waiting for that reform.

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Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Manicouagan for her speech. Of course, I recognize that she and her political party have long supported legislation to prevent replacement workers. We in the NDP are very proud to have forced the Liberals to make that happen. It was an essential condition of the agreement we negotiated with them. Let us not forget that the Liberals have always voted against such bills in the past.

While there are things my colleague and I agree on, such as the benefits of this bill, there are Quebeckers who are currently suffering from the absence of such a bill. I am thinking of the dock workers at the Port of Quebec, as well the Videotron employees in western Quebec, in Gatineau, who are in a labour dispute.

Is my colleague prepared, before the law is enacted, to speak out against employers who use replacement workers, like the Port of Québec or Pierre Karl Péladeau?

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, allow me to repeat it for my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie: We want it to be fair, we want there to be a balance of power.

In my mind, there are no exceptions. We are talking about a bill. In the end, it is really what we want. I am focusing on the principle: We want a balance of power, fairness. That is what the Bloc Québécois wants, and we will be prepared to support the bill.

• (1540)

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Manicouagan for the hard work she does for workers in her riding and the bills she has introduced for them over the years.

I would like her thoughts on Bill C-58, on its urgency and the good news it offers. In the meantime, there are flaws in this bill, including the 18-month requirement. Is that really necessary? Is there no way for this to come into force immediately?

My colleague told us that her notes list 10 points, but she only got to the third one. I would like to know what her eighth point was.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member has 45 seconds remaining to answer the question.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I have to go through my notes. I always have a plethora of ideas. Of course, I agree with my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue on the timeline. It does not hold water.

We are ready. We have been for 50 years, likely. We are voting for the bill and then we are off to the races. Any questions on that 18-month delay can be asked when the bill is in committee. This could come into force quickly. I do not think this is complicated. We have seen the government act very quickly when it wants to. I think it is a matter of will and not a matter of whether it is possible.

I cannot say what my eighth point was. We can talk about it later since I am out of time. We are ready to vote.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is great to stand

here today with a great piece of legislation that is going to help out Canadian workers and help our economy get to the next level. We believe that Canadian workers have the right to fair, honest and balanced negotiations, where replacement workers are not waiting in the wings to take their jobs.

That is why we have introduced this legislation, to ban the use of replacement workers in federally regulated workplaces. I have negotiated on both sides of the table, for the employer and for the union. I know for a fact that the best deals are always at the table. I know for sure that banning replacement workers puts that focus on the table to get the best deals possible.

This is where workers get those powerful paycheques that our Conservatives like to talk about. It is where Canadian workers secure reliable benefits and job security. The bargaining table is where Canadian workers secure changes and investments that make their workplaces much safer.

The threat of replacement workers tips the balance in the employers' favour. It is unfair and contrary to the spirit of true collective bargaining. Ultimately, replacement workers give employers an incentive to avoid the bargaining table. It is a distraction that can prolong disputes and can poison workplaces for years after. We have seen it throughout our history, both locally in my riding and across Canada.

Conservatives like to perpetuate the myth that workers want to strike. They pretend that workers have some devious plan to halt our economy. This could not be further from the truth. Workers drive our economy. Positive labour relations make Canada a great place to invest, which we have seen so much of recently.

Striking is a last resort for workers. Nobody wants to lose their benefits and live off strike pay. It is an anxious, uncertain state for anyone. It can hurt a family's financial and psychological well-being. Our government believes that it is in everybody's best interest to ensure that workers, employers and the government work together to build a strong, stable and fair economy that we all rely on.

Unlike the Conservatives, we will not feel threatened when workers use their bargaining power to demand better wages and better working conditions. As the Minister of Labour has said, bargaining is hard work. It is tense and messy, but it works really well.

I met regularly with my constituents about labour issues, including the Sault Ste Marie and District Labour Council and the United Steelworkers, just to name a few. They are thrilled that we are doing this at a federal level. They want to see the same kind of leadership to benefit provincial workers in Ontario as well.

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Just last week, I was at the Standing Committee on International Trade, where Robert Ashton, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Canada, said the following: “If Bill C-58 had actually been in use for the last couple of years, all these lockouts and these strikes, where the employers have been using scabs and have drawn it out, would have been a lot shorter.”

He joined a chorus of union leaders who supported this legislation. This includes the United Steelworkers Union, which reported, “Federal anti-scab legislation will help 80,000 USW members and approximately one million workers across Canada.”

Lana Payne, the national president of Unifor, said, “This legislation is a step toward levelling the playing field. It will be good for the economy and good for labour relations”.

I know the opposition does not listen to workers, but maybe the Conservatives might listen to the 70 labour experts who signed an open letter calling on Canadian policy-makers to support Bill C-58. The letter states, “By adopting Bill C-58, Parliament has a historic opportunity to advance workers' rights and improve labour relations in federally-regulated workplaces by:

“Strengthening the collective bargaining process and levelling the playing field in contract disputes;

“Banning the use of strikebreakers that inflame tensions and poison workplaces [for very long periods of time];

“Reducing instances of picket violence and vandalism;

“Incentivizing employers to focus on reaching negotiated settlements at the bargaining table rather than strategizing over how to best undermine union members exercising their right to strike.

“Bill C-58 offers practical and meaningful measures that would help to address longstanding imbalances in the labour relations regime.”

• (1545)

We have heard from experts, from labour leaders and from Canadian workers. We have also heard from members of the NDP, the Bloc and the Green Party, who have expressed their support for this legislation. However, we have not heard from the Conservatives. In fact, today, the CLC continues to issue statements calling on the Conservatives to tell us what their position is.

It is no surprise that the Conservative leader, who has spent his entire career standing against working people, has not shown his hand. He proclaimed himself dedicated to bringing the right-to-work laws to Canada. These notorious U.S. laws are aimed at undermining unions; ultimately, they are about worse conditions and smaller paycheques. The Leader of the Opposition has enthusiastically served wealthy interests most of his life. Under the previous government, he championed two of the most anti-union, anti-worker bills that the House has ever seen: Bill C-525 and Bill C-377. We repealed them right away. In 2005, he even opposed child care, because the workers would be unionized.

Actions speak louder than words. Recently, the Conservatives have been opposing Bill C-50, the sustainable jobs act, which would bring workers to the table so that workers decide how we meet our economic opportunities. Instead, the Conservatives sub-

mitted 20,000 amendments at committee and then tried to submit another couple of hundred frivolous amendments to put the brakes on it. The race is on to seize the greatest opportunity of our time, which is to unlock the potential of renewables, to create thousands of jobs and to drive sustainable economic growth. Right now, companies are deciding where to invest and build. The Liberal government is meeting this momentum, but the Conservatives are throwing temper tantrums.

Now Conservatives, again, have not told us where they stand with respect to Bill C-58. In fact, in 2016, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan opposed similar legislation, arguing that replacement workers offered opportunities for the unemployed to gain temporary work and valuable experience. Think about being so out of touch with working Canadians that one thinks temporary jobs to replace working Canadians are somehow a solution. More recently, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster complained that similar legislation would result in a higher share of company profits going to unionized workers. In a time of record corporate profits, it is hard to imagine being upset that working Canadians might get a greater share of the profits that they are responsible for producing.

We know how important this legislation is to Canada's labour unions and the workers they represent. We know that experts support this bill. The bill has the support of the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party. I urge my Conservative colleagues to reconsider their efforts to oppose working Canadians and consider, just this once, actually supporting workers.

• (1550)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order to seek the unanimous consent of the House to revert to presenting reports from interparliamentary delegations to allow me to table a report from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Some hon. members: No.

[*English*]

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, we know, from information from various sources, that thousands of employees from Korea and other places will be coming in to take jobs that are subsidized by Canadian taxpayers. If my colleague had had an opportunity to be at the drafting table for this piece of legislation, would he have put in something to ensure that foreign workers would not be getting the largesse from the publicly funded investments into electric vehicle battery plants here in Canada? Why are we not actually protecting Canadians with an investment using Canadian tax dollars?

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Mr. Terry Sheehan: Madam Speaker, this legislation is long overdue. It has been called for by Canadian workers since before Canada was even a country. It would absolutely strengthen this economy and continue to grow our country, the greatest place to work, live and play. I can say that we did a lot of consulting. We consulted with workers, with labour representatives, with employers and with indigenous communities, who helped us craft this very important legislation. It is long overdue, and I would ask that member to support Bill C-58.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, to begin, I would like to take this opportunity to wish a happy holiday and a good vacation to everyone in the House, but mostly to the people of Berthier—Maskinongé, who have worked so hard over the past year. I hope they get time with their loved ones. I wish the same for my colleague who just made his speech, because I know him well enough to wish him a merry Christmas.

If we know each other well enough to wish each other a merry Christmas, I imagine we know each other well enough to provide really good, accurate answers. That is the gift I want this holiday season. I would like for him to explain, in all honesty and frankness, the rationale behind this 18-month delay. Quebec has had equivalent legislation for 47 years, which means that workers' rights are not equal. It works very well in Quebec.

How is it that the government ends up introducing this bill after years of promises and then imposes an 18-month delay before it comes into force? I would like a real answer.

Mr. Terry Sheehan: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague and wish him a merry Christmas as well.

[*English*]

The period of 18 months is there because we have a proud history of tripartism in this country, bringing employers, workers and the government together to make sure we get the balance right. It is in that spirit that we are giving all the parties time to prepare and because there are the most significant changes that Canada has ever seen and that we all agree on in federal collective bargaining, it cannot be rushed.

In particular, the Canada Industrial Relations Board needs time to build capacity and work closely with employers and unions on the implementation of these changes. When the bill comes into force, the following 18 months, as the member knows, will give the parties the time to adapt to the new requirements and obligations that this country has not seen before.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in my friend's comments, he referred to other pieces of legislation the Liberals overturned that Stephen Harper had put in place. When I look at this anti-scab legislation, it was part of the election platform that the member and I ran on. I am quite happy with the legislation.

I posed this question to other opposition members. We know the Bloc and the NDP are supporting it. We are not sure what the Conservatives are going to do as of yet, though they say they are for workers. Would it not be wonderful thing for the debate to collapse

so that the bill could go to committee before Christmas and a wonderful gesture for the union movement in Canada?

• (1555)

Mr. Terry Sheehan: I wish a merry Christmas to all my constituents.

Those two pieces of legislation made it very difficult for unions to operate. It made it difficult to certify their members, easy to decertify them and tried to bury them in red tape. I was pleased to run under that banner and run again when we put pro-union and pro-worker legislation in our platform. This is a promise made and a promise kept.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to be able to rise in the House today to speak to this important bill, Bill C-58, which I do want to note is a part of the confidence-and-supply agreement that we have with the government. I want to quote from a section of that agreement under the heading, "A better deal for workers". It reads:

Introducing legislation by the end of 2023 to prohibit the use of replacement workers, "scabs," when a union employer in a federally regulated industry has locked out employees or is in a strike.

That was an important part of the agreement. That is why I am so happy to see this bill. We need to stand in this place every single day as representatives of our constituents and show that we are here to fight for workers. They deserve our respect, better wages and better working conditions. When we look at the history of collective bargaining in this country, it is the union movement that has done that.

I think of my own riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, going back to the 1920s and the 1930s. I come from a part of Canada where the forestry industry was dominant. If members ever go out to British Columbia, to the beautiful forests of Vancouver Island, they will see trees that they would have thought could only exist in their imagination. There was a massive timber industry. It was back then during the labour unrest of the 1920s and the 1930s from the absolutely brutal working conditions that workers were subjected to, with low pay, dangerous working conditions and everything else, when the worker militancy in the forests of British Columbia was born. Those workers used their power to fight for rights. That is a small part of the history of Canada. I am so proud of that heritage from the part of the world that I come from.

I am so proud to be a member of a party that is of the workers and for the workers. Everyone knows, of course, that our party, the NDP, was formed in 1961 as an alliance between the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Canadian Labour Congress. We carry that heritage proudly with us to this day.

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This bill is particularly important because, in the last 15 years, the NDP has introduced eight anti-scab bills. The last time they came up for a vote in 2016, it was the Liberals and the Conservatives that teamed up together to defeat it. We often are accused of having a short memory in this place, so I will say that into the record. In 2016, it was the Liberals and the Conservatives that teamed up together to defeat our last attempt to bring in anti-scab legislation.

I do not know where the Conservatives are going to stand on this bill. They have tried so desperately and spent millions of dollars to try and recast themselves as a party for the workers. They like to make their YouTube videos. I have yet to see the Leader of the Opposition out on a picket line. I still do not know where they are going to stand on this bill. Every time it has come to actual action to stand up for workers, they are more interested in their words. This is a moment to stand in this place through a vote to show that they are in favour of actual legislative change that is going to help the working movement.

I am proud that we have not given up on this issue. That is why we can stand here proudly, offer our support to Bill C-58 and show the workers of Canada that we are committed to moving this forward, to making sure that the Canada Labour Code is there for workers and that it has that important change. We know that this bill would not be moving forward if it had not been spelled out in the agreement and we know that this bill will require multiple party support to advance to the next stage.

I have a few theories as to why the Conservatives have been so absent in this debate. The few times that they have gotten up and put speakers on this bill, they have talked about anything but the bill. In fact, we have often had to raise points of order in the House to try and bring them back on topic. One of my theories is that the Conservatives, under the previous prime minister Stephen Harper, have a long and brutal legislative track record against workers, particularly ones who work under federal jurisdiction.

We can go back to 2007, when the Conservatives introduced Bill C-46, the Railway Continuation Act. That was back-to-work legislation against railway workers. It forced 2,800 members of the United Transportation Workers Union at CN Rail back to work: the drivers, yard-masters and trainmen. It forced them back to complying with pretty brutal demands from the employer. Fast-forward to 2011 and Bill C-6, the Restoring Mail Delivery for Canadians Act, which forced 48,000 locked-out postal workers back to work and imposed wage raises lower than what the employer had agreed to earlier. Fast-forward to 2012 and Bill C-33, when again the Conservatives intervened, this time between Air Canada and its employees—

• (1600)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I have yet to hear about what is good or bad about the bill, so if he could get on with the point.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows there is a lot of latitude in how members present their speeches on a bill.

I will let the hon. member pursue.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I understand why he is uncomfortable with my speech right now. I am talking about a history of the Conservative government intervening and forcing workers back to work when we are talking about a bill, Bill C-58, which is designed to protect those collective bargaining rights. That is the context of my speech. I understand if he is uncomfortable taking a little walk down memory lane as we talk about Bill C-58.

We can also talk about 2012, when again the Conservative government intervened in a railway strike, demonstrating again it has no problem using a legislative sledgehammer against unions and workers. I hope on Bill C-58 its members stand up one day to vote in favour of this bill.

It was not just the government, because in the previous Harper government we had two private members' bill, Bill C-525 and Bill C-377—

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I already asked politely. Can he please get to the point and talk about the bill?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member started off his speech by talking to the bill, so I am not going to limit his latitude in discussing the bill within the framework of what we are talking about.

The hon. member may continue.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I am talking about Bill C-58, but in talking about that bill, we need to put it in a historical context of why the Conservatives have been so anti-worker and so anti-union and have been repeatedly unafraid to use a legislative sledgehammer against workers and their unions in federally regulated sectors. That is what Bill C-58 is designed to protect, and Canadians need to understand they have a long history of being anti-worker and anti-union. This is a chance for them to try to redeem themselves from that shameful history.

Before the Liberals think they are going to get off the hook in my speech, let us turn to the Liberals and back-to-work legislation because both of these parties are equally guilty when it comes to that.

In 2018, the Liberals brought in Bill C-89, which ended the postal strikes and forced the Canadian Union of Postal Workers back to work.

In 2021, there was Bill C-29, which ended the strike of CUPE local 375 and its fight against the Port of Montreal.

Before my Conservative colleagues get a little too high on their horse, I would like to point out for both of those bills the Conservatives supported the Liberals, showing that when it comes to controlling workers and fighting against their interests, these parties more often than not have been voting in lockstep.

This is important, because if we look at the different lines of work that are covered by the Canada Labour Code we are talking about federally regulated workers in air transportation, banks, grain elevators, feed and seed mills, most federal Crown corporations, ports, marine shipping and ferries, canals, bridges and pipelines, postal and courier service, radio and television broadcasting, railways and many more. This legislation would impact thousands of workers, and it is important we show a united front and demonstrate that as members of Parliament we have their backs and are putting in legislative safeguards.

The history of Canada is one of labour fighting for its rights against corporations. There has been too much corporate deference over the last number of decades, and I am proud to see how that pendulum is starting to swing back into workers' favour these days. They are becoming more militant, more assured of their rights and more ready to use their collective bargaining to achieve those more powerful working conditions and better paycheques for themselves. I am proud to be able to stand in this place and offer them support.

Seeing as I am in the closing minute of my speech, I want to take this final opportunity I have in the House to wish all of my colleagues from all political parties a very merry Christmas and a very happy new year. We have had strong and principled debates and arguments in this place, but I hope everyone in this place has the opportunity over Christmas to spend some much needed time with their families and their friends and to reconnect with their constituents. I look forward to seeing everyone back here in 2024 as we continue the hard work of governing this country.

* * *

• (1605)

[*Translation*]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House to present the report of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

[*English*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-58, An Act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is nice to see the anti-scab legislation. This legislation was promised to Canadians in the Liberal Party's election platform.

I notice the member seemed to take a bit of delight when he was talking about back-to-work legislation. What he did not mention is that provincial NDP governments have also brought in back-to-

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work legislation, so I do not think it is quite as simple as the member tries to portray it. To the member's disadvantage to a certain degree, I was a parliamentarian in the Manitoba legislature for many years and the NDP did not bring in back-to-work legislation. In fact, as a compromise, it brought in final offer selection.

Would the member agree that it appears we have good support inside the chamber from at least the NDP, the Bloc and the Liberals? Conservatives go around the country saying that they support workers. Would it not be a wonderful thing to see this legislation pass to the committee stage? It would make a wonderful statement if that was unanimous. At the end of the day, with Christmas upon us, it would make a powerful statement for our unionized and non-unionized workers.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I cannot speak for members of the other parties, but we want to see this bill advance through all stages of the House.

I want to remind my hon. colleague that this is an issue the NDP has been fighting for for many years. We have the record to prove it: eight attempts with eight different bills and a united vote by both Liberals and Conservatives in 2016 to squash one of those legislative efforts.

I am not going to interfere with the right of my NDP colleagues who want to speak to this bill at second reading to demonstrate that history and the renewed commitment to workers in federally regulated places. We have their backs and are putting in legislative safeguards so that their collective bargaining rights will not be undermined by scab labour and big powerful corporations.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the past year, I have been visiting work sites throughout the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. The Leader of the Opposition has been there, and we have had a great response, whether from the forestry sector, fishers, shipbuilding, welders or trades unions. They want to get pictures. They want to be there. They want to share their concerns.

What concerns union workers the most is the cost of living. I talked to one welder at Seaspan Shipyards who said that he has to work seven days a week, 12 hours a day just to make ends meet. He cannot give his body a rest because of the cost of living caused by the inflationary spending of the Liberal-NDP government.

I wonder if the member would respond to that, the real bread-and-butter issues for workers.

• (1610)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I would like to ask where the member has been. We have seen all the evidence of corporations making record profits while workers suffer.

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Of course inflation is hurting workers. It is hurting workers in my riding. It is hurting workers from coast to coast to coast. However, we know it is corporate profits driving inflation. Oil and gas profits are up by over 1,000% over the last three years, with crickets from Conservatives. Grocery CEOs are making bonuses and driving their companies to record profits, with crickets from the Conservatives.

I will stand in this place and talk about the cost of living, but unlike my Conservative colleagues, I am going to name the Conservatives who are driving inflation and show the workers in my riding who their actual friend is, not just their perceived friend.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and his last answer in which he talked about the crickets we often get from the Conservatives. I find that very interesting and relevant.

I would like him to comment on the 18-month delay being placed on the bill's coming into force. I do not understand that. We have had similar legislation in Quebec for 47 years. I think we know how this works and we have demonstrated that it would work.

What does my colleague think of that and how does he explain this insistence on imposing an 18-month delay? This does not make sense to me.

[*English*]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, that is indeed a great question from my hon. colleague, whom I have the pleasure of sitting with on the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

All I can say at second reading stage is that this is a debate and vote on the principle of the bill, and that is one provision of the bill that I have personally identified as problematic. That is something I hope my colleagues from all parties who are sitting on committee will take a close, hard look at, because I do not understand why we need that length of time when this issue is so serious and workers need legislative safeguards to make sure they have an even hand with their employers.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): 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 Calgary Rocky Ridge, Housing; the hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepeewa, Carbon Pricing; the hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam, Housing.

[*English*]

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand today in support of Bill C-58.

On November 9, 2023, we tabled Bill C-58 to ban the use of replacement workers in federally regulated industries during a strike or a lockout. When the Minister of Labour argued his case, he clearly illustrated how resorting to strikebreakers does no good for anyone: not for employers, not for strikers and certainly not for

Canadians. However, the minister reminded us that hiring replacement workers in 2023 is still legal.

We have seen many examples where a workplace that has been poisoned over the years, often including the use of replacement workers, experiences long and frequent work stoppages. Each side will argue its position, but ultimately, the use of replacement workers can undermine the rights of workers.

Addressing the use of replacement workers is long overdue. Unions have repeatedly told us that using replacement workers can poison relationships, prolong disputes and keep people from focusing on getting an agreement at the bargaining table. That is not good for either side and it is especially bad for the Canadian economy.

The Canadian labour movement has long been asking for this, and we have listened. The unions explained that allowing replacement workers undermines workers' rights to strike, and that gives employers the upper hand. They argued that this imbalance of power leads to more difficult bargaining processes and makes strikes and lockouts longer.

The government believes in free and fair collective bargaining because we know that is how the best deals are reached, deals that bring stability and certainty to our supply chains and services because they are built on agreements and compromises between the parties. Thorough collective bargaining and stability are not mutually exclusive, as some might argue. In fact, I believe that one reinforces the other.

That belief is at the core of the legislation we introduced on November 9. Bill C-58 proposes to ban new hires and contractors from doing the work of striking or locked-out employees. If it is a full strike where everyone is supposed to stop working, employers would not be able to use members of that bargaining unit and have them cross the picket line, even to work from home, for example.

We are going beyond a simple prohibition. We are proposing clear timelines to address issues with the maintenance of activities provisions in the Canada Labour Code. If and when the bill comes into force, the parties will have 15 days to come to an agreement on what services they need to maintain to protect the public from immediate and serious danger during a work stoppage.

If they cannot come to an agreement, the matter would have to be referred to the Canada Industrial Relations Board to resolve within 90 days. That is important because right now, if negotiating parties have to go to the board for this kind of decision, it can take months or even over a year. During that time, the right to strike or lockout is suspended while the parties present arguments in that forum.

It is also a distraction from the central issue, which is the collective agreement that they are meant to be negotiating. This bill is about keeping parties focused on the table so we can provide more stability and certainty for the economy.

I do not think it is overstating to say this would be the biggest thing to happen to collective bargaining in Canada in decades. We recognize that the ability to form a union, bargain collectively and strike is essential to a healthy workforce. Tensions can be extremely high during a work stoppage, and this only gets compounded by the use of replacement workers, which many people feel poisons the atmosphere, makes it hard for relationships to come back to normal and can prolong disputes.

We need employers and unions to come to the table ready to bargain and to get serious about getting things done. This legislation is pushing us in that direction. The lesson from history is that collective bargaining is successful when the parties recognize they have to sit down and negotiate fairly with each other.

The ban on the use of replacement workers would set the table for free and fair collective bargaining. The timelines for establishing maintenance of activities agreements would add structure to that portion of the bargaining process. It is amazing what happens when we allow room for unions and employers to come to a deal. That is where strong labour relations are forged, where the best deals are made and where we get stability for our economy.

As the Minister of Labour said, “Our economy depends on employers and workers negotiating an agreement at the table.” By tackling head-on the problem of poisoned workplaces and prolonged disputes, this legislation would bring more stability, more certainty and better collective agreements. We believe that stability and certainty in our supply chains and services are essential. This bill would deliver on that. It is good for unions, good for employers and good for Canadians.

• (1615)

Quebec has had a ban on replacement workers for going on close to five decades now. Successive governments have protected the legislation because they recognize its importance. In British Columbia, we have seen the same thing, and successive governments there have also maintained the legislation. It is important to point out that neither of those economies has collapsed. Businesses continue to open, operate and be profitable in those jurisdictions.

The legislation before us is not anti-employer, nor is it unreasonable. I know that unions are often seen as wanting to take away something from employers, but when workers are better off, we all benefit. Tackling problems is hard work, but when two parties sit down together to defend their interests, they find compromises and an agreement. Bill C-58 would encourage unions and employers to do exactly that.

Bea Bruske, who is the president of the Canadian Labour Congress, said, “The legislation will lead to less labour disruptions, fewer work stoppages and will help build a more balanced economy”. Lana Payne, who leads Unifor’s nearly 70,000 members, said, “Finally, a government is taking important steps to uphold workers’ fundamental right to [collective bargaining]”. She said that collec-

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tive bargaining is something that would change lives, lift workers up and build equality and equity.

I would encourage all members to read the bill and to read what union leaders are saying, because what we have done here is so important to our economy. This is about the stability and the certainty that come with not being distracted by anything other than finding the solution at the table. That is where strong and lasting contracts are formed.

With clear and fair rules in place, we may be able to avoid unnecessary strikes and lockouts, which would create more stability for Canadians and more certainty for investors. That is what we would be doing with Bill C-58. It is a strong bill that reflects needed change in this country. It is how we build a successful economy and a successful country. The time to get this done is now. That is why I am asking each member to support Bill C-58.

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L’Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, given that we both sit on the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, my colleague has witnessed conversations that have been had and even motions that have been moved to find out why the government has allowed the use of foreign workers in the battery plants, which are currently under construction and will eventually be operational.

I would like to know from my colleague whether the current bill would have prevented situations like the one about to happen with workers from South Korea, Sweden and other countries coming to work in Canada to replace Canadian workers.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Madam Speaker, the unions in Windsor have very clearly told us that this is not the case and that the jobs are going to be offered to Canadians and the citizens of our country.

This bill is important, because it ensures that these parties are focused on the negotiating table. That is how we will regain stability and certainty in our supply chains and throughout our economy.

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Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, we remember the brutal 2011 Vale strike in Sudbury. Stephen Harper and Tony Clement allowed Inco and Falconbridge, two world-class mining companies, to be taken over by the corporate raider, Glencore. Then, Vale came in to try to break the back of the working class in Sudbury. Workers were out for over a year. It caused huge damage to the community, but people stood up, resisted and fought for better wages. I want to ask the member, who was in Sudbury at the time, about the damaging impacts of these kinds of strikes and the need to make sure we have rules in place so workers can negotiate fair agreements with their employers.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Madam Speaker, I certainly was in Sudbury during that strike, and I will tell members that the legacy of it still haunts Sudburians to this day, as well as people from across northern Ontario. We had colleagues in dispute with one another, and neighbours arguing with each other. We talk about a poisoned work environment; after the strike, when workers returned, the relationship with Vale was not in any way in a healthy state, because of what went on for over a year. We saw families being impoverished. We saw their homes being put in jeopardy. Luckily, there were local bank branches that helped people to be able to still afford the payments they needed to make. It was difficult on the community of Sudbury. It is something that we still feel today. That is why the legislation is so very important: to avoid having that kind of situation ever happen again.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was wondering whether my hon. colleague could comment on the rationale of the government for the 18-month implementation date for the legislation, and why the government would preclude the largest employer group, the federal public service, from being part of it.

Ms. Viviane Lapointe: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks, this is probably the largest legislation that we have seen in decades.

We need to make sure that we get it right. This would be, indeed, one of the most significant changes to federal collective bargaining that Canada has ever seen. We need to give all parties time to prepare. That is the reason why it would only come into force 18 months after it receives royal assent, to give employers, unions and the Canada Industrial Relations Board time to adapt to their new requirements and their obligations. This is significant. If we are going to be successful in its execution, we need to make sure that we give all those parties the time that they need.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-58, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Industrial Relations Board Regulations, 2012.

I will read the summary of this bill, because I think it is important. The bill has the following objectives:

- (a) amend the scope of the prohibition relating to replacement workers by removing the requirement of demonstrating a purpose of undermining a trade union's representational capacity, by adding persons whose services must not be used during legal strikes and lockouts and by providing certain exceptions;

- (b) prohibit employers from using, during a legal strike or lockout intended to involve the cessation of work by all employees in a bargaining unit, the services of an employee in that unit, subject to certain exceptions;

- (c) make the contravention by employers of either of those prohibitions an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$100,000 per day;

- (d) authorize the Governor in Council to make regulations establishing an administrative monetary penalties scheme for the purpose of promoting compliance with those prohibitions; and

- (e) amend the maintenance of activities process in order to, among other things, encourage employers and trade unions to reach an earlier agreement respecting activities to be maintained in the event of a legal strike or lockout, encourage faster decision making by the Canada Industrial Relations Board when parties are unable to agree and reduce the need for the Minister of Labour to make referrals to the Board.

This bill gives me the opportunity to talk about what is unfortunately wrong with Canada right now, about public trust in this government and about how the government is turning its back on Canadian workers. We agree that Canadian workers need to be protected, of course, but unfortunately, this government is incapable of doing so. There is a lot of evidence to prove it. This government says it will be able to implement this bill in 18 months, as set out in the bill. We do not believe that. We are convinced that, unfortunately, the government has no intention of implementing this bill.

We have seen proof of this on several occasions in the past. Unfortunately, this government has failed to keep a number of promises. Just look at the first promise made in 2015 to run three small deficits before returning to a balanced budget. Unfortunately, there is now an additional deficit of \$600 billion compared to the deficit before this Prime Minister took office. Unfortunately, we do not believe that the government will keep that promise.

As many of my colleagues have mentioned, this type of legislation has existed in Quebec for nearly 50 years and it did not take 18 months for it to come into force. From the moment it was passed, it was brought into force. The government always gives itself extensions. It gives itself room to manoeuvre. In any case, an election will be called in 18 to 24 months. Even if the bill is passed tomorrow morning, which it will not, it would not likely come into force before the next government is elected. That is proof that this government is incapable of protecting Canadian jobs.

We saw it with Volkswagen. I mentioned it to my colleague earlier when I asked her a question. Volkswagen, Stellantis and Northvolt are going to set up plants in various regions of Canada, particularly in Ontario and Quebec. They are going to bring in temporary foreign workers to set up those plants. However, despite all the motions that we moved at the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, we still have not been told how long those people will be working here for.

We realize that they are not coming to build the plants. They are coming to set up the technology. What I do not understand and have never understood is why we cannot hire Canadians and send them to South Korea, rather than bringing workers from South Korea to Canada. The South Korean ambassador went to see Windsor's police chief to ask him to find space to house 1,800 employees. They are not coming here to clean. They are coming to work and take jobs away from Canadian workers.

That is unfortunate, but that is how it is. We have seen the same thing in other situations. The same thing is going to happen with Northvolt in Quebec. It is a plant that will be partly set up in the riding of the leader of the Bloc Québécois. We really need to think about these projects. These businesses are going to get nearly \$50 billion in subsidies, which will serve in part to pay the temporary foreign workers who will spend some time here and then go home. The thing is, we do not know how long they will be here.

• (1630)

This bill will probably not change anything. My colleague mentioned that, in fact. This will not change anything, so—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, the workers who will be brought in to set up the battery plant are not scab labour. They are not replacement workers. The member needs to understand—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is debate and perhaps a point that could be made during questions and comments.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I am sorry to have to tell my colleague from Timmins—James Bay that the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology was told that replacement workers would be brought to Canada. Moreover, on the Government of Canada website, jobs are already being posted for Korean-speaking temporary foreign workers to come here. I do not know how many people in Windsor speak Korean, but one thing is certain: This is going to take jobs away from Canadians.

I am a business owner myself. The decision to build a factory is not made overnight. It takes years of planning. That means it is possible to make a plan to hire Canadians and send them to South Korea for training on how to set up a plant. That has not happened. Instead, people are being brought in from Korea, and people from Sweden are going to be brought in to work at Northvolt. This is not the right way to develop employability in Canada. I will leave it at that for now, but one thing is for sure: When Canadian families pay their taxes next year, they will realize that \$1,000 of that money is going to fund these foreign workers. That \$50 billion or \$45 billion-plus is the equivalent of \$1,000 or more, adding up to nearly \$4,000 per family for the next 10 years. Obviously, we cannot spend money and give subsidies to make batteries that, unfortunate-

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ly, will be manufactured by temporary foreign workers. It is really not good for Canada. Everyone agrees with that.

Here is another example. An electrode quality engineer position is currently being advertised, and applicants who are fluently bilingual in English and Korean are preferred. Once again, I am not sure how many Korean workers would qualify for this position in the Windsor region. I think it would have been much better if Canada had hired Canadian workers and sent them to South Korea for training so that they could learn to set up the battery plants in question.

I would also like to briefly mention that members of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology asked to see the controversial Stellantis, Northvolt and Volkswagen battery plant contracts. We saw the Volkswagen contract, but in a way—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie on a point of order.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague from the Conservative Party that we are talking about an anti-scab or anti-replacement worker bill. He is not at all on topic.

I would like him to talk about the bill currently before us. I understand that he does not want to talk about it, that the Conservatives do not feel like talking about it, but that is what we are discussing today.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member knows that members have some leeway on how they deliver their speeches.

The hon. member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup has to address the topic of the bill and I will allow him to finish his speech. He has two minutes left.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, some Canadian provinces, including Quebec and British Columbia, have anti-scab legislation. If we had anti-scab legislation in Canada, then we would need to make sure that it applies everywhere and in every sphere of economic activity. The construction and battery sectors where the government is investing \$50 billion also have unionized workers, and the unions help ensure the advancement of working conditions. We completely agree. I think it is important to set the stage for all these plans that might come to fruition and that need to be protected in one way or another.

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The Liberal government that has been in office for eight years has not helped Canadian workers, quite the contrary. During the past eight years under this Liberal government, there have been more than 300 major, unprecedented labour disruptions. Had it not been for the pressure exerted by the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, we would not even be here today, because the Liberals do not care about Canadian workers. They have proven it on many occasions. Once again, the government let this bill languish. It is still letting it languish and will continue to do so. Once the bill is passed, the government is giving itself another 18 months to implement it. The government could implement this bill a lot faster than that.

After eight years of this Liberal government, work does not pay like it used to in Canada.

I see that my time is already up. I could have talked for another 30 minutes, but I am ready to take questions from my colleagues.

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not know if the member truly understands anti-scab legislation. This is for companies existing today that have a workforce from a national perspective. When a strike mandate is given and the workers go out on strike, then the anti-scab legislation would be applicable. The legislation is there to ensure that the employers are not able to hire workers to replace the workers who are out on strike. That is the simplicity of the legislation.

The legislation seems to have fairly broad support within the House. The only thing we are having a difficult time with is trying to determine whether or not the Conservatives actually support it. Will the member and his caucus colleagues vote in favour of this legislation ultimately going to committee, or do the member and his Conservative caucus plan to vote against the legislation?

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, my colleague is someone who is very influential in the House because he never lets an opportunity to speak pass him by, if I can put it that way. He will see what we decide when the time comes.

One thing is for sure: My colleagues and I are here to help advance all the legislation that the government is implementing or trying to implement, because it is taking an incredibly long time to do so. It is no different with this bill.

We will see when the time comes how we decide to vote.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am going to pick up on what my colleague from the Conservative Party just said, which is that they are here to advance legislation. It seems to me that it would be so much clearer if he could just tell us whether or not his party is going to be in favour of such a bill. It seems to me that would speed things up. If that is what they are here to do, it seems to me they have a great opportunity to do it and send that message loud and clear.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I just want to mention that my colleague has worked extremely hard her entire life to im-

prove conditions for workers, something we Conservatives have also done.

Since our party was first created, we have been helping Canadian workers get better wages, better pay and better working conditions. Above all, we have worked to ensure that we do not end up with the kind of conflicts that the Liberals have created over the past eight years.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the fascinating things, since the member for Carleton took over, is the use of the Trojan horse approach. The Conservatives say they want to deal with all the stuff that is in the budget and keep us here until Christmas, but it was a way for them to be visibly on the record as voting against Ukraine. They managed to do that.

What they have been doing with this bill on anti-scab legislation is carrying on their constant attack on investment in EV technology. We see the Conservatives of the 401 corridor making fun of EV batteries, saying they are going to catch fire, that they are inefficient, that we should just give the money out, as though we give it out to everybody. Volkswagen is making a \$7-billion investment in Canada. That is enormous. There will be \$5 billion from Stellantis, and GM is going to spend \$35 billion on EV technology. The Conservatives are claiming that the people who are brought over to help set up the plant are scab labour.

The Conservatives do not misunderstand the bill. They are abusing this bill to drive the agenda of the Conservative leader, the member who lives in Stornoway, who has undermined the EV investments that Canadians are dependent upon.

• (1640)

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, what my colleague just said is completely untrue. We are not against new technologies. We are not against battery plants. We never said that we were against that. Quite the contrary.

What we are saying is that things have to be done the right way. When we give away \$45 billion of our money, money that belongs to all Canadians, to plants from anyplace in the world, we have to make sure that they are going to hire Canadian workers, not foreign workers.

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, it gives me great personal pleasure to stand in the House today to speak to Bill C-58, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code, which would finally ban the use of replacement workers or, as we in the labour movement call them, scabs, in federally regulated workplaces.

Prior to being elected in 2008, I had the honour of working for 16 years with the Teamsters union and, unlike many people in this place, I had the opportunity to experience, first-hand, how important this legislation is. I have been on and walked on many picket lines in my life, unlike most members in the House. I sat at bargaining tables, negotiating collective agreements.

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I represented workers at labour board hearings and saw unfair labour practices, where employers would fire workers who did nothing more than exercise their rights under the Canada Labour Code and under the Charter of Rights. I have seen what happens when employers use replacement workers to undermine unions and workers as they are exercising their constitutional right to strike.

The NDP has been Canada's political party for workers for many decades. Prior to its formation as the New Democratic Party in 1960, it took the form of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. In all of its iterations, it has always been a party that puts at the centre of our being the need to make sure that workers in this country are protected.

We believe, as New Democrats, that Canadian workers deserve respect, dignity, generous wages, proper benefits, and safe and healthy working conditions. We know that workers are the backbone of the Canadian economy. We believe that all Canadian workers should get a fair share of the fruits of the wealth their labour, talents and skills play such a pivotal role in creating.

In this venue or milieu, no entity has done more to achieve these goals than Canada's labour movement. It is through the hard work of unions, their efforts, their courage and very often their sacrifices, that Canadian workers have come to enjoy the many benefits that they do today.

I want to touch on just a few of the benefits that were fought for by unions, benefits that Canadian workers take for granted today. In many cases, these were fought for by unions, demanded at bargaining tables and, in many cases, paid for by the blood, sweat and sacrifice of Canadian workers on picket lines. They include the 40-hour work week; overtime; paid vacations; pensions; health and welfare plans providing workers and their families with eyeglasses, dental services and prescriptions; paid sick time; a voice in the workplace; and, most importantly, the opportunity for workers to collectively bargain the terms and conditions of their work instead of simply taking whatever their employer is dictating to them.

These and many other rights were not given to workers. They are the products of hard-fought bargaining, often by workers who had to suffer great wage losses by striking or being locked out for these gains. They won these rights through collective bargaining and, incidentally, all workers, whether they are unionized or not in this country, now enjoy those benefits, paid for by those unions and the workers who sacrificed for them.

They never had to make these sacrifices without pain. These people did not do this only for themselves. They did it for other workers and for their children and generations to come. Many of these workers made these sacrifices at great risk to their personal safety. Canadian labour history is replete with horrific examples of employers hiring private security forces, often goons, to attack striking workers.

Some workers, many workers, even died. As they were laying down their tools and forgoing their wages to exercise their right to strike for the betterment of their fellow workers and for generations to come, many had to watch unscrupulous employers hire replacement workers, scabs, to cross those picket lines to perform their work.

• (1645)

What is the impact of that? When replacement workers are used, it undermines the workers. Workers lose money while they are striking, but employers continue to profit and operate during the strike, so that tilts the bargaining table in favour of management. It also prolongs strikes and lockouts. On average, labour disputes where scabs are used last six times longer than when they are not. It leads to picket line violence, divides communities and causes family tension and suffering.

I will go through a few examples in Canadian history. People may remember the Giant Mine strike, one of the most tragic events in Canadian labour history, which happened in Yellowknife. At that time, in 1992, Royal Oak Mines locked out its workers and decided to use replacement workers in that small community of Yellowknife. Canadian mines had not seen a replacement worker used in the previous 50 years. The scabs were used explicitly as strikebreakers. It undercut bargaining, enraged the local workers and split families in the community. The tragic result was that nine workers died in a bombing incident.

I personally experienced this kind of violence myself. The Gainers strike in Edmonton in 1986 was a strike that lasted six and a half months, and Peter Pocklington, the owner of Gainers, hired strikebreakers to break the strike of workers doing some of the hardest, most physical, unpleasant work there is working in a rendering plant. I watched as Peter Pocklington brought in scabs and saw first-hand the violence that caused on the picket line.

I remember the Zeidler Forest Products strike in the 1980s, where I saw scabs speed up as they were driving their cars toward the men and women on the picket lines, narrowly missing them and, in some cases, hitting them as they sped by, impervious to the striking workers' welfare. Lest we think this is a relic of the past, just this month I visited a picket line in Vancouver at Rogers Communications, which had locked out its workers in British Columbia and used scabs to cross the picket line to do the striking workers' jobs.

I also want to talk about the fact that the Liberals and Conservatives only seem to care about the rights of workers to strike in this country when the impact of those strikes is strong. They will order Canada Post workers back to work, and they will order port workers back to work, but right now, as we speak, there are hundreds of people on strike at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel. They are going into their third year on strike, and they are mainly women and immigrants. Maybe the impact of this strike is not as strong on the economy. In that case, the Liberals and Conservatives will let workers rot on the picket line for years, but if workers have any real economic clout, then, all of a sudden, their rights have less meaning.

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The answer to this is to ban scabs. British Columbia has done it in this country for many decades, and so has Quebec. The NDP has introduced anti-scab legislation eight times in the last 15 years, and the Liberals and Conservatives voted against it every single time. Today, make no mistake, I want every Canadian worker in this country to know that Bill C-58 is the product of one party in the House, and that is the NDP. We forced the Liberals to put this in as a demand in our confidence and supply agreement. That agreement is not a mutual agreement. It is a series of 27 demands that the NDP made of the Liberals in exchange for our support of the government.

I have heard the Liberals bragging in the House about their 2021 platform. I looked at it, and in that platform, for the first time in history, the Liberals talked about banning replacement workers, but only in the case of a lockout. They did not care about banning replacement workers if workers exercised their right to strike. It was only in the narrow instance where an employer might lock out its workers that they were prepared to extend the ban of replacement workers. It was the NDP that said, no, we must ban replacement workers in all labour disputes, both in lockouts and strikes.

I want to thank organized labour, the CLC, the building trades and the Teamsters union. I also want to and give a shout-out to all my brothers and sisters in Teamsters Local 31 and Teamsters Canada across this country, who have been fighting for decades for this very basic and equitable measure in Canadian labour law.

● (1650)

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I start, I just want to wish you and all my colleagues a very merry Christmas.

As he knows, I am from Oshawa. An extremely important thing in the automotive industry is supply chains. Some of these parts move across the border, quite often by rail, in federally regulated industries.

As he said, the NDP put this bill forward. Has the NDP ever done any analysis on how this bill would affect supply chains, the investment climate in Canada, and our competitiveness versus our partners in CUSMA, the United States and Mexico? Could he alleviate some concerns on that?

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, there are reams of evidence, decades of evidence, showing that, when we ban replacement workers, we shorten labour disputes and we reduce picket line violence. By balancing the bargaining relationship at the table, we get to more agreements. It is good for business, and it is good for the economy.

I am glad my friend spoke up because the Conservative Party lately has been trying to pull the wool over Canadians' eyes saying that they are somehow the friends of workers. They have voted against anti-scab legislation every time in the House. They have ordered workers back to work, violating their Charter right to strike. They even tried to raise the retirement age to 67, which is particularly hard on blue-collar workers, who have to do physical work and use their bodies. They opposed dental care. They opposed pharmacare and anything that would help workers actually get a break in these unaffordable times.

I just want to conclude by saying that, when New Democrats filibustered in 2011 for three days, we did so when the Harper government wanted to order Canadian post workers back to work. The Conservatives, when they did it just this week, were doing it to give a break to their corporate friends from the carbon tax. I think that tells workers all they need to know about which party really stands up for workers in the House.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate many of the things that the member has said. The only thing I want to qualify is that there are many individuals in the Liberal caucus, and I can attest to this, who are very strong advocates.

I represent the north end of Winnipeg, and I have done that now for 30 years, in one way or another. We can talk about the 1919 strike, the replacement workers and how that ultimately caused the overturning of a street car. It is known today as Bloody Saturday, something that made North American news, possibly even worldwide news.

There is a long history in supporting anti-scab legislation. I appreciated when it was incorporated into the election platform and today, we have it. It is not to undervalue it. I think it is great that it has the support from the Bloc and the NDP. I am glad we have the province of B.C., which was NDP when anti-scab legislation was brought in, and the province of Quebec, which had a Liberal administration when it brought it in.

At times, we get strong leadership, and what really needs to be emphasized is that parties should work together, get behind labour and see that the legislation gets passed. Would he not agree?

● (1655)

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, the NDP does not just support this bill. We are the ones who drove it onto the agenda.

The Giant Mine tragedy happened in 1992, and we saw the murders of nine people. We would think that a federal government would have seen fit to take the logical common-sense step of banning replacement workers after we saw Canadians killed. The Liberals have been in power for many years since then, and they never did it. It took the NDP demanding that in this Parliament, as a price for our support in the confidence and supply agreement, to bring it to Canadians.

Government Orders

The Liberals only campaigned on banning replacement workers once in the last election, and then, it was only in a lockout situation. The Liberals can take no credit for this. Canadian workers know which party is responsible for bringing in anti-scab legislation finally to this country, and it took the NDP to do it. I am very proud of that. Workers across this country are going to benefit from this measure.

I want to thank my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie for bringing in this legislation and for being such a strong driving force for workers in this country.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will begin by talking about democracy, union democracy.

There are some people who think that unions do whatever they want, however they want, but that is not at all true. First, it is a recognized right, is it not? Then, people at the head of unions are elected. I feel like saying that sometimes these are ejection seats when members are not pleased, are not satisfied. Union leaders do not do whatever they want, however they want, and their power is limited by the will of their members. I know something about that, having been the president of a 10,000-member union for 10 years. Democracy applies, as I always say.

Now that I have explained that a union is a very democratic body, I will come back to the matter at hand.

In nearly every one of their speeches, my colleagues have said from the outset that the Bloc Québécois is very much in favour of this important bill. I would like to add a few points. We will have hoped and waited a long time for something like this. As the saying goes, better late than never. Anti-scab legislation is a legislative tool that allows workers who, in order to gain respect and decent working conditions, must use the ultimate pressure tactic, a strike, to achieve that. Nobody is ever excited to have to go on strike.

My speech will be largely inspired by a file on this subject prepared by Unifor. Unifor was founded by two major Canadian unions: the Canadian Auto Workers Union and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union. Unifor has a few more members than my union. It has 315,000 members, 696 locals and 29 sectors. The people at Unifor know what they are talking about. I see this legislation as nothing less than a matter of fundamental respect. I will take my cue from Unifor and share its premise:

Scabs tear apart communities, pull down workers and prolong disputes—something, we at Unifor, know all too well.

Since Unifor formed in 2013, our three longest labour disputes in terms of over-all days lost involved the use of scabs. Labour disputes that involved scabs lasted on average six times longer than those without scabs.

Scabs remove any incentive for the boss to bargain fairly and they tip the balance of power away from workers trying to exercise their right to withdraw services when an employer is unreasonable.

What Unifor said on its website is clear.

It is always a good idea to remind the House that Quebec implemented this sort of legislative framework in 1977. There are, perhaps, a lot of people here who were not even born yet or who were not very old at the time, and so they may not be as aware of the harmful effects that the lack of such legislation can bring about. It

is a matter of conviction. It is a matter of perception. However, the Quebec law has its limits. It does not apply to federally regulated employees.

At the core of all this is the idea of respect, respect for workers and their loyalty. It is also about respecting their legitimate request to be heard by their employers. It is about ensuring that, when the time comes to renegotiate an expired collective agreement, there is a real possibility of engaging in negotiations that are as productive, honest and fair as possible.

Scabs are a direct attack on the right to strike, as is the use of special back-to-work legislation. Canada has used that tactic extensively. I remember it happened with Canada Post, I believe, when I was first elected. That, too, is an attack.

The Supreme Court writes, “The right to strike is an essential part of a meaningful collective bargaining process in our system of labour relations.”

It is clear that the right to organize and the right to strike to improve working conditions are both recognized rights in this country.

It is high time this law be brought into the federal framework because workers in federally regulated sectors in Quebec have essentially become a different category of salaried employees. The same can be said in British Columbia, which passed similar legislation in 1993. This means that, in Quebec and British Columbia, not all employees have the same rights.

Here in the House of Commons, the Bloc Québécois has tabled 11 bills since its creation. There have also been NDP bills.

● (1700)

Our esteemed colleague in the House, the longest-serving member of our assembly, waited 33 years for this result after introducing the first anti-scab bill back in 1990 and 11 others after that. The member for Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel must be reliving a few highlights from those days now.

I would now like to return to the background document prepared by Unifor.

The scab might be the single most polarizing figure in the world of labour relations. For employers, the scab represents an effective means of applying economic pressure when contract talks with the union break down, either taking some of the financial sting out of a lockout, or undermining the effectiveness of a strike. For picketing union workers, the scab represents a breach in the strength of the line, and a loss of solidarity and collective power. At the same time, the use of scabs completely destroys the essence of a labour dispute, that is, a withdrawal of labour creating a cost to both the union and the employer.

Government Orders

The provisions of Bill C-58, starting with the prohibition against using replacement workers, including subcontracted workers—except in very specific situations—along with the prohibition against crossing the picket lines and fines for non-compliance, are the basic components of this legislation.

These clear prohibitions form the basis for additional provisions, such as those specifying time limits for each intervention and the powers conferred on the minister to regulate the setting of penalties.

Is it any wonder that business groups, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, are concerned about Bill C-58? The answer is no. I am thinking of the activities of lobbyists. I will come back to that shortly.

Employers do not want to lose that competitive edge over their workforce, namely the ability to settle a labour dispute without any industrial or commercial impact when other people are being paid, ever. Their position is that, if the bill passes, it would deprive employers of the opportunity to mitigate the harm caused by prolonged work interruptions and lead to further problems in supply chains still recovering from COVID-19-related shutdowns.

COVID-19 is clearly an excuse for everything. My question, however, is this: What about the harm being done to workers, for goodness' sake?

In 2023, it is frankly disappointing to see such organizations shirking their responsibilities. I would say that it is archaic to think that workers are not being harmed in any way, and that it is mostly employers that are harmed when their business declines.

The Government of Canada's delay in implementing this legislation leaves me, as a former union president, with a bad taste in my mouth. There is no need to wait 18 months after a bill receives royal assent for that legislation to come into force. We have never seen anything like it.

It is not required for the government, whose role is to legislate, to give in to the demands of employers. Which brings us back to the issue of lobbies, who always use their clout, in every area, to weaken legislation and regulations.

I will close by reading an excerpt from *The Scab*, by Jack London.

In the group-struggle over the division of the joint-product, labor utilizes the union with its two great weapons, — the strike and boycott; while capital utilizes the trust and the association, the weapons of which are the blacklist, the lockout, and the scab. The scab is by far the most formidable weapon of the three. He is the man who breaks strikes and causes all the trouble.

I am going to be realistic and end on that note. We should not celebrate too soon. It could take a while. Could there be obstruction? Could there be an early election that causes Bill C-58 to die on the Order Paper?

Although there is still a long way to go, the Bloc Québécois is delighted that workers covered by the Canada Labour Code will soon have the same rights as all other Quebecers. This will correct a major inequity.

• (1705)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, to pick up on the member's last words with regard to our not being there yet, she is right in her assessment. We do not know the position that the Conservative Party is going to take; if its members end up voting against the legislation, I trust that they will do whatever they can in order to filibuster the debate, so it does not become a law.

I appreciated the member's comments about scab labour. It causes a great deal of harm having scabs cross the line, not only in the workforce, in the areas in which they are working, but also outside the workforce in our communities. Could she just expand on her thoughts on that?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pausé: Madam Speaker, the fact that the official opposition's position is unknown could slow the work down, but I clearly read that the Leader of the Opposition said they were pro-worker. It is not that much of a stretch. Someone who is pro-worker should be in favour of this bill.

What does a strong, fair anti-scab bill accomplish? First, it reduces the length of disputes, that is for sure. I gave some examples of that earlier. It also makes workplaces safer. We have seen confrontations break out when scabs are brought in. Finally, it significantly reduces picket line conflicts.

I would go so far as to say that an anti-scab bill improves labour relations, especially during a strike.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate and thank my colleague, the member for Repentigny, for her speech. It was an excellent speech that I would be prepared to endorse any time. I agree with absolutely everything. Bravo.

I am also very proud that we were able to force the Liberal government to finally put an anti-scab bill on the legislative agenda. We have waited far too long. It is true that this will resolve the inequity in Quebec, as well as in British Columbia, by protecting workers in federally regulated sectors.

I have been visiting strikers and locked-out workers who are currently out there, whether at the Port of Québec or at Videotron's western sector. They agree that we should move forward, even though they would have liked to benefit from this. They know that it is important for the future and for those who will come after them, which is very moving.

I agree with my colleague that the 18-month delay is very worrisome. We in the NDP are also concerned about this. I would simply like to know if my colleague is prepared to work together in committee to change this delay in implementation, because 18 months is also far too long in our view.

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Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. My colleague is also my MP in Montreal.

In 2005, we were just 12 votes short. It was not Bloc Québécois votes that were missing, we can be sure of that. Obviously the Bloc Québécois is going to make every effort to ensure this bill is adopted.

The 18-month delay worries us. We do not understand it. I have already asked the government about it and I was told we could change this in committee. That being said, it is their bill. What prompted them to include an 18-month delay? That has never been done.

Usually, a bill receives royal assent and then it comes into force. There is no doubt that my colleague and I will work on fixing this.

• (1710)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I get the feeling that we are wasting our breath right now on the issue of the 18 months. If the 18-month delay is real, if it is effective, even if the election takes place as planned toward the end of 2025, we are wasting our breath. We will never get there.

Is this some sort of massive sham?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Madam Speaker, I must admit that we are wondering about that. Are we doing all of this for nothing? Will there not even be a bill in the end?

Here is why we are wondering about that. The much-talked-about agreement between the NDP and the Liberals states that the government is committed to introducing a bill. The agreement does not state that the government agrees to pass that bill. We are concerned about that. My colleague used the word “sham”, and we are wondering if that is what this is.

[*English*]

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by wishing everyone a merry Christmas on these final strokes of the parliamentary calendar for this year.

I want to talk a little bit about the context of Bill C-58. I believe there is 100% agreement among all members, and probably among all Canadians, that we need more great-paying union jobs in this country. I want to talk about how we get there, how we make sure that there are more great-paying union jobs here in Canada.

The challenge right now is that, as a nation, we have a productivity crisis in our country, and productivity is what powers our economy. Let us imagine the economy of the country as a business itself. If, in fact, the business is producing things efficiently and effectively, then guess what? If there is a strong union in place, good wages should follow, and that is exactly what we want for the nation. Unfortunately, the factory that is our economy is not keeping up with other OECD countries.

Let us unpack productivity. What does “productivity” mean? In layman’s terms it basically means how efficiently and effectively we are delivering goods and services. How efficiently and effectively is our economy running? The answer is that it is not great,

unfortunately, because of a number of standards. Productivity in itself is basically a three-legged stool. One leg is technology; another is capital investment, and the other is workers. I will go through those legs one by one to make sure we understand what the challenges are and why, unfortunately, the government is just not meeting the challenges.

I will start with technology. It makes sense, and it has been true since the Roman Empire and even before it, that a society or an economy that has leading technology will have the ability to bring prosperity, or prosperity relative to the rest of the world, to its shores. Unfortunately, in Canada, we have a government that is stifling technology and innovation. For multiple years, going on almost a decade, in fact, we have been calling on the government for open banking legislation that was supposed to be here a year ago, and a year before that. Finally, in the fall economic statement, we got a promise for another promise to have open banking legislation. It was supposed to be here years and years ago. In the U.K., open banking has saved customers, depending on which academic or economist one approves of, between \$1 billion and \$10 billion. That is money we are leaving on the table every year because the government cannot get out of its own way.

We can look at legislation with respect to innovation. Around the world, there is a lot of innovation about how we nurture the small or medium-sized technology companies and make them into the behemoths that they are. Unfortunately, in Canada, we are struggling with that. We have innovations like a patent box, which is available to the government as a tool. We have special regulatory and tax breaks that we can give companies, not just to move factories onto our shores by giving multinationals billions and billions of dollars, but also by creating businesses here at home, and we are failing there when it comes to the technology aspect.

Another element of the technology world where we are letting people down is real-time rail. Most, if not all, G7 countries have real-time rail. People at home might ask me what the heck real-time rail is. Real-time rail is just having money travel instantly. A person may say that when they do an electronic funds transfer to their friend to pay half of the dinner bill, it seems to go immediately. However, in reality, while it seems to go immediately, what actually happens is that the financial institutions are fronting the money, and then the money comes back.

• (1715)

Our current money transfer payment system is really held together by duct tape and a dream. It will break down, mark my words, at some point if we do not have some legislative innovation to allow a real-time rail system, which most of the other G7 and OECD countries have. That is an issue because the flows of capital and the flows of transfer are incredibly important to an innovation economy.

Government Orders

We have some great start-ups and great fintechs across this country, but the government seems to be doing everything it can to stifle their development. There are tremendous opportunities. By the way, these are not partisan issues. It was, I believe, both in the Liberal policy items and in the Conservative policy items in the last election to have open banking, but we just need to deliver. That is the problem. Many times, my issue with the government is not so much ideology; it is just competency. These are things every other country seems to get done but that this country cannot.

Second, the other leg I talked about was capital investment. This is the money that powers the technology that powers the worker. We have decisions to make as a society as to how much money we put into the public sector, which is incredibly important, and how much money we put into the private sector, which I would argue is just as important, if not more so. The private sector is that economy; it is what is driving the money flow. If we do not have a vibrant private sector generating revenue and income for the rest of our economy, that means we will not have a vibrant public sector, because the taxes come from the private sector. They come from the small business owner who is working 20 hours out of a 24-hour day.

However, our current regulatory regime, as well as our taxation regime, is not fair to these individuals. In fact, even the government's approach to business is stifling growth. It is preventing winning from happening. I say this not for partisan reasons per se, but it does sort of illuminate where the government stands with respect to business. When it called small business owners tax cheats, that not only affects the bottom line; it also affects the way people think about business. It shows the way the government thinks about business, when in reality, without strong businesses, without entrepreneurs and without doers in our society, we will not have the revenue we need to fund our very important public sector programs.

The final leg I am going to talk about today is with respect to workers. Our workers are, I think, and in fact I know, the best in the world. We have so many intelligent, hard-working women and men across this great country who go to work every day, but what has happened to them over the last eight years is just not fair. I do not know how else to put it. Let us start by discussing what the government is doing directly, and then we can talk about what it is doing indirectly, to our workers. There is something called the marginal effective tax rate, which is how much one pays to the government for the next dollar. That involves both taxation and clawbacks. It is shocking to me that there are Canadians earning less than \$50,000 who, on their next dollar earned, will be giving upwards of 70¢, 80¢ or even 90¢ back to a government. Can one imagine?

For those of us who have children, imagine saying to them that they are going to be given an allowance. They are to shovel the snow, which is no doubt coming, or rake the leaves, or whatever, and they will be given \$10 an hour to do it. However, by the way, \$9 an hour is going to be taken back. It is unbelievable the impact that taking away from workers would have.

In sum, we need to improve the productivity of our country through reductions in red tape and reductions in taxation so we can have the productivity we need to make sure there are great high-paying union jobs across this country.

• (1720)

Hon. Terry Beech (Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the spirit of the holidays, I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone happy holidays and a merry Christmas, and to say that, upon reflection, I think it is important for all of us to realize that no matter what party we belong to in the House, we all represent Canadians and, at the end of the day, all play for the same team. I recently had a chance to meet the member opposite's son, who happens to share a birthday with my daughter. I know that the member wants to build a great country for my daughter, just as I want to build a great country for his son, which is something I think all members of the House can come together on.

We agree with a lot of the things and ideas he talked about. I, too, am excited by open banking. I am also excited by patent boxes. In fact, that is something I have worked on for some time. I often think there is a wonderful opportunity for the opposition in the House, not just to oppose but also to propose. I think good ideas can come from all sides of the House, so I congratulate the member opposite for a year of hard work and his relatively non-partisan speech. I will end my comments by agreeing with him on the last part of his statement, when he said, "Our workers...are the best in the world."

Merry Christmas to everyone.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, we agree unanimously with respect to our workers' being the best in the world, but the rest of it may be on division.

I thank the member for his kind words. I did very much enjoy working with him on the finance committee.

What I would say is that I believe that everyone here wants the best for Canada and Canadians. The difference, though, between every other party in the House and Conservatives is that they define "compassion" as how many people the government helps, whereas we define "compassion" as how many people the government does not have to help.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, if I may, I would like to take this opportunity to wish a merry Christmas and a happy Hanukkah to all colleagues here and to the residents of my community of Kelowna—Lake Country.

The member talked a lot about the cost of living and people needing help. People's paycheques are not going as far as they used to. I wonder whether he can expand a bit on how inflation and rising interest rates are affecting families and on how it was really the decisions of the government that have caused these.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, that was part of my speech; unfortunately, I did not make it there.

Government Orders

We have a double-edged sword, because Canadians are getting hit twice: once because of low-economic growth, the worst since the Great Depression, and Canadians' wages not increasing; and a second time because of the government's propensity to outspend any reasonable metric. We have inflation, which is driving up costs; therefore, Canadians are earning less and paying more, which is why the polls look like they do.

• (1725)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, in the spirit of the holidays, I wonder whether my colleague from Northumberland—Peterborough South would grant me a few words about the topic of the bill, which is the use of replacement workers during strikes and lockouts.

I listened intently to what he shared with the House, and while he touched on many different topics, and I know he is a very intelligent person, he did not speak to the actual topic of the bill at hand, Bill C-58, which is about finally banning replacement workers during strikes and lockouts.

I missed the first 30 seconds or minute of his speech, so perhaps I missed it. If he could repeat it for me, I would much appreciate it.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I did actually outline the Conservative position on the bill in the first 30 seconds. I am sorry the member missed it.

What I will say is a microcosm of the way Conservatives see the world as opposed to NDP folks. I do have a ton of respect for the member, but that being said, in order to have strong union jobs, jobs that pay the bills, we need a strong economy, and that is what Conservatives are committed to bringing to Canada.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Before I give the floor to the hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, I would just like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a great start to 2024.

[*Translation*]

Thank you all for your support over the past few months.

The hon. member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is real and distinct honour to rise this evening and speak to Bill C-58, which would ban the use of replacement workers in strikes and lockouts. This is a bill that is the result of a lot of work over a lot of years by a lot of folks.

The other day, I had a chance to stand at the press conference here in the foyer when the tabling of this bill was announced. I listened to labour leaders speak about the long history behind this bill and how long workers in this country have been fighting to have their rights protected to ensure that when they make that difficult decision to go on strike, they are not going to be at risk of violence and their rights to collectively bargain are not going to be undermined by the use of replacement workers. This is an effort that has taken place over more than 100 years.

Certainly I am proud to rise as part of the NDP, a party whose roots are in labour and a party that has worked for more than 15

years to bring forward in this House, time and time and time again, bills that would do precisely what would be done by Bill C-58.

This is really a momentous occasion, and I want to take a moment to read into the record part of an email that I received from a constituent who reached out and wanted me to understand what this bill means for him in his workplace.

He wrote to me and said, “Hello again, Mr. Bachrach. ... I've been a union member for over 13 years while working at Telus. ... I've seen Telus attempt to get away with bullying and scare tactics in the workplace to reduce the numbers of our union members and their voice, then benefit from it at the bargaining table, negotiation after negotiation. This time around, we lost more again. I plead with you to assist in pushing the Anti-Scab legislation forward to prevent large corporations...from allowing scabs or replacement workers in to do our work during a dispute and undermining our negotiations.”

That really speaks to the significance of this bill for working people across this country. Nobody takes the decision to go on strike lightly. This is something that affects the families of working people. They need to know that when they make that difficult decision and they choose to exercise their constitutionally protected right to strike, their rights are going to be respected and their rights are not going to be able to be undermined and they are going to be able to fight for better working conditions and to do so in a way that results in a fair and equitable deal at the end of the day.

That brings my time to an end. It is far too little time to do justice to such an important issue. I just want to say how proud I am to stand in this House and support this bill. I do hope that our Conservative friends down the way will also see fit to support Bill C-58. What better message is there to send to the working people of this country than to vote unanimously for this bill to ban replacement workers?

I have a lot of respect for many of my colleagues down the way. I have listened intently to what they have said with respect to this bill, and I do believe—

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry. Unfortunately, I do have to interrupt.

[*Translation*]

It being 5:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

Private Members' Business

[English]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour to inform the House that messages have been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bills, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-13, an act to amend the Interpretation Act and to make related amendments to other acts, and Bill S-14, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, the Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act, the Rouge National Urban Park Act and the National Parks of Canada Fishing Regulations.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

PROHIBITION OF THE EXPORT OF HORSES BY AIR FOR SLAUGHTER ACT

The House resumed from November 20 consideration of the motion that Bill C-355, An Act to prohibit the export by air of horses for slaughter and to make related amendments to certain Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-355. If passed, Bill C-355 would prohibit the export of live horses from Canada for the purpose of being slaughtered.

I assume that the Liberals and the activists behind this legislation have deliberately chosen the word “slaughter” in their communication strategy in the hopes of evoking an emotional outcry from Canadians. While some Canadians may not like hearing the word “slaughter”, as a lifelong farmer myself, I think it is important to point out that the humane slaughter of animals has sustained our society since human existence.

It is this humane and responsible slaughter of animals that will continue to sustain the world, especially during a time of such high food insecurity. Instead of focusing on addressing the worst cost of living crisis in a generation, the Liberals are more focused on targeting Canadian livestock producers in an attempt to score cheap political points. In typical Liberal fashion, they have chosen to divide, distract and stigmatize, once again.

Most Canadians are unfamiliar with Canada's horse export industry and the details of horsemeat consumption. Although the consumption of horsemeat is not very popular in Canada, it is important to note that over one billion people worldwide consume horsemeat as a form of protein. The vast majority of horses exported from Canada for consumption go to our friends in Japan, a nation whose culture highly regards horses. It may surprise some Canadians, but even here in Canada, over 1,000 tonnes of horsemeat are consumed annually. I know my colleagues from Quebec are used to seeing horsemeat available for purchase in grocery stores across their province.

Exporting horses for consumption is not a practice exclusive to Canada. The United Kingdom, Argentina, Belgium, Poland, Brazil, France, Netherlands and Uruguay all export horses for consump-

tion. Here in Canada, there are currently over 300 breeders who raise horses for export. These livestock breeders and producers make a living through their work in this segment of Canada's agriculture industry.

While some members have no regard for these families whose livelihoods depend on raising horses for export, many of these producers live in my constituency. When we debate the proposed Liberal law that would kill this industry, I believe it is paramount that members understand the impact it would have on the livelihoods of Canadian producers. Last year, Canada exported \$19 million in horses for consumption.

If this legislation passes, that means \$19 million would be removed from our rural economies, much of which will be removed from indigenous communities. In fact, of the Canadian horses exported for consumption, 25% of the horses come from indigenous herds owned and managed by Canadian indigenous breeders.

Over the past eight years, the Prime Minister has never shown any understanding for the livelihoods of rural Canadians, so I am not surprised to see his government support this legislation without considering rural Canada.

However, while the economic impacts of this bill are concerning, the most disturbing aspect of this proposed law is the underlying notion that producers have no regard for the welfare of the animals they raise. This notion is false and extremely insulting to Canadian producers. As someone who has personally raised livestock for export and consumption, I can assure the House that Canadian producers take the highest level of care in treating their animals. I do not tolerate animal abuse nor do Canada's agricultural producers.

Canada is recognized across the world as a leader in the safe and responsible production of animals. Bill C-355 fails to recognize the strict standards followed by Canadian producers. This is just another prime example of how disconnected the current NDP-Liberal government is from the realities of Canada's agricultural industry.

The political ideology of the government has distracted its members from the facts when it comes to the export of horses. The fact is, since 2013, 41,000 horses have been exported from Canada for consumption. Of those 41,000 horses, the mortality rate at all stage of transport is 0.012%. Since 2014, zero deaths have occurred as a result of transport. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency ensures that veterinary inspectors are present at airports to make sure that every shipment of live horses, regardless of purpose, is compliant with animal welfare regulations.

• (1735)

However, these facts do not matter to the NDP-Liberal government. The government has no shame in pushing forward an emotionally driven narrative that totally disregards the facts. The Liberals would rather share anecdotes than share the facts on how Canadian producers follow some of the world's most stringent transport requirements for livestock.

Let us be honest: The only reason the Liberals are moving ahead with this politically motivated and scientifically baseless legislation is because of a group of self-proclaimed activists who have never raised livestock for a living. These activists have singled out one species of livestock solely to exploit society's emotional connection to horses, but let us not be fooled. The activists who want to pass this legislation are the same people who want to outlaw the sale of fur and erase Canada's hunting and trapping heritage. These activists are the same people who believe livestock should not be raised for personal consumption. These are the same activists who believe feeding one's family with nutritious meat is morally wrong.

I do not believe for a second that these activists will stop at horses if this bill becomes law. The fact is that these activists do not believe any animal should be transported for slaughter to feed the world, so my question is this: What is next? Is it pigs? Is it sheep? Is it chickens? Is it goats? Is it cows? Where does this end?

I do not think this activist-led campaign against the responsible production and consumption of animals does end. It is because of these constant attacks against responsible animal use that I fear not only for Canadian producers but also for the millions of people around the world who are hungry because of food insecurity.

Before I conclude, I want to note that industry experts are raising concerns too. The Canadian Meat Council, Equestrian Canada, the Horse Welfare Alliance, the Canadian Quarter Horse Association, the Métis Nation of Alberta and many Canadian equine veterinary practitioners oppose this legislation.

I hope that every member of this House takes the time to visit one of the 300-plus breeders in Canada who raise horses for export before they vote on this legislation. Maybe they will understand the facts and realities of the industry before punishing Canadian producers again.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-355, which seeks to prohibit the export by air of live horses for the purpose of being slaughtered. That is a very specific bill.

I listened to my colleague who spoke before me, and I think he made some interesting points in the Conservative way, obviously. He raised concerns about where this bill will take us.

This bill is one of the most irritating bills I have had to analyze. I want to say at the outset that the Bloc Québécois's initial position is that we disagree with the principle of this bill. However, we will listen to the arguments that are presented.

As my colleague who spoke before me mentioned, this bill appeals to people's feelings and emotions. There have been many comments made and testimony given by people who said that Canada was built on the backs of horses and so on. They are making horses out to be more like pets than commercial farm animals. They are implying that people have the same relationship with horses as they do with cats or dogs, rather than with cows or sheep. I think that is what they are getting at, but it is unclear.

I, too, am somewhat concerned about setting a precedent, because we export a lot of live animals, and not necessarily to abuse

Private Members' Business

them. Piglets are often exported to be fattened elsewhere. Horses exported to Japan are kept alive there for a certain period as well. It is part of a very important ritual in Japan for the animal to be fed there and so on. This bill raises a lot of questions.

First, if it is cruel to export live animals, why target just one species? I do not deny that it can be cruel in certain circumstances, but in that case, why not ban all animal exports? New Zealand, for example, bans animal exports entirely, no matter the reason, even if it is to house them elsewhere. Great Britain bans export for slaughter. Is exporting animals for slaughter more cruel than exporting them for commercial sale?

There are also horse breeders who can sell a purebred horse that will take part in competitions or things like that. Will we gradually move towards an export ban on these animals? Are the animals not destined for slaughter exported in more comfortable or less cruel conditions than those that are? These questions deserve to be studied, and this bill raises many questions.

Furthermore, why does this bill prohibit export by air only? I am not sure which is more comfortable, transportation by road or transportation by air. If people are concerned about animal health and welfare during transportation, maybe what we should be doing is changing transportation standards. We might not be asking the right question here. I am just suggesting we question things. Could we not revisit air transportation standards given that, as we are told, the animals are in cages and so on? There are standards, and they were actually updated in 2020. Is that what we should be doing?

I mentioned that the Bloc Québécois does not support the principle of the bill, but I would not want people to think we do not care about animal health. On the contrary, we feel it is very important. From an industry perspective alone, no industry is viable without healthy, well-treated animals. I do not believe anyone in this Parliament wants to mistreat animals, but is the end goal to stop exporting animals for slaughter altogether?

• (1740)

My Conservative colleague raised this earlier, and I found the point interesting. We have to be alert when we vote on bills.

Here is another question I could have asked: Why introduce a new bill that only concerns horses instead of amending existing legislation and reviewing the transportation conditions? The Health of Animals Act is one example that comes to mind.

The other doubt I want to raise concerns the Liberal government's nebulous intentions and the lofty promises it often makes us from its sunny perch, up on high, hair blowing in the wind. The good things it promises us never materialize. I get the impression that this is one of those times.

Private Members' Business

The member who spoke before me talked about activists. I myself have received a lot of letters from certain groups asking us to halt exports of live horses. Maybe it was to please those people that the former agriculture minister's mandate letter told her to ban the live export of horses.

We are more than halfway through the mandate, and this bill is being introduced as a private member's bill. That raises doubts. Does this mean that the government made that commitment without realizing what it entailed and that it does not really feel like following through anymore, so it got one of its members to introduce it so that it could tell those activist groups that it had kept its promise and introduced a bill?

Is the government taking a gamble that the bill will be rejected or die on the Order Paper without damaging it too much? This raises major doubts. The government did not take action. When we make promises, we need to act on them. I feel like I keep repeating myself in my speeches lately. Can they commit to doing something and then do it? I get the impression that the Liberals made a promise that they do not really want to keep and they are doing what they can to wash their hands of it. I am just asking a question. I am not making accusations. The question is worth asking.

We are of the opinion that the issue that is being raised here might be a cultural one. Perhaps it is a matter of sensitivity. Perhaps horses are more important than other animals. That is what concerns us because we eat a lot of animals. Are we going to stop exporting live poultry or live hogs? Are we going to stop exporting live cattle at some point? Let us talk about sensitivity. Many people have presented the argument that horses are very sensitive animals, but so are pigs. Pigs are so sensitive that clear directives have been issued for how pigs are to be transported to reduce their stress. For example, the number of hours that they can travel without water was lowered and a size limit was established. Thousands of live animals are exported every year.

I have the impression that this bill, which is relatively minimal, focuses on only one species. It bothered us quite a bit to say that we supported the bill. That is why we are against the principle. My colleagues can try to convince us, but for the moment, we see no reason to prohibit the export of a single animal species by air. I believe that all animals are important and that all animals deserve proper treatment.

Perhaps the goal is to ensure animal welfare without compromising livestock production. Perhaps that is the underlying, hidden objective of this bill. Once again, I am not accusing anyone, but it does raise some questions. If the goal is to ensure animal welfare, we should be sitting down and reviewing animal transportation standards. However, those standards were reviewed relatively recently. The Bloc Québécois does not deny the fact that, in certain circumstances, there may be things that need to be reviewed.

If it is a question of supporting the bill in its current form, we are not yet convinced, and we will be watching closely to see what happens next.

• (1745)

[English]

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I just want to acknowledge a staffer in my office who was a page last year, who diligently served here in the House and who is celebrating a birthday today. I wish Jacob Wilson a happy 20th birthday.

I am pleased to stand in support of my colleague's private member's bill, Bill C-355, the prohibition of the export of horses by air for slaughter act. During his speech in the first hour of debate, the member for Kitchener—Conestoga spoke admirably about the significance horses have had throughout Canadian history, including the important symbol they provide our Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the special relationships that so many Canadians have with horses.

Our Liberal government knows that Canadians are deeply concerned about the live export of horses for slaughter. In 2021, as a part of the Liberal Party platform, we pledged to move forward on improving protections for our animals and species around the world. This commitment was also listed in the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food's 2021 mandate letter. A part of this pledge includes banning the live export of horses for slaughter, and the member for Kitchener—Conestoga's bill delivers on this promise.

We know that there are different views on this issue, but I want to reassure this House that I have heard the concerns of Canadians. Almost 27,000 pieces of correspondence on this issue have been received by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

The goal of Bill C-355, to ban the export of horses for slaughter, has been shared across party lines for many years, with many bills and petitions. The member of Parliament for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford also tabled a petition to ban this practice, which had over 36,000 signatures. It is abundantly clear that Canadians want to see this practice come to an end. Several countries, including the United States and the United Kingdom, have already banned it, and as many hon. colleagues noted back in November, it is time for Canada to join them.

I would like to remind members of the House that Bill C-355 proposes to create a new act that would prohibit the export of horses by air for slaughter. Horse exporters would be required to provide a written declaration that horses are not being exported for the purpose of slaughter or fattening for slaughter.

First, I will give a bit of background. Last year, some 2,600 horses were exported from Canada for slaughter. This number, which had reached a peak of 7,000 horses in 2014, has decreased significantly over the past decade. All horses exported for this purpose are transported by aircraft. Currently, all horses exported live for slaughter are for a niche market. It is providing draft or draft cross horses to foreign countries for further fattening prior to the horses being slaughtered for human consumption. This market requires the horses to be exported live, as the horse meat is consumed raw.

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There were initial consultations with producers, including indigenous producers, as well as other players along the transportation and export supply chain. These consultations included producers, feedlot operators, exporters and freight forwarders to organized shipments. Horses bound for export may come from different types of farms. These range from small, multi-purpose producers that also breed horses for other primary uses to larger operations that specifically breed for this market.

Our government takes the issue of animal welfare very seriously. Canada is a leader in animal welfare, with a unique and robust system in place to ensure that animals are well cared for through all stages of production.

• (1750)

Our government has heard the views of concerned Canadians and remains committed to ban the export of live horses for slaughter. For this reason, I would like to thank the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga for bringing forward a bill that would not amend the Health of Animals Act, but rather positions this as a stand-alone act that would address a concern of so many Canadians.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency have been engaging with a variety of stakeholders, including animal rights advocacy groups, provincial governments, industry representatives and indigenous organizations. These engagements were pursued to better understand the points of view of various stakeholders and the potential impacts of a prohibition on the live export of horses for slaughter.

Our government continues to perform its due diligence to minimize potential unintended consequences related to any changes in policies or laws. I appreciate that the member for Kitchener—Conestoga took into consideration, when drafting Bill C-355, that horses transported for other reasons like sporting events would not be impacted by this bill.

We value the perspectives of all stakeholders. I appreciate that the member Kitchener—Conestoga committed to continuing his collaborative approach as the parliamentary process plays out. I know our government also remains committed to working collectively with all relevant stakeholders to advance the work under way to meet our platform and mandate letter commitment.

This includes, but is not limited to, engagement with animal rights advocacy groups, provincial governments, industry representatives, indigenous business owners and organizations, and Canadians to obtain information and their points of view regarding this important issue.

To summarize, our government is committed to addressing the concerns expressed by Canadians. We remain committed to working and engaging with key stakeholders, provincial and territorial partners, indigenous communities and animal rights advocacy groups to better understand the potential impacts of a ban.

Once again, I thank the hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga for bringing this important bill before this House.

• (1755)

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I begin this debate a little heavy-hearted, because this is an issue that is near and dear to me and I just want to reiterate what I just heard.

I just heard the member of Parliament for Calgary Skyview advocate against jobs in his own riding in the Calgary airport, jobs of shipping horses. This is from a bill from the member for Kitchener—Conestoga.

Apparently this is the pressing issue in Kitchener—Conestoga. It is not affordability. It is not any other issue, like day care, crime or violence in our communities and streets or people using food banks; the most pressing issue in Kitchener—Conestoga apparently is what some Métis people in Alberta are doing, and a few farmers in Manitoba, Alberta and Quebec are doing, when it comes to horses.

It is a niche market, as I will freely admit, and my constituents admit that, but it is an important issue. I am referring, obviously, to this notion of somehow singling out horses for export from our agricultural community. In essence, the government and its acolytes in the Senate have launched a two-pronged attack. The first bill here is Bill C-355, which we are debating today, and the second is Bill S-270. Both of these bills would prohibit the export of live horses from Canada for the purpose of slaughter. The primary difference is that Bill C-355 would only restrict that export by air, while the Senate bill would do so more generally and broadly.

Since this issue is not often discussed in the public domain, other than in misinformation campaigns, I would like to begin my speech today with a few statistics and some key information about this valuable industry.

There were only 347 exporting breeders in Canada, and they exported a total of 2,600 animals for slaughter in the last year, 2022. For the education of my colleague for Calgary Skyview who just spoke and said that we used to export 7,000, that was because we used to have PMU barns and we used to produce a lot more horses because of that pregnant mare urine, which is a biotic used for the creation of birth control. As that was phased out in favour of therapeutics, the number of horses has gone down.

However, we still need a market for these animals, but that member would not know that. I do not think there are a whole lot of horse breeders or horse raisers in Calgary Skyview, which is fine. I always find a lot of humour in listening to my Liberal colleagues from urban areas talk about how much they clearly do not know about agriculture. That number is complemented by another 10,840 live horses that are also exported, but not for the purpose of slaughter. Basically, a five-to-one ratio of horses that are actually exported are not for slaughter, but who is going to know what the motives are of the buyer of that particular horse when it is purchased in Canada and shipped on an airplane?

Private Members' Business

While the distribution of this industry, as I said, is spread across the country, the greatest number of these animals comes from my province of Alberta, as well as Ontario and Manitoba. It should be noted that 25% of these horses come from indigenous herds. I remember when this government used to say that there is no relationship more important to it than the relationship with first nations people; a quarter of this industry is actually providing income and stability to the economic viability of first nations, primarily the Métis in Alberta.

Canada consumes 1,000 to 1,200 tonnes of horsemeat every year. This is mainly in *la belle province* of Quebec. As well, over a billion people—16%, so almost two in 10 people on this planet—consume horsemeat, so almost 20% of human beings on the planet consume horses. That is an astounding number, but apparently it is not good enough for those who do not know the industry, do not know anything about agriculture and never represented anybody in agriculture, and they are just going to shut down this industry.

It is also very healthy meat, with 20% more protein than beef, 25% less fat, 20% less sodium and double the iron of a beef sirloin, so I do not know why my colleagues across the way are protesting so much.

Now that we have a picture of what this industry looks like in this country, I would like to stay with what the Liberals propose to do with Bill C-355, and it is nothing short of shameful. The bill would require an unreasonable regulatory process to be undertaken prior to any flight being allowed to depart with a horse on board. This includes a signed declaration, to be approved by the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, that the horses are not being exported for slaughter.

Can members imagine? The pilots have about five minutes when the plane pushes back from the gate when the pilots have the authority to get their documentation, get everything signed, push back and take off.

- (1800)

Now, we would have to have an approved letter from the Minister of Agriculture just before push-back. I am sure that would be an interesting bureaucratic hoop to jump through. This declaration must then be in the hands of the pilots of that aircraft and the chief customs officer of the airport. If it is contravened, the consequences of this act would be devastating. On the higher end, fines of up to a quarter of a million dollars, imprisonment for a term of not more than two years or both may result.

One gets less for violating a gun prohibition order in this country. This is the way the folks across the aisle think about these particular issues. There is nothing more damaging to Canada, apparently, than a farmer.

This is not speculation. The Air Line Pilots Association, International, for Canada has expressed concerns. It represents 95% of the unionized pilot workforce employed at 21 airlines.

The result of this bill would be to essentially restrict the air transportation of all horses in and out of Canada for all purposes. Not only would this bill impose an unfair burden of proof on the pilots and exporters, who cannot always be assured of what the end use is

of the horse that is on board, but it would also dissuade them from even taking any live horses as cargo because of the overly punitive fines.

As previously mentioned, Canada exports 10,840 live horses for purposes other than slaughter. This bill would inadvertently hurt those producers as well, as it would make it harder for them to find air shippers that are willing to take their cargo.

For example, this may cause delays for those who need to fly horses engaged in Olympic or other equestrian competitions, as well as horses that are simply sold for their genetics and used in breeding programs elsewhere in the world.

These delays could jeopardize their opportunity to compete and represent their country internationally. We would lose things such as the Spruce Meadows and show jumping. We would have all kinds of problems, even applying for an Olympic bid in this country, because somebody would bring their horse here and would like to take it home with them. “Not a chance in Canada,” say the Liberals.

I must say that this bill is not just about the export of horses. It is part of a larger issue, which is the general assault on the Canadian farmer, who is already burdened by costly carbon taxes and excessive regulations.

We saw this disregard for farmers again recently, when the Liberal-controlled independent senators blocked Bill C-234's passage through the Senate. Finally, when they did pass it, they amended it to gut the bill of its impact. Instead of healing the urban-rural divide, the government is still stoking division.

This debate is personal for me. The horse export industry is prominent in my riding of Red Deer—Lacombe. A testament to this importance can be found in some of the feedback I have received from constituents and stakeholders. As one can imagine, in mixed and rural ridings such as mine, the impact of such legislation can be of outsized importance. This includes a member of an Alberta Métis group.

As part of a larger statement to us, they have stated, “There has been no consultation with indigenous producers and people on the plan to ban the export of live horses. The Canadian government has a history of stepping on indigenous farmers.”

There is a duty to consult in the Constitution, and they have not done that with this bill. I would also like to point out that the rationale for banning the bill, based on the so-called premise of animal welfare, is all based on misinformation and untruths.

Orders of the Day

This is especially the case when it comes to claims of mistreatment and abuse of these animals during their transportation. I can tell members that I grew up on a farm. On the farm, our animals are the most important thing we have. They are part of our business. We have to treat them well and with respect, because our business and livelihood both depend on the health and viability of these animals.

Since 2013, over 41,000 horses have been exported. The mortality rate at all stages of transport, not just on the airplane, is 0.012%. Basically, this is statistically insignificant. I want to highlight that no deaths as a result of the transportation of these animals have occurred since 2014.

We have veterinary oversight. We have very stringent transportation rules for animals. This is a clear campaign by misinformed individuals who simply want to make an emotional argument to try to shut down an industry that they disagree with ideologically.

This is absolutely frustrating, not only for my constituents but also for all farmers. It is a slippery slope. I urge all my colleagues in the House to vote against this bill.

• (1805)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Kitchener—Conestoga for his right of reply.

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are here today to discuss an issue that is important to me and to many Canadians, my private member's bill, Bill C-355, which seeks to ban the export of live horses for slaughter.

I tabled this private member's bill in September and I continue hearing from and consulting with stakeholders and receiving calls and emails as recently as today. I commit to continue this dialogue and I am open to hearing people's concerns and ideas. If this bill passes second reading, it now looks like the vote will be at the end of January. I look forward to this bill going to the agriculture committee and continuing this conversation. I am especially proud of the fact that I sit on the agriculture committee.

I thank everyone who spoke today and everyone who has reached out to me and all members of Parliament across Canada to share their opinions about this practice. I want them to know their voices are being heard.

The most important thing to me, the goal that I commit to work toward, is that we join other countries in the world and ban the export of live horses for slaughter. I welcome the opportunity to work together across party lines and advance this important legislation.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

• (1810)

[English]

Mr. Tim Louis: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The House resumed from November 29 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the excellent member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

It is a very challenging time for Canadians. We have food price inflation that we have never seen before in this country. Food bank usage is at an all-time high. A third of all food bank users are children. We have seen reports from experts that the inflationary policies of the NDP-Liberal government are contributing to food price inflation.

As we move into the holiday season, Canadians are getting ready for Christmas and are struggling. Rents are up. Mortgage payments are up. The interest payments that people are paying on everything they borrowed, whether it is through a line of credit, a credit card or their vehicle loans, are up. They are looking for a little relief.

When we talk about food in particular, the food that we get does not come from the grocery store. That is not its point of origin. Food comes from the farmers who grow it. One way that we could address food insecurity and food price inflation is by reducing some of the pressure on our farmers and producers.

Conservatives put forward common-sense Bill C-234. It would remove the carbon tax for our farmers on their grain drying and on the heating and cooling of their buildings. When we have farmers paying an average of \$150,000 for their carbon tax bill, which is set to quadruple with the Liberals, it is incredibly concerning what the downstream effect of that is going to be for Canadians when they go to the grocery store. Our farmers have two options. They can either cut production to cut their carbon tax bill or pass the increased costs on to consumers, who are already feeling the effects of food price inflation. This is after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government and the unsustainable path it has put us on.

Orders of the Day

What we hear from Liberal members is that the alternative, Canada's Conservatives, would cut. What we will cut is Liberal corruption. What we will cut is Liberal taxes. I could list a few of the areas very quickly where the Liberals have found no dollar that they are not willing to take from Canadians' pockets in the form of taxes. Instead of helping Canadians out, the Liberals help out friends and insiders.

We had the infamous \$54-million arrive scam. This is not a project that Conservatives support, and we would cut that kind of spending. There is the billions of dollars that Liberals have given to their friends in high-priced consulting fees. In true Liberal fashion, when they were called out on their high-priced consultants, no one ever having spent more on consulting than the Liberals, they hired a consultant to tell them how to spend less on consultants. That cost taxpayers three-quarters of a million dollars. We would cut that.

We can look at the \$1-billion green slush fund, which is mired in scandal. We had a whistle-blower at committee just this week talking about \$150 million. The Liberals allowed that money to line the pockets of well-connected insiders. We have two Liberal appointees now under investigation by the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner for voting to give themselves \$600,000 between the two of them. We would cut that kind of spending. Of course, we would root out that kind of corrupt behaviour.

Another director on that board has also been identified as having furthered their own interests—

• (1815)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. When I was speaking with respect to the agriculture report and concurrence, I did not talk about the corruption that was there with Stephen Harper—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is a point of debate. I would just ask members, when they rise on a point of order, to please specify the standing order that they are speaking on.

The other thing is, instead of trying to interrupt members or making comments while the member is speaking, I would ask members to please wait because there is going to be an opportunity for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, they cannot even help but heckle the Speaker when that member is so desperate to try to defend the indefensible, and that is the Liberal corruption that is costing Canadians and is forcing them to skip meals.

The Liberals' inflationary spending is not for legacy projects. It is not to build bridges or build homes. It is to line the pockets of insiders. While we have tent cities that did not exist eight years ago and while we have food bank use in numbers that did not exist eight years ago, we have corruption the likes of which has never existed in this country, except for under the current NDP-Liberal government.

It is clear that after eight years of this Prime Minister he is not worth that cost. He is not worth the cost of record food bank usage. He is not worth the cost of record food price inflation. He is not worth the cost of scandals. It is hard not to be disappointed in the government when every day there is a new scandal. These Liberals just cannot help but jump up to defend the indefensible.

We saw it today, in fact, when the industry minister stood up and was very animated in defence of all of the conduct at the billion-dollar green slush fund. These are Liberal appointees who are under investigation. I understand that there might be an initial instinct, but many months have passed. The Liberals have seen the evidence. The Auditor General has now launched an investigation. That is the stage that we are at.

We are at the stage where we have many millions of dollars go missing and instead of saying they are going to get Canadians their money back and they are going to make sure that everyone who had anything to do with it is held fully accountable and that of course they are going to clean house and everyone is fired, they have fired not a single person. They have not sought to recover a single dollar. I have to say that my first call would be to the RCMP because with Canadians who are starving and struggling and freezing in the dark, that is the kind of reaction that we should have to misappropriation and embezzlement; not looking to jump up and, as I said, defend corrupt practices.

That is why we have put forward common-sense solutions, like Bill C-234. It is horrible to have seen the pressure that the PMO and his radical environment minister used, to have senators amend that bill before sending it back here. It is brutal. It could have provided real relief to Canadians. It could have had a real effect on food price inflation and could have contributed to food security for Canadians. While the Liberals may have given up on doing the right thing, we are always going to stand up for Canadians and we are going to bring home lower prices and food that people can afford.

• (1820)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member talks about food security. With respect to the issue of affordability, at the end of the day, they will find that what is happening in Europe is having more of an impact than the price on pollution on inflation here in Canada. What did the Conservative Party do in regard to Europe? Not once, not twice, not three times and not four times, but five times the Conservatives voted against Ukraine, whether it was the trade agreement or budgetary allocations. That does nothing in terms of world or European stability, which has an impact on food prices.

As opposed to trying to have his fairy tales of corruption, as if only in the member's mind, why does he not recognize the fact that the Conservative approach on substantive policies like Ukraine is for the member opposite and his caucus in its entirety to vote against Ukraine at every opportunity they have had in the last number of weeks?

Orders of the Day

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, I will offer some facts to the parliamentary secretary. The Auditor General of Canada is investigating embezzlement and corruption at the Liberal billion-dollar green slush fund. That is a fact. The Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is investigating not one but two Liberal appointees to the billion-dollar green slush fund for their conflicts of interest in voting for motions that put hundreds of thousands of dollars in their own pockets. That is a fact. The report that was commissioned by the government found \$40 million in misappropriated funds, but a whistle-blower has now said that there is \$150 million in misappropriated funds.

These Liberals have sent gas turbines to Russia. They have sent detonators that are blowing up Ukrainian soldiers, and they voted with Russia in support of Hamas at the United Nations. We are not taking any lessons on foreign policy from these jokers, today or any day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, concerning grocery store prices, I would like to ask my colleague for his interpretation of the theatrical performance put on by the Minister of Industry.

The minister called in the CEOs of major corporations to give evidence and asked them to change their prices. However, when they appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, these same CEOs told us that they had not changed their practices and that everything is the same as it always was. Instead of following the committee's existing recommendations, the government decided to put on a show to win popular support.

What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, it was the same theatre that we saw from the minister when talking about his refusal to take action on the billion-dollar green slush fund. There was an awful lot of motion. He was quite blustery, but he wanted us to confuse that for action.

He is not taking any action there, and he is not taking any action on food price affordability. When standing committees particularly make recommendations, those should be the first thing that the minister looks at, instead of having a big show trial where he brings in grocery CEOs to look him in the eye and talk sternly to them. We have presented concrete ways that they can bring down food price inflation and one of those ways would be to pass the common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-234.

• (1825)

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary on this seemed to doubt that there was any kind of a problem with the billion-dollar green slush fund, wherein members have actually admitted at committee to have voted to give themselves money.

I wonder if the member, in whatever time he has left, could ensure the parliamentary secretary does have his facts straight.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge rightly identified that it was the Liberal-appointed

chair of the billion-dollar green slush fund who not only moved the motion, but also voted for the motion to give herself hundreds of thousands of dollars. She put it into a company and then withdrew a salary for \$120,000 from that company, at a time when Canadians are struggling to feed themselves. That is what the minister is defending. That is what the parliamentary secretary is defending. It is indefensible, and we need common-sense solutions such as Conservative Bill C-234.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, what an ironic situation to be standing in the House talking about concurrence in a committee report dealing with strengthening food processing capacity after we just spent an hour of private members' business talking about a Liberal private member's bill that is going to shut down an entire portion of Canada's agricultural economy.

It is bizarre to stand here today and talk about food security in the context of the greatest food insecurity time that we have ever had. Since food banks started recording information in 1989, there has never been more demand at our food banks than right now. We have had eight years of the Liberals, now propped up by the NDP, making bad policy, bad law and bad budget after bad policy, bad law and bad budget. We find ourselves in a scenario where inflation, caused by the doubling of our national debt, all previous prime ministers combined, came to a little over \$600 billion. For the current Prime Minister, it was \$600 billion in just eight years, making the cost of everything go up.

The Liberals' proudest moment was when the Prime Minister stood in this House and announced he was going to implement a carbon tax, a tax that we as Conservatives said would be a tax on everything. Here we are. Canadians are choosing between heating their homes and eating. Seniors are moving back in with their children. Children are not even able to move out of their parents' house. Parents are wondering if they are going to have their kids and parents living in their house. There are a lot of people asking themselves those questions right now.

The agriculture committee studies food processing. That is part of the entire supply chain, so let us take a look at how we get food here.

Orders of the Day

Liberals would have us believe that Canada cannot produce its own food, that we somehow need to support other countries around the world in order to have food here. That is not true. We are one of, I believe, only five nations in the world that are net food exporters. That means that Canada can make more than enough food for ourselves and can export food around the world. That is what we do with beef, grain, oilseeds, pork and hopefully still horses if there is any sensibility in the room. Imagine the arrogance of a government knowing what people should be able to choose on the shelf. Imagine it being so knowledgeable that it can do people's shopping for them right here in the House of Commons and tell them what they can and cannot have. We see that all the time with the government. It is not just with respect to the food we eat, but the energy we can use for our vehicles and homes, the modes of transportation we can use and the firearms we get to use when we decide to go hunting. A lot more people are hunting these days. Madam Speaker is from a riding with a lot of hunters in it. That is not necessarily because they want to, but out of necessity because of the cost of food. There is a lot of uptake in hunting, which is a good thing. I am a hunter. I like that.

• (1830)

This is all premised on the notion that the Liberal government has no trouble berating its own industries that it does not like. It berates our oil and gas sector, even though we have one of the cleanest oil and gas sectors on the planet. It berates our agricultural sector, even though we are one of the most advanced societies relying on technology. We have to be innovative. We only have four or five months of a growing season in the year to grow crops. If we were not innovative, we could not compete with countries that can grow grass 12 months of the year. We would not keep up with them.

We need to be innovative with greenhouses. In my riding of Red Deer—Lacombe, we have great greenhouses. Guess what we do to increase the efficiency of food production in a greenhouse. Does anyone have any idea what we might pump into a greenhouse to make plants grow faster and help the crop be more productive? It is carbon dioxide. That is what we put into a greenhouse.

What goes into fertilizer? It is natural gas to create urea. We need this so we can use our innovative farming techniques for single pass. When I was a kid growing up on a farm in central Alberta, we used to have things like rod weeders and all kinds of other equipment we would use. We would even contemplate summer fallow, which is leaving the ground empty for an entire growing season just to deal with the weed problem. We do not have to deal with that anymore because we have so much innovation making our land more productive and reducing our input costs.

How do we reduce our input costs? It is by using the innovative technologies I just talked about, which all depend on things like natural gas for the creation of fertilizer. However, now that is taxed.

We are talking about Bill S-234 right now. It was in the Senate. It was passed by this place so that farmers could have a bit of an easier go when it comes to drying their grain. Some years they can take it off dry; some years they cannot. They do not get to pick and choose.

Farmers in my riding are showing me their carbon tax bills: \$18,000 a year to dry 90,000 bushels of grain and oilseed.

Where are they going to recoup that cost? Are they just going to pass it along to the consumer or the next purchaser? They are already paying more for their fertilizer because there is a carbon tax on that as well, before the inputs even get there.

With the shipping of new farm equipment to their farm, like a new truck, tractor, cultivator or harvester, now there is a carbon tax. It is not only on the creation of the machinery but on the shipping of the machinery. Before they even get a kernel of grain or raise a cow, they are already paying the carbon tax on the items that were brought to the farm.

Now they go through their growing season and are harvesting, and everything they do is taxed. They get a few little exemptions on farm fuel but it is taxed. Then what happens? They put grain in the truck and take it to wherever the market is. They are marketing it to the grain terminal or taking their livestock to the auction market, wherever that happens to be. There is a carbon tax on that fuel and a carbon tax on that vehicle.

Then it gets purchased by a buyer and gets shipped someplace else in the world. There is a carbon tax anytime the stuff moves or changes hands. Hopefully it ends up at a processor, which is what this report is all about. By that time, it has already had a carbon tax applied two or three times directly or indirectly just to get enough grain over to a terminal, where it is sent to a processor. Now that processor is paying a carbon tax on the electricity being used in the building and for the shipment of all the boxes and everything other type of thing they might have. Their entire production line is going to consume energy, which means a carbon tax.

Is it any wonder that we have seen the price of food go up? We have not even gotten to the grocery store yet. How do Canadian farmers, shippers, processors and grocers have a chance when they are taxed to bring us the food that the consumer ends up having to pay the bill for? They cannot do it.

It is time to axe the tax. We want to help innovation for processors. Let us get out of their way, axe the tax and make it affordable.

• (1835)

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.

Just today I was alerted to something that was really unfortunate with two people in my riding. I found out that two family members of a family that I grew up with had recently passed. On Tuesday, Allen Nordick passed away. May perpetual light shine upon him.

Unfortunately, the day following, his mother, Maybelle Nordick, passed away at 93, so there were two deaths in the family within 24 hours. It is very difficult to see a mother and her son both pass away. May perpetual light shine on Mabel Nordick as well. I will be attending the joint funeral on Monday. My deepest condolences go out to the family.

To my colleague, if he could change one thing that this Liberal government could do in light of his speech, what would that be?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I also want to extend my condolences on behalf of myself and this House to your constituents' family.

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, obviously the issue that my colleague brought up is a difficult one, and I send my support and sympathies as well.

I thank him for the question. It is really quite simple.

The carbon tax is a tax on everything, because energy is what we use to do everything we do in our lives. The entire economy rests upon our ability to have energy. It powers us in everything we do: work, play and our quality of life. When we tax our quality of life, our quality of life goes down, which is what is happening. Our productivity is going down, our affordability is going down, our cost of living is going up and Canadians are struggling. It is time to axe the tax.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by colleague for Red Deer—Lacombe and his hard work on this file in representing large agricultural areas, as I do. Both of us are farm kids and have first-hand experience.

We witnessed here all fall the Liberals refusing to give a carbon tax carve-out for our farmers. The Liberals are creating food inflation and they are creating food insecurity. As they bring in more and more of their environmental restrictions—and now we are looking at methane and looking at reductions in fertilizer applications across this country—these restrictions will drive down production significantly, will drive down profitability of our farms and will increase the price of food to consumers. These Liberals would rather import food from other countries that do not have the same regulatory standards and environmental standards that we have here in Canada, plus pay the cost of transporting all of that food to feed Canadians, probably at even a higher cost. That, to me, is ridiculous.

Now these guys like to talk about making sure that we are protecting Ukraine. That is something that is very near and dear to my heart as a Ukrainian-Canadian, but these individuals, instead of helping Ukraine by sending it more weapons, are actually allowing detonators to go in land mines that wreak havoc in those fields and are actually killing Ukrainian farmers.

Adjournment Proceedings

My question to the hon. colleague for Red Deer—Lacombe is this: Does he believe these Liberals are undermining food security in Canada and around the world?

• (1840)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, absolutely. My colleague for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman is exactly right. He knows very well how things work from the farm gate right to the grocery store.

It is really sad to see what is transpiring in this place with the accusations from the government about support for Ukraine. If this government were actually truly supporting Ukraine, it would make absolutely certain that no products leaving Canada would ever be used against our friends in Ukraine. We see that with detonators. We have seen that with the turbine. We have seen the humiliating incident right here in this chamber when the government hosted President Zelenskyy and we had the unfortunate incident that led to the resignation of the previous Speaker. Hopefully there will be the resignation of the current one.

We will take no lessons from the chaps on the other side. It is time that we actually had a new government in this country to restore our credibility and reputation internationally and to restore some hope to the Canadian public.

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise. I am not going to speak at length about the report.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word “That” and substituting the following:

“the first report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, presented on Wednesday, February 2, 2022, be not now concurred in, but that it be recommitted to the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food with instruction that it amend the same by adding to Recommendation 5 of the report a call to the government to discontinue the carbon tax, given that over 100 first nations communities have taken the government to court because it is violating the rights of First Nations with the carbon tax on rural and remote people and the recent request from the Premier of the Northwest Territories, who joins other premiers, for an exemption from the carbon tax”.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The amendment is in order.

There being no further members rising, pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion are deemed put and recorded divisions are deemed requested.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 66, the recorded divisions stand deferred until Wednesday, January 31, 2024, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

Adjournment Proceedings

● (1845)

[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, a few weeks ago, I asked the government when it would rein in its inflationary spending and balance the budget to bring down inflation and give Canadian homeowners interest rate relief.

The parliamentary secretary took a cheap shot at the Conservative Party leader, but the main meat of his response needs some unpacking. He referred to his government supposedly working with the City of Calgary, and that point needs correcting. In this case, the minister the parliamentary secretary speaks for wrote a threatening letter to the mayor, demanding that city council take a vote on a specific proposal or lose housing accelerator funding.

They were not working with the City of Calgary; they were threatening it. It is a classic “my way or the highway” type of move. Sadly, it is one that they have also undertaken with other municipalities.

I would like to contrast that approach with the building homes not bureaucracy act, the housing plan that has already been partly tabled in the House of Commons by the Conservative Party's leader. Under this plan, the federal government would tie municipal funding to outcomes, but not by sticking its nose into municipal government's business. Instead, a Conservative government approach would respect municipal decision-making. It would simply tie national government funding to national policy objectives; increasing the national housing supply is a critical policy imperative.

The question that I asked remains unanswered. Under the NDP-Liberal government, interest rates have gone through the roof. Even the government's own experts and all kinds of random Liberals have affirmed without any doubt that the government's spending and borrowing are contributing to inflation.

Former Liberal finance ministers, such as Bill Morneau and John Manley, have clearly said that the government is losing the battle against inflation because it keeps pouring gasoline on the inflationary fire. Current and former governors of the Bank of Canada have also weighed in with concern about how the government's spending and deficits make inflation worse.

The finance minister herself even admitted earlier this year that her government was going to have to rein in its spending to fight inflation. However, she then tabled a fall economic statement with more spending, taxes, borrowing and deficits, which means more inflation and higher interest rates.

Inflation has been called the cruellest tax ever. It robs workers of the value of their wages, it robs savers of the value of their savings and it robs seniors of the value of their pensions. Inflation is crushing Canadians and lower-income retirees with higher interest rates. Moreover, higher interest rates threaten mortgagors and threaten to suppress housing construction. They even threaten the entire financial system because of the weight of mortgage asset balances.

Canadians cannot afford the homes they already own, in many cases, because they were forced to buy at peak prices that were bid up by a lack of supply. Now their mortgages are maturing at shock-

ingly high rates. Under the government's watch, some were even forced into fixed-payment variable rate mortgages, because at the very peak of prices, qualifying calculations actually made it more advantageous to do so. People were just trying to put a roof over their head, and they had to take on these riskier mortgages just to get into a home. Now they have negatively amortizing mortgages, where the balance owing is increasing. Thus, they are having to either make giant payments of principal or face huge increases on their payments, but they do not have any extra money. People are desperately worried that they are going to lose their homes, and observers worry that the banking system itself is at risk.

Therefore, I ask again. When will the government rein in its deficits, reduce its wasteful spending and get inflation under control so interest rates can come down, Canadians can afford to keep a roof over their own head and builders can afford to build?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the challenges we are facing are complex and multi-faceted. There is no simple solution. This is a nationwide issue that can only be solved with close co-operation between partners in every sector and all levels of government.

After decades of absence at the housing table, this government has stepped up and assumed a leadership role. To this end, I am happy to remind members what the Government of Canada is doing for Canadians and the solutions we have put forward for Canadians to find homes they can afford and improve communities across the country.

On housing, we are taking a practical approach to increase the supply of all types of homes. We have to look at the housing challenge holistically. As I said, this is multi-faceted with a range of factors that requires participation from all concerned. We are talking about shelters, transitional housing, community housing, affordable rental housing and more. Each of these comes with its own unique set of challenges.

With that mind, we are attacking it from all angles. To get more homes built, we are working with partners directly or indirectly involved in the housing sector. That includes provinces, indigenous governments, municipalities and private and community sectors.

Adjournment Proceedings

Thanks to various programs under the national housing strategy, many projects have been started in my colleague's city of Calgary. One such example is the Sheriff King Home women's shelter. By working with the Government of Alberta, we were able to double the number of available spaces. Another example is the Templemont Place and Gardens residence, which opened last spring. This 120-unit affordable housing project for seniors provides 50 affordable housing units and 70 supportive housing units, where residents have access to on-site doctors and nurses.

This housing complex was made possible thanks to contributions from the national housing co-investment fund, the Canada-Alberta National Housing Strategy Bilateral Agreement and the seed fund program. No doubt, this initiative demonstrates the success that comes through a concentrated approach and this is the approach we are taking to get more homes built more quickly.

This government invests to ensure greater equity across the country that is essential to making a difference for all Canadians.

• (1850)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary still has not answered my question. When are the Liberals going to rein in the spending, rein in their deficits and get inflation under control so that interest rates can come down and Canadians can get on with living their lives and not have to deal with the catastrophic effects of the inflationary and high-interest-rate environment that they have created? People's payments, in some cases, are doubling. It is normal now for a maturing mortgage to add \$700, \$800 or more a month to people's payments. They cannot afford it. They cannot afford to keep the homes they are in.

I did not hear an answer to my question. I heard him tick off a couple of announcements of funding and openings, but that comes amid the need for millions of new housing construction in the years to come. The answer I got is not going to cut it for the needs of Canadian housing and certainly will give no relief to existing Canadian mortgage holders, which is the substance of the question that I had asked.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, we have lowest deficit in the G7, we have a AAA credit rating and all the member wants to do is cut. Last week, he and the Conservative leader voted against measures that are creating 86,000 new apartments for Canadians, including over 15,000 deeply affordable homes. They voted against emergency shelters for women and girls. They voted against veterans experiencing homelessness.

All the Conservative Party wants to do is cut. Conservatives were absent when they were last in government and they think cutting more will build more houses. They are absolutely wrong. We are in strong financial shape and we are going to invest in Canadians. They are reckless. We have Canadians' backs.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, Canadians just found out that the environment minister charged taxpayers \$140,000 for his trip to China this year. The minister's trip to China was only two days long. That is a cost of \$70,000 a day.

The environment minister was just in Dubai for two weeks. How much money did he charge taxpayers for his high-carbon trip to Dubai?

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is disappointing when members, and it is their right to do so, change the topic of the question they have.

I believe the hon. minister was there for four days. What this underlines, and it has been the bent of the Conservative Party this entire Parliament, is its "let it burn" philosophy for Canada. It is to let the country burn and to deny climate change.

That hon. member ran on a price on pollution. He ran on it. Just moments ago, in this very place, he mocked that the government is concerned and that Canadians are concerned about carbon dioxide. He laughed at a joke his hon. colleague told about carbon dioxide as a problem for Canadians. They are climate deniers, as he sees fires and floods in communities just like his across the country. All he will come to do is choose to remove environmental spending and choose to fight against Canadians' fight against an existential threat to our country, an existential threat to the world.

They are not serious on climate change. Their questions show, day after day after day, that they are unserious about this. When billions of dollars are racked up for farmers, communities and infrastructure, and the cost of climate change is real, what do they do? They do nothing. They just let it burn.

It is disappointing. Conservatives do not care. They are reckless. It is truly unfortunate.

• (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to make sure that everybody is on the same page because the hon. parliamentary secretary mentioned that it was not the right topic. The topic that is before the House is regarding Bill C-234. The question that was asked was:

We know why the Prime Minister is blocking the carbon tax carve-out for Canadian farmers. It is because his environment minister has threatened to quit if Bill C-234 passes.

The environment minister does not care about Canadian farmers. He is jetting off to Dubai for two weeks.

The hon. member's question was relevant to the question that he had brought forward. I just want to make sure that the hon. parliamentary secretary is aware of that. I am not sure if the hon. parliamentary secretary received a different question.

The hon. member for Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, there we go.

The government did not answer my question. I will give him a second crack. My question was simple: How much did the environment minister spend jetting off to Dubai?

Adjournment Proceedings

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, again, what this member does not want to say is that he is denying the impacts of climate change, and he will use any opportunity. It is the same with the members of his caucus, to deny, to stick their heads in the sand on the most important thing facing Canadians.

It is truly shameful that speaker after speaker for the Conservatives do not wish to address anything meaningful in climate change, when, just two short years ago, that member ran on a price on pollution. Now he is running away from Canadians. It is truly unfortunate. They are reckless.

HOUSING

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the cost of living is past the breaking point for many people in my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam and the government's lack of action to build affordable homes is pushing more people to be homeless this winter. Many shelters are at full capacity across the nation and Canadians are unable to find adequate housing solutions in their communities.

Sequential Liberal and Conservative governments turned their backs on affordable homes across Canada for 40 years. Some 800,000 affordable homes were lost under the former Conservative government alone and the Liberals did not replace them.

In the greater Vancouver area, homelessness just continues to go up under the shadow of luxury condo towers, many used as investment vehicles and Airbnbs. The inequity and injustice of this reality is a result of Liberal and Conservative bad policy decisions.

In my riding of Port Moody—Coquitlam, luxury towers continue to reign and those people whose affordable housing has been displaced by the insatiable appetite of luxury condo builders are struggling to find new homes. They simply cannot afford a place to live because of unchecked corporate greed. Market-driven policies that the Liberals and the Conservatives before them started and perpetuated are not working for people. People cannot afford housing. Seniors are feeling the affordability gap more and more. The average 70-year-old, who is dependent on their well-earned government benefit, spends about 78% of their income to rent a one-bedroom apartment in B.C. This leaves them with very little at the end of the month. Many seniors are left to choose which one they can afford: groceries, rent or medications. The same is happening with persons with disabilities and anyone on a fixed income, who simply cannot absorb these enormous rent increases. With increased renovations driven by corporate profit and greed, my community members are suffering.

Not-for-profit organizations are pleading with the federal government for better investments in affordable housing. The government must act and invest in housing solutions that meet people's needs now. Will the Liberals front-load their investments into purpose-built rentals, including more investment in co-op housing and immediately match the B.C. rental protection fund to save affordable housing in the most expensive region of the country?

• (1900)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Port Moody—

Coquitlam for her question and for her concern for the well-being of those who are unable to find an affordable place to live.

The Government of Canada shares this concern. Far too many Canadians are struggling to keep a roof over their heads, and those particularly affected are our most vulnerable neighbours. That is why we have urgently addressed this issue. Identifying and implementing effective solutions to Canada's housing crisis is our top priority.

We are already making deep investments in affordable housing through the national housing strategy. This \$82-billion plan focuses first and foremost on providing housing for our most vulnerable neighbours, such as women and children fleeing family violence, seniors, indigenous people, people with disabilities, those dealing with mental health and addiction issues, veterans and young adults.

The rapid housing initiative, for example, is expected to create more than 15,500 permanent affordable homes across the country. These homes are being rapidly built to address the most urgent needs of those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Several cities in my colleague's province have already benefited from this funding, including Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby.

The national housing co-investment fund is another program geared to helping the most vulnerable populations. It provides low-cost loans and contributions to non-profit organizations to build affordable housing. It has already committed funding to build close to 40,000 new homes and repair more than 126,000 existing homes.

At the same time, our new housing accelerator fund is an incentive for municipalities to make the regulatory changes and planning commitments they need to get more homes built faster. The federal government also recently announced GST exemptions for rental construction and additional financing available through Canada mortgage bonds. All of this will help cut out the red tape and make the math work for our partners across the country so we can quickly get shovels in the ground.

We know that increasing the housing supply alone cannot be the only lever we pull, especially when too many of our most vulnerable neighbours are presently experiencing homelessness. It is unacceptable that anyone in Canada has to go without a place to call home, but there is no magic solution to addressing this challenge. It requires all hands on deck to deliver innovative solutions and change how we tackle the crisis.

Since its launch in April 2019, Reaching Home, Canada's homelessness strategy, has helped connect over 122,000 people with homelessness prevention supports like rental assistance and mediation, and has helped place almost 70,000 people in stable housing. In the Tri-Cities areas of Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, Reaching Home is supporting the SHARE Family and Community Services Society. SHARE delivers homelessness prevention and client support services focused on tenant advocacy. This non-profit organization has received \$100,000 in funding from Reaching Home from July 2022 through March 2024.

Through Reaching Home, we are also supporting The Link, which is a continuum of care for homeless or at-imminent-risk youth from foster care living in Coquitlam and nearby municipalities. Reaching Home is also providing nearly \$854,000 in funding to support housing placements, prevention, shelter diversion and client support services. This housing first program ensures youth in great need can enter difficult rental markets and develop essential life skills.

I invite my colleague and all members of the House to work with their communities to make the most of national housing strategy programs and other initiatives.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the comments. I certainly appreciate him for highlighting the work of SHARE in our community. SHARE is one of the largest organizations in our community and has so many services for people. I really appreciate the work SHARE does in the Tri-Cities.

The member talked about the rapid housing initiative, and at this point in time, I am trying to reach Infrastructure Canada to talk about modular housing with regard to the rapid housing initiative. The member knows that the rapid housing initiative is well over-subscribed, with many denials because it is not enough.

Adjournment Proceedings

I want to go back to the fact that a one-bedroom apartment in Coquitlam is renting for \$2,350 right now. We cannot ask people to wait for homes. They cannot afford homes right now. They need action.

Again, will the government front-load its investments into co-ops and purpose-built rentals, immediately match the B.C. rental protection fund and help those who need to get into a home today?

● (1905)

Mr. Chris Bittle: Madam Speaker, the Government of Canada is firmly committed to helping Canadians find an affordable place to call home in these challenging times. We have taken a leadership role, making historic investments in housing after decades of absence in the sector from all levels of government.

We are meeting the goals of our national housing strategy. We have recently introduced new measures to incentivize the kind of housing that Canadian families need now and the types of housing that the hon. member is discussing. We are continuing to work with our partners in government, in the housing sector and beyond to find solutions that will solve our housing shortage and bring relief to Canadians, especially our most vulnerable Canadians.

Merry Christmas to you, Madam Speaker, and to all the residents of St. Catharines.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:06 p.m.)

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