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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 23, 2024

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

The House resumed from June 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-378, An Act amending the Canada Labour Code (complaints by former employees), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for her work on this file. The government supports this legislation, and I would like to take a few moments to explain why.

Everyone deserves a healthy workplace where they feel safe. It is a basic right, yet one that many workers are denied. Harassment and violence at work still happen and no workplace is immune to them. No one should face this on the job or anywhere else. The Government of Canada must set an example, and we are. In 2021, we put in place stronger protections against workplace violence and harassment under the Canada Labour Code and its regulations. This historic piece of legislation, Bill C-65, is now better protecting workers from these harmful behaviours, which disproportionately impact women.

To continue improving protections for workers, an important part of this work is monitoring the progress of these new measures. Last year, we published our first annual report on taking action against harassment and violence in workplaces under Canadian federal jurisdiction, which covers harassment and violence reported to employers in 2021. The first report showed that not all workers experience harassment and violence in the same way or to the same degree. This information is critical. With each annual report's findings, we are able to evaluate what is working and identify improvements that will ensure workplaces are safe and healthy across the country.

When occurrences of workplace harassment and violence are reported, it is important that the investigations are truly independent. In 2021, the government set up a registry of workplace harassment and violence investigators to make it easy for employers to identify qualified investigators and better protect federally regulated employees. We currently have 75 qualified investigators listed who can be contracted by employers to lead independent investigations and make a positive difference in the workplace. In March, we launched a selection process to expand our registry of qualified investigators. These additional resources are expected to be made available by June of next year.

We are also investing in partner organization-led initiatives that will help drive culture change in federally regulated workplaces and protect workers from harm. With the workplace harassment and violence prevention fund, we are currently funding seven new multi-year projects and have funded 14 overall since 2019. The three new projects will receive \$10.7 million in total funding over three years.

For instance, let us take the project from the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children at Western University. The project will see the creation of specialized resources and training for unions to inform employees of their rights and build workplaces free of harassment and violence. All of the following groups are coming together to make it happen: the subject-matter experts at the Canadian Labour Congress; francophone representatives from Quebec; and FETCO, an employers' organization comprising federally regulated firms within the transportation and communications sector.

We are also providing funding through the “workplace opportunities: removing barriers to equity” program, or WORBE, to help break down employment barriers experienced by women, indigenous people, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. Currently, WORBE has a funding envelope of \$3 million every year with 11 multi-year projects.

Canada also participates actively in the global effort to cultivate workplaces that are free from fear and intimidation. Earlier this year, the groundbreaking International Labour Organization convention 190 came into force in Canada. Canada played a strong leadership role in the development, adoption and advancement of this convention. It is the first-ever global agreement on ending violence and harassment at work. We joined countries around the world to protect workers and make sure that every workplace is safe and respectful. It is not just a Canadian value that we have promoted. Now it is a protected right.

Private Members' Business

We have also made progress in supporting the mental and physical health of women at work. We are improving the well-being of nearly half a million workers who may require menstrual products during their workdays by making sure these products are treated like the basic necessities they are. Since December 15, federally regulated employers are now required to provide access to free menstrual products to their employees. This is a big step toward creating a healthier and more inclusive workplace, and we are on our way to accomplishing much more.

In December 2021, we passed a bill to give workers in federally regulated private sector workplaces 10 days of paid sick leave. That bill passed with unanimous consent, because no one should ever have to choose between getting paid and getting better.

Through Bill C-59, we are proposing changes to the Canada Labour Code to create a new three-day leave for federally regulated private sector workers following a pregnancy loss. In the event of a stillbirth, employees would be entitled to take eight weeks off. For most employees, the first three days of this leave would be paid. Dealing with pregnancy loss is hard for employees who experience it and they need support. This new leave would provide employees with greater job security while they recover. It would be available to the individual who is pregnant, the spouse or common-law partner and any person who is intended to be the legal parent of the child.

As everyone can see, we have been working on many fronts to protect workers and make sure that every workplace is safe, healthy and respectful. We have made great progress, but a lot more remains to be done, whether it be through training programs, efforts to eliminate the stigma that prevents workers from speaking up or better resolution processes.

We are all in this together: employers, unions, labour experts and different levels of government. We will continue to work hand in hand to confront, prevent and eradicate harassment and violence in the workplace. When workplaces are safe, it is a win for all of us. Workers can be at their best, employers thrive and the economy benefits.

• (1110)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-378, which was introduced by our Conservative colleague from Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to thank my staff, since this is the first time that I am rising since the House resumed. Like every other MP's staff, they help us improve our work, give better speeches and better carry out our duties, but most importantly, they help us to provide very important services to our constituents when we are away from our ridings. I am talking here about my political staffers, Daniel Lavallée and Sonia St-Amand, my communications manager, Corinne Guimont, my head of representational work, Michel Kieffer, and my photography and videography manager, Vincent Yergeau. This whole team is managed by an exceptional director, Arianne Collin-Gascon. I tip my hat to them and sincerely thank them for all the work they do behind the scenes to support me in my duties.

Back to Bill C-378, which would amend the Canada Labour Code by extending the timeframe to file a complaint for harassment or violence in a federally regulated workplace from three months to two years, even after the individual ceases to be employed. The Bloc Québécois supports this initiative to better protect workers who have suffered abuse. Extending the deadline is a significant step forward for people who may not have the strength or support they need to act quickly in the wake of incidents involving harassment or violence.

The Bloc Québécois has always been a staunch defender of workers and always will be. We believe that this bill is a step in the right direction. The Bloc Québécois is delighted to see the Conservative Party suddenly taking an interest in workers. We hope that this is not just electioneering and that the Conservatives will continue to put workers first in the coming months. Let us hope that if they do come to power, they will be able to keep from targeting them in the cutbacks they plan to make.

In short, giving victims two years to report incidents of violence or harassment recognizes that victims of trauma may need more time before they are ready to file a complaint and take action. This is about respect for trauma victims. These people may, in some cases, need more time to finally be able to speak out. They often experience psychological and physical pain in the months following an incident of this kind, and they often do not have the strength to take action or defend themselves. Some may even need to seek medical attention, which obviously makes it even more difficult to file a complaint.

There have recently been some very positive developments for workers under federal jurisdiction, with the historic and unanimous vote in favour of Bill C-58 prohibiting the use of scabs. By extending the statute of limitations, we are showing kindness and understanding towards those who have experienced these hardships. It shows concern for the victims, a sense of empathy that should always guide our decisions and legislation as legislators.

It is worth remembering that, in 2018, the government passed Bill C-65, which strengthened the provisions on workplace harassment and violence. Updated definitions were added to control this kind of unacceptable behaviour more effectively. The definitions in question include any action, conduct or comment, including of a sexual nature, that causes offence, humiliation or other physical or psychological injury or illness to an employee. That encompasses all types of harassment and violence, even domestic violence.

I would now like to raise a matter of concern to me. Federal public services and Crown corporations are the sectors where incidents of harassment and violence occur the most often.

Private Members' Business

• (1115)

In 2023, the Department of Employment and Social Development tabled its annual report entitled “2021 Annual Report: Taking Action against Harassment and Violence in Work Places under Canadian Federal Jurisdiction”. I will talk about that later.

The Department of Employment and Social Development identified 4,950 reported incidents in 2021. The federal public sector and the banking sector alone account for nearly half of the reported cases, which is a very significant proportion. These numbers are troubling, if not alarming. That is why it is so critical that this limitation period be extended.

Before I conclude my speech, I would like to talk about an article I saw in this morning's newspaper. Maka Kotto, a former Parti Québécois minister, wrote this very moving article, which aptly summarizes what is happening in the House. He talked about the sometimes disgraceful comments and gestures that are made and the totally inappropriate attitude sometimes shown by members of the House, or certain members.

One point he made in the article was that bringing back dignified debates, where differences are expressed respectfully, is the only way to restore public confidence in our institutions. Everyone should read this article by Maka Kotto, a former Parti Québécois minister.

To wrap up, this bill is an important step toward greater justice for victims. It is time to recognize psychological wounds, which are not always obvious, and to take time to heal them. It is also time to recognize that federal workers deserve all the protection we can offer them with this legislative adjustment.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and honour today to rise to speak to Bill C-378, an important bill. It recognizes that the impacts of workplace harassment and violence endure after employees have left a job, and extends their ability to seek recourse and accountability.

As the mental health critic for the NDP, it is important and critical that we advocate for the rights and well-being of workers, especially their mental health. This is a critical bill to ensure we work toward supporting workers who have been impacted in the workplace, so they have enough time to process their trauma and bring forward a complaint when they are ready. This is a crucial change to that and it would allow workers more time to do that by extending the period to two years.

We know that most adults spend more of their waking life at work than anywhere else. Therefore, workplaces have an essential role in the mental health of Canadians. We certainly know that here. Toxic workplaces that fail to take action to prevent or stop harassment or violence contribute to mental health problems that have an enormous cost for workers, families and Canada as a whole.

According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, 14% of employees do not think their workplace is psychologically healthy or safe at all. About 30% of short and long-term disability claims are attributed to mental health problems and illnesses. The total

cost from mental health problems to the Canadian economy exceeds \$50 billion annually.

In 2011, mental health problems and illnesses among working adults cost employers more than \$6 billion in lost productivity from absenteeism, presenteeism and turnover. According to a study by Mental Health Research Canada, 22% of respondents report being exposed to trauma at work; 20% of respondents indicate that the nature of their job involves unavoidable risk to psychological harm; two-fifths of respondents, 38%, are still impacted by their trauma, while half, 48%, have recovered from it. Clients, 46%, co-workers, 29%, and direct managers, 27%, are the most frequent sources of workplace trauma. Twenty-seven per cent of respondents indicate that people at work do not often or always recognize the importance of protecting the physical safety of employees and 45% indicate the same about protecting the psychological safety of employees.

We know that workers face significant barriers in bringing forward complaints regarding workplace harassment and violence, including fear of reprisal, loss of their livelihood and impacts on their career trajectory. I will talk about a couple of cases in my riding, which I heard at committee as well, in a moment.

For some workers, it is only possible to come forward once they have left an unhealthy workplace. Therefore, it is essential to remove barriers for former workers to bring forward complaints. Otherwise, harassment and violence can continue unchecked at toxic workplaces. If there is no accountability, there is no push for change.

A deficiency of the bill is that it would only apply to harassment and violence. It would not allow workers to make complaints regarding other actions that may impact their psychological well-being, such as discrimination and unfair dismissal. Therefore, I am hoping that at committee consideration will be made to expand the types of complaints workers can make. However, the bill could also be improved to provide clear timelines and procedures to ensure that former employees do not have to endure prolonged stress because of delays in resolving their complaints.

I was fortunate to serve on the government operations committee for a couple of years. We were in the process of going through Bill C-290, the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act. I had the opportunity to listen to witness testimony about workers who were subjected to terrible workplace trauma and a lot of mental health-related issues. I see my friend from the Conservative bench, who sat with me on that committee, nodding. We heard about the trauma experienced by Luc Sabourin, who worked for the government. Workers were literally torturing him. When he left, the process took a long time, and it is still taking time. Luc is still going through the process of recalling what happened to him.

Private Members' Business

● (1120)

Going through that process can take a long time, when people have been traumatized, to roll out the facts, to reassess, to seek professional support, to get the guidance they need, to ensure they get the counselling they need, first and foremost, and when they make a complaint, to ensure the complaint is just. We want justice here. That is what we all commit to when we walk into this place.

Another situation that surfaced in my riding over the summer, a really difficult situation, was the lack of safeguards for temporary foreign workers and the lack of recourse for them. We found out that workers at the San mill in Port Alberni were living in inhumane conditions.

I will read a quote from CHEK News that interviewed Joe Spears, who was working as the San Group's general manager of terminals. Workers were washing dishes in and drinking water from a creek. They literally had no drinking water in their accommodation. At one time 30 people were living in an Adco-style trailer. When the news media reported on it, 16 workers were living in inhumane, mouldy conditions. The sewer was running underneath and was leaching into one of the bedrooms. It was absolutely disgusting. It was a horrific scene.

The company tried to say that it was not its problem because it was not required to provide accommodation for these temporary workers under its current permit. However, it was still charging them, \$350 each, to live in this trailer. I was told that the rent was going to go up to \$500. We also learned that they were not paid what they had been promised, never mind the hours that they were promised. There was discrepancies left, right and centre.

These workers were enduring trauma after coming to Canada, with the lack of safeguards to protect them and the inability of government to respond to support these workers. Joe Spears, when asked by CHEK News about where they were washing their dishes, said, "This is where they chose to wash their dishes." He went on to say, "If someone chooses to use water, maybe in Vietnam that's an acceptable practice, that's normal housekeeping." He was alluding to the fact that these Vietnamese workers would rather use an outdoor runoff from a stream than have a running water.

It is unbelievable that a private sector company would put its employees through this trauma. Those workers were left with nowhere to go. The Salvation Army went in and protected those workers. It removed them from the site and found them temporary accommodation. However, it took a couple of months before they received their open work permits and were finally able to get a better start.

It is taking a long time to actually get the full story from these workers as more and more things are surfacing. Language barriers are contributing to the fact that we are not hearing about all the different things they endured through their working time at this mill in Port Alberni.

We have to do better to protect workers. When we look at temporary foreign workers, there is no program for the federal government to respond, to find housing for workers who have been treated poorly, and nowhere for them to get the right supports. The government supports for temporary foreign workers, when they have endured harm in the workplace, are not there.

I was disappointed with the Conservatives. They are bringing forward this bill today, and I am grateful for that, but they were nowhere to be found when this story came out. The Conservative leader was at that mill, talking about the workers and standing with the owners of the mill, but he was nowhere to be found when this terrible situation happened.

I have to bring this to the floor of the House of Commons, because we should never allow this to happen again. I am grateful for this legislation, and look forward to it getting to committee.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for introducing Bill C-378. Well done.

[*English*]

The bill is an exceptional piece of legislation by another Conservative MP trying to enhance the rights of workers across the country. There has actually been a long history in the current Parliament, where the NDP-Liberal government has not acted to protect workers; in fact it has been Conservative MPs who have stood up to try to make sure that workers are protected.

A number of bills have been put forward by Conservative MPs to improve the lives of workers, in addition to this fantastic bill; for example, there is Bill C-228 by the member for Sarnia—Lambton, which would actually protect workers' pensions. It has been a long-standing problem in this country that a company would go bankrupt, workers' pensions would be unsecured creditors and their pensions would disappear. In nine years of an NDP-Liberal government, no action was taken on that. It took a Conservative member of Parliament to say we need to protect workers and this has to change.

There is also Bill C-241, brought forward by the member for Essex, which would allow tradespeople to deduct their travel costs for going to work. It is common sense. If a CEO can write off the cost of their private jet, then why can a worker not write off the cost of their travel as they go out to try to earn an income. Again, during nine years of a NDP-Liberal government, this is something that had no action. A Conservative member of Parliament stood up to make that change.

I also want to mention Bill C-409, brought forward by the member of Parliament for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex. We have heard a lot from the NDP, and silence from the Liberal government, about how flight attendants were ending up working, on average, 30 unpaid hours per month. The NDP-Liberal government did absolutely nothing. The New Democrats talked a bit about it and tabled petitions and other things.

However, it took a Conservative member of Parliament to put forward a bill that would change the Canada Labour Code to define what constitutes work for flight attendants so they would no longer be sitting on a plane waiting for it to back up or waiting for it to take off, and not get paid. We heard horror stories of flight attendants who would show up for work but the flight was delayed and they would be there, would time out for their shift and then go home and not be paid. It was outrageous, and the NDP-Liberal government just let that go on for the past number of years, with no action.

This brings me right back to the fantastic bill before us that has been put forward by my colleague. This is a very serious matter. People who are the victims of harassment or violence at work are victims. They have been traumatized. The Canada Labour Code was only allowing them three months after they left work to file a complaint. These are people who are vulnerable and probably are not in a position to make that decision. Once again, a Conservative member of Parliament had to step in to make that change.

The Liberal government tried to make some changes under Bill C-65, where the victim could apply to extend the three-month timeline. Imagine that: Victims would actually have to apply to extend the deadline. The burden would be on the employee to make the justification for a new deadline. They would have to file an application, explain the trauma and ask for an exemption. The Liberals thought this would well serve the victims of harassment or violence, but it actually would have done nothing of the sort. Imagine having to give deeply personal details to someone to see whether they would let them file a complaint after three months.

It was very thin gruel for the victims. Therefore I want to congratulate again my colleague for seeing the problem, coming up with the solution and making sure that people who suffer these outrageous acts would now have up to two years to file their complaint.

● (1130)

It is a pattern we have seen well established in Parliament, that the NDP-Liberal government talks a very good game about protecting the rights of workers, but they do not actually deliver the results that are required. Therefore it has taken a series of Conservative bills to actually make incredible differences in the lives of workers, including the bill before us here today.

I understand that there is support for the bill to pass, which is wonderful, but it always leaves me this question: After nine years of an NDP-Liberal government, why did it take so long for it to realize this was a problem? It is because the government is really not governing the country well on this and on a whole host of other issues. As opposition members, we have a limited ability to try to clean up the messes that are left by the government, and we have done that with a series of bills that actually are going to make substantial differences.

We hope that the bill before us is going to be fast-tracked through Parliament. Let us get it to committee, get it studied and get it passed. We do not have a huge amount of time in Parliament left for it to pass, so we want to make sure that the piece of legislation can go to the Senate and receive royal assent. I hope it is going to pass through committee very quickly.

Private Members' Business

I would also hope that when Bill C-409, the fairness for flight attendants act, comes up for second reading and a vote, it also goes to committee expeditiously, because it is an incredibly difficult circumstance that flight attendants have right now across the country, and labour has not really had the friendliest of governments.

There was recently a section 107 referral by the government with respect to the resolution of the rail dispute. The right to strike is constitutionally protected; the Supreme Court said that in 2015, and the NDP-Liberal government said it was going to make a referral and take away the workers' ability to go on strike. Once again we have an NDP-Liberal government that claims to be friendly for workers, but it has taken—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Mr. Speaker, now I am being heckled by a Liberal member of Parliament because I am standing up for the rights of workers. One cannot make this stuff up, and 10 minutes from now the member will be saying that the Liberals are so friendly to labour and are the ones who stand up for labour, when in fact they do not.

I just want to say once again again that I congratulate my colleague for putting forward a strong bill to protect victims, to protect workers. Conservatives will always stand for workers and victims.

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise in the House this morning. This is the first time I am rising since Parliament resumed. I would like to take this opportunity to wish my colleagues a good return. The session may be cut short. We shall see what the next few days and weeks bring. We are being kept in suspense. In any case, according to the media, the suspense is rather intense right now.

I truly hope, as my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles said earlier, that we will be able to soften the tone a bit this fall and focus on working for the well-being of Quebecers and Canadians. I hope we can do that. It is not easy, judging by the tone we heard all last week, but I truly hope that we can do it. I think it is possible. I think we have elevated the debate before, and I hope we can do so again.

Private Members' Business

Before I continue, I would also like to congratulate the candidates and winners of last week's two by-elections, in which I was an active participant. I commend all of the candidates. In this day and age, putting one's face on posters and wanting to work for the common good takes courage, no matter which party someone is seeking to represent. Not everyone here shares the same vision for the common good, but I think that most of us are trying to work toward that. Everyone who ran in the two by-elections did so with that goal in mind, and I commend them for that. I especially want to congratulate the two winners, the NDP candidate who won in Manitoba and, obviously, the Bloc Québécois candidate who won a great victory. We stayed up very late last Monday evening, until 2:30 in the morning, to find out the results, and the Bloc Québécois won. That is a great victory. I look forward to our new candidate's arrival in the House. He is a bright, intelligent young man who is full of ideas and who will rise in the House to strongly defend the interests and values of Quebeckers. I am sure that he will. We will see when he arrives.

I am delighted to speak to the bill tabled by my colleague from Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, for whom I have a great deal of respect. I am fond of my colleague. I am not so fond of the Conservative Party's ideas in general, but I have a great deal of respect for my colleague. I rise today in support of Bill C-378, an important bill to protect the rights of federally regulated workers. It would extend from three months to two years the period during which a former employee may file a complaint for harassment or violence in the workplace.

As members know, the Bloc Québécois has always been a staunch defender of workers' rights. Before the summer break, much was said about the anti-scab bill. The NDP had tabled the bill, and it was finally passed. Obviously, we supported it. In fact, over the past 30 years, the Bloc Québécois has introduced anti-scab bills 11 times. We settled this issue in Quebec 50 years ago. This happens all the time in the House. The House has debated countless bills on issues that Quebec has already dealt with. Take child care and pharmacare, for example. Quebec addressed both of those a long time ago. However, here they are still being debated. The Bloc Québécois members often feel as though we are working to help Canada catch up with Quebec. That is what we are doing most of the time.

Yes, we have always been staunch defenders of workers, and we firmly believe that this bill represents a major step forward in the fight against harassment and violence in the workplace. It is high time we recognized that victims of these kinds of incidents need more time to come forward, especially in cases where they are under tremendous psychological or physical stress.

Currently, federally regulated employees have only three months to file a complaint after leaving their job. This is simply too soon for many victims. The consequences of harassment and violence in the workplace do not disappear overnight. Too often, victims of workplace harassment or violence continue to suffer the after-effects long after they have left their job. They face emotional difficulties and mental health issues and, in many cases, are reluctant to speak out against their abusers for fear of reprisals or career stigma. This bill provides a concrete solution to that problem. Extending

the time frame to two years gives victims time to heal, catch their breath and find the strength to file a complaint.

• (1140)

Two years is a reasonable amount of time for workers who have been unjustly treated to take the necessary steps to seek justice.

Workplace harassment and violence are not isolated problems. The Department of Employment and Social Development released a report entitled "2021 Annual Report – Taking Action Against Harassment and Violence in Work Places under Canadian Federal Jurisdiction" that revealed some alarming figures. In 2021, employees working in federally regulated industry sectors reported an absolutely staggering 4,950 occurrences of harassment and violence. The federal public service, banks and the transportation sector are among the main sectors where these incidents occur most often.

These figures unequivocally show that the fight against workplace harassment and violence is an ongoing process that is far from over. We need to strengthen protections for workers, and that includes allowing former employees to file complaints long after they leave the company.

It is also important to remember that these incidents often have serious repercussions, not only on the victims' professional lives, but also on their personal lives. The physical and psychological repercussions of workplace harassment and violence can persist long after the incident, which is why this bill is so important. It gives victims more time to come forward.

Passing this bill will send a clear message. Workers in federally regulated sectors deserve a safe and respectful work environment. The Bloc Québécois has always supported measures to protect workers and guarantee decent working conditions. We are pleased to see this bill move forward, just as we were pleased to see Bill C-58, which bans the use of scabs, pass recently. These are historic victories for workers' rights, and we must keep up the momentum.

I would also like to draw a parallel with the bill I introduced with my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord, Rhéal Fortin. I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I would remind the hon. member, an experienced member of the House, not to use members' names. Rather, members should be referred to by their riding name, as the member mentioned.

Mr. Denis Trudel: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that my colleague from Rivière-du-Nord and I introduced a bill to limit the use of the Jordan decision for serious crimes.

These two bills share a common concern: guaranteeing access to justice for the victims. The bills try to correct flaws in the legal system, flaws that, as they stand, can deny some victims the chance to assert their rights.

In the case of Bill C-378, the purpose is to provide victims of workplace harassment and violence with more time to make a complaint, in order to help them overcome the psychological and administrative obstacles associated with these traumatic situations.

In the case of the proposal to limit the use of the Jordan decision for serious crimes, the purpose is to prevent the accused from evading justice because of excessive court delays. Jordan sets strict deadlines for trials, and it has at times allowed individuals charged with serious crimes to be acquitted, jeopardizing the safety of the victims and the integrity of the justice system.

Both bills seek to restore balance between victims' rights and legal requirements, while preventing procedural formalities from compromising justice. By extending access to justice, in the case of Bill C-378, and by tightening up the legal loopholes arising from the Jordan decision, these two bills share a vision of a fair, effective justice system centred on the victims' needs.

In conclusion, the Bloc Québécois is proud to support this initiative. We hope that all members of the House can grasp the importance of this legislation to this country's workers. Indeed, there can be no justice without recognition for victims' rights, which is exactly what this bill seeks to achieve.

• (1145)

The Speaker: The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for her right of reply.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues' week is off to a good start.

I am delighted by what I am hearing today. Of course, I was equally delighted by what I heard during the first hour of this debate at second reading.

I am very moved to see that Bill C-378 will probably receive unanimous support. As the bill's sponsor, I find that extremely gratifying, although the spotlight does not belong to me. It really belongs to these former workers. As things stand, they have only three months to file a complaint if they were victims of workplace harassment or violence. Three months is the blink of an eye. It is not enough.

When I was the minister responsible for labour at the Quebec National Assembly, I reviewed all of the labour standards, and I worked very hard to ensure that this aspect was reviewed and corrected in workplaces to ensure that, in Quebec at least, the time frames are the same for former employees as they are for current employees. Here, in the federal government, current employees are not held to any limitation period, unlike former employees who have only three months, which is obviously not enough time.

Unlike what the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles suggested, this is not a new-found interest for me. I am grateful for his support, of course, but he implied that the Conservatives have just developed a new-found interest in the cause of workers. That is not true at all. I can prove that this has been an ongoing interest and concern of mine over the past few years. My colleague from Dufferin—Caledon also articulated that very well. Conservative members have introduced many private members' bills in the House to

greatly improve the situation of workers in federally regulated workplaces.

I am very pleased with the unanimity we have in the House. Even though our debates can sometimes get a little heated, we are also able to share a common vision and work to keep protecting employees.

The government had already included the possibility of extending the time limit by three months. In other words, the government already knew that the short time frame might be challenging for the victims who want to make a complaint. We know how long it can take for a person to realize they have been a victim of harassment or violence in the workplace. Often, in the span of three months, there is not enough time for the individual to realize they were victimized. Then the deadline expires and, ultimately, the person has no recourse. Two years is patently a reasonable amount of time.

I will close by quoting Cindy Viau, director general of the Groupe d'aide et d'information sur le harcèlement au travail for the province of Quebec, who said the following about the two-year time limit that exists in Quebec and that I want to implement here:

In addition, at the provincial level, we note from our experience that very few people who contact us find it difficult to initiate the complaint process within the two years set out in the Act respecting labour standards. Since the time limit was changed in 2018, we have only on very rare occasions had to explain to a victim that they had missed their deadline to file a complaint.

All that to say we are on the right track. We have a good objective, a common goal to protect workers from harmful workplace behaviours like harassment and violence. It is the least we can do to give a full two years' recourse to those who have left their jobs.

• (1150)

The Speaker: 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.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote, please.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 93, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 25, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader is rising on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest we suspend for 10 minutes and begin at 12 o'clock with Government Orders.

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Speaker: The sitting will now be suspended until noon.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:52 a.m.)

Government Orders

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1200)

*[English]***ONLINE HARMS ACT**

The House resumed from June 7 consideration of the motion that Bill C-63, An Act to enact the Online Harms Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act and An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, 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.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to what I believe to be very positive legislation. I suspect that, if we were to canvass a vast majority of Canadians, they would recognize that what the online harms act deals with is a very positive thing.

I am a bit surprised at the Conservative Party's approach to the legislation. It is important to look at the essence of what the online harms bill attempts to recognize as issues. There are two categories, if I can put it that way, of what one would classify as the harmful contact specifically being dealt with in Bill C-63. The first is intimate images communicated without consent, including sexually explicit deepfakes, and the second is content that sexually victimizes a child or revictimizes a survivor.

I would have thought that all members of the House would support those initiatives. I have heard Conservatives across the way talk about concerns related to them, how offended they are about the issue and the government needing to do something. Now that we have a piece of legislation before the House with which, instead of just talking about it, the Conservatives can actually do something about it.

I was very surprised to read an editorial back in July in the Winnipeg Free Press that the Conservatives not only oppose the legislation, but also, if the legislation were to pass in the House, a Conservative government would repeal it. It would repeal the law. I do not quite understand the logic behind that, and I hope that during questions and comments, a member of the Conservative Party will have the courage to explain to Canadians why Conservatives would oppose this legislation.

I will read from the Winnipeg Free Press article, an editorial that was written July 10. I want to quote the article because the Winnipeg Free Press is very much apolitical and sticks to the facts. I know the facts can be confusing to the Conservatives, but here is what it had to say:

In the current era of partisan politics, [the Conservative leader] and others should recognize it is important to recognize a good idea when it comes along, whoever might pitch it.

And this is still just an idea — the act has not passed and the regulators have not been established. Given its unrealized state, [the Conservative leader's] dismissal is premature.

A spokesperson for [the Conservative leader] said a 'common sense Conservative government' would repeal the act. Well, let's take a look at the situation, and determine the good sense of a such a pledge.

According to Statistics Canada, between 2014 and 2022 there were 15,630 incidents of police-reported online sexual offences against children, and 45,816 online incidents of child pornography. The overall rate of police-reported online child sexual exploitation incidents in Canada has risen to 160 incidents per 100,000 children between 2014 and 2022 — a 217 per cent increase.

There were 219 reported online hate crime incidents in 2022, up from 92 four years prior. Of those cyber-related hate crimes, 82 per cent were violent.

This legislation deals with issues that are important to Canadians, and the Conservative Party is saying no. Not only are the Conservatives going to vote against it, but if it were to pass, a future "common-sense", or I would suggest nonsense, Conservative government would repeal the law. I question why.

● (1205)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite was trying to pose a question to the opposition about what he wants us to explain. He will get his chance to ask questions of the government when he is sitting in opposition.

The reason we do not have any confidence in Bill C-63 is that the government would be choosing the censors, and the government has failed at everything it has attempted to do. The people have lost confidence in any boards that the government has appointed, the latest being what we are hearing on SDTC.

We do have a bill, Bill C-412, that would protect children. It actually zeros in on the protection of children and proposes specific measures to take to protect them from viewing material they should not be seeing online.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I guess there are now two reasons the Conservatives are opposing the legislation. They have that far-right element, and I am going to a bit kind here, which has a tinfoil impact, where they believe in here and there, and in the stars, and that Canadian rights are being overridden. There is nothing to it.

I can assure the member opposite that she does not need to be fearful. This is not an attack on the far right. This is legislation that a vast majority of Canadians would support. Does she not realize that, by voting against the legislation, she would be voting against protecting a child? She would be voting against prohibiting sexual exploitation through the uploading of intimate pictures on the Internet.

This is legislation that would protect people in many different ways. It would protect people who have been exploited and our children. How can the Conservatives not vote for it? I hope it is not to deal with censorship, as the member opposite tries to say to justify her voting action.

Government Orders

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member has heard about an app called Telegram. It has about a billion users, and its CEO was recently arrested in Paris. It is basically an Internet platform for the exchange of people, drugs, guns and pretty well every illicit substance we can possibly think of. I wonder whether the hon. member could address whether this particular legislation may have some effect on gaining Canadian control over those people within our jurisdiction who are on an app such as Telegram.

• (1210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the legislation is a good, solid first step in addressing, in good part, many of the issues the member has just raised. When I gave some of the statistics I gave about incidents being registered with the police or police reports being filed, those numbers did not reflect the actual numbers as they did not include the incidents that go unreported.

There are so many mischievous players, not only here in Canada but also, even more so, outside of Canada. I look at this legislation as one that ultimately has nothing to do with a person's, or a Canadian's, freedoms or rights. We also have responsibilities, and as legislators, I believe we have to stand up strong to support actions, such as those Bill C-63 is proposing to do, to protect the interests of our children and victims of different forms of sexual exploitation.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think Bill C-63 is important. Online hate is a major problem for us politicians on a daily basis. There is also the issue of non-consensual sharing of intimate images, child pornography, hate speech and so on. It is a major issue and it needs to be tackled.

I would like to hear my colleague talk about the safeguards that are included in Bill C-63 to ensure that no one is infringing on freedom of expression. That is always the challenge. Of course, people are spewing nonsense everywhere, and it would be nice if people would stop saying whatever comes to mind on social media. That said, we do not want to limit freedom of expression.

What kind of safeguards are included in Bill C-63?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that that is why I focused on the two categories in which the legislation would place its attention. I believe that the two categories I referenced as examples, the circulation of non-consensual sexual pictures and child pornography, are fairly clear-cut. I believe that Canadians as a whole, in all regions of the country, would support this particular legislation.

We must have a solid starting point to move forward. Through the creation of the commission and the opportunity for us to review the legislation once it becomes law, I am sure that there would be a number of things put in place to ensure, to say the least, that rights and freedoms would be being protected. We have the Constitution and the Charter of Rights, which, I must say, was brought in by Pierre Elliott Trudeau. I do not see an infringement in any fashion with respect to this legislation on a person's rights and freedoms.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, does my colleague believe that it is not just the content online that

can be harmful to our youth but also the addictive design features incorporated into social media platforms? Does he also believe that those design features need to be regulated to protect our youth?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I do believe that, when we look today and compare it to yesterday, we will see that the Internet, whether it is through the growth of AI, consumer consumption of airtime, if I can put it that way, or watching material online, seems to be ever-increasing. As a national government, there is a role for us, as legislators, to play in protecting the interests of children and victims of crimes. These are things that would be within the legislation and are areas that a vast majority of Canadians would, in fact, support.

• (1215)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite wants to know why Conservatives are voting against the legislation. There are many reasons, but one that really came to light over the summer is that the Liberals appointed an anti-Semite to lead the Canadian Human Rights Commission. This is a man who had said that terrorism, in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is not an irrational strategy.

Why should Canadians trust the Liberals to run the Canadian Human Rights Commission when they are making these horrible appointments of biased people?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that there are two reasons the so-called common-sense nonsense Conservatives are actually voting against the legislation. One is the censorship issue or the conspiracy theory, which is that far-right, MA-GA component within the Conservative Party. The other is that they have concerns of cost, which is estimated at somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$20 million a year. Even though those numbers have not been confirmed, at least from what I understand, the Conservative Party in its common-sense nonsense approach to politics has made the determination that it is just not worth bringing forward the legislation, and that, even if it passes, a Conservative government would repeal it. I believe, if the legislation passes, the Conservatives will hear very clearly from Canadians that this is good legislation, and we hope to build upon it in the years to come.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I proudly rise today in opposition to Bill C-63.

Canadians take pride in living in a nation where justice prevails. Freedoms are upheld and our most vulnerable, especially our children, are protected. However, after nine years of this failed government, crime is rising, leaving families across the country concerned for the safety of their loved ones, both on the streets and online.

Government Orders

Online criminal activity continues to surge, but the Liberals' response has been to push censorship bills that would force Canadians into a false choice between their safety and free expression. Instead of addressing the real issues, this Liberal legislation silences Canadians under the guise of security, creating bloated bureaucracies led by the Prime Minister's hand-picked allies. Canadians are bearing the brunt of this government's failures.

Bill C-63 introduces a dangerous new provision for an offence "motivated by hatred", which could impose a life sentence for even minor infractions under any act of Parliament. This broad, unchecked provision opens the door to the possibility that mere words alone could lead to life imprisonment.

While the government claims that a serious underlying act must occur for this punishment to apply, that is simply not reflected in the text of the bill. Section 320 of the Criminal Code would be amended to state, "Everyone who commits an offence under this Act or any other Act of Parliament...is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for life."

Laws to address the issues we are witnessing have been in place for decades, and the Supreme Court has ruled on them multiple times. We do not need new laws to govern hate speech. This government needs to grow a backbone and enforce the laws as they stand.

Earlier this year at the justice committee, the justice minister openly admitted that Bill C-63's new hate crime offence could apply to any offence as long as it is hate-motivated. He said the bill's sentencing range covers everything from minor to serious crimes, but judges, hand-picked by this government, will make sure minor offences do not receive harsh sentences. However, by leaving this to the courts, the government is being reckless. We cannot rely on vague promises that the judiciary will fix a poorly drafted bill. Parliament needs to clearly define when a life sentence should apply, not hand over broad and unchecked power.

The bill risks extreme punishments for minor infractions. As stated by a political commentator, "[The] Liberals are using the guillotine for speech violations and [on the other hand] house arrest for career criminals roaming the streets exploiting a broken bail system." Only in Canada would that bizarre statement have application.

Widespread concern from all sides of the political spectrum had been raised about Bill C-63's introduction of a so-called hate crime peace bond, with many labelling it as a pre-crime measure for speech. The problem lies in the fact that this provision would extend the power to issue peace bonds based solely on speech-related offences without clearly defining what constitutes such crimes or ensuring that they meet the criminal standard for hate.

While the Liberals focus on banning opinions that challenge the Prime Minister's ideology, Conservatives are dedicated to keeping Canadians safe, both online and off-line and, also at the same point, upholding and defending their civil liberties, a concept that is completely unknown to this government.

• (1220)

This is why my colleague the member for Calgary Nose Hill introduced Bill C-412. Bill C-412 is designed to protect Canadians online through three key areas: protection from online criminal harassment, safeguarding our children and ensuring user privacy. Bill C-412 aims to empower victims of online criminal harassment who currently have limited options for quickly and permanently ending their harassment.

This legislation would allow victims to apply to a judge to identify their harasser, end the harassment and then impose conditions to stop it, as deemed appropriate by a court. It also provides legal clarity regarding when online operators such as social media platforms must disclose the identity of an alleged abuser. Additionally, the legislation introduces an aggravating factor for perpetrators who repeatedly harass anonymously using multiple burner accounts.

These measures are designed to streamline the process for victims to interact with law enforcement and receive effective protections, ultimately enabling law enforcement to de-escalate violence in a timely manner. In contrast, the Liberals' Bill C-63 contains no such provisions, representing a significant flaw for a bill that purports to protect Canadians from online harm.

Online harassment is widespread and often anonymous, yet our current laws are outdated and Bill C-63 fails to provide on this front. In addition, Bill C-63 fails our children by delaying protections and relying on an unclear regulatory process. In contrast, Bill C-412 takes proactive measures by imposing a clear duty of care on online operators. The bill seeks to establish a novel set of checks and balances between the government, operators and parents to keep children safe online.

Under Bill C-412, existing government regulators, law enforcement and the judiciary would ensure operators follow their duty of care to keep kids safe online. Operators would be formally required to ensure they keep kids safe under a clear set of guidelines. Parents, then, would have all the tools needed to understand what their kids are doing online and then make informed decisions about what types of permissions to give them for their online use.

Government Orders

It would provide parents with tools to protect their children online through non-invasive age verification methods and would enforce these protections with steep penalties for non-compliance. Bill C-412 would specifically safeguard children against physical harm, bullying, sexual violence and harmful online content.

Bill C-412 offers a balanced solution that emphasizes privacy, preserving age verification methods, while explicitly prohibiting the use of digital IDs. Many Canadians are concerned about privacy and the misuse of digital IDs. Bill C-412 would ensure that digital identifiers could not be used for age verification. Meanwhile, Bill C-63 leaves privacy concerns unaddressed and lacks clear prohibitions against the misuse of digital IDs.

Bill C-63's vague regulatory framework allows for excessive bureaucratic oversight, creating opportunities for tech lobbyists to manipulate the process behind closed doors. Instead of providing immediate protections, it pushes key decisions into an opaque regulatory future, prioritizing the interests of big tech over the safety and well-being of Canadian families.

• (1225)

By failing to effectively tackle online harassment and leaving significant gaps in protections, Bill C-63 reflects a government more concerned about creating a facade of action than genuinely, actively safeguarding Canadians' rights and safety.

Bill C-63 seeks to reinstate section 13 of the Canadian Human Rights Act, a provision that was removed by the Harper government and that even the *Toronto Star*, hardly a cheerleader for the Conservative Party of Canada, has deemed unnecessary for protecting Canadians from hate speech. Section 13, which was previously repealed for its overly broad and subjective application, allowed the government to censor speech without the need for criminal proceedings. Reintroducing this section would open the door to an extrajudicial system where vague definitions of hate speech could lead to a chilling effect on free speech.

The new section 13 would make communication of hate speech by anyone on the Internet, or other means of telecommunication, subject to the jurisdiction of the Canadian human rights complaints mechanism with the standard of proof being not proof beyond a reasonable doubt, which is an extremely high standard, but merely a balance of probability, 50.01%. This is not only dangerous but deeply flawed. We have already seen the consequences when the Liberals attempted to appoint an arbiter under Bill C-63, who had previously argued that "terror is not an irrational" approach. This highlights the inherent risks in giving unchecked power to unelected individuals who may interpret free speech in ways that suppress legitimate voices.

Section 13 would also pave the way for dangerous precedents, like life sentences for hate crimes without proper legal thresholds. The Liberals have failed to provide evidence that such extreme measures would be effective in preventing hate when the laws we already have are not being enforced. We need to hear from legal experts and civil liberty groups to understand the unintended consequences this could bring. What we really need is action. Action today, not years from now, and not censorship, which is exactly what Bill C-63 does.

The government should focus on enforcing existing laws and protecting ethnic minority groups by empowering the RCMP, INSET and NSES to work collaboratively and quickly with local police forces and share intelligence to protect vulnerable communities; directing CSIS to implement threat reduction measures and communicate threats to ethnic minority groups; and ensuring the security infrastructure program provides real, timely funding to help community centres improve security. Rather than reintroducing section 13 and limiting free speech, the government should enforce current laws and take meaningful action to protect Canadians.

It is no surprise that the justice minister is proud of the only piece of legislation he has managed to introduce since his appointment. Meanwhile, that is in contrast to the Conservative Party of Canada, which has put forward 10 bills that offer real solutions to the issues Canadians face today. Even the justice minister himself, the bill's biggest advocate and cheerleader to the failed Liberal government, admitted it would take years for this bureaucracy to create and enforce regulations. Members should let that sink in.

• (1230)

This widely hailed, very important piece of legislation is not going to protect families for years to come. That is the impact of the government. There are announcements with no effective follow-through. According to the justice minister's own logic, millions of taxpayer dollars would be wasted long before any meaningful protection or enforcement is put in place.

Canadians deserve better than half-hearted reforms. They need a government committed to real accountability and actionable solutions. It is time for the minister to stop hiding behind buzzwords and start delivering results that protect Canadians day in and day out.

As shadow minister for justice, I stand firm in criminalizing and enforcing laws that protect our most vulnerable: our children. We must criminalize and enforce penalties against those who victimize children online or bully them digitally. We must punish those who induce self-harm or incite violence in minors. We must ensure strict bans on distributing intimate content without consent, including the rise of deepfakes.

Government Orders

My Conservative colleagues and I believe these serious crimes must be investigated by police, be tried in court and result in a jail sentence. We will not support the creation of bureaucratic offices that do nothing to prevent crime or bring justice to victims. A Conservative government would protect our children and punish those who prey on them, not create more red tape.

This past summer, the PBO revealed the cost of the Liberal government's online harms act. It would cost \$200 million to create a new 330-person bureaucracy to enforce rules that are still undefined. That is \$200 million up front with no protection to create more work for a bloated bureaucracy.

An hon. member: Over five years, but that's a minor point, I guess.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot wait five years.

This raises serious concerns about transparency, efficiency and the potential impact on free speech. Even worse, the \$200 million does not cover the additional workload for the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which would have to manage a surge of complaints about social media posts in today's cancel culture. The government has no estimate of how many complaints the commission might receive, so it is very likely the \$200 million is just the beginning.

To put that in perspective, the PBO's numbers reveal that the bureaucracy created solely by Bill C-63 would be about one-third larger than that of the Transportation Safety Board of Canada, the agency responsible for ensuring the safety of Canadians in the air and on the roads. Additionally, the PBO's analysis shows that on a per capita basis, the new bureaucracy would be vastly larger than that of any comparable agency in other peer countries.

Bill C-63 should be scrapped just on the basis of its wasteful cost. It is absurd that while Liberals underfund the RCMP, leaving almost one-third of cybercrime positions vacant, they are proposing to dump \$200 million and hire 300 staff for a vague new bureaucracy.

Canadians are rightly concerned. In this digital age, we must strike a balance between protecting individuals from harmful content and safeguarding their rights. That is why the Conservative Party is committed to delivering common-sense solutions that would protect our children and ensure their safety online without compromising the freedoms we hold dear.

The bottom line is that Canadians are living in fear due to online harassment and it is costing lives. They need real protection, not more Liberal delays and incompetence. The Liberals should adopt the common-sense solutions in Bill C-412 or call an immediate election and let Canadians choose real, immediate protections or another costly Liberal censorship scheme.

• (1235)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a former Crown prosecutor, the member opposite would know full well that what is contemplated in this law is taking the current jurisprudence that applies in the physical world and applying it in the online world. Some of that ju-

risprudence is the Keegstra and Whatcott definition of hatred that my colleague would be familiar with.

He talked about the potential for disproportionate penalties. I would point him to the very Criminal Code that he used to apply as a Crown prosecutor, which talks about all sentences needing to be fit to the gravity of the person's responsibility and to the nature of the offence. That is section 718.1.

We have heard tremendous support for this legislation from all sectors of society, including CIJA, which has called for more strict penalties for hate propaganda, prompting it to get behind this bill. When law enforcement and victims' families are talking to me and our government about the fact that they cannot get a handle on this issue, because even when their children take their own lives, the victimization of the family continues after death, they ask for one thing and one thing only, which is that the images be taken down. That is what this bill would do. It would take down the images and reduce those who abuse children from circulating that online.

Does the member opposite agree that simple proposition is answering the calls from Carol Todd, Amanda Todd's mother?

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, there was much to that particular question. The minister asked very forcefully why the Conservatives would be opposed to removing that material. Of course, we are not. However, Bill C-63 talks about that being taken down not immediately, but after a complaint, after it is reviewed and within 24 hours. That is insufficient.

The minister also talked about all the various groups that have applauded the government's Bill C-63. I could literally spend another 20 minutes talking about the public interest groups, and very key individuals in the legal field who have spoken against the bill as another form of censorship by the current government. Therefore, there is zero balance protecting the rights of Canadian families, their children and our civil liberties. Bill C-412 does exactly that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I appreciated the thoroughness of most of his comments.

Obviously, we all share the same concerns about public protection, the removal of non-consensual images, the protection of children and privacy. I understand all that quite well. If I am not mistaken, he referred a few times in his speech to Bill C-412.

Government Orders

I have a question for my colleague, who seems to have a good grasp of the topic. Would he not be able to work in committee on Bill C-63? He could suggest improvements to the bill and include parts of the other bill he was talking about to make Bill C-63 more effective. If I understand correctly, the member has specific criticisms related to certain aspects. Could we find a way to work on that? Will he commit to doing so?

• (1240)

[*English*]

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, I am hearing a collaborative approach between Bill C-63 and Bill C-412. The only difficulty I have with that is this. I am not opposed to that in principle, but I think there are very few measures in Bill C-63 that Conservatives could actually support, that we could actually parse out of the bill and perhaps pass with unanimous consent here in the House.

Clearly, Bill C-63 will be studied at committee. I would encourage all members on the committee to be open to the possibility of looking at significant amendments to replace some of the dangerous language and the unintended consequences in the bill with the clear, precise and immediate protections offered to Canadian families and kids in Bill C-412.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-63 is an act that is basically split into two parts, and the first part of it is aimed at reducing exposure to harmful content. It would put in place special protection provisions for children as well as make online service providers accountable. It is particularly aimed at addressing online child sexual exploitation, which has increased 290% over the last 10 years.

The second part is intended to address and denounce hate crimes on the Internet, and I note that groups like the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which my hon. colleague sort of touched upon, does raise concerns about vast authority bestowed upon a newly established body, granting it sweeping powers that include new search powers of electronic data with no warrant requirement, and they pose significant threats to privacy rights.

I think everybody in this House wants to see action, for sure, on protecting our nation's children from online pornography, hate and other very harmful mechanisms. At the same time, I think it is fair to say that there are serious concerns about how we address free speech on the Internet. Would my hon. colleague be willing to look at splitting this bill in two so that we can come up with legislation that protects our children, while also making sure that we preserve freedom of speech in this country?

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, there are a couple of things I want to say. I agree with my colleague in principle that the bill is not strictly to do with online harms. We do have the hate speech component. The problem is that we already have laws that clearly govern hate speech in this country, which have been the laws for several decades. Against the backdrop of what is happening on our streets from coast to coast, the demonstrations and the protests, there appears to be a lack of political will by law enforcement to actually enforce the existing laws, so I am not in favour of creating more laws when laws already exist.

As a member of the legal community for close to 30 years, I believe in clarity. I believe in succinctness. We already have that on

the books. We need a direction from this government, a direction from the Department of Justice, to encourage police to do their job and to prosecute these individuals who demonstrate clearly on a week-to-week basis that they are crossing the line between protected speech and hate speech.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. As I listened to the Attorney General's question and reflected on my colleague's speech, I was struck, and I was struck for a few different reasons.

The Attorney General spoke about fitness of sentence. This is a government that has allowed people who abuse children, people who produce child sexual abuse and exploitation material, people who distribute it, people who possess it and people who lure children, to serve their sentences on house arrest. My concern is that Bill C-63 would create a parallel process, an administrative process, to deal with these pernicious and insidious crimes.

This government is not serious when it comes to protecting children. How can we trust Bill C-63 when they will not even address the deficiencies in the laws, particularly sentencing laws, around child sexual abuse and exploitation material and Internet luring?

• (1245)

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague. There is not much more I can add. It is a sad statement that my colleague had to make, but it is so apropos and is really reflective of this government's approach to protecting children and to ensuring that communities are safe.

For nine years, the government has yet to strike the appropriate balance with bills such as Bill C-5 and Bill C-48, which it proudly proclaims are going to keep Canadians safe. We have heard from numerous premiers and heads of police associations, asking what happened to the promise of Bill C-48. The Liberal government promised that we were going to see some changes. There is nothing but crickets from this government. It fails to act and it fails to protect Canadians. I would add that it is the number one responsibility of a federal government to keep Canadians safe.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I think the Speaker should ring the bells because we only have a few Liberals here and do not even have 20 members in the whole chamber.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We now have quorum.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue

Government Orders

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thankful for this opportunity. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Oakville North—Burlington.

It is with a lot of mixed feelings that I stand here to talk about this bill. A number of years ago, when I was a member of the justice committee, we studied the impact of online harms and how they translate into the reality of the people on the ground. When we see people being shot down in mosques, when we see people in synagogues being victimized and when we see gurdwaras, temples and the LGBT community being targeted because of—

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, a bunch of Liberals ran in when I raised my last point of order, and I counted again and there are fewer than 20 members. Some may come in from behind the curtains, but right now we do not have 20.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will not talk about there being only two Conservatives inside the chamber. They also have a role to play in quorum counts.

I do not think we are supposed to note that, so I extend my apologies for highlighting that there are barely any Conservatives participating in the debate on this important issue.

The Deputy Speaker: If I could make a suggestion for next time, just come in and call quorum, and then we will do the count and make sure there are 20 people in the chamber. I am counting 20 people in the chamber at the moment.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue has the floor.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, since I was interrupted twice during the beginning of my speech, I will start from the top.

I am here today to talk about this very important bill on online harms and how it conveys what the online world translates into real, lived experiences for so many people across Canada. I was part of the justice committee when it started a study on online harms and hate crimes and how they translate to lived realities. I have seen first-hand, in my nine years as a member of Parliament, people being shot down in mosques and victimized in synagogues because of significant hateful rhetoric being pushed online and right-wing organizations targeting LGBT communities, for example.

This bill would have a very significant role to play in how we conduct ourselves as a country. The hon. member before me talked about the role of enforcement. We are talking about federal policy. We are talking about how we at the federal level can improve our legislation to make sure that Canadians are kept safe. All we can do is encourage our premiers to pick up the mantle and ensure that our communities are being kept safe and that laws are being enforced.

I will speak about two specific things in the Criminal Code. It is an enormous shame that the measures proposed by Bill C-63 have been subject to significant misinformation and disinformation. I am extremely disappointed in the reaction of the official opposition to this critical legislation, having seen what has transpired because of online hate.

When the bill was put on notice but before the actual text was publicly available, we saw the Conservatives reject it immediately.

They had no regard for its substance, no regard for the years of consultation with victims and with survivors of abuse, and no regard for the countless organizations that are begging the government to do more about exploitation and hatred, online and in the real world. Canadians deserve a lot better than this.

I am proud to support Bill C-63. I would like to go through some of the myths that have been circulated about the part of the bill that deals with hatred specifically. I will be explaining why I think these are unfounded.

Let us start with the proposed hate crime offence. It would make it an indictable offence to commit an offence in the Criminal Code or any other act of Parliament where the offence is motivated by hatred. It would have a maximum punishment of life imprisonment. This is a maximum punishment, not a minimum.

There are two important reasons for creating this specific hate crime offence. First, it would appropriately denounce the harm caused by hate crimes. Second, it would assist with data collection on hate crimes in Canada. Currently, a judge can apply the provision on hate as an aggravating factor in the Criminal Code to help determine a sentence, but the underlying offence is not categorized, for statistical purposes, as a hate crime. If this proposed hate crime offence is enacted, statistics on hate crimes would allow governments, law enforcement and victims to better understand how hate crimes are being charged, how they are being prosecuted and how they are being addressed by the courts.

Some have expressed concerns that the availability of life imprisonment as a penalty could result in unjust and inappropriate sentencing outcomes. I would like to explain why those concerns are misplaced.

First, the law in Canada requires judges to impose a just sentence that is proportional to the seriousness of the offence and the offender's blameworthiness. Second, a maximum sentence represents just that: the highest possible sentence, to be imposed only in the most serious of cases. It acts as a ceiling for a range of sentences, with judges being required to impose an appropriate one depending on the seriousness of the crime and the responsibility of the offender.

● (1250)

Maximum penalties of any kind are, by their very nature, imposed very rarely, taking into account principles of sentencing as applied on a case-by-case basis. As a result, life imprisonment would only be appropriate in the most serious of cases, notably for Criminal Code offences that are already punishable by maximum life imprisonment, such as aggravated assault and sexual assault.

● (1255)

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, do we have quorum?

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: We'll count for quorum once again.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We are good. We have over 20 members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, it seems like people do not really want to hear what I have to say, but we can count apparently. However, I am quite honoured to stand here to speak about this bill, because it is so important to communities like mine and to people like me.

As I was saying, another criticism that is made against the proposed hate crime offence is that it is too broad and would potentially apply to every offence in the Criminal Code and any other act of Parliament. However, this is not a novel approach for offences in the Criminal Code. For example, section 83.2 makes it an offence to commit an indictable offence in that act or any other act of Parliament “for the benefit of, at the direction of or in association with a terrorist group”.

While the proposed hate crime offence is not restricted to indictable offences, which are considered to be more serious, there is a good reason for the difference. It is to ensure that the offence can apply to all hate crime offences, many of which can be prosecuted as summary conviction offences rather than indictable offences. Specifically, the 2022 statistics for police-reported hate crime in Canada show that the largest number, which is 54%, were non-violent crimes, and of these, the majority were general mischief offences. However, 46% of crimes were violent offences, including the offence of uttering threats and common assault. Mischief, uttering threats and common assault can all be prosecuted as indictable or summary offences.

Just as indictable and hybrid offences in the Criminal Code should be potentially caught by the proposed hate crime offence, so too should offences where they are found in other acts of Parliament. Some have expressed concern that this would result in trivial offences being included. However, that would not happen. First, it would likely be a rare case where a trivial crime in another act of Parliament would be hate-motivated. Second, what might seem to be a trivial offence on its own could be significant when coupled with the disproportionate harm caused by hate crimes.

I will also emphasize that other acts of Parliament are not limited to trivial offences. For example, subsection 112(1) of the Firearms Act prohibits advertising a firearm in a manner that promotes violence against a person. It is a hybrid offence that, if prosecuted by way of indictment, carries a maximum punishment of two years for the first offence or five years for the second offence or subsequent offences. The new hate crime offence would capture this offence if motivated by hatred, whether it is prosecuted as a summary or an indictable offence.

I can carry on with the technicalities of this bill, but I realize that I am running out of time. I do want to say that it is up to us to ensure that the legislative framework exists and that we partner with our provincial counterparts to ensure that it is being enforced. At the same time, we as parliamentarians have an obligation in this House to ensure that we ourselves are not inciting hatred and that

we are conducting ourselves in a manner that is becoming of the multicultural society that Canada is. Recently, I have not seen that happen. I have seen some tropes, whether they are about incels, against women or against trans, gay, Muslim or Jewish communities. This bill would go a really long way to ensuring that we are setting the framework for what is a strong, united Canada.

When I first moved to Canada, back when I was 11 years old, I wondered how Canada was such a peaceful country. It is not just because we have rules and regulations, but also because we have an ability to work together to ensure that we take care of one another. It is a constant battle. It is a constant piece of work for which we need to continue to build bridges, and this bill is one of them.

• (1300)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, which was very clear.

Does she think that Imam Charkaoui should have faced criminal charges after calling for hatred and violence last October?

[*English*]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying earlier, it is not up to us to decide individual cases. That is up to our law enforcement because that is how our Constitution and our democracy work. However, it is up to us to set the standard of what free speech is versus what hate speech is, as well as to ensure that we are creating a balance so that Canadians are protected regardless of their gender, religion, creed or ethnicity.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the U.S. surgeon general recently called for a warning on social media platforms because they contribute to the youth mental health crisis. The Minister of Health dismissed that idea and suggested that parents just need to talk to their kids about social media. That is clearly not working, and it ignores the fact that platforms have been intentionally designed to be addictive.

Does my colleague believe that the Canadian government needs to do more to protect kids from damaging impacts of social media, such as requiring warning labels or restricting the use of addictive design features on accounts used by minors?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, our government created a ministry for mental health, which put in millions of dollars to ensure that youth have access to mental health facilities and resources, to make sure that they are being safe and that they are protected. At the same time, the online harms bill would make sure that youth are not victimized, that they are not sexually victimized. Yes, there is a lot more work to do, and we are willing to do it, as long as we do it together.

Government Orders

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would just simply point out that freedom of expression is everyone's concern in the chamber. Hate speech is not constitutionally protected. It is not protected in the physical world, and it should not be in the online world. It is that simple. What I point out for her is that people, including members of the official opposition, have raised a lot of concerns about the free-standing hate crimes offence. There are 47 jurisdictions out of 50 in the United States that have a free-standing hate crimes offence. The last time I checked, the United States and their protections on freedom of expression were not being eroded.

Would the member care to comment on the importance of having a free-standing hate crimes offence in the code?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I recall serving with the hon. minister on the justice committee and talking about this exact thing. One thing that came to light was how the previous government, the Harper government, got rid of section 13 of the human rights code. Basically, that section created a remedy for those who were being targeted and victimized online. I think that, yes, there is a balance between what is freedom of expression and what is hate speech. Hate speech should absolutely not be protected. We have seen how much it has impacted our communities and our ability to work together as a country.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I listened to part of my colleague's speech, and she was referencing protecting children. This is a government that has not addressed mandatory minimums when it comes to sexual offences. The Harper government addressed mandatory minimums on drugs, on guns and on sexual offences. The current government has legislated on guns and drugs, but it has not touched sexual offences.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Frank Caputo: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from St. Catharines can complain all he wants about this. At the end of the day, the reality is that we have people who are committing sexual offences against children and serving sentences on house arrest. I will also note that he did not vote to have Paul Bernardo's transfer revisited. I wonder how the people of St. Catharines feel about that.

How can the member say they are there to protect children when the reality is that they are allowing predators to serve their sentences at home?

• (1305)

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I will take no lessons about the protection of Canadians from a party that continues—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I am hearing a lot of cross-conversation going on.

Mr. Chris Bittle: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say it is disgusting that the hon. member across the way, with a smile on his face, would mention a serial killer's name in this place and attempt to use it for political gain—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I have the floor.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Mr. Speaker, I will be the voice of reason in the House today.

Unfortunately, when we hear colleagues accusing each other in righteous indignation, we have to look at our track record. We have done a lot as a Liberal government to protect children while a lot of slogans have come from that side. There is a lot of politicization of the issue when we should be protecting children here in our country. We are not able to get to that because they continue to completely restrict and hold up legislation, instead of letting it go forward in the House so that it can protect Canadians and protect our children all across the country.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am going to speak about one of the online harms act's core purposes, and that is the protection of children. Our government will stop at nothing to ensure that kids in this country are safe, and this includes their online safety.

Our children spend many hours of their day watching online videos, chatting with their friends and posting snippets of their lives. Being online is integral to their lives and offers many benefits. It is a way for them to connect, learn and find entertainment. However, the online space is not always safe for children. We have rigorous toy standards to ensure that Canadian kids do not get hurt while playing. The Internet is the most complex and riskiest toy ever invented. It must have its own safety standards to protect kids from the harms embedded within social media platforms.

For too long, we have tolerated a system where social media platforms have off-loaded their responsibilities onto parents, expecting them to protect their kids from harms that platforms create and amplify. Until now, there have been no safety regulations for online platforms. Parents and kids do not know where to turn to get help when things go wrong online.

The bill would create a baseline standard for online platforms to keep Canadians safe. It would hold platforms accountable for the content they host.

Over the last several years, we have conducted extensive public consultations. A common theme that was heard was the vulnerability of children online and the pressing need to take steps to protect them. At the same time, the consultations highlighted a desire for a flexible, risk-based approach to online regulation. Bill C-63 would balance these two objectives.

Government Orders

I am disappointed to see the Conservatives discredit the hard work of the organizers, victims and survivors across the country who were consulted on the legislation. By refusing to support the bill, they are rejecting this experience and the reality of today's world that children are not currently safe online. The bill was meticulously created to keep Canadians safe while ensuring that their rights are maintained.

The online harms act introduces a new duty to protect children. It requires platforms to integrate design features that protect children on their platforms and report on the measures they are taking to protect children. The specific design features will be identified following open regulatory processes where all interested parties have a chance to be heard. This would ensure that the measures are fit for purpose and consider the latest research and evidence, as well as that they are workable for the social media services that need to implement them. We believe this approach to protecting children respects the government's position of supporting a safe and inclusive digital space in Canada.

The online harms act would require operators of social media services to integrate design features that protect children, such as age-appropriate design. Bill C-63 does not opt for a prescriptive approach requiring the use of a specific technology, such as age verification; instead, it opts for a principle-based approach that can evolve with technology. The goal of age-appropriate design is to make the online user experience of children safer by decreasing the risk that they will encounter harmful content. This might include design features such as parental controls, default settings related to warning labels on content and safe search settings.

Age-appropriate design is useful because it is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It recognizes that a five-year-old and a 16-year-old interact with the online world differently, so they likely require different design features to improve the safety of their online experience. The digital safety commission would articulate these features through regulations after examining industry practices and available technology, as well as engaging with stakeholders and Canadians. This process would ensure that the subsequent regulations on design features that protect children are well-informed and in line with Canadians' expectations of privacy and digital expression.

Bill C-63 was crafted with special attention to freedom of speech, a charter right that the government will always protect. At each step, we made design choices with freedom of expression top of mind. Under the online harms act, the risk-based approach is anchored in a duty to act responsibly that requires platforms to create safer spaces online so that users are less likely to encounter harmful content. The duty to act seeks to ensure that we have in place adequate systems by services that limit the likelihood of users viewing harmful content.

• (1310)

Bill C-63 would also enhance the protection of children online by amending an act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service, the mandatory reporting act. The bill would amend the mandatory reporting act to strengthen reporting obligations under the act to help facilitate child pornography investigations. The bill would allow for the centralization of reporting to a single law enforcement body, a

response to a long-time ask from law enforcement and child advocates.

The duty to report would be triggered when the service provider has reasonable grounds to believe that their network is being or has been used to commit a child pornography offence. The reporting requirement would also be enhanced to require the provision of transmission data in any report where the service provider believes that the material is manifestly child pornography.

We recognize that children are spending more and more of their time on the Internet. Our goal is not to prevent children from having access to valuable information and a social experience online. Our goal is the opposite: to make the online environment as safe as possible for them to explore. The duties set out in the online harms act would be critical to accomplishing this goal.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her speech.

Would she agree that we should split the bill? That way, we could deal with part 1, which covers everything dealing with sexual content, separately from the other parts of the act that we find more problematic.

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, the government spent four years consulting on the bill, and I think it is important that we look at the entire bill together. I know it is going to be going to committee, and hon. members can discuss those kinds of things there. However, given that it has had four years of consultation, I believe the government has listened to that consultation and put what needs to be put into the bill.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have enjoyed working with my colleague on so many different issues over the years. She talked about the protection of children. The U.S. Senate recently passed the kids online safety act with bipartisan support, and it would be great to be able to do something like that here on parts of the bill.

However, the U.S. bill contained provisions to restrict design features that contribute to compulsive use of social media by youth, like automatic playing of media, rewards for time spent on the platform, and notifications. By contrast, Bill C-63 primarily focuses on addressing harmful content and leaves the possibility of restricting addictive design features to future regulations.

Government Orders

Given the youth mental health crisis and increasing concerns about the role of social media, does my colleague believe that Bill C-63 could be improved by incorporating provisions like those seen in the U.S. bill to restrict addictive design features?

• (1315)

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his tremendous work when it comes to mental health and the mental health of young people here in Canada. We did a study at the ethics committee, one of the few studies we actually were able to do some work on, about the influence of exactly the type of addictive behaviour that the hon. member has spoken about and its impact on young people. It will not be as easy as I initially thought it would be to regulate that.

The addictive nature of social media and the algorithms that are built into it are something important we do need to be looking at. I would be happy to work with the hon. member on that.

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to the important concerns pointed out by the member from the NDP, I think they are really important suggestions to get to the floor of the committee. With respect to the ideas about dividing the bill, I think what is really important is that after four years of consultation, we understand online harms to be a continuum. They affect not just children; they also affect adolescents and adults.

I appreciate the member opposite's work tremendously as well. She has been an outspoken advocate for women, including women who are facing violence and things like coercive control. A very key measure in the bill deals with not just adult women but also younger women. It deals with the phenomenon of revenge porn, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images. We know that has had tragic consequences for young Canadian women in this country, such as Rehtaeh Parsons and Amanda Todd. Under Bill C-63, that kind of material would have to come down within 24 hours.

Could the member comment as to whether that would help keep Canadian young women and adult women safe?

Ms. Pam Damoff: Mr. Speaker, I heard testimony from the families of both Amanda Todd and Rehtaeh Parsons when I was on the status of women committee. Those young women continue to be victimized online because their images continue to circulate. It was many years ago that these young women were horrifically victimized online, forcing both of them to die by suicide. It is incredibly important these types of images get removed from the Internet immediately so the victims, and in some cases their families, do not continue to be victimized years after the images were posted.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise on behalf of the people of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry in our part of eastern Ontario. In this case it is to contribute to the debate going on today on Bill C-63, known to many Canadians, through the media or the debate on the bill, as the online harms bill.

I want to take the time I have today to lay out a case to Canadians that I think is getting clearer by the month and the year. After nine years of the NDP and the Liberals in office, crime is up significantly in this country. It is their record and it is their actions, or in

some cases inactions, that have undone what was successful in keeping our streets safe.

When we looked at the metrics by Stats Canada before the Liberals came into office, we see that crime was decreasing across the country. After nine years of their legislation, their bills, their ideas and their policy proposals, here is what Stats Canada says is the record of the Prime Minister, the NDP and the Liberals working together: Violent crime has increased 50% in this country. Homicides are not down; they are up 28%. Sexual assaults are up by 75%, and gang murders have nearly doubled in this country over the course of the last nine years. A crime wave has been unleashed across this country.

I make the case. Sadly, now there is not one part of this country, a province or a region, that has not heard the stories in local media or by word of mouth in communities of crime going up: violent crime, robberies, theft and car theft. Auto theft is up 46%. The justice minister's own car in fact has been stolen three times. That is how bad crime has gotten under the Liberals' watch.

Extortion has exploded in this country under the Liberals' watch. It is up 357%. This side of the aisle, through our deputy leader from Edmonton, the member for Edmonton Mill Woods, proposed a private member's bill that would crack down and toughen up on Canadians who try to extort others. I would suggest that when there is a 357% increase, the status quo of whatever the Liberals are doing is not working. We proposed a common-sense private member's bill from this side of the aisle that was voted down, only to continue the status quo by the Liberals and NDP.

Recently, through our work in asking questions, we finally got some answers. The Liberal government was forced to admit that 256 people were killed in 2022 alone by criminals out on bail or another form of release. It is unacceptable and speaks to the many broken policies that the government has implemented in the last nine years. It is not by accident.

The province of Ontario paints a picture when it comes to the Liberals' public safety record. In Ontario, the total number of violent Criminal Code violations is up 51% to 164,723. Homicides in Ontario are up 50% to 262. Total violent firearms offences, for all the action the Liberals have claimed to have taken, and I will get to that in a bit, is up to 1,346. That is a 97% increase in violent firearms offences in Ontario alone. Extortion is up 383% in Ontario, at just under 4,000 cases.

Government Orders

Theft of a motor vehicle has gone up. When the Liberals came in, there were 16,600 vehicle thefts in Ontario. It has exploded 167%. Now, under their watch with their soft-on-crime approach, including Bill C-5, Bill C-75 and so forth, it is up to 44,459 thefts of a motor vehicle.

That is the Liberals' record. Bill C-75 was passed and implemented by the Liberals and the NDP, who implemented catch-and-release bail policies. Despite the legislation demanded by Conservatives and by every premier in this country, it did not go far enough, and Bill C-75 is still wreaking havoc on our law enforcement and on public safety in this country.

● (1320)

Bill C-5 passed, again by the Liberals and the NDP and supported by the Bloc in that case, I specifically remember as well. When it started to be implemented and Canadians saw the wacko examples of criminals of a violent, repeat nature being arrested and back out on the streets, the Bloc members tried to pretend they were not for it anymore, but they voted for Bill C-5. That bill removed mandatory minimum sentences for major crimes, ensuring again that violent criminals are out on the streets.

After all those numbers I took the time to lay out, that is the Liberals' record. They cannot go back and blame anybody else, but for the last nine years that the Liberals have been in office, it has been their government legislation that has allowed the crime wave to be unleashed across Canada, and here we have a justice minister who is touting how great the Liberals' latest solution is with Bill C-63.

Rightfully, Canadians have major distrust in the current government. Its record on public safety speaks for itself by the numbers and the examples that people are living and breathing. However, it was the current justice minister, on his first days on the job, who did a media interview and said he thought it was empirically unlikely Canada is becoming less safe. He said it is in people's minds; it is in their heads and is not really a problem. People are just envisioning that.

That just goes to show the mindset and perspective when it comes to public safety, to protecting our streets and getting the violent crime wave down in this country. That is the perspective: It is just all in our heads and there is nothing to think about.

I have mentioned Bill C-5 and Bill C-75. The debate today is actually timely because it was just last week that we got an updated answer. Four years ago, the Prime Minister did a big stunt of a photo op and an announcement that he was going to ban assault rifles; he was going to clamp down and resolve all of this by way of the Liberals' legislation and their will. Well, the numbers are out. Four years later, after saying that, zero firearms from criminals are off our streets, and the only winner in this is the bureaucracy.

Sixty-seven million dollars of taxpayer money has been spent on a program that is not even running, not even active and has taken precisely zero firearms from criminals and gang members off our streets in this country. That is the Liberals' record. Worst of all is that we know what the Liberals are proposing to do and the reason there are all the delays. They are rightfully being called out that it will not affect the gang members and those involved in criminal enterprises who are committing the car thefts, violent crimes and

firearms offences in big cities, suburbs and rural communities alike. They are not going to be participating in this terrible program, this costly, useless program, frankly.

The Liberals are targeting law-abiding firearm owners, hunters, sport shooters and indigenous communities that follow the law and have never been a public safety issue. They are going to be the ones paying the price on this, and it is taxpayer money, \$67 million alone, going out.

One of the things I have said to many folks in our part of eastern Ontario and in my travels across the country is that there are not too many prerequisites to becoming a member of Parliament and sitting in the chamber. Members are democratically elected, which is obviously the right way to go. However, I feel if there were a little asterisk of what every member of Parliament must do before debating or voting on public safety legislation such as this, it would be that the member should do a ride-along with the frontline law enforcement in this country.

We are very blessed in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry to have the OPP, the Cornwall community police, a force in Akwesasne and the RCMP. One of the most rewarding events or annual visits I make is to those detachments, getting in a vehicle with a frontline law enforcement member and seeing first-hand and on the front lines what they have to go through day in and day out.

● (1325)

Officers are extremely frustrated after nine years of a soft-on-crime approach, a broken justice system, a broken bail system and a Liberal government that continues to make life easier for those criminals of a repeat violent nature, which takes valuable police resources and time away from important things. Instead, they are repeatedly arresting and re-arresting many of the same folks despite being out on bail.

I raise that today because under the Liberals watch and the broken bail system, where repeat violent offenders are back out on the streets within about 24 hours, on average, police are being redirected and dealing with the same percentage. The Vancouver Police Department said that in one year there were 6,000 police interactions, many of them arrests of the same 40 or 50 people. This means that every other day there was an interaction, an arrest, a bail hearing and back out on the street. That is a waste of police resources.

Government Orders

How much longer will it take? How many more calls from the Conservatives, premiers and law enforcement agencies will it take to fix our broken bail system? Instead, today, when we talk about the broad terms of protecting folk online, protecting children, or cracking down on Internet child pornography as the bill states, the basis of this legislation is admitting failure on the part of the government.

Our court system and existing law enforcement resources are so overloaded with the increase in crime, the broken justice system and the broken bail system, that now the government is proposing a brand new federal bureaucracy, with hundreds and hundreds of federal bureaucrats, to administer what it says cannot be done through existing means.

If we were able to go back to common sense, the way it was before the Prime Minister and the government came into office, we could revert and allow law enforcement and, in many cases, our existing laws to be enforced and protect Canadians, protect children, families, victims of child pornography, victims of all ages, and clamp down on the rising hate crime numbers happening under the government's watch.

I correlate it again to the government's record. We had legislation a couple of years ago passed under its watch, Bill C-11, an act to amend the Broadcasting Act, which I basically called a censorship act, where the government would hire hundreds of new bureaucrats at the CRTC to watch and regulate the algorithms of Internet searches in Canada. At that time, the Liberals said not to worry, that it was not that big of a deal, that it would not cost that much. It is getting very expensive, and they are just getting started in the cost of the bureaucracy.

I am proud of our common-sense Conservative team on this side. Very early on, when the government came forward with Bill C-63, we asked the Parliamentary Budget Officer to look at what the cost of this proposal would be, an independent look to understand the true cost to administer the government's proposal. A little while ago the analysis came forward. Posted on the website, the Parliamentary Budget Officer found that would cost a staggering \$200 million to establish, the government's own data provided to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 330 new bureaucrats and a brand new bureaucracy to administer this. When does this madness stop?

The Liberals keep adding new bureaucracies, new commissions and new layers, but they do not tackle the problem we have in our existing justice system and law enforcement community. Whether it be the RCMP, a provincial force or local municipal force, they are stretched thin because of the broken policies that the government has implemented. Now its proposal is to separate all that into a new bureaucracy. Worst of all, when asked, there is no time frame. A lot of the regulations and details of what it is proposing will be dealt with later, of course, behind closed doors. A lack of transparency and details, that is what the Liberals are providing to Canadians.

• (1330)

We know how Ottawa works. We know how the Liberals work with the NDP. They make a great, big announcement of how wonderful the legislation would be and that it would solve every problem possible. They never follow through, it is never done cost-effectively and it is delay after delay, and more and more frustration

and backlog. We will see the exact same thing when it comes to the new bureaucracy proposed under Bill C-63. For context, if we took the \$200 million and invested in frontline law enforcement, if we hired more police officers, we could hire over 200 more per year to work the front lines each and every year.

I want to thank the member for Calgary Nose Hill, who has been on the file of protecting women, children and all Canadians and victims of child pornography, of exposing intimate images and, in many cases, new emerging technologies of deepfakes and AI. We need to realize that this legislation is inadequate for many reasons. She, our shadow minister for justice and the Attorney General of Canada, and many other colleagues with a law enforcement background in the legal community have spoken up against the bill.

As Conservatives, we have said that, as always, the Liberals get it wrong again. They claim that we should pass this, get it to committee and just be fine with it, because for four years they have consulted experts in the field. They have tabled legislation before that they had to pull because they got it wrong. There are still many voices in the country speaking up against the bill in its current form and what it would do on the infringement of free speech. The Liberals are making decisions through regulation, through back-channel means and behind closed doors, putting the power in the hands of way too many people who do not deserve it, for example, Meta, Facebook, other tech companies that have these massive lobbying efforts they can use to pressure this new bureaucracy.

Instead, our common-sense Conservative private member's bill, Bill C-412, would enforce the existing laws in the country when it comes to hate crimes. The laws are there, but the government lacks the political will use those tools. If we are going to modernize legislation, which it does need at times, we could go after AI and deepfakes, which is not even addressed in Bill C-63.

The Liberals, like they have with Bill C-5, Bill C-75 and now with Bill C-63, talk a big game. We can look at other legislation such as their firearms confiscation program of law-abiding hunters and anglers who own firearms and so many other pieces of legislation. We can look at the Liberals' own numbers. The longer they are in office, the more they spend and the worse it gets from a financial situation, but, most important, from a public safety perspective.

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Bill C-63 does not need to be as omnibus as it is. For the number of years the Liberals claim they consulted experts, they have gotten it wrong again. It is time to bring forward not this bill, but the common-sense Conservative bill, Bill C-412.

Let us get to the root causes, protect children, women and all Canadians from the abuse and hate and violence seen online through child pornography and other means. Let us trust our law enforcement on the front lines, with the tools and resources, to get that job done. They do not need a new bureaucracy or to be thrown aside. Law enforcement needs to be empowered with good legislation and support from this federal government, not the record we have seen after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government.

• (1335)

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talked extensively about crime, but we cannot cherry-pick which victims we would support in this place.

Second, he talked about listening to law enforcement, walking with law enforcement. I have done exactly that. What law enforcement officers have told me is that they need increased tools, including a tool to take down the images that are so harmful to adolescents and children.

Third, they have cited to me the statistics, that four out of 10 Canadians are exposed to online hate. That number doubles if a person is racialized, is a person with a disability or one who identifies as 2SLGBTQ+. We thankfully have not had an incident like this in Canada, but in Orlando, in 2016, 49 people were killed and 53 were wounded by a person who was radicalized online, who shot people at a queer bar.

For the member opposite, if we can prevent that kind of incident from happening in Canada, is this bill worth supporting?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear about the justice minister's record and the record of the Liberals and NDP. The number of victims have skyrocketed under their watch. When he is talking to law enforcement officers who say they are overwhelmed and need more tools, it is because of the decisions the Liberals have made to be soft on crime, to have a revolving catch-and-release bail system. Being soft on crime and not following through using our existing laws is why law enforcement is being overwhelmed.

Let us be clear about what law enforcement officers want. They want the tools to do what they have done for decades, generations and centuries, in many cases, which is to be the front line of law enforcement and have the resources to go after criminals themselves. They do not want a 330-person, \$200-million a year bureaucracy that will backlog everything. They want the resources themselves. They want some common sense from the justice minister, so maybe he can realize, after his car was stolen three times, that the Liberals' existing policy, their existing framework and all the things they have done in nine years have made the problem worse for law enforcement. It needs the new tools. We are not cherry-picking victims. The number of victims in the country has skyrocketed directly because of the minister's policies, no one else's.

• (1340)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleague to comment on the fact that the exemption for religious texts that promote hatred is maintained in the bill. What does he think of the religious exemption for incitement to hatred?

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, on that specific provision, there is a right for freedom of religion in our country. With respect to exemptions on that, what is important here is enforcement if there is a problem. If hate is generated online, or cases or acts of that, it could be explicitly clear on our existing legislation.

We talk about modernizations and what we do. It is going after AI, deepfakes and many emerging technologies that have not been updated in this legislation. In the broader context of this, I am very curious to see where the Bloc Québécois will land on this legislation. We remember many times when its members propped up previous bad bills from the Liberal government, including Bill C-5. As soon as they voted for it, they immediately started regretting that they had and pretended they wanted changes, amendments and so forth. There are a lot of questions the Bloc Québécois needs to answer. It needs to stop propping up the Liberal government so Canadians can decide, frankly, on public safety or whether to have a carbon tax election. Canadians need to have their say.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that is very prevalent in the broader community, of course, is the issue of disinformation. It is happening more and more now, and it is more urgent than ever for us to tackle this issue. Taiwan has been very proactive in dealing with this. Of course, there is an intersection of this issue with foreign interference. What the government in Taiwan has done is create a portal whereby citizens can put forward information they are not sure is true or not. It is almost like a fact-checking portal, and then citizens would be able to know whether something is disinformation.

I am wondering whether the member would support an effort like this. One of the things I will say, because he is going to attack the NDP no matter what, is that we are going to support this going to second reading, because it warrants discussion at second reading and to hear from experts, as well as to entertain potential amendments.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the issue of disinformation and misinformation is a major issue in this country.

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It was on the floor of the House of Commons last week that the member for Kingston and the Islands was called out for spreading misinformation and disinformation. He was forced to apologize and has been quite quiet since then. The Liberals have a lot to own up to, right in their own caucus, on misinformation and disinformation.

To the member's point in all of this, it comes down to trust and the overarching themes or parts of this bill. There is, rightfully, a distrust in this country based on past behaviour, in examples and follow-through. The NDP continued to vote confidence and to vote as part of their coalition with the Liberals for many years. Bill C-11 was an example of all these things that it was going to solve. There is the firearms confiscation program that actually does not target violent criminals. The Liberals spent \$67 million and got nothing done. It has been all talk, no action.

For the member for Vancouver East and members of the NDP particularly, there is an issue that the overarching parts of this are on the wrong track. We have a common-sense Conservative solution on this side. That is what we are advocating for. The trust to take this behind closed doors, to have the minister and big tech be the administrators and arbiters of this, is completely on the wrong track.

● (1345)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-412 does three things. It provides members of law enforcement and victims of criminal online harassment with more tools to stop the harassment immediately. Victims groups of all political stripe are crying out for this. Bill C-63 does not do this.

Bill C-412 also includes an immediate legislated duty of care for online operators. Bill C-63 proposes to allow big tech companies to manipulate what would be in that duty of care five years into the future when we need justice now. Bill C-412 would also close a loophole in the Criminal Code for the non-consensual distribution of intimate images created by deepfakes.

Would the member suggest that the government adopt Bill C-412, parse out the section in Bill C-63 on strengthening reporting requirements for child pornography, pass that on unanimous consent and then abandon the rest of the bill that has had people like Margaret Atwood calling the bill Orwellian, so that we can get justice for children, women who are experiencing intimate partner violence and children in high schools who are not getting justice when nudes of them are created online?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill just gave an eloquent example and summary.

Let us just think about this by context. The Minister of Justice and the Liberal government spent four years, using the bureaucracy of hundreds of folks here in Ottawa, to do consultations. The member for Calgary Nose Hill, a small but mighty common-sense Conservative caucus and her team have tabled more substantive legislation that gets to the core of the issue than what the Liberal minister and the Liberal government have for the last four years.

Kudos to her for her leadership on this file and, most importantly, not creating a bureaucracy that maybe five years down the road might start to get the ball rolling on helping victims, as has been outlined on this. We could make immediate, tangible changes and

improve public safety, protect children and protect women now, not wait for a brand-new bureaucracy five years down the road.

Common sense means we can get common-sense changes now, not five years down the road.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, common sense for the Conservatives is a bunch of nonsense.

At the end of the day, we have organizations like the National Council of Canadian Muslims and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, two outstanding organizations, in support of passing Bill C-63.

As Conservatives continue to rely on the maga right to influence public policy, Canadians who are following the debate need to be aware that the Conservative Party is not there for the people of Canada.

This legislation is about children. It is about individuals whose pictures are being exploited on the Internet without consent. The legislation is there, it is tangible and it has a wide spectrum of support. Why will the Conservative Party not allow it to pass to committee today at the very least?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Mr. Speaker, what is nonsense is the member opposite still having any sort of pride in his record after nine years. Nonsense is when Stats Canada says that after all the legislation, all the things the Liberals have done in nine years, violent crime is up 50%, homicides are up 28%, sexual assaults are up 75%, and the amount of hate and the number of threats in cases have absolutely skyrocketed. That is not from nonsense on this side, but nonsense, virtue signalling and a woke approach the Liberals have taken on that side.

The irony of all this is that the member for Winnipeg North has confidence and pride in the government's record. Members of law enforcement and the victims of crime, who have exploded in numbers, are tired of that broken approach in this country. Every time the Liberals propose something, every time they spend more money, it gets worse and crime rates go up.

It is time to have an election and let Canadians decide. I have a feeling the Liberal caucus might be in a very small corner of the back over there when things get done, based on the numbers.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a privilege and honour to rise in this House. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Richmond Hill, my neighbour in York region.

• (1350)

[*Translation*]

It is an honour for me to say a few words about Bill C-63.

In addition to the new legislative and regulatory framework, this bill also amends the Criminal Code, the Canadian Human Rights Act and An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service. My comments will focus on the amendments to these three acts.

[*English*]

Online harms have a real-world impact, with sometimes tragic, even fatal, consequences. Ask the families of the six people killed at the Quebec City mosque by someone radicalized online. Ask the young boy orphaned by the horrific attack on the Afzaal family in London, Ontario. Ask the parents of the young people who have taken their lives after being sextorted online.

The online harms act is the result of extensive consultation conducted over more than four years. We have heard from countless organizations that represent victims on the essential nature of this legislation. The groups in support of this bill range from the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to the National Council of Canadian Muslims, the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Victims of exploitation and hatred and those who advocate on their behalf are asking all of us to do more. It is time we meet their call and meet their demands. The Leader of the Opposition forgets these facts. He is not serious about helping kids. He is not serious about stopping hatred online or not online. Conservatives are abandoning victims who are asking us to do more. They are discrediting the years of detailed expert advice and shared experience gathered during consultations.

The Conservatives' so-called law and order agenda vanishes when it comes to keeping our digital world and our kids safe. That puts children at risk. That allows hate to fester. We will not let that happen. We will do better. Canadians deserve to live in safety online and in the real world. They also deserve a measure of decency from their politicians, much like I would ask my colleagues on the other side to refrain from making comments when other individuals are commenting on important things. It is called decency.

As regards the Criminal Code amendments, the bill proposes to define the term “hatred”. This definition would apply to the two hate propaganda offences in section 319—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I know that as we get closer to two o'clock when question period starts, there are a lot of people coming in and having conversations. Let us keep it down to make sure the hon. member who has the floor can keep his thoughts straight and make his speech as I know he is prepared to do.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, this definition would apply to the two hate propaganda offences in section 319 of the Criminal Code that have the term “hatred” as an element of the offence, as well as the proposed new hate crime offence. The definition

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would put into statutory language the high bar that the Supreme Court of Canada has found is required to constitute hatred in this context. It means an emotion that involves “detestation or vilification”. A message that “discredits, humiliates, hurts or offends” another, no matter how unpleasant that message might be, does not meet this high bar. There is a category of online language that we call “awful but lawful”.

[*Translation*]

The bill will also amend the Criminal Code to create a new peace bond to prevent the commission of hate propaganda offences and hate crimes. This peace bond is modelled on other peace bonds in the Criminal Code that are designed to prevent certain crimes. For example, there is one to prevent the commission of terrorism offences and another to prevent offences related to organized crime.

[*English*]

Bill C-63 would also include new provisions to better denounce and address hate-motivated conduct. For instance, it would increase the maximum punishment for all hate propaganda offences when prosecuted as indictable offences.

[*Translation*]

It is important to note that this bill will create a separate hate crime offence. This new offence will apply to any offence when it is motivated by hate based on specific criteria, such as race, colour, religion, ethnic origin or gender identity or expression. The maximum sentence will be life imprisonment. This offence will recognize the serious harm caused by offences motivated by hate — harm to victims, harm to their community and harm to Canadian democracy in general. Although the maximum sentence for this offence is life imprisonment, independent judges will determine the appropriate sentence based on the facts of the case and the principle of proportionality in sentencing.

• (1355)

[*English*]

I strongly support this proposed change. It would respond to repeated calls for stronger hate crime laws in the Criminal Code. It would send a clear message that the government, and indeed all parliamentarians, strongly condemn and denounce any crime committed with a hate motive. Quite simply, harming others out of hatred has no place in our society and our laws should reflect this.

It would also allow us to better understand and address hate-motivated crimes by allowing better identification and tracking of individual offences.

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Finally, I turn to the amendments outside the criminal law. This bill proposes amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act that would empower individuals and groups to obtain effective remedies against other users who post hate speech online. An improved section 13 of the CHRA would provide that it is a discriminatory practice to communicate hate speech online. Complaints would be filed with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, which would screen them out of or into the process under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Respondents might recognize at this point that the content was hate speech and take it down. Otherwise, the commission would decide whether to send a complaint for adjudication to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. After a fair hearing, if the tribunal upheld the complaint, it would order the respondent to remove the hate speech. In special cases, the tribunal would be able to order compensation to victims personally identified in the hate speech and may award a monetary penalty, if needed, to ensure compliance with the law.

In any event, the purpose of the CHRA is not to punish but to remedy. Section 13 is not criminal law and it does not establish an offence.

Some members may recall that Parliament repealed an older version of section 13 of the CHRA a decade ago. That repeal took away an important tool for combatting hate speech online. In that time, we have seen why Canadians need this tool. We consulted widely to understand the perceived problems with the former section 13. As a result, these amendments include a number of improvements. Specifically, “hate speech” is now clearly defined and the commission would rapidly dismiss complaints that do not satisfy this definition. Complainants and witnesses may be given confidentiality where needed in order to protect them from reprisals. Further, the tribunal would have more control over litigants who abuse the process.

[*Translation*]

These amendments to the Canadian Human Rights Act provide effective recourse in individual cases of hate speech, alongside the more systematic regulation of social media platforms under the online harms act.

I would like to conclude my speech by pointing out that this bill also addresses the extremely worrying cybercrime of child pornography. In 2011, Canada passed An Act respecting the mandatory reporting of Internet child pornography by persons who provide an Internet service. This bill will modernize that legislation to respond to the rapid societal and technological changes that impact how child pornography is created and distributed. Among other things, the law will clearly stipulate that it also applies to social media and apps.

[*English*]

These are important changes for everyone in this country, especially with the rise of the Internet and online social media networks. I encourage all members to support this groundbreaking legislation, Bill C-63.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*English*]

CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN

Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian dental care plan is already changing lives in many communities in Bonavista—Burin—Trinity and across Newfoundland and Labrador. Almost 42,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can now visit a dental office thanks to the Canadian dental care plan.

Dental care is health care, and we know that Canadians, including the 750,000 who have already received care, do not want their uninsured neighbours or family members to end up in the ER from infections for the simple fact that they cannot afford to go to the dentist.

As members of Parliament, we must show up for our communities and put the interests of Canadians first.

* * *

RED ROOF RETREAT

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, across our country, millions of Canadians selflessly invest their time and energy to help make our communities great. One such individual is Steffanie Bjorgan, who has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for children and their parents through the establishment of the Red Roof Retreat.

The Red Roof Retreat was established in 2000, but the journey to its creation began in 1993 when Steffanie's middle son, Garrett, was born with cerebral palsy. That is when Steffanie started realizing just how little there was available for Garrett and other children with special needs. She then got to work and has been tremendously devoted ever since to starting and growing this incredible organization.

In July, Steffanie was awarded the Meritorious Service Decoration in the civil division by the Governor General. It is my sincere honour to recognize Red Roof Retreat and Steffanie Bjorgan in the House of Commons today and to thank her for making our community and our country a better place to live.

*Statements By Members***CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN**

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 8,000 Prince Edward Islanders have already received dental care thanks to the Canadian dental care plan and the dental professionals in P.E.I., who worked closely with our indefatigable Minister of Health to improve the program.

I wish to recognize the leadership of the Dental Association of Prince Edward Island, including Dr. Mike Connolly and Dr. Matt Shaffner, who always put their patients first during discussions with our government. I am honoured to represent 2,000 of those patients, many of whom are seniors on fixed incomes. What does the leader of the official opposition have to say to them? He claims the program does not exist. He did not protect their CPP pension and he will not fight for their dental care.

Seniors have worked hard their whole lives. They deserve the dignity of knowing that their pension is safe and that they can receive the dental care they need. Our government is delivering exactly that for them.

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[Translation]

LOCAL MEDIA IN LONGUEUIL—SAINT-HUBERT

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the local media plays a crucial role in the vitality and cohesion of communities across Quebec. In my home community of Longueuil, FM 103.3, the south shore community radio station, recently won community radio station of the year at Les rencontres de l'ADISQ for its commitment to promoting emerging franco-phone artists and their music. By giving a voice to local artists and bringing its audience closer to the arts, FM 103.3 strengthens the region's cultural identity.

TVRS, which is celebrating 35 years on the air, continues to serve the community with rich and diverse programming. By focusing on local events and history, TVRS reflects the day-to-day reality of its viewers, helping provide the local news essential to the well-being of the community.

These two media venues demonstrate just how important it is to have strong local news that builds ties and brings everyone closer together in our communities. I thank them so much for being community builders. We will continue to fight for them.

* * *

[English]

CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise in the House today to talk about the Canadian dental care plan, which has helped over 7,000 constituents in my riding of Cape Breton—Canso. The Conservative leader says the program does not even exist, but he should tell that to the more than 750,000 Canadians and close to 69,000 Nova Scotians who have already received dental care.

Our government knows that investing in dental care means better health outcomes for Nova Scotians and Canadians. However, the Conservatives do not even know how to run public health care

plans; they only know how to cut them. The Conservative leader has had dental coverage for the last 20 years or so. Is it too much to ask for Nova Scotians to have the same?

* * *

● (1405)

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the summer, I met with and heard from the good people of Okanagan—Shuswap and people across B.C. They are hard-working and love their country, but what I heard from them was that taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

One in five Canadians skipped or reduced the size of at least one meal because they could not afford groceries. One in five parents ate less so their children or other family members could eat. In Vernon, one in 23 families relied on a food bank in the last 12 months, and one in 13 kids depended on a food bank last year. Thirty per cent of food bank users in Vernon are children.

Many food bank users are hard-working, middle-class families struggling to put food on the table, some already working two or more jobs. What I heard was that after nine years of the Liberal-NDP government, those good people have no confidence in the government and want a carbon tax election now.

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[Translation]

CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Vimy, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thanks to our government, the Canadian dental care plan is helping Canadians across the country, including in Quebec.

More than 713,000 Quebecers—including 12,000 in my riding of Vimy—are eligible for care under the Canadian dental care plan. If that is not enough to convince my colleagues that this program is successful, just ask the 750,000 Canadians who have already received care. These are real people who are benefiting from this historic program put in place by our government.

When we prioritize the health of our communities, everyone benefits.

* * *

CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the people of Madawaska—Restigouche are seeing the positive impact of the Canadian dental care plan. More than 52,000 New Brunswickers are currently eligible for care under this program.

This is not only great news for my province, it is also great news for the 750,000 Canadians who have already received dental care.

Statements By Members

Conservative budget cuts will jeopardize this much-needed program for our citizens, both in New Brunswick and across the country.

Canadians can rest assured that our government is committed to protecting our health care system and our Canadian dental care plan.

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[English]

HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third Saturday in September is National Hunting, Trapping and Fishing Heritage Day across Canada, but the NDP-Liberal government has turned its back on hunters and anglers. Hunting, trapping and fishing are synonymous with Canadian identity and heritage. Canada is blessed to have vast amounts of public land, forests, rivers, lakes and oceans.

As the shadow minister for hunting, angling and conservation, I am proud to represent the interests of the millions of Canadians who hunt, fish and conserve our wild spaces, but after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, hunters and anglers have had enough. As lawful gun owners, hunters are tired of being demonized and blamed by the government for the violent crime wave it has caused. Anglers are frustrated by the restrictions and closures that make no sense, and grassroots and local conservation organizations are ignored or left out in the cold in favour of global agendas that deny Canadians access to their own wild spaces.

Conservatives know that hunters and anglers are the original and best conservationists. A Conservative government will always listen to them, respect them and include them.

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CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before our government passed the Canadian dental care plan, one out of four Canadians could not afford to go to a dental office. Since we passed the Canadian dental care plan, more than 700,000 Ontarians can now visit a dental care provider. This has allowed dentists to serve over 10,000 people in London West. We clearly know that this is working because 750,000 Canadians have already used a CDCP and do not want to lose access to this vital program.

The Conservatives do not want to talk about the incredible impact that this program has had on many thousands of lives in our country because they do not want people to know that they would cut this program, which will impact Canadians. Our government, however, is always going to put Canadians first. We are going to work to get this country the health care that it deserves.

* * *

● (1410)

OPIOIDS

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since 2016, over 47,000 Canadians have lost their lives to

overdose. Overdose is the leading cause of death for children aged 10 to 18 in my province of British Columbia.

The tribal council representing 14 first nations on Vancouver Island has declared a state of emergency over the ongoing opioid and overdose crisis. Under the NDP-Liberal government in Ottawa and the NDP government in B.C., indigenous people in B.C. are dying at a rate six times higher than that of non-indigenous people. The Prime Minister and his friend, Premier Eby, have unleashed crime, chaos, drugs and disorder on our streets. Their radical experiments, such as so-called safe supply and decriminalization, have turned our once-safe communities into war zones.

Only common-sense Conservatives will end the dangerous drug experiments and bring home treatment, prevention and recovery for our loved ones. After nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up and crime is up; now time is up for the Prime Minister.

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[Translation]

BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, voting for the interests of Quebec means voting with us in favour of the Conservative Party's non-confidence motion against this government. If the Bloc Québécois truly had the fate of Quebeckers at heart, at the request of Premier Legault, it must vote with the Conservative Party and stop selling its soul.

So far, the Bloc Québécois has not made any gains for Quebec. On the woodland caribou file, the Liberals are jeopardizing 1,400 jobs with the Liberal order, and the Bloc Québécois has failed to negotiate the withdrawal of that order. The only party working to save the forestry sector is the Conservative Party. That is why the Bloc Québécois must vote with us on the non-confidence motion to save 1,400 forestry jobs throughout Quebec.

To represent Quebeckers, we must decide whether we are going to keep the Liberal government in power or not. Will the Bloc Québécois vote to axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime?

* * *

[English]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans believe in building up, not tearing down our public health care system, as the Conservatives have always done over the decades. That is why we are taking action to strengthen it for the long term.

Our government is making significant progress in dental care, with more than 62,000 Manitobans now eligible to receive care. Across the country, 750,000 Canadians have already accessed the dental care they need, relieving families of the burden of high out-of-pocket expenses. This program is already making a real difference in the lives of Canadians.

We have heard loud and clear from Manitobans that they want to see us make meaningful investments in health care, and we are doing exactly that. This is about creating a stronger, more inclusive health care system that reflects the values of Manitobans: equity, accessibility and a commitment to leaving no one behind.

* * *

MISSING CHILDREN

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there were tears of joy and relief across northern B.C. last night when news broke that six-year-old Oaklynn Schweder had been found safe.

Oaklynn was reported missing Thursday evening, and what occurred over the next 72 hours was one of the largest searches in northern B.C. history. On Saturday alone, over 800 people were out searching for her. I hope my colleagues will join me on behalf of all Canadians in thanking the RCMP, search and rescue teams from across B.C., the Canadian Rangers, Skin Tyee First Nation, Chinook Emergency Response Society, the B.C. Wildfire Service and, especially, the hundreds of everyday citizens who travelled from far and wide to be part of the search effort.

As we rejoice that young Oaklynn is back in her parents' arms, this morning, our hearts and condolences go out to the family in Shamattawa, Manitoba, who have received tragic news concerning their missing loved one. May they find strength and support in the days to come.

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[Translation]

CAROL BINET

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight the outstanding accomplishments of Mr. Carol Binet, who has been a shoemaker in Trois-Rivières since 1957.

Still hard at work, Mr. Binet's mastery of his craft is exceptional. His passion for shoemaking began when he was young. Over time, his shop became a true institution, serving clients from every corner of Mauricie. His business eventually expanded to include sewing and upholstery services along with a retail shoe store.

The people of Trois-Rivières feel privileged to have such a passionate, skilled craftsman as Mr. Binet in their midst. His unmatched interpersonal skills make every visit a unique and memorable experience. I recently asked him why he had not retired. He told me that if he retired, there would be no one left to make shoes. That was a good answer.

I am extremely proud to honour Carol Binet's outstanding achievements. I congratulate him not only on his career, but also for

Statements By Members

being a shining example of resilience and perseverance. I thank him for everything he has done for the people of Trois-Rivières.

* * *

• (1415)

[English]

BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS

Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. The Bloc has now officially decided to join the coalition so that it too can cause a bit of hardship for Canadians. It clearly supports skyrocketing rents, crime and chaos in our communities, and weakened wages.

Just the other day, the Premier of Quebec called on the Bloc to vote in favour of our non-confidence motion to end the tired government. I agree with him. Why does the Bloc not? Does it not shop at the same stores as the rest of us, where the carbon tax has driven up the price of everything? Can it not see the drug-fuelled crime in our streets? Maybe it is because it has the most MPs slated to benefit by getting a pension, just as the leader of the NDP will.

One thing is clear: The choice Canadians will have in the carbon tax election will be between the Liberal-NDP-Bloc coalition, which will continue to increase grocery prices, raise our rents, spend recklessly and allow crime to run rampant, and common-sense Conservatives, who will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime.

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CANADIAN DENTAL CARE PLAN

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 105,000 Albertans are now eligible for the Canadian dental care plan, and 750,000 Canadians have already received care. The numbers speak for themselves. Canadians want the CDCP. Accessing dental care should not be political. This is a historic program, and we must protect and build our public health care system so that it is well-equipped to meet the needs of Canadians today and for generations to come.

The Speaker: Colleagues, the last time I was in this chair, a number of questions were not relevant to the administration of government. There were words that fell outside what is acceptable in the parliamentary system, and there was behaviour that was outside the parliamentary tradition. I will have more to say about this in the coming days, but I hope members will conduct themselves in a manner befitting of the expectations of our constituents, who have sent us here to represent them.

*Oral Questions***ORAL QUESTIONS***[English]***CARBON PRICING**

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Canadians are suffering. The Liberals look around the country, and they see tent cities popping up in our communities; they see millions lining up at food banks and families falling further and further into debt. What do they think is the cause of all these problems? It is that Canadians are not paying enough in taxes. That must be why they have already hiked the carbon tax five times and why they are going to hike it to 61¢ a litre.

How can making everything more expensive provide any relief for Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the Conservatives are finally talking about the economy because it gives me a chance to highlight some good economic news we have had. Last week, we learned that inflation in August was at 2%. In fact, for all of this year, inflation has been within the Bank of Canada's target range. That means interest rates are coming down. Meanwhile, wages have been outpacing inflation for 19 months in a row. However, the Conservatives do not like to talk about that, because good news for Canadians is bad news for them.

• (1420)

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister can tell all the people lining up at food banks that they have never had it so good, but she knows that prices are not coming down. She also knows that her carbon tax will not stop a single forest fire or flood; the Liberals have admitted that. Therefore, Canadians get the brutal double whammy of all the extra cost associated with natural disasters, plus the carbon tax on top of it. Now the NDP leader is trying to pull off another stunt: He is trying to fool Canadians into thinking that he has some new position on the carbon tax. In reality, he loves it. He has voted for it 24 times.

If they are so sure that Canadians love their carbon tax, why do they not take it to the Canadian people and let them decide in a carbon tax election?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the Conservatives know how to do is talk Canada down. Do members know why that is? It is because they do not want Canadians to ask themselves what the Conservatives really stand for. That is because the Conservatives have a hidden agenda. They have a hidden austerity agenda, and it is time for us to ask ourselves what they would cut. Would they cut child care? I think so. Would they cut dental care? I think so. Would they cut our housing plan? They sure would.

* * *

HOUSING

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are cutting back as they see their paycheques devalued and prices skyrocket, but it is not just the carbon tax that

the NDP and Liberals are hiking. The new tax hikes that the government is announcing today will hit the middle class hard. In the middle of a housing crisis, they are raising taxes on carpenters and roofers. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Apartment Associations said this: “The capital gains increase will discourage the construction of new rental homes for Canadians.”

Why is the government's response to the housing crisis to punish the people who actually build the homes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really glad to hear the Conservatives talk about housing because, last week, we made a very important announcement on housing. Last week, we announced that amortizations for first-time homebuyers and everyone buying new builds will be extended to 30 years. That is going to help young Canadians make the dream of home ownership a reality, and it will get more homes built faster. I am shocked that the Conservatives are opposed to this essential measure.

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[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of this Liberal Prime Minister, who has been put on life support this week thanks to the Bloc Québécois, more and more Quebec students are going hungry. According to the Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec, students are broke and struggling to feed themselves. According to statistics, more than 80,000 students have used food banks, which is four times more than 10 years ago.

Instead of continuing to starve students, will the Prime Minister and his Quebec lieutenant from the Bloc allow Quebeckers to go to the polls right away to vote in a common-sense government?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is utter nonsense.

The member opposite is talking about how hard it is for people to feed their kids, how too many kids are going to school hungry in the morning and yet, last week, his Conservative leader said it would merely feed bureaucracy to support community organizations, including those in my colleague's riding, that help kids go to school in the morning on a full stomach.

Does he see that as nonsense or common sense?

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would invite the Liberals to face the facts. This Liberal government's track record should be making the Bloc members run the other way.

Over the past nine years, the cost of housing and food have doubled. We are paying \$1 billion in interest on the debt every week because of the \$500 billion in inflationary spending that the Bloc Québécois supported. Everyone is paying and the Bloc Québécois is grandstanding.

Does the Prime Minister, who is supported by the Bloc Québécois, understand that enough is enough and that we can no longer afford his incompetence?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, incompetence is talking about how children are going to school hungry in the morning and then preventing the Canadian government, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois from supporting those children.

Is my colleague open to coming with me to Moisson Québec and the Granit food bank in his riding to explain to them why it is bureaucratic to help children learn better at school and get to school in the morning with full bellies?

* * *

• (1425)

SENIORS

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have a choice to make. They can correct an injustice to seniors by increasing old age security for seniors aged 65 to 74, or they can be responsible for triggering an election. It is as simple as that.

All retirees deserve support to cope with the rising cost of living. This government is in no position to say that it cannot afford it. I would remind the House that it gave \$83 billion in tax credits to oil and gas companies in addition to a nice \$34-billion pipeline.

Today, the Liberals have to choose. Will it be seniors or an election?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has always chosen seniors.

Unfortunately for them, that is not the case for our friends opposite. Why? They voted against lowering the retirement age from 67 to 65. Furthermore, when we decided to support the poorest seniors and those most in need in Quebec by increasing the guaranteed income supplement, what did our friends in the Bloc Québécois do? They voted against it. How about dental care? They also voted against dental care.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I know that the oil and gas companies received \$83 billion in tax credits and a \$34-billion pipeline as a bonus. In the meantime, people 65 to 74 are being denied 10% of their pension.

That is a lot of generosity toward the oil companies out west, especially when they then turn around and tell Quebec seniors that there is no money to help them. Clearly, the multi-billion dollar oil companies are a priority to the Liberals.

Our priority is seniors. It is high time that the Liberals cleaned house in their priorities. Are they going to improve pensions for seniors or trigger an election?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague likes to be precise,

Oral Questions

but we have never cut help for seniors. All we have done, despite the opposition of our friends across the way, including the Bloc Québécois, is increase support for Quebec and Canadian seniors.

The Bloc Québécois has always voted against that support. I invite my colleague to correct the record. We have never cut funding from Quebec or Canadian seniors.

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[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is \$100 for a doctor's appointment. For-profit corporations such as Loblaw are forcing patients to pay to see a doctor. The Conservatives love this because their chief strategist, Jenni Byrne, also doubles as a chief lobbyist for Loblaw. The Liberals promised a crack-down and that turned out to be a letdown.

Why does the Liberal government continue to let big corporations rip off Canadians and not defend our health care system?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the NDP had a choice to continue working on pharmacare, dental and our health system or to cave to a bully. Here are the facts: if NDP members cannot stand up to the Conservative leader, how are they going to stand up for Canadians?

The reality is that Liberals are going to keep fighting to improve our health care system and work on the basis of collaboration. We are not going to cave to the bullying of the Conservatives across the way. We are going to make sure that every Canadian gets dental care and pharmacare, and yes, that we revolutionize primary care.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have caved again and again to the big corporations that are ripping off Canadians, and they have not stood up to the Conservatives.

• (1430)

[Translation]

In Quebec, the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, or CSN, is saying that no one should profit from illness. We know that the Conservatives want CEOs to get richer on the backs of the sick, but it is very disappointing to see that attitude from the Liberals. They promised to stop the privatization of health care. They failed.

Is it because they are too weak to stop the Conservatives or too beholden to the CEOs?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will tell members what “weak” is. Weak is to run away just two days after the Conservative leader demands that they stop action to work with the government to help Canadians on health care. Do members know what else is weak? It is weak to abandon climate action when the Conservative leader puts too much pressure on them.

Canadians should ask if the NDP is willing to stand up for Canadians, if the NDP can stand up to the Conservative leader. We are here each and every day to make sure that Canadians get what they need, to stand up for our public health care system and to make sure that Conservatives do not get what they want, which is to cut our health system to the bone.

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CARBON PRICING

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. Here is how bad the carbon tax has driven up inflation in food costs in Toronto: Daily Bread Food Bank says its monthly usage has gone from 60,000 people to 350,000 people per month. That is a 480% increase. Pre-COVID, the food bank spent \$1.5 million per year on food. Today, it spends \$29 million.

The Liberals' only solution is to quadruple the carbon tax to 61¢ a litre. Instead, why would we not have a carbon tax election so Canadians could decide?

Hon. Jenna Sudds (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to have the opportunity once again today to talk about what is up. I will tell members what is up. Women's participation in the workforce is way up and has reached a record high. New child care spots are being built, and that means 250,000 new spaces by 2026. We know the Conservatives would like to cut these programs, but on this side of the House, we will fight for Canadians.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals will make us think we have never had it so good, despite millions of Canadians having to line up at a food bank every month. We just do not know how many more facts the Liberals need to see about how damaging the carbon tax really is.

The trucking industry says it adds \$4 billion a year. Farmers are going to pay \$1 billion more in carbon taxes, and food banks in every part of this country are seeing skyrocketing use. The Liberals' own budget documents say that the budget blows a hole of about \$35 billion, at least, in the economy. Again, if the Liberals are so confident, they can call an election and let Canadians decide for themselves about the carbon tax.

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, interest rates are down. Inflation is down. Gas prices are down, and pollution is down. Pollution levels are at their lowest in 25 years. What we have achieved is the equivalent of removing 69 million cars from our roads, which

means less pollution for Canadians and for our kids, all across the country.

We are fighting for climate change. We are fighting for Canadians. We are fighting for a better future for all Canadians.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, everyone knows that taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and, pretty soon, time is going to be up for the corrupt Liberals.

We all remember a couple of weeks ago when a brave steelworker confronted the Prime Minister to say that taxes are killing him and that he does not believe a single word the Prime Minister has to say. Nevertheless, the NDP keeps propping up the unpopular government because the New Democrats' leader wants to keep his pension. Why is the NDP-Liberal government so intent on raising the carbon tax and reducing workers' pay?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all the Canadians watching at home will know what is up, and it is investment in the future of the country. Under the Liberal government, investment in decarbonization is up to make sure that our steel mills are productive, that our steelworkers have jobs and that Canada would win in the economy of the 21st century. Canadians know that what is up is making make sure that the government continues to invest in Canadians to build the Canada of the 21st century.

● (1435)

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister has some nerve talking about steel.

I have met with steelworkers and those in the steel industry. They have said that, if the Liberals quadruple the carbon tax like they plan to, there will not be a single steel plant left in the country.

That is the minister's economic record. That is what he is doing to Canadians. The carbon tax is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan that is blowing a \$35-billion hole in the Canadian economy every year.

Workers are bringing home less, yet they are paying more. It is time for a change. Why do the Liberals not call a carbon tax election to let Canadians decide?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to talk not only about steel but also about aluminum.

One thing Canadian workers know is that, when it was time to stand up for them, Liberals stood up for them. We just imposed tariffs on steel coming from China to make sure we protect our industry, our jobs and our future. Workers across the nation know that we have their backs. We will fight for the industry, and we will always fight for Canada.

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[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have weakened the Criminal Code, which means that crime is now spreading beyond Montreal and into all regions of Quebec.

Let us remember that the Bloc Québécois supported the Liberal bill that allows for criminals to be arrested and released several times in the same day.

Will the Liberal government and its Bloc Québécois friends tell us why they made such a mistake?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect to bail, what we did was change the rules. We changed the rules with the support of all parties in the House. We also toughened sentences for certain crimes, for example, auto theft.

The decision about bail provisions falls to the judges or justices of the peace appointed by the provincial government. The decision to appeal a ruling regarding bail provisions is made by the Crown attorney involved.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does the minister recognize that, since they made changes to the Criminal Code, including under Bills C-5, C-75 and C-83, criminals are no longer afraid of anything?

Crime is running rampant in Quebec right now. A 14-year-old boy died in Beauce. Shots are being fired in broad daylight in Quebec City. The same thing is happening in La Baie, Saguenay, and elsewhere.

Will the government, supported by its Bloc Québécois friends, acknowledge its mistake and revert to an earlier version of the Criminal Code?

Hon. Arif Virani (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to be absolutely clear. When a decision is made about bail, it is made by someone appointed by the Quebec provincial government. When there is a decision to appeal, that decision must be made by a lawyer appointed by the Quebec government. When there is a decision to be made about whether there is enough space in the prisons to care for or accommodate a person who has not been granted bail, that decision is made by the Quebec government.

In other words, they should talk to Mr. Legault.

Oral Questions

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Immigration admitted on Saturday that his government had waited, and I quote, “a little too long to slow down” immigration.

Quebec has been sounding the alarm for years. The Bloc Québécois has been warning him about this for years. We gave him facts and he responded with insults.

Does he realize that we would not be in this mess today if he had listened to Quebec's warnings instead of calling everyone names?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I almost heard my hon. colleague pay me a compliment.

From now on, I expect the Bloc Québécois to support our reduction measures, which, as announced, will achieve our objective of lowering the temporary immigration level from 7% to 5%, I hope.

Furthermore, my colleague himself had a hand in that. The last time he contacted my office, it was to increase the number of temporary workers in Quebec, and rightly so. I would point out, however, that it was his request.

● (1440)

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think the member is mixing up some private conversations. The minister also said that it is always easy to look back and say, “We should have done this, that or the other thing”.

The easy thing to do would have been to listen back then. The Quebec government warned him. The Bloc Québécois warned him. Economists at the big banks warned him. Even his own officials had warned his government as far back as 2022 that its immigration targets would put too much pressure on health care and housing. He would not listen to anyone. He insulted everyone.

It may be too late to listen, but not to take action. What is he waiting for?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am being showered with compliments today.

I would simply like to remind the member opposite that this is the same Quebec government that tripled the number of temporary residents in Quebec under its jurisdiction.

We always have a duty to make adjustments. That is what we are doing, and we will continue to do so.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, he himself blamed his own government after a week. It is a good thing that the minister is admitting that he waited too long.

Oral Questions

However, he has not even come close to making up for the mistake he admits making, because asylum seekers still have not been relocated. A record number of asylum seekers have applied for welfare because they are waiting months for their federal work permit. They are not even allowed to work. Applications are still taking many years to process. In the meantime, Quebec's public services are stretched thin.

When will we see real action on the ground with real results?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it takes only 60 days to get a work permit. The Minister of Public Safety and I will be meeting with Quebec's new immigration minister, Jean-François Roberge, tomorrow. We are expecting to see some progress as well.

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[English]

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Drug addiction and crime have been running rampant under the government. As a direct result of failed drug policies and the legalization experiment, overdoses have become the leading cause of death for children in British Columbia. In fact, numerous first nations in B.C. are in a state of emergency due to the drug crisis as they try to protect their children.

When will the NDP-Liberal coalition admit failure and bring home our loved ones, drug-free?

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to every community that is impacted by the illegal toxic drug supply.

It is nice to hear the Conservatives acknowledge that there is a crisis, because when they were in power, they cut the drug treatment fund by more than two-thirds. They are not willing to invest.

Actions speak louder than words. We need every level of government involved to save lives. On this side of the House, we have committed over a billion dollars to date and will continue to do more. When are they going to get on board and work with us?

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the answer is clear to Canadians: End the NDP-Liberal government's failed hard-drug experiment and save lives.

Rather than stemming the tide of overdose deaths, the Prime Minister's radical experiment has flooded our communities with dangerous opioids. It is even worse in B.C.'s first nations communities, where people are dying at six times the national rate.

When will the NDP-Liberal coalition end its failed agreement, end this failed policy and save lives?

Hon. Ya'ara Saks (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we continue to work with every level of government to save lives each and every day. Rather than using slogans on the

back of a napkin, on this side of the House, we listen to experts, we listen to communities and we listen to the science. On this side of the House, we believe in the health of communities. On that side of the House, they do not believe in science, they do not believe in data and they do not believe in saving the lives of Canadians.

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• (1445)

SENIORS

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberal government, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Across this country, we are seeing seniors lining up to get their groceries from food banks, skipping medication and living in tents. Mary, a senior in Maple, showed me her heating bill. She received 44 dollars' worth of gas but paid \$46 in carbon tax.

The NDP leader is keeping the Prime Minister in power so he can secure his pension.

Why will the NDP-Liberal government not call a carbon tax election and let Canadians decide?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thought we had heard everything in this House and then I heard the hon. member. This is from the party that has stood up in this House and voted no to every single support we have brought in for seniors in this country. This is after the prime minister from that party, Mr. Harper, went to Davos, to the World Economic Forum, and took the opportunity to tell Canadian seniors back home that their retirement age was going up to 67. Shame on them.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Lebanese Canadians in my community and across Canada are frightened as the Lebanon region experiences unprecedented explosions and air strikes. They have been trying to rebuild Lebanon for years. They do not want a war.

This escalation means civilians, including children, seniors and people living with disabilities, vulnerable people, pay the price. My constituents are terrified for their friends and families, who are caught in the middle. The government needs to be pushing for peace so all those in the region can be safe.

Can the government tell us what exactly it is doing to de-escalate the situation and prevent a wider war?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is following closely the situation between Israel and Lebanon, both because of the danger of escalation in the region and because of the high number of Canadians in Lebanon. As we have said since October, Canadians should avoid all travel to Lebanon, and Canadians in Lebanon should book a commercial flight to leave the country. No country or nation stands to gain from any further escalation.

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LABOUR

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is allowing the rampant wage theft of truck drivers. Drivers who bring essential goods to Canadians are being taken advantage of because neither the Liberals nor the provincial Conservatives have the courage to crack down on shady bosses. Our hard-working truck drivers deserve a government that fights for them, one that ensures they get paid for their work.

When will the Liberal government finally enforce the Canada Labour Code to protect vulnerable workers and stop the brazen wage theft?

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Minister of Labour and Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, had it stayed on a co-operative basis with us, the NDP would know we have worked closely with workers and businesses to find an effective and fair solution to this problem. In fact, earlier this year, we changed the Canada Labour Code to stop employers from misclassifying employees as independent contractors. Any employer who knowingly misclassifies an employee to avoid obligations is breaking the Canada Labour Code and will face consequences.

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DENTAL CARE

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 750,000 Canadians have already received care through the Canadian dental care plan, and that number will keep rising. Almost 9,900 constituents in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt have enrolled in the program. Many seniors have been able to get dental care after years of not being able to afford to.

Can the Minister of Health update this House on how the Canadian dental care plan is helping Canadians access dental care?

Hon. Mark Holland (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her relentless advocacy for oral health. The member for Scarborough—Agincourt has been such a passionate advocate for making sure that everybody in this country gets access to the oral health care they need.

When we hear that number, 750,000 people in less than five months, it is incredible, but behind that number are real lives and real stories of people who can be proud of their smiles and people who are addressing their oral cancer. I was talking to Dr. Redmond, who told me of three patients whose oral cancer was identified and caught early. Imagine what that means. This is about the kind of country we live in, making sure that everybody gets care.

Oral Questions

• (1450)

[Translation]

HOUSING

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the housing crisis is not getting any better. As we speak, 1,671 Quebec families do not have a roof over their head. That number has gone up since July. Housing starts are down 13% in Quebec, and 61% of young renters are not sure they can afford their rent.

That is the reality after nine years of this Liberal government, enthusiastically supported by the Bloc Québécois. Does this government understand that repeating the same mistakes is not going to get more homes and housing built in Canada?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to our colleague, where is the Conservative Party's plan for housing and homelessness?

[English]

They do not have a plan. When it comes to getting people housed and making sure there are more homes, what has this government done? It has lifted the GST off the construction of apartments and taken 87,000 people off the street with wraparound supports.

The Conservatives go to encampments to make videos and use people as props. That is not what we are going to do. We are going to stand by Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I, too, have a great deal of respect for my colleague, who, like me, is very well dressed today, by the way. However, the fact is that Canadians are suffering when it comes to housing.

These people have been in office for nine years and they are still taking the exact same approach. It is not working. As far as we are concerned, one thing is clear: Our plan to build housing does not revolve around the photo ops of this government, which is being enthusiastically propped up by the Bloc Québécois. The reality is that, according to RE/MAX, 28% of Canadians are thinking of leaving the country because of the housing crisis.

Are you proud of that?

The Speaker: I would like to remind all members that questions must be put to the Chair in order to maintain a certain atmosphere in the House.

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one, two, three, four, five, six affordable homes. That is all the Conservative leader and chief insult-hurler built across the country during his entire time as minister responsible for housing.

Oral Questions

We spent all summer looking for those six units. We have yet to find them. In contrast, 160 affordable housing units have been built in the member's own riding in just the last few months, in collaboration with Quebec municipalities, the ones his Conservative leader calls incompetent.

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change has announced that he plans to wait until Christmas to impose his order. Satisfied, the Bloc Québécois quickly seized upon this announcement as a win.

Let me be clear. The “Liberal Bloc” will eventually introduce an order that will kill at least 1,400 jobs, shut down businesses and possibly wipe out communities. It is only a matter of time. We, the Conservatives, are the only ones who will cancel the order once and for all. Will the Prime Minister promise that his order will not cause the loss of a single job in our regions?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as usual, all that the Conservatives have to offer are empty slogans.

That is why we presented a \$468-million offer the Government of Quebec so that we could work together on reaching an agreement. I wanted us to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Quebec from the start. Unfortunately, the Conservative Party has nothing to offer anyone on this issue.

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to this job-killing order, splitting the difference does not benefit anyone. Lives will be shattered.

For people in the forestry sector like Éric, Jean-Marc and Lise, the Girard family and the Tremblay family, the only possible positive outcome is to bring down this government before Christmas. The Bloc Québécois may have won in LaSalle—Émard—Verdun in Montreal, but it needs to listen to people in the regions.

What does the minister have to say to the at least 1,400 workers who will lose their jobs?

• (1455)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the fight against climate change, which the Conservatives refuse to talk about, or the issue of air quality, water quality or conservation, the Conservatives are pretty much the only ones who do not get it.

Workers, unions, businesses, regional governments and experts all understand that there can be no future in forestry if we do not protect our forest ecosystem properly. There is no one in this country who does not understand that, except the Conservatives. We will continue to work with all stakeholders and the Quebec government to find a solution. The Conservatives can keep throwing out empty slogans.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about the Liberals' former Quebec lieutenant, who made an appearance on Quebec's most-watched Sunday program, *Tout le monde en parle*, yesterday. Last Thursday, when he announced that he was leaving to run for the leadership of the Liberal Party of Quebec, he was questioned about Amira Elghawaby, whose resignation the Quebec National Assembly has unanimously called for. He said, “I would have voted the same as the other members of the National Assembly”. It is funny how he never mentioned Ms. Elghawaby's resignation when he was minister.

How many other Quebec Liberals want Ms. Elghawaby to resign but do not have the courage to say so?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I worked in academia in Quebec for a long time. I know how hard the university community, university administrations, faculty members and department heads work to hire people based on merit. We know that diversity makes our universities strong everywhere in Canada, including Quebec. That is why we will always work with the Government of Quebec, with all those who fight against discrimination and fighting for diversity and inclusion, so that all people, all universities and all organizations in Quebec and elsewhere make the right decisions in the right circumstances.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I do not hear heckling very often from that corner of the House. I hope this will not become a habit.

The hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must admit that when the new Quebec lieutenant outdoes himself with such hollow responses, it is hard to restrain oneself. I would bet that many of them think the same way as their former Quebec lieutenant. They keep quiet, much like he did before he stepped down. That is what the Quebec members of governing parties do. They have no qualms about keeping their opinions to themselves and setting their convictions aside when it suits the party and as long as it does not affect their personal ambitions in cabinet too much.

If the Quebec Liberals truly share Quebecers' values, then they should stand up, put their foot down and ask why Amira Elghawaby has not yet stepped aside.

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, government members from Quebec have a significant influence on the decisions made here. We represent Quebecers just as much as my colleagues opposite. The difference is that the influence we exert on the government is real. We influence the government behind closed doors, that is true. They get all worked up in the newspaper or in the media. That may make them look good, but we get things done.

*Oral Questions**[English]***TAXATION**

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up.

Canadians are struggling to meet their basic needs, and the government has decided the only solution is to tax Canadians more. The new capital gains tax will add a 30% tax increase on food producers at a time when the cost of food has already skyrocketed. The last thing Canadian families need is increased financial stress because of taxes on our food supply chains.

Why is this NDP-Liberal coalition imposing this job-killing tax hike on Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear about the facts. In an average given year, only 40,000 individual Canadians have capital gains above \$250,000. That is 0.13% of our population. We believe it makes sense for those with the broadest shoulders to support everyone else.

The Conservatives can tie themselves in knots trying to justify policies that are ultimately about austerity and cuts, cuts, cuts.

• (1500)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals certainly gave their uber-rich friends enough time to move their money and are about to give their best friend, carbon tax Carney, \$10 billion.

Not only will this new capital gains tax increase financial stress, but it will prevent families from transferring wealth to the next generation. The Canadian dream is to build a foundation that one can pass on to one's children. The capital gains tax is now increasing the pressures on Canadians as they pass on their wealth, their businesses and their farms.

Why does this NDP-Liberal coalition want to kill the Canadian dream?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I want to know is why the Conservatives are so hypocritical and inconsistent. There was a Conservative who said in 2020:

...the wealthiest 1% who own the most expensive and luxurious real estate and have in their portfolios the most stocks and bonds and other financial instruments will continue to see their net worth expand, having done nothing, by the way, to deserve that expanded net worth.

Who said that? It was the current Conservative leader.

* * *

THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is so interesting that the finance minister brought up hypocrisy. Last week, it was revealed that Liberal pseudo-minister Mark Carney's company Brookfield is lobbying the government for billions for a new corporate climate fund, but recently, a damning report revealed that Brookfield does not account for a whopping

92% of the greenhouse gas emissions that its investments create. That is hypocrisy.

Can the environment minister confirm that he and his NDP-Liberal partners will not help wealthy unregistered lobbyist Mark Carney get rich by giving billions in subsidies to his greenwashed company?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is happy to get advice from Canadians across the country, but let us talk about how the Conservatives get their advice. They get advice on the cost of living from a Loblaws lobbyist. They get advice on foreign policy and Ukraine from Elon Musk and Tucker Carlson. They get advice on women's rights from misogynists and the far right. We will take no lessons from them.

* * *

[Translation]

DENTAL CARE

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more than 9,000 citizens in my riding of Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel are receiving dental care thanks to the Canadian dental care plan. This is a historic investment that benefits many Quebeckers, especially seniors, and guarantees access to the health care they need and deserve.

Can the Minister of Public Services and Procurement explain how this plan helps Quebeckers get the care they so desperately need?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our congratulations to the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel on the remarkable success of the Canadian dental care plan in her riding, which mirrors the success of the 750,000 Canadians who have been able to receive dental care in recent months. We also offer our congratulations to the Conservative member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis for taking the top prize, with 18,000 seniors having received a Canadian dental care plan membership card in recent weeks.

We have no congratulations, however, for her Conservative leader, who continues to claim that the Canadian dental care plan does not exist.

Oral Questions

• (1505)
[English]

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up for this jet-setting, high-flying Prime Minister, who is off to New York City to dine with elites while doubling costs for Canadians. While he is there, maybe he can check out the \$9-million condo that he got for his media buddy Tom Clark. They can share a coffee from his \$5,000 coffee machine or work on their golf swings at the golf simulator paid for by Canadians. Maybe the Prime Minister can save us a couple of bucks and bunk with his buddy Tom Clark at this \$9-million condo on billionaire's row.

Hon. Bill Blair (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister of Canada undertakes very important work representing Canada at home and abroad. For example, this week in New York, he spoke at the—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I will invite the hon. minister to start from the top, please.

Hon. Bill Blair: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives might have been more comfortable if I had begun with a bad poem.

The Prime Minister undertakes very important work on behalf of Canada at home and abroad. For example, this week in New York, not only is he speaking at the United Nations General Assembly, but he is also leading and co-hosting the Summit of the Future, talking about key global challenges on sustainable development, international peace and security, technical innovation, digital coordination, the decarbonization of clean energy and human rights.

I do appreciate that nobody over there appears to care about any of those things, but they are important to Canadians.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after nine years of the NDP-Liberals, taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and now time is up. Since 2015, violent crime has surged by 50%. Shockingly, sex assaults have surged by 75%. Today, the Parole Board inexcusably granted day parole to a serial rapist who still poses a risk to drug, manipulate and coerce victims. Let that sink in. This is not keeping Canadians safe.

Who on the Liberal bench approves of this?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows very well that the Parole Board, by law, operates independently of the government. Our responsibility is to ensure that the appropriate men and women serve on the Parole Board, something we have done with great seriousness.

The Conservatives know that the most important criteria in any independent decision made by this quasi-judicial tribunal is public safety. My colleague knows that very well, and he should be careful

not to increase public cynicism in a way that does not serve public safety. He knows very well that is incorrect.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations is arguing that UNRWA employees who participated in the October 7 terrorist massacre are immune from legal action. This is a day that saw seven Canadians murdered. Let me rephrase that. They are arguing that individuals who contributed to rape, murder and kidnapping are outside and above the law.

I have a simple question for the government: Does it support immunity for terrorists, yes or no?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada is committed to ensuring that our humanitarian assistance aligns with Canadian values and international standards of neutrality. We take any allegations of misconduct very seriously.

Upon learning of allegations from UNRWA about some of its staff, Canada was the first country to take action and pause all additional funding pending thorough investigations by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services and an independent review led by former French foreign minister Catherine Colonna. It is very rich for the member to talk about anything to do with the UN, because she will face down her party, which wants to quit the UN. Canada is a founding member.

* * *

DENTAL CARE

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it has become abundantly clear that the Conservatives would cut the Canadian dental care plan, taking away coverage from the 2.4 million Canadians who have already enrolled in the program, with more signing up every day. That is more than 282,000 British Columbians.

Will the Minister of Citizens' Services please update the House on the work being done by the government?

• (1510)

Hon. Terry Beech (Minister of Citizens' Services, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend from British Columbia is correct that 2.4 million Canadians currently have their membership cards. Over 750,000 Canadians have care, and we are all hearing the good stories of the change that this is making in individuals' lives. It is making life more affordable.

While Canada is in a position to have the lowest deficit and the best economic forecasted growth, we are investing in making life more affordable with dental care, with child care, with pharmacare, by building more houses, by attacking climate change and by making sure that we take measures to make Canadians' lives better. We will continue to do that.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this summer, the fisheries minister announced that she was closing both the Pachena and Carmanah lighthouses. These lighthouses sit between the West Coast Trail, which sees thousands of hikers per year, and the graveyard of the Pacific, a famously treacherous stretch of water.

Automating these lighthouses simply will not suffice. This decision puts lives at risk and was made without consulting first nations, labour, mariners and local communities. Will the Liberals pause this plan, do the proper consultation and invest in keeping coastal people safe?

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are aware of the cultural and historical significance of the lighthouses along the West Coast Trail. After an engineering investigation and assessment this year, the Canadian Coast Guard determined that the locations were no longer suitable for the Canadian Coast Guard personnel to operate safely. The safety and well-being of Canadian Coast Guard personnel is our top priority, and we will continue to ensure that the aids to navigation in these areas remain functional to continue to protect mariners and coastal communities.

* * *

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, four years ago to the day, the government promised a new Canada disability benefit modelled after the guaranteed income supplement. The GIS supports millions of people with a maximum amount of over \$1,000 a month. The CDB is slated to deliver a maximum of just \$200, and that is to the select few who can qualify for the disability tax credit. Consultations on regulations for the benefit close today.

Will the government listen to the disability community and deliver a Canada disability benefit aligned with its promise four years ago?

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Diversity, Inclusion and Persons with Disabilities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are absolutely committed to making sure we are delivering on the Canada disability benefit. We are stepping up and making sure that more than 600,000 Canadians with disabilities will get the Canada disability benefit. This is what happens when we all work together to deliver for Canadians, and we are absolutely committed to making sure we get it through the finish line.

Speaker's Ruling

WAYS AND MEANS

NOTICE OF MOTION

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to fairness for every generation and to investing in Canadians. Therefore, pursuant to Standing Order 83(1), I would like to table, in both official languages, a notice of ways and means motion, which contains our plan to make our tax system and our economy fairer for everyone.

Pursuant to Standing Order 83(2), I ask that an order of the day be designated for consideration of this ways and means motion.

* * *

[Translation]

CIVIC-MINDEDNESS AND RESPECT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, 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 reiterate that elected officials are invested with the trust of the people and have a responsibility to the office they hold;

That the House reaffirm that violence and threats have no place in Parliament; and

That the House urge all its members to behave with civic-mindedness and respect towards their colleagues, in order to allow a truly constructive debate, in the interests of democracy and the common good.

● (1515)

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

PRIVILEGE

FOREIGN INTERFERENCE AND ALLEGED REPUTATIONAL HARM TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on June 18, 2024, by the member for Vancouver East concerning foreign interference and alleged reputational harm to members of Parliament, as a result of the publication of a report by the National Security and Intelligence Committee of Parliamentarians, also known as NSICOP. The report, tabled in the House on June 3, 2024, discussed the threat of foreign interference in Canada's democratic processes and institutions.

Privilege

In her intervention, the member quoted several extracts of the report supporting the idea that members of Parliament might have, wittingly or semi-wittingly, assisted foreign state actors in undermining Canada's democratic processes and institutions. The fact that the report failed to disclose these members' identities raised questions and cast a pall over the entire House. As evidence to this, the member reported that on the street in front of Parliament, individuals were, "shouting, questioning and jeering [at the members of Parliament] about who the traitors may be."

[Translation]

She added that the unsubstantiated suspicions were damaging to members' reputations individually and to the House collectively. She concluded by arguing that these suspicions diminished members' and the House's effectiveness and impeded their ability to carry out their parliamentary duties.

According to a long-standing practice, certain conditions must be met for the Speaker to find a prima facie question of privilege. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, page 142 states:

...the Speaker must be convinced that a prima facie case of breach of privilege has been made and, second, the matter must be raised at the earliest opportunity. If the Speaker feels that these two conditions have been met, the Speaker informs the House that, in his or her opinion, the matter is entitled to take precedence over the notices of motions and Orders of the Day standing on the Order Paper.

[English]

My predecessors have on occasion rejected questions of privilege on the sole basis that they were not raised in a timely manner. As members can discern, the inherent logic behind this rule is straightforward. It presupposes that if a question of privilege is so important as to require it to take precedence over all other matters of the House, the member raising it presumably would have taken their first opportunity to bring it to the attention of the Speaker.

[Translation]

On May 29, 2008, Speaker Milliken, at page 6277 of the Debates, indicated that:

It is true that members wishing to raise a question of privilege must do so at the earliest opportunity.

However, there is an important nuance.... In this case, as in others, it is not so much that the event or issue complained of took place at a given time, but rather that the members bringing the matter to the attention of the House did so as soon as practicable after they became aware of the situation.

The Chair has always exercised discretion on this point given the need to balance the need for timeliness with the important responsibility members have of marshalling facts and arguments before raising matters of such import in the House.

[English]

I note that at least two sitting weeks passed between the release of the NSICOP report and the moment that this matter was raised with the Chair. The facts raised by the member in her arguments had become apparent well before her intervention. The Chair is of the view that the member for Vancouver East had prior opportunities to raise her concerns. As such, this question of privilege fails to meet one of the two conditions to find a prima facie question of privilege.

• (1520)

Nevertheless, the Speaker would like to address the substantive element of the member's concern. The member argued that because the NSICOP report claimed that one or more members were working for a foreign entity, but failed to name them, it raises suspicions about all 338 members, which impeded us all in our effectiveness in carrying out our parliamentary duties. I understand the point the member is trying to make.

[Translation]

To find a prima facie question of privilege on substantive grounds, members must be able to demonstrate how an individual member, or the House collectively, has been interfered with in carrying out their functions. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, at page 148, states:

In deliberating upon a question of privilege, the Chair will take into account the extent to which the matter complained of infringed upon any Member's ability to perform his or her parliamentary functions....

[English]

While a member should always care to make this link when raising a question of privilege, it is not enough to assert it in some general way. The member must demonstrate, concretely, how they, or the House, were impeded in the discharge of their functions, and, most important, that evidence exists as to the material interference.

While I understand that findings presented in the NSICOP report are serious and appear to create suspicions about certain members, that in itself is not a basis to establish that this question of privilege merits priority of consideration over all other House business.

Furthermore, the Chair notes that the NSICOP report was made public not only in the interest of public disclosure but also to assist members of Parliament in their understanding of the threat foreign political interference poses to our democratic institutions.

For these reasons, I cannot conclude that either of the necessary conditions has been met to establish a prima facie question of privilege on the matter raised by the member. I thank all members for their attention.

ALLEGED FAILURE OF WITNESS TO RESPOND TO STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today on a question of privilege regarding the ongoing failure and refusal of a witness to provide documents requested by the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. The committee, under Standing Order 122, has the authority to summon witnesses and compel the production of documents, rights that are essential to the functioning of Parliament, as outlined in the Constitution Act of 1867. These powers are fundamental to our ability to conduct inquiries and obtain the truth, as noted in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, page 137.

The witness in question, Stephen Anderson, a business partner of the Minister of Employment, was ordered by the committee on June 11 to produce phone records, text messages and call logs from September 8, 2022, but he failed to comply. Despite his appearance on July 17, Mr. Anderson provided non-responsive documents and refused to disclose the identity of the person referred to as Randy in key communications.

This blatant disregard for the committee's orders violates Standing Order 108(1)(a), which empowers committees to access documents relative to their inquiries. The committee extended the deadline to July 19, yet Mr. Anderson continued to withhold the requested information. According to *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, when a witness refuses to comply, the committee may report the matter to the House, which then has the authority to enforce compliance. The committee has now done its part by adopting a motion on this matter.

As *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* makes clear at page 138, when a witness resists a request for documents, it is up to the House to take appropriate action. Given Mr. Anderson's failure and refusal to comply with both the June 11 and July 19 orders, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to recognize this as a prima facie breach of privilege that could amount to contempt.

New Democrats believe Mr. Anderson to be in contempt, and the House shall force him to answer for his actions, as well as deliver the documents he refused to produce. The House must uphold the authority to protect our parliamentary privilege in order to ensure accountability and transparency in all matters of government oversight before its standing committees.

• (1525)

The Speaker: I thank the hon. member for his intervention, and the Chair will take that into consideration before coming back to the House.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACT

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP) moved that Bill S-244, An Act to amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and the Employment Insurance Act (Employment Insurance Council), be read the first time.

He said: Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 69(2), I have the honour to present to the House the Senate bill, Bill S-244, on behalf of my friend, who is from Quebec, Senator Diane Bellemare. It is an act to amend the Department of Employment and Social Development Act and the Employment Insurance Act, employment insurance council, which was passed by the Senate on Tuesday, June 18.

This bill aims to create an employment insurance council to strengthen social dialogue by seeking to create within the Employment Insurance Act an advisory council for the Employment Insurance Commission, which would be co-chaired by two commission-

ers representing the labour market: the commissioner for workers and the commissioner for employers.

This bill has the support of representatives from major employer and worker associations in Canada and reflects the NDP's values of supporting the working class by ensuring that workers have a seat at the economic decision-making tables. I look forward to working with all colleagues across the House to see the legislation passed.

(Motion agreed to and bill read the first time)

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, I move that the 18th report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food be concurred in.

Today, we are here to talk about food prices and food price volatility.

It is no secret that the cost of food has risen dramatically. We are seeing record numbers of people visiting food banks. In fact, in Ontario, one million people used a food bank last year. Food bank use since 2019 has gone up 135%. This has never happened in my lifetime. In the past three years, rent and groceries are up 40%. Canadians are spending 43% of their income on tax. That is more than housing, food and clothing combined.

It is easy to look at food prices in the grocery store and blame the big grocers for the high cost of food, but blaming them does not get to the root cause of the problem and why food has become so expensive. The bottom line is that the NDP-Liberal government's policies and regulations are driving up the cost of food and the cost for farmers to produce food.

We have heard this time and time again, and I am not afraid to say it again, and I will say it as many times as I need to, that the Conservatives will axe the tax. However, in the meantime, we need to pass Bill C-234, unamended, and give farmers a reprieve from the carbon tax.

I will give members an idea of why the carbon tax impacts the cost of food so much.

If we look at the supply chain from start to finish, every single step along that supply chain is facing increased costs, which can be related directly back to the carbon tax. Sometimes they are paying multiple times in carbon tax. For instance, farmers have to pay for fertilizer, and we are getting taxed right now on fertilizer. How does the fertilizer get from the fertilizer company to the field? It is trucked. We use trucks for everything in the country in order to get things from wherever it needs to be, from the farm or back to the field or from the field back to the farm. When we increase the cost of fuel for these trucks, which are not exempt from the carbon tax or from any fuel taxes for that matter, it is absolutely going to increase the cost of the production.

Routine Proceedings

However, we should not believe everything the Liberals tell us, or when we hear that farmers are exempt from taxes on their farm fuel. There is a slight bit of truth to that, but for the most part, on modern farms today, we are not using just tractors anymore. Yes, tractors are exempt and any equipment that does not use a roadway is exempt. However, from experience on my own farm, we use transport trucks to get the potatoes from the field back to the farm to the packing house.

If we look at the prairies, farmers have to truck grain from the field back to the farm to put it in the bins for storage. What is the most economical way to get products from the field back to the farm for storage? It is using big transport trucks and taking less loads from the field back to the farm. It saves on fuel, first, and it save on costs. However, when those trucks are not exempt from the carbon tax, or any taxes for that matter, it increases the cost for doing business for farmers.

What is the end result of that? Farmers cannot eat up all those costs. It comes off their bottom line. It comes off what they would have as extra income to invest back into their farming operations. Of course, those costs are going to get passed on to the next part in the chain, whether that is direct to the consumer or direct to a wholesaler. In my instance, I have to increase my costs. When my costs go up, I have to recoup those costs as I cannot afford to eat them. At the end of the day, consumers and Canadians at the grocery store are going to pay more because of the carbon tax.

If folks are watching and they are from a city, they may not know where their food comes from. Out on the prairies, the fields can be 10 to 80 kilometres away from the home farm. For instance, some of our farms are 80 to 100 kilometres away from the home farm. We have no choice but to truck the goods from those fields back to the farm. Even if a farm is 10 kilometres away from the home farm, to go 10 times a day back and forth is 100 kilometres driven. Imagine how much fuel is being consumed on just transporting food from point A to point B at the farm gate, and I am not talking beyond the farm gate here. Therefore, the cost of that carbon tax on truckers is immense, and it is immense for the farmers.

● (1530)

If we tax the farmer who grows the food and tax the trucker who ships the food, Canadians are the ones who are going to pay more for the food. It is common sense.

One of the other policies the NDP-Liberal government has put forward that will greatly impact the cost of food is its ban on plastics for fresh produce. I have talked about this in the House before, but it is worth talking about again because this would have such a profound impact on the fresh food we eat. Two-thirds of the produce Canadians eat is imported from other countries, and if we ban plastic on produce, we will see a 34% increase in the cost of fresh produce in this country, on top of what we are already seeing as high costs for food.

It will also reduce the availability of fresh produce to Canadians by over 50%. Members can imagine 50% less choice in the grocery store for Canadians. It will cost the industry \$5.6 billion. On top of this, it will have a 50% increase in greenhouse gases on the produce supply chain because of rotting produce. It is also going to increase CO₂ emissions from the rotting produce.

I would like to say that I will be sharing my time with the member for Regina—Lewvan today.

When we talk about the 50% increase in greenhouse gases from rotting produce, that does not include the increased transportation costs to truck more food and have more trucks on the road going to grocery stores because we are going to need more food. It is going to increase the health care costs by over \$1 billion per year.

Back in my riding and across the country, when I have talked to folks, I have talked to moms who have told me they have no choice but to cut back on the food they are buying for their families. They have to find somewhere to slash their budgets. I talked to one mom in particular who told me she could not afford to buy any out-of-season produce anymore. She is only be able to afford what is on sale at the grocery store for produce and will have to buy bigger quantities. Her kids will have to go without fresh food because she cannot afford it anymore. That is terrible. We must think of the increased cost to our health this is going to have when parents cannot afford to buy nutritious food for their children.

Another factor we need to take into account when considering why our prices are going to go up is the fact that the majority of Canadians live in rural and remote communities. I have had the privilege and honour, for the last five years, of representing Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, which is a completely rural community. I have travelled to rural communities across this country, including up into the north, into Whitehorse and Yukon, and there is a real issue when it comes to food insecurity and the price of food. If we see trucking costs go up, and we see less production and less availability of fresh produce, how are these people, who live in rural remote communities, going to be able to access nutritious food? They are going to have a hard time.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business estimates that the cost of this plastics ban will add \$1.9 billion in customer costs. Nationwide, we stand to lose 60,000 jobs. We also hear that insurance rates are up due to vehicle thefts, break-ins and damages, and farmers have to pay higher insurance rates because of this. Vehicle insurance rates in Canada are up over 6% year over year. I have had some constituents tell me their insurance rates have doubled in some areas.

If we look at the whole supply chain and all the things farmers have to do to run their business, and if the costs are up everywhere, of course food costs are going to be up. Farmers have no choice but to pass these costs on down the line, and then every step along the supply chain has price increases and they need to be passed on. The result is Canadians having to pay more for food from the store.

Points of Order

Here is another piece of common sense: no farms equals no food. Government red tape is up. Insurance costs are up. Heating costs are up. Grain drying costs are up. Taxes are up. Crime is up. Time is up. Conservatives will axe the tax, build the homes, fix the budget and stop the crime, and we will bring down food prices for Canadians.

• (1535)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today we were supposed to be debating Bill C-63. It is interesting that, once again, after four days and four different pieces of legislation being introduced, the “hungry and thirsty for power” Conservatives have brought in a concurrence motion to try to change the channel. This is the fourth time.

Why does the Conservative Party have such a lack of respect for Canadians that it is prepared to do whatever it takes to play a destructive role here on the floor of the House of Commons in not allowing legislation to even be debated?

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I actually have a lot of respect for Canadians. I respect them so much that I am here fighting on behalf of my constituents of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and every single farmer across this country who has seen the government's bad policies and bad regulations, a lot of times without consultation, driving up their costs of production. In fact, they are driving some farms out of business. That is a problem for Canadians.

Farm families tell me that they cannot afford to keep farming and that next generations cannot afford to take over the family farm, thanks to another policy of the government and its capital gains tax increase. The root cause of these problems in Canada is the NDP-Liberal government, which does not respect our farmers or agriculture sector and refuses to stand up for family farms.

• (1540)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to hear my colleague admit that grocery prices have risen significantly and that families and individuals are struggling because of it. I hope that she will support the NDP's proposals. Right now, we are the only ones who are saying that we need to stabilize and control prices by capping the price of certain essential foods for families.

I am surprised that I did not hear her talking today about the scourge that is the paper or cardboard lids on cups at Tim Hortons, since she has made a lot of videos about this issue in recent weeks and months. I would like to know whether keeping plastic around is the Conservative Party's only suggestion for the environment.

[English]

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I have been in this place now for five years and had the honour of representing Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and farmers in my riding and across this country.

It is a bit rich for the NDP to say that Conservatives do not care about food prices. From day one in this Parliament, we have said that we need to get rid of taxes, bring taxes down for farmers and axe the carbon tax so that farmers can have a reprieve. Especially, if we can pass Bill C-234 unamended, that will help our farmers. I do

not understand why the member will not just stand with us, help pass Bill C-234 and give farmers a reprieve from the carbon tax now.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, we focus a lot on the carbon tax in this place but without looking at the climate crisis and the real impact it has on Canadian farmers. We really want to support the family farm. We know that people living on farms are experiencing suicides. It is an extremely difficult life right now.

Removing carbon pricing on things such as drying grains is one thing. However, if we ignore the biggest economic threat to farmers, we are missing the larger picture. That is the climate crisis, with increased drought, aridification, floods and the kinds of disasters that mean that crops do not come to fruition and farmers do not get money off the fields at the end of the season.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, the government policies are driving farmers to the breaking point right now. Fertilizer has increased by 80%, machine fuel by 78.5%, machinery costs by 20%, pesticides by 7%, feed by 29% and shelter, including barns and sheds, by 13%. That is all because of the NDP-Liberal government's policies.

Farmers are the best stewards of our land and the ones who make our bread and butter from it. Conservatives care about the land. If we do not take care of our land and are not stewards of it, we will not have a livelihood.

Conservatives will always stand up for farmers, the benefit of the agriculture sector and what is best for farmers.

* * *

POINTS OF ORDER

ALLEGED VIOLATION OF STANDING ORDER 116 AT STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order; specifically, it relates to Standing Orders 116(2)(a) and 116(2)(b). This is in relation to events that took place earlier today at the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

I understand that the Speaker does not normally become involved with the business of committees, but there are occasions when the Speaker has intervened. I think this may be one of those occasions.

Routine Proceedings

During debate on a motion today in committee, my hand was up to speak prior to the vote being called, but the chair called the vote regardless. I immediately indicated that my hand was up to speak, but the chair ignored my request and proceeded to a vote. This exchange can be found in the videos of today's meeting.

As you know, Madam Speaker, Standing Order 116(2)(a) states:

Unless a time limit has been adopted by the committee or by the House, the Chair of a standing, special or legislative committee may not bring a debate to an end while there are members present who still wish to participate. A decision of the Chair in this regard may not be subject to an appeal to the committee.

Standing Order 116(2)(b) states:

A violation of paragraph (a) of this section may be brought to the attention of the Speaker by any member and the Speaker shall have the power to rule on the matter. If, in the opinion of the Speaker, such violation has occurred, the Speaker may order that all subsequent proceedings in relation to the said violation be nullified.

The exchange that happened in committee can be seen on video; not only this, but the rules of the House also apply at committee. In the House, we take members at their word. I state categorically that my hand was up to speak to the motion and that I had indicated it to the chair before the vote.

I would respectfully ask that the Speaker look into this, deem that the proceedings on the motion be nullified and allow the debate to continue so that I am able to speak, as I had indicated my desire to do so.

• (1545)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. member bringing this point of order to the House. We will look into the matter and return to the House with a response if required.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to join the debate today on the concurrence of the 18th report of the Standing Committee of Agriculture and Agri-Food on food price inflation.

I find it very strange that the Liberal member would talk about tying up the House's time on things he thinks are not important. When I was in my riding of Regina—Lewvan and our communities all summer, one of the major topics was the price of food and how it is getting harder to make ends meet each day.

We know that taxes are up, costs are up, crime is up and time is up. It is time to have these discussions, and it is time for a carbon tax election. That is what Canadians want. Seventy per cent of Canadians think that the carbon tax should be axed. It is one of the major reasons costs are going up at our grocery stores.

We saw this in some of the comments made at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. As a member of the committee, I was able to partake in the meetings. Some of the comments especially focused on the carbon tax. One such comment was made by Mr. Ron Lemaire of the Canadian Produce Marketing Association. He reported that the greenhouse vegetable sector, for ex-

ample, estimates that the carbon tax will have an annual cost on his operations of \$22 million this year. This amount is projected to increase to as much as \$100 million by 2030. What do members think that does to the price of vegetables in our grocery stores, if that is the cost being incurred by our vegetable growers across our country?

Another comment was made by Mr. Keith Currie of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. He noted that the carbon tax accounts for as much as 40% of energy bills in some agricultural sectors. He called for a time-limited and targeted exemption; he would like to see an exemption from the carbon tax.

Another thing that a lot of stakeholders talked about in our committee was the fact that they would love to see Bill C-234 passed, and that is the exemption from the carbon tax for heating barns for grain drying. This is something that our producers desperately need. Mr. Currie went on to say something about the mental health of our producers; the member from Saanich—Gulf Islands also talked about this. Can we imagine having to pay a bill that is ever-increasing and would eventually take millions of dollars out of our pockets? That is the pressure that our agriculture producers are facing.

One thing needing to be mentioned is that many members on the Conservative side come from family farms. The member who just spoke has family that has been in agriculture for generations. I grew up on a dairy and beef farm, and I have cousins who still ranch. These are not just random numbers. These are our family members and our constituents. That is why this is so important to the members on this side of the House, to the Conservative members of Parliament.

For a Liberal to say that this is just fluff and does not matter, that it is just a tactic, is actually quite insulting to the men and women who produce our food and put food on the table. The member should apologize for that comment.

I want to talk about the pressure that our men and women are facing in agriculture. What this brings to the forefront is that it is not just the carbon tax. As I hear all the time, it is also a tax on the tax. It is the GST being paid by our producers on top of the carbon tax. The PBO has done some reports on this, which say that \$486 million in GST will be paid on the carbon tax. By 2030, \$1 billion a year will be paid just in GST on the carbon tax. The carbon tax is going to blow a \$30-billion to \$40-billion hole in our economy, and the agriculture sector is going to account for the lion's share of that money. There is pressure.

My colleague said it well, and it is worth repeating: If we tax the farmer who produces the food, the trucker who buys the food and the stores that sell the food, it only stands to reason that we are going to tax each and every Canadian who goes to the store and buys the food. This is what as common sense would indicate.

Routine Proceedings

That is the point we are trying to get at. We know that the sellout NDP members have voted for the carbon tax 24 times. Because they were in trouble in the Elmwood—Transcona by-election, the leader of the NDP had a come-to-Jesus moment and said, “No, we are not against the carbon tax.” Now he says that they want to vote against it.

• (1550)

Now we are going to see another flip-flop because the NDP eked out a win in one of its seven safest seats in Canada, where I think they lost 20 points. That flip-flop was strictly to play politics to try to fool Canadians, just like the ripping up of the supply and confidence agreement. Can members believe that? It is two flip-flops in two days. I am surprised the hon. NDP leader did not pull something. First he was for the government and then he was against the government, and on Wednesday he will be for the government again. It is hard to keep track. Now the NDP in B.C. is also against the carbon tax. It is unbelievable how many times people have changed their minds on the carbon tax over the last week in NDP land.

I have a great deal of respect for the men and women in our agriculture sector. They do the hard work of feeding Canadians and feeding the world. One thing we hear from some of the Liberal members on the agriculture committee is that we need to do more. Why do some of the Liberal and NDP members on this committee not give the agriculture sector credit for what it has done so well already? Saskatchewan, which has done so much to create environmental sustainability in the agriculture sector, uses rotational grazing for cattle and crop rotation, with different crops taking out different nutrients from the soil. Western Canada pioneered that. We have also done great work when it comes to zero tillage and straight head combining, where there is less machinery on the field.

There have been so many innovations that we should be proud of as the Canadians who represent the men and women in the agriculture sector, and we should take them to the world. Imagine exporting our great agricultural practices to other countries around the world so they catch up. That would lower world emissions. If we want to tackle environmental sustainability, we should talk about some of the good things we are doing on the world stage instead of always acting like we should be embarrassed by our agriculture and energy sectors.

We know that right now we do not have any champions for agriculture in the current government. We have talked about this many times in Saskatchewan, where agriculture is still the backbone of the economy. Why is it that every time Liberals come into government, their agriculture minister sits at the kids' table?

We know that one of the biggest problems with the government's ag policy is that it is being made in the health and environment departments, not in the agriculture department. It is being made by people who have never been on a farm. That is why we see continuous increases, whether it is in red tape, taxes or policies, like wanting to reduce fertilizer use by 35%. Do members know how much that is going to lower yields for our producers? Talk about putting more mental strain on them. We are hand-tying them on what they do best by telling them what they can and cannot put on their fields. That is reminiscent of socialist Russia, which I think some mem-

bers in the Liberals would enjoy seeing. The activist Minister of Environment has said that he is a proud socialist. He would love to tell agriculture producers what they should and should not be doing with their own land.

To address how we can lower food prices immediately, we can axe the tax and make sure no one is paying a tax on a tax by taking GST off the carbon tax. We can allow our producers to use technology and the great practices of farming, not tie their hands by telling them how much fertilizer to put on their fields. First and foremost, what we need is a common-sense Conservative government that will not have an ag minister sitting at the kids' table and that will bring policy forward that helps instead of hurts our producers. That is what the Conservatives will deliver to Canadians when we have the carbon tax election that 70% of Canadians want.

• (1555)

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Madam Speaker, even though I wanted to speak about government legislation on online harms, it is always an honour and privilege to represent the good people of the riding of Waterloo.

Although they have a diversity of perspectives and experiences, the one thing the majority of my constituents reference is the climate crisis and how to take it seriously. I will reference an article from May 16, 2021, because the member did refer to flip-flops and I feel that the Conservatives flip-flop more than anybody else. The member for Calgary Signal Hill said he was answering dozens of emails and phone calls: “There’s no question I’ve had a number of constituents, and I think I’m not talking out of turn when I say so probably have every other western Conservative MP”. These constituents were asking members of Parliament from the Conservative Party, “Why the flip-flop?” He told the Canadian Press that it was important they did this.

Why did they campaign on a price on pollution only to come to the House and lie—mislead Canadians?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member did catch herself.

I just want to remind members to be very careful of the words they use in the House. They can end up causing disorder, and then we end up disrupting the proceedings.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I do not do this very often, but to quote a Liberal minister, we will take no lessons from them when it comes to flip-flopping and breaking promises.

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The Liberals have broken many promises to Canadians. Do members remember when they were going to have a couple of small deficits and then balance the budget in 2015? Do members remember when they promised to lower emissions in 2015 and 2019? They have not. Do members remember when the Liberals said the carbon tax will never go above \$50 a tonne, a target they blew past?

We will take no lessons from them and their broken promises, which we have seen in every campaign since 2015 under the current Prime Minister.

Hon. Bardish Chagger: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I did not intend to cause havoc in the House. I apologize. I am glad I was able to catch myself, but my intentions were not to use a word that was inappropriate in this chamber.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about a number of things in his speech. However, he did not mention a recommendation that many farmers regularly bring up with me. Some Canadian processors in the riding of Shefford have their office in Granby. I am referring to the following recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada increase staffing and the regularity of inspections at the border to ensure compliance, and that the government require that imported products meet the same quality standards—including environmental, labour, and growing standards—as domestic products, while ensuring it respects its trade obligations.

This is about reciprocal standards, a really crucial issue I hear a lot about in the riding of Shefford, which is home to many farmers.

What does my colleague think about the cutbacks made at the Canada Border Services Agency between 2007 and 2011, back when I was an assistant there?

[*English*]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, there is no doubt that there needs to be more border security. We could use the \$67 million from the Liberals' phony gun buyback plan and put some of that money into the border to have more people at border services.

Another thing about processing that is really hurting farmers' bottom lines is trucking. Canadian Trucking Alliance members just said that the carbon tax is going to cost them \$26 billion by 2030. That is going to hit farmers in the pocketbook as well. It is another tax on a tax.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Saskatchewan brought up the election in Elmwood—Transcona, and I am sure he joins all members of this House in congratulating Leila Dance on being the newest MP in the House.

He talked a lot about flip-flops, and I have to follow up on that. The New Democrats have put forward a number of different motions and solutions for the price of groceries, yet the Conservatives have voted against them every single time. Aside from their one-trick pony, which is the carbon tax, does he have any solution that would help with prices?

• (1600)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I appreciate a question coming from anyone in this House. Everyone has the right to ask questions. However, for a member of the NDP to stand up and talk about anything other than the inconsistency of their leader and how he sold out Canadians for his pension is, quite frankly, ridiculous.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was trying to rise to ask a question of the the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, but then I heard the shot toward the hon. member for Burnaby South. It is unparliamentary to suggest that the member sold out the country for his pension. I know that in this House we cannot be charged with slander, but that certainly is unparliamentary.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members to be extremely careful with the language they use and how they choose to identify others. The House of Commons is meant for debating the policies of government, not attacking individuals. I want members to please reflect on that before they make comments.

The hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke is rising on a point of order.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Madam Speaker, the member who spoke previously mentioned the name of a soon-to-be MP in this chamber. I thought that was against the rules. Could you please clarify that?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has not been sworn in, as far as I know. She is not officially a member until she is sworn in, if I am correct, but I will double-check that and get back to the House if need be.

Resuming debate, 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, here we are again, just the second week into the fall session, and this is the fourth concurrence report brought in by the official opposition. This once again reinforces, for anyone who follows the debate via CPAC and wants an understanding of what is taking place in Ottawa, that the Conservatives are going out of their way to quench their thirst for power, as opposed to trying to deliver in a very real and tangible way for Canadians.

Today, the Conservatives brought forward this motion for concurrence to talk about farmers, the carbon rebate and interest in regard to the price on food. I find it interesting that they have chosen to debate that today. If my memory serves me correctly, I cannot recall once when the Conservative Party of Canada, the far right, thought this issue was important enough to bring forward to the House for debate on an opposition day. We have had dozens of opposition days, and not once have the Conservatives raised the issue that is the focus of the concurrence report.

The Conservatives like to say that this is about farmers and Canadians. Well, I do not believe it. If any of the Conservatives have the courage to debate me in any university or other post-secondary facility, I would welcome it, just to show how abusive the Conservatives are when we are trying to be there in a very real and tangible way for Canadians. In fact, the Conservatives have had two members speak about the report. They are the ones who thought it was so important to debate this report. However, did either member who spoke even make reference to the response to the report that was provided by the department and the minister? No.

We are already half an hour into discussion, and while the Conservatives had a detailed response to the report, no reference has been made to it whatsoever. It does not surprise me, because as every member of the House of Commons knows, this is not about the issue the Conservatives have raised today. They are using an issue that Canadians are genuinely concerned about, which I agree is a concern, to sidestep legislation and prevent the government from being able to pass it.

My colleague and friend from Waterloo referenced that she was hoping to debate Bill C-63, which we started this morning. The Conservatives have said that if this bill passes and we get a Conservative government, they will repeal the law. We understand that they do not support the legislation, even though the interests of Canadians are represented in it, but this is what we were supposed to be debating today.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1605)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There are a few interventions being made that should not be made at this point in time. Hon. members will have 10 minutes of questions and comments. I would ask them to wait until the appropriate time for that.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, in the last federal election, a mandate was given to each political party in this chamber, not just the governing party. Members of the official opposition have a responsibility to Canadians too, not only to their leader and the far right of this country, and they are not living up to that responsibility. Why? Because of their thirst for power and nothing else. I say shame on them for that attitude.

There has been other legislation, even legislation they support. I am thinking of Bill C-66 last week, when the Conservatives brought in a concurrence motion to prevent debate on that legislation. That is not to say the food issue is not important. We know it is. That is why we have taken legislative and budgetary action to support Canadians, all of which the Conservative Party has voted against and filibustered. Imagine the hypocrisy from the other side when they try to say they have the interests of farmers in mind. Any objective person can see through the misinformation that is constantly spewed from the Conservative Party, the Conservative-Reform party. It is never-ending.

We can take a look at it. Conservatives talk about grocery prices and lobbyists. Need I remind them of Jenni Byrne's name? Of course not, because the Conservatives know her well. She sits in a

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part of their caucus. She is someone who had a very close relationship with their current leader when he was in a former government. She was a lobbyist and an adviser to Harper. Why is that important? Because she is a lobbyist to her firm for the grocery—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. If individuals want to have conversations, then they should hold them outside. I would ask them not to heckle and to wait until the appropriate time for questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it does make someone wonder when—

• (1610)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, this member is going off on all kinds of tangents. He is bringing in things that really have nothing to do with the business of the House, and I would—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Which standing order is the point of order affecting?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the member is being both irrelevant and unparliamentary in the insinuation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not a point of order. It is starting to be disrespectful.

The parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is disrespectful when opposition member after member is trying to disrupt the comments I am trying to put on the record. Every word I have spoken is the truth. I understand that it might make them feel a little uncomfortable, but that is just too bad.

At the end of the day—

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would just ask you to rule on whether this is relevant to the actual motion that is currently being debated.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. members know full well that there is some latitude when debates are happening. I do want to make sure members are aware they need to bring it back to the motion. On both sides, during debates, some members have gone off-script a bit, and I would just ask them to bring it back. However, I also want to ask members to please be respectful and follow the orders of the House, which are to not disrupt individuals or heckle, and to not have conversations while someone else has the floor. If they wish to have those conversations, they should take them out in the lobby.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, only because of the constant interruptions, on a point of issue of relevancy, I was referring to Jenni Byrne, who is a lobbyist for the grocery—

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The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member is actually going into a debate. I would ask the member to go on with his speech and make sure it is relevant. I would ask the same thing of the hon. members who will be taking the floor today. I would also ask members to maybe read up on the rules of the House about when to speak, or not, in the House, please.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would add to some of your comments that if members opposite are feeling uncomfortable with the truth, they do have a choice. They do not have to sit in the chamber and listen. They can always exit the chamber. That way, they will not be as hurt or their feelings—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have ruled on this. I think it is not proper to be reflecting on what I have just said when I am closing the door on it, so I would ask the parliamentary secretary to go on with his debate, and I would ask members not to interrupt as well.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will go right to the debate.

The Conservative Party tries to give the impression that it actually cares and wants to see action taken on the issue of food pricing. Let us do a comparison between Stephen Harper or the current leader of the Conservative Party, and the government of today.

We have five major grocery chains in Canada. We used to have six. The reason we went from six to five is that the Stephen Harper government allowed Shoppers to be joined with one of the big five. Now we have a government that changed the Competition Act, in part to ensure more accountability with those types of company takeovers, protecting the interests of Canadians.

The Conservatives might have good talking points. They might have some great slogans and bumper stickers, but the reality is, and history clearly shows it, that they are quite incompetent. In fact, when we take a look at their policy, we find that it is wanting. They talk about the carbon rebate and the carbon tax, and they are saying—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I am talking about the carbon rebate and the carbon tax, and they are talking about relevance. They should listen to what their speakers had to say. That was 50% of what they spoke on. Really, they should get a life and try to understand what is happening on the floor today. I say to my colleagues across the way that they have to understand and appreciate that the Government of Canada has taken a number of initiatives.

Let me give a few examples, some very tangible specifics. The national school food program, which the Conservatives opposed, is there to help potentially 400,000 children. It is an investment in children so that they would be able to have food while they learn. Where are the Conservatives on the issue? Again, we find they are offside.

During the peak of food inflation, the government brought in a grocery rebate to put money in the pockets of Canadians. The Conservative Party of Canada voted against that. I made reference to the Competition Act, which ensures a higher sense of fairness in the pricing of food, and how competition is so important to that industry, and again, we saw Conservatives filibuster even legislation of that nature.

We could talk about the food price data hub, which is a tool Canadians can use to look at what is actually happening with the price of a number of food commodities. Because education is a budget line type of issue, we find that the Conservative Party also voted against that.

We talk a lot about farmers. I have had the opportunity over the last number of years, from visiting farms, to get a better understanding of Manitoba's agricultural community. In particular, I am talking about our pork industry, about piglets from birth to putting down, and providing the food that is necessary. That industry has grown significantly over the last number of years—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1615)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I am hearing comments and it is not the appropriate time. I would ask hon. members to not do that. The same members over and over again are making those comments. It is not like they have not heard what I just asked of them, so I would ask them to please hold off.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I think of the chicken industry in Manitoba. In fact, if we take a look at the chicken industry over the last decade, we will see there are close to 200 new chicken producers. People would not think this was true if they listened to Conservatives. They would think they would be seeing a shrinking of the pork industry, a shrinking of the chicken-processing industry, which is just not true. I have visited not only those industries but also our cattle industry and agriculture communities.

I was flying into Winnipeg from B.C. recently. When people fly in and get under the clouds, they see golden fields with multiple colours, where all forms of crops are coming up. There is a lot to be said about the beauty of the Prairies when one sees the potential harvest there, and how that is dealing with food security not only here in Canada but abroad.

I do not need to be told to appreciate farmers and the fine work they do. I do that naturally and I have done it for many years, both as a parliamentarian and as a young person jumping on a John Deere tractor as it was cultivating. This is something I believe in and I know the government believes in it too.

Earlier this year, we were in the Philippines. The Minister of Agriculture was making an announcement for the opening of an agri-food trade office where we are going to have 30-plus other countries looking for trade. We will be using the Manila office as a place to enhance Canadian trade for agri-food products. We will all benefit by that, in particular our farmers. With the potential markets in that area of the world, there is phenomenal potential for growth. As a government, we are looking to secure that growth for our country, at the same time as feeding the world.

Many initiatives taken by the government deal with the issue the report talks about. Unfortunately, the Conservatives have used this as a way to cause division and to filibuster government legislation. It is not about the issue for them, as I said at the beginning. It is all about how they can cause a disturbance in the chamber, and we saw some of that by the reaction.

When Liberals met as a caucus, we talked about many different issues and concerns in Canada. There are reasons for us to be very optimistic, whether it is the 2% inflation, the downward direction of interest rates or the record foreign investment, especially in comparison with other countries.

Last year, on a per capita basis, we were number one in the G7 in terms of foreign investment coming into Canada; in the world, we were number three. That is all good news. It shows we are moving forward in the right direction, but we do need to continue to work at improving conditions for all Canadians. That is the type of thing we discussed when we went to caucus. We talked about agriculture.

We can contrast that to the leader of the Conservative Party's opening comments at its convention. The headline was, "Carbon pricing to cause economic 'nuclear winter,' [the leader of the Conservative Party] tells his MPs". Let me tell members what he had to say.

• (1620)

In his speech to his caucus, he said that the Liberal government's plan to increase the price would cause a "nuclear winter" for the economy. "There would be a mass hunger and malnutrition with a tax this high...Our seniors would have to turn the heat down to 14 or 13 C just to make it through the winter," the leader added. "Inflation would run rampant and people would not be able to leave their homes or drive anywhere."

This is the type of whatever we want to call it. That is how he addressed his caucus. I can tell the House that we have seen that shift to the far right. A lot of the negative things that Canadians do not like about politics coming up from the United States are being ushered in through the Conservative leader's office.

I received an email. I do not know how I got it, but it is addressed to me. I will leave out what I know I have to leave out, the names. It says, "He's a liar. He's a fake, a phony, a fraud. He told Canadians he was tearing up his costly coalition with [blank], but he is continuing to prop up the Liberal government. Worst of all, he sold out Canadians to get his \$2.3-million pension. Canadians can't trust anything he says. It's time for a carbon tax election, full stop. Chip in today to support [I cannot say the name] and the common-sense", I call it nonsense, "Conservatives as we take on a [I cannot say costly] coalition and win the carbon tax election. [I cannot say

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the name] has made everything worse. Taxes up. Costs up." We know the slogan, Madam Speaker. "[Blank] will keep lying to Canadians to keep his pension, but they won't win because we have a secret weapon." It says me; I am a secret weapon. "We're counting on a strong and patriotic Canadian"—

• (1625)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member's time is up.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would actually like to ask a question that I am hoping the member will be able to answer, because it is an important one. He mentioned Manitoba pork. I had the opportunity to meet with the executive director of Manitoba Pork just a few weeks ago, Cam Dahl, who told me it has a very serious trade issue. The pork industry in Manitoba is worth about \$2 billion in GDP and employs over 20,000 people. He said that the country-of-origin labelling issue in the United States is going to have a deleterious effect on Manitoba pork. I presume that since he has been researching agriculture in Manitoba, he is well aware of the issue.

Can the member inform the House as to what tangible steps he has taken to protect the Manitoba pork industry from the onslaught of country-of-origin labelling in the United States?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I too have met with Cam and many representatives of the pork industry. The industry is alive and well, doing exceptionally well in the province of Manitoba. Over the last number of years, we have seen substantial growth. I think it is somewhere between six million to eight million pigs annually, which is up quite significantly. Are there concerns? Absolutely. It is one of the reasons why, even when we went to Manila, we had representatives from the Canada Pork association.

It is one of the reasons why, when we look at trade with the Philippines and other countries, I have actually made the suggestion that Manitoba Pork should have representation there. It is important to me. It is important to Manitoba. It is important to Canada. With regard to the whole country-of-origin labelling, of course, we are aware of it. It is something we will stay on top of.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, the report's first recommendation addresses the temporary foreign worker program in the agriculture and agri-food sector.

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This program, which is essential for the regions of Quebec, is extremely important to us. The government has just announced a review of the program, but this review jeopardizes jobs in the agri-food sector in Quebec, particularly in regions where the program is needed.

It is not easy to hire people. It is not easy to maintain a workforce or retrain every year if new staff need to be hired. The government took action without considering the very smart and very well-thought-out recommendations, which emphasize the need to look at this program in light of regional realities.

Would my colleague agree that the government should rethink the new measure that was put in place by the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and consider regional realities when it comes to the temporary foreign worker program?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I give credit to the member because obviously I think it is a great question being posed. I said in my remarks that the minister actually provided a detailed response to the different recommendations. In fact what we will find if we pick up the letter, and it is on page three, is that we start to get a response.

Just as an example, the letter says that “The Government acknowledges this recommendation. The Recognized Employer Pilot (REP) program, launched in Summer 2023, is a three-year pilot program designed to be more responsive to established labour market”. It goes on to say, “when Canadian and permanent residents are not available. Program policies are continuously reviewed to ensure that they reflect the latest economic conditions.”

Again, in the report itself there are responses to all of the different recommendations. The official opposition would have known that, but obviously they did not think it was that important to reference that at all in the beginning of their comments.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is a lot of conversation about all the things, of course, we need to do to help people afford the food they need in order to survive, and of course help the farmers who produce that food. There are lots of things the government can do. It can be far better at supporting, for example, our supply-managed sectors instead of selling a lot of that off in trade agreements, and supporting those incredible farmers within those industries.

One of the things I have been asked over time in my area is from the Dairy Farmers of Canada. Its members need to see a great deal more, as the incredible stewards of the land they are, who care about sustainability, the protection of their environment, the wetlands, the soil levels, the runoff and all those things. They need support with respect to processing facilities. That is something they have asked the government for numerous times in order to reduce the amount they have to ship their product in order to be processed properly. They have asked for that support in southwestern Ontario.

I would like to ask the hon. member for his comments on what the government can do to help them in that regard.

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will first address the beginning of the question. With respect to supply management, not only was it the Liberal Party of Canada that ultimately brought in supply management, but anyone who has ever talked to the Minister of Agriculture would find out that, as a government, we continue to support supply management to the degree we did when we brought it in in the first place. It is absolutely critical for a wide spectrum of reasons that I will not be given the time to expand upon.

With respect to the environmental policies of good stewardship, a lot of them are driven by the farmers themselves. The government recognizes that and supports it in different ways with things such as research dollars.

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, a lot of the debate today was based on climate change and its impact on agriculture. In 2024, the Conservative Party voted to reject a call to actually recognize climate change in Canada.

In Ontario, 70,000 people work within the agriculture sector. It is a \$60-billion sector. It is important to make sure we preserve and keep the integrity of the land and the weather conditions in order for farmers to be successful.

Could the member talk about the importance of the recognition of climate change and its impact on the agricultural sector in Ontario and the rest of Canada?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is critical. If members do not believe me, they should ask the farmers. The farmers will tell us that.

My colleague made reference to the issue of the carbon rebate and the carbon tax. What I would highlight are two quick points.

Every member of the Conservative Party across the way who campaigned in the last election voted in favour of and campaigned on a price on pollution. A price on pollution is a carbon tax. In fairness, they have flip-flopped a few times on it, but in the last federal election that was their official position. It is somewhat interesting now that they are starting to criticize others who have changed their opinions. All they need to do is reflect on their own position over the years.

I would suggest that Conservatives have an obligation to Canadians to tell them what they would do to deal with the climate situation, because obviously the far right does not take that into consideration. It is unfortunate, because many farmers are also concerned.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, every time I hear the member for Winnipeg North speak, I feel a little worse about the state of Canadian democracy and how the Liberals no longer stand up for their constituents on a regular basis. The records clearly indicate that the member accounts for more than half of the debate on government orders. Therefore the fact that the Liberals do not speak to anything happening in the House is a reflection of the fact that even they have lost confidence in their Prime Minister but are too afraid to say anything about it.

Let me point out two specific statistics: Unemployment right now for youth is at 13.5%, and nearly a quarter of Canadians, an 80% increase, will be using a food bank this year. How in the world can the government think it is getting it right for Canadians, with atrocious statistics like those?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, if the member wants to talk about statistics, let me leave him with one. In the nine years in which Stephen Harper was the prime minister, he generated somewhere in the neighbourhood of one million jobs. In the same time frame, by working with Canadians, we have generated over two million jobs. That is double.

Yes, there are issues that are very serious that we do need to deal with. However, at least on this side of the House, we are prepared to work hard and deal with the issues. The Conservatives, however, are more interested in slogans and bumper stickers, and they do not want to give any attention to the real concerns and issues that Canadians want dealt with by the House of Commons, because of their behaviour with respect to the constant filibustering that takes place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Oil and Gas Industry; and the hon. member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, Carbon Pricing.

• (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would have liked to have the opportunity to ask my colleague one last question. Since he is still here, I will ask him anyway. Perhaps he can answer me by me asking a question.

He spoke about supply management in response to a question from my NDP colleague. He said that his government has always supported supply management. That is reasonably accurate. Bill C-282, which is important, was passed in the House in June, not in June of 2024, but in June of 2023. The Senate will finally start examining the bill on Wednesday, September 25. My colleague said that his government supports supply management. He officially supported the bill. Even the minister at the time voted in favour of it on behalf of the executive branch of the government. Perhaps it is time to pick up the phone and ask the Senate to deal with this promptly. I am not sure it is reasonable to take over a year to begin examining a bill. That was the comment I wanted to make. If the person in question did not hear it, members can pass the question on to him.

Today's debate revolves around concurrence in the report entitled "How Government and Industry Can Fight Back Against Food Price Volatility". The title is important; we are talking about fighting volatility, not controlling prices. We all want food to be less expensive. We have all seen terrible inflation in the food sector, while in other sectors inflation was under control or not as high.

We obviously do not live in a totalitarian regime. The government cannot set food prices. It must therefore take action to try to tame the volatility. Funnily enough, supply management is one of the best methods our farmers have found to control price volatility.

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We always end up with prices that are reasonable and based on the average cost of production. We are therefore encouraging people to be more efficient while also letting them make a decent living. At the end of the day, the consumer pays a reasonable price. We should be looking at these models. That is why we need to pass this bill quickly.

This is the committee's 18th report. I wanted to mention the number of reports because I think that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food is exemplary. Its members work together in the interest of the common good—until recently anyway. Let us hope it stays that way. People are working to adopt measures to help the agriculture sector.

This study was resumed after the call of the Minister of Industry, who had a meeting with the five major grocery stores. These five big grocery companies control 80% of the food market in the country. They were asked to make an effort. The file came back to us. At committee, we had already done a study on the same topic. We ended up studying the same thing twice. That was not exactly efficient, but it did allow us to be more thorough and confront the five big grocery companies.

These sectors trample on the competition to then become an oligopoly. No matter what any executive of these companies might claim tomorrow morning, next week or in six months, when five companies control 80% of the market in a given sector, that is an oligopoly. If they are not colluding, because that is illegal, then they are at least watching each other and copying each other. We only need to look at the bonuses that were cut at the end of the COVID-19 crisis: They ended on the very same day for everyone. What a coincidence.

All irony aside, when we heard from these companies' CEOs last spring, they all agreed to give the Competition Bureau their profit figures. The Competition Bureau had been tasked with studying what was happening with grocery prices. I personally put the question to the five representatives. They claimed that there were no big profits. They told us that they had managed to keep the same margins because of pharmacy activities or other factors. When we asked them to show us figures supporting their claims, they told us they could not comply because they were all competitors.

• (1640)

The Competition Bureau was doing more or less the same study as we were, at the same time. However, the Bureau's studies are more confidential. We asked company CEOs if they would provide the Competition Bureau with their figures, and they all said yes, with no exceptions.

A few weeks later, we received the Competition Bureau's report. In the first few pages, the report's authors lamented the lack of transparency and the fact that they had not been able to obtain the much-talked-about figures. When we met with the CEOs again in committee a few months later, I asked each of them the same question. I told them that, apparently, some of them had not provided their figures. I then asked them if they had. They all said yes.

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It really is a beautiful world we live in, is it not? Somebody somewhere did not tell the truth. We just do not know who it is. This example, which is a little anecdotal, I agree, is still important. It is a matter of transparency towards the government. This example shows that one of the government's responsibilities is to ensure that sectors remain competitive.

The committee came up with several very interesting recommendations. I see colleagues who sit on the committee with me. I am almost sure they would agree with my next statement. We have published 18 reports. We work very hard. We are serious and rigorous. When we adopt a report, it usually passes by consensus or with an overwhelming majority. We want these proposals to move forward. However, if we were to measure the thickness of the dust covering each of these reports, which are sitting on the shelf, we would be very disappointed. That is the first point I wanted to make. When I was rereading the recommendations just now, I thought to myself how good the report was. There is only one exception, one small caveat that I will get to later. Otherwise, it was a wonderful report.

I will return to the recommendations. The first reads as follows:

The Committee, noting the particular importance of temporary foreign workers to the agriculture and agri-food sectors, recommends that the Government of Canada reduce the administrative burden....

This has still not been done. We are still waiting. The government has even made things worse. We suggested asking for fewer labour market impact assessments and now they are requested more frequently than ever. They used to be requested once a year, but now it is every six months. We might understandably hesitate to write anything in the next report for fear that the government will do the opposite. It is a little ironic. Sometimes we wonder whether the recommendations we adopt in committee serve any purpose at all.

We therefore need to be careful about that. We need to keep the recognized employer pilot program going. We also need to be careful in the agri-food sector. We often talk about the agricultural industry but less often about the agri-food sector. Let us remember that what is produced must be processed before it is eaten. Agri-food is the next step, an extension of the agriculture industry. There are no limits on the number of foreign workers that can be hired in the agriculture industry, but there are limits in the agri-food sector. It is difficult to hire workers to cut up pork in a meat factory. I can tell members that. I would invite the MPs who have not already done so to visit a food processing plant. It will become obvious to them that we need these workers.

Is it 30%? Is it 20%? Is it 10%? I am concerned about the last announcement. The cap was reduced from 30% to 20%. There was talk of reducing it to 10%. I hope that agri-food will not be affected by this 10% limit. My colleague from Drummond asked the parliamentary secretary about this a few minutes ago. It is important to be smart. Every time the government does something, it has to think about the consequences. It should not do something just to have a nice announcement. It needs to look at how the measures put in place will apply on a daily basis.

I am not saying that it is wrong to lower the cap from 20% to 10% in other labour sectors. However, in agri-food, I think this will

create a serious problem. I would not want to see food processing centres move elsewhere in a few years because they cannot recruit workers. We can mechanize production and make investments, but the government still needs to have a little more vision and provide incentives to modernize these processing plants. That was another one of our recommendations, but it did not appear in the report. This recommendation was included in a number of reports, but it has not yet been implemented. I would therefore invite the ministers to read the committee reports.

The first recommendation was to be thorough and take regional characteristics into account before making any changes.

● (1645)

The second recommendation had a lot to do with the impact of climate change, something we have talked about. Even grocery store suppliers told us that it was sometimes hard to get supply and that they had to go elsewhere because of weather events that had impacted supply. That can create scarcity, which also leads to higher prices. All of this needs to be taken into account. That is why we need to ensure that we have local food resilience, that we are able to feed our people and keep our farmers in place. To keep them in place, we might have to support them more than we currently do, through the risk management programs, for example. That was not part of this study. We did not mention it again, but we did have discussed it at length and we have produced more than one report on the subject.

The sustainable Canadian agricultural partnership will be renewed in 2028. I feel like we are going to wait until November 2027 to start talking about it, when the government should already be sitting down with stakeholders to see what changes need to be made. We will need to make major changes here, unless we do not want it to work. These programs need an in-depth review, better funding and, above all, a better coverage rate.

Some agricultural producers are telling me that they no longer take out insurance because the likelihood that it will benefit them to be insured is so small compared to the high premiums they are being charged and the small payout they will receive in compensation. That does not work for a company. These people are business owners. Farming tends to be romanticized, but first and foremost, farmers are business owners. They need to balance their books at the end of the month. Things are so hard now that 44% of Quebec farmers have a second job. They work off the farm so they can balance their books at the end of the month. Is it right for the people who feed us to have to take on other work? They take the train in the morning, go to work, come home and go back to the farm in the evening. It makes no sense and it needs to be addressed. It is easy for me to go off on a tangent.

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The only recommendation the Bloc Québécois expressed concern about was recommendation 3, which calls on the Government of Canada to pass Bill C-234 unamended. We initially backed this bill because we believe in the agriculture exemption. However, when it came back from the Senate with an amendment, we suggested embracing the step forward that it represented and then determining what could be done about the buildings. The Senate had taken out the buildings.

Of course, decisions are sometimes difficult to make. However, I think it was the right decision under the circumstances. As a matter of fact, when the bill came back from the Senate, we could have wrapped it up in a week, finished debate, voted and accepted this proposal. That way, farmers would be entitled to the exemption for grain drying now, this fall. I remember that the first speech I made when we came back in January 2024 was about that exact aspect. It was almost a year ago.

Instead, the Conservatives decided to kill time with speeches and the debate never ended. We have yet to vote on this bill because they are looking to get political mileage out of this issue.

I know that the carbon tax has become a sticky issue, politically speaking. It has been very polarizing. However, this bill would improve things in the fall for grain farmers. If any of them are watching us, I say to them that all we need to do is vote next week for the grain drying exemption to come into effect. It is not in effect at the moment. That is the end of my tangent. Obviously, when it comes to this recommendation, I was not among the majority. Nevertheless, we were pleased with the report as a whole and we adopted it.

I will now move on to recommendation 4. It recommends that the government review its labelling regulations. That is a great example. I will not have enough time to talk about all the recommendations since I have so much to say about each topic, but I will talk about the ones I have time to address.

Regarding labelling, Health Canada decided to protect citizens and help them be healthy. If a food contains fat or sugar, that will be generally indicated on the food, but the rest of the content of the food will not. That is a fine example of a policy that was adopted quickly to make the government look good, to give the appearance of being good and kind and of having protected the public.

• (1650)

For example, dried cranberries need a label because they have a very bitter taste, so they need added sugar. I am not saying that the package should not say that it contains sugar, but when people go to the grocery store and see that it contains too much sugar to be healthy, without seeing the rest, it takes away some of the nuance. Cranberries are very effective antioxidants. They have a whole bunch of health benefits.

I would like to return to this idea, if anyone on the government side is listening. We need to be smarter with our policies. Let us look at France, for example, which has adopted a “Nutri-Score” system, rather than just saying that a food has a lot of fat or a lot of sugar, which takes away all the nuance and means that a bunch of exemptions are needed. I have not mentioned it yet, but dairy products got an exemption. Ground meat got an exemption pretty quickly, because the same cut of non-ground meat would not be labelled,

which is completely ridiculous. People figured that out fast. It took two weeks to get that exemption. I can say bravo for once, but that should happen more often.

France's “Nutri-Score” system assigns each food item a letter, either A, B, C, D or E. For foods like cranberries, instead of being assigned the letter E because the front-of-package label shows the word “sugar” in big letters, the product might be rated B or C, since it has other health benefits. Decisions have to be informed and carefully considered.

It is important to remember that labelling changes come at a high cost to the industry. The government says it wants to lower the cost of groceries, but the cost of changing the food labelling policy every two years is huge. For one thing, consider the packaging that will be thrown in the recycling bin. We need to think carefully. We need to ask what exactly it is that we want to change generally, among all the labelling features, and then make the changes once and only once, so that the industry can adjust. The industry needs time to adjust too.

Moving on to the report's fifth recommendation, everyone agrees on getting rid of plastics. No one disagrees. All we are saying is that we cannot ban PLU stickers, the small labels placed on fruit, with a snap of our fingers.

Science has begun to develop biodegradable labels. They exist. They are coming, but they are very expensive and are not widely available yet. We may lose suppliers based in foreign countries. They may stop providing us with bananas, for example, because the cost will become too high too quickly. Yes, let us make these changes, but let us be reasonable about the deadlines and then see what the alternatives are.

Plastic packaging for vegetables is probably the best example that I can give. Broccoli wrapped in plastic will last two, three or four times longer in the grocery store than broccoli that is not wrapped in plastic. Everyone agrees that we want to get rid of the plastic, but first we need to develop an alternative solution. Otherwise, we will put broccoli on the shelves and food waste will skyrocket. What is a huge source of greenhouse gas emissions? Food waste. I am talking about thinking things through. That is how we usually work at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

We talked about the nutrition north Canada program. The government provides subsidies to companies that supply food to remote areas. However, we are not sure that those subsidies are being put to good use. We put the message out there because food prices are atrocious in remote areas. It is crazy.

Should the formula be reviewed? Should the government support citizens directly instead? It is unclear whether that is a good idea, but we should look into how these subsidies are being used. Our job is not to increase a private company's profits. Our job is to ensure that citizens have access to affordable food.

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To conclude, one of the major recommendations is the grocery code of conduct. It is an excellent example of what happens when we work constructively. The committee worked on this for a very long time. We put a lot of pressure on the companies. Two of them did not want to sign, but they finally did this summer. The code of conduct will be implemented. Now it will be important to monitor how it is being applied. The most important element is the dispute resolution mechanism for small suppliers.

I would now be happy to answer any questions my colleagues may have.

• (1655)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech. He touched on a number of topics, including the fact that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has tabled its 18th report. In the more than four years that I have sat on this committee, we have produced a considerable number of recommendations. The government, however, has implemented very few of them. My colleague mentioned a statistic earlier. He said that 44% of fruit and vegetable producers sold their produce at a loss in 2023. This was not that long ago. The committee made recommendations in this regard.

Does my colleague think that improvements could be made to help our fruit and vegetable producers, since that is also part of our overall food supply system? Could we not help them succeed, rather than import food from other countries because it is cheaper? While greenhouse gas emissions may not enter into the equation, a lot of people feel they are a very important factor.

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Beauce for his question. There were 18 reports, yes, and here is a little tip for those who want to run a successful campaign: They should read the committee reports. I think that, if they do, they are going to have a pretty good platform with smart, well-structured solutions. That is the end of my aside.

The 44% reflected producers who have to work outside, but there may be similar numbers in fruits and vegetables. I can say that because major producers in my riding were hit again this year and it is having dire consequence. I spoke earlier about risk management programs and how we manage risk. The people at the company I am talking about had a terrible summer in 2023. They filed an insurance claim, but it barely covered half of their losses.

When they took out insurance the following year, the premium had quadrupled. This year, however, they need to file a claim again because some waterways overflowed. That is what needs to be urgently reviewed. We have to start now, because the traditional concept of risk management no longer works.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the member's comments regarding the pork industry and temporary workers because one thing Manitoba and Quebec have in common is very healthy pork industries, which the member opposite and I are very much concerned with in regard to maintaining stability of employment.

One of the things that Manitoba has been very successful at, in working with the federal government, is using the local nominee program to ensure that there is stability in that workforce. It has been very successful at ensuring that the employees required to support the communities of Winnipeg, Brandon and Neepawa, in particular, are there in a very real and tangible way. What does the member think about the Province of Quebec doing likewise, if it is not already, and working with the federal government in the agricultural sector to maybe look at permanent residents filling some of these positions?

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his question. I am certainly interested. I will go and check out that program. We can always draw inspiration. What I would not want is for the federal government to tell Quebec what to do in a skills training program. The parliamentary secretary will not be surprised to hear that I have the usual reservations. Some of my colleagues who sit on the committee may even be sick of hearing that. I always add key phrases in resolutions. It has gotten to the point where we laugh about it, but we put them in anyway.

It is important to look at other options because we need the temporary foreign worker program, and it is working well. However, as I was saying earlier, we do not necessarily oppose reducing the percentages, but let us look at which sector and what impact it will have. That is where we have to be progressive and intelligent.

It would not be a bad idea to see how this could be reformed and how we could stop relying on foreign workers, or at least on this scale, because it does not cost our entrepreneurs any less to hire temporary foreign workers.

• (1700)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I want to address the issue of temporary foreign workers. I have some concerns about their rights and working conditions; sometimes, not always.

I am trying to understand. For the past few years, the Bloc Québécois and the Government of Quebec have been calling for less temporary immigration in Quebec. In fact, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean asked a question about that today. The member for Drummond and the member for Berthier—Maskinongé say that we need to be careful because the agriculture and agri-food sector needs those workers, those employees, and cannot retrain them every year.

Then there are the people in meat-packing plants, in processing and manufacturing who say that they need these temporary workers. It is the same with health care and construction. At the end of the day, do we want fewer or more temporary workers, or do we want their numbers to stay the same?

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, to answer his question, what we want are intelligent measures. We do not want a populist announcement that says that we are going to reduce this by a certain percentage. That is what matters.

The Bloc Québécois speaks out a lot about refugee claims. We want to welcome people, but our major concern is the proportion of temporary people that Quebec has to take care of. We are not just talking about workers. There are distinctions to be made, but of course, it is not always easy to do so in 30-second clips. Still, there are important distinctions to be made.

The agri-food sector is not necessarily against looking at how to reduce that, but we need to be smart about it because we do not want to break the supply chains. That is where the need for finesse comes in. My colleague talked about how he has concerns. The Bloc Québécois also has concerns. That is why we are advocating that we stop issuing closed permits and start issuing open, sector-specific permits.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague is so passionate about this file that I could listen to him all day. He wanted to lay out the 10 recommendations. He has three more to go. I therefore yield the floor to him so that he can talk about the recommendation that he is most passionate about and most interested in.

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I will circle back back to the recommendation I had just started talking about, the code of conduct, because it is an important aspect of controlling food prices. We have come to realize that a lot of money is being taken from the middleman.

I want to talk about the worst example I have seen recently. A lettuce salesman delivering lettuce to a large grocer was called back a few days later, only to be told to pick up three-quarters of his order because they did not want it anymore. The conditions were that he was not to charge the grocer for transport, but simply collect the rest of the order. This is unacceptable. What was the reason? The grocery chain said it had gotten better prices from Mexico.

First of all, who knows what is on the lettuce. I am going to talk about reciprocity of standards. Do not get me started. Not only did the store say it came from Mexico, but they also said they got a better price. The grower went back to pick up three-quarters of his order, then kept an eye on lettuce prices in grocery stores. Well, they never went down. A code of conduct with a dispute resolution process between small suppliers and large grocery stores is essential.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am going to ask a question in English because I want my friend to clearly understand my question.

[English]

Total net farm income across Canada decreased by about \$9.1 billion. In Quebec, the decrease was almost the highest in the country, with net farm income going down more than 43% last year. The reason for that net loss in income for farmers is the much higher input costs on feed, fuel and fertilizer, which are a result of Liberal-NDP policies, such as the carbon tax.

I would like to ask my colleague a question. How does he go home and talk to his constituents while continuing to support the Liberal government when he knows that its policies are destroying family farms, our rural communities and their economies?

Routine Proceedings

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question and especially for having worked so hard to deliver an introduction in French. This is the first time I have heard him speak French in such a long time. It is rather interesting.

To answer his specific question, the Bloc Québécois does not support a government. The Bloc Québécois imparts its decisions one division at a time. If it is good for Quebec, we vote for it. If it is not good for Quebec, we vote against it. We have been doing that since I have been here, since 2019. We have done that in the past and we will continue to do so. That means that if we have a division two weeks from now where something is not good for Quebec, we will vote against it. If, in two weeks, we have something good for Quebec, we will vote in favour.

The division we are going to have this week is not about something good or bad for Quebec. It is a matter of switching one thing for another with nothing gained. We think we can make gains on some issues in the meantime, such as old age security or the adoption of supply management, which has been held up in the Senate for over a year.

• (1705)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I was hoping to briefly read the questions on the Order Paper. I believe there is support for me to do so.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if a revised response to Question No. 2775, originally tabled on September 16, could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled in electronic format immediately.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 2775—**Mr. Bernard Généreux:**

With regard to the list of over 300 meetings held on Bill C-27, An Act to enact the Consumer Privacy Protection Act, the Personal Information and Data Protection Tribunal Act and the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts, submitted to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology on November 21, 2023: what are the details of each meeting, broken down by the (i) date that it occurred, (ii) names of all persons that attended, (iii) topic of discussion related to the meeting, (iv) proposed sections of the bill on which the amendments were discussed?

(Return tabled)

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[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise here today as the new NDP critic for agriculture and speak to a subject that Canadians really care about, a subject the NDP has been the leading force on in this place, and that is the rising price of groceries.

Groceries have gone up 22% over the last three years alone, and since food is one of the biggest parts of any family's budget, and an absolutely essential one at that, this has hit Canadians hard. The use of food banks has hit a 35-year high. Meanwhile, the grocery sector made record profits last year, raking in \$6 billion. Loblaw has almost doubled its profit margin in the past five years.

On top of that, other parts of household budgets have also soared, which impacts families, in many cases, as much as, or more than, food prices, and this has aggravated the impact of the rising cost of food. Housing costs have soared. The price of gas at the pumps has skyrocketed as the big oil companies revel in high world oil prices and rake in billions of dollars in record profits, over \$30 billion last year alone. All in all, it is easy to see why Canadians are struggling to make ends meet.

As I said, it has been the NDP that has really been fighting for relief from all these rising costs. We have been fighting to stabilize food prices, build affordable housing and provide relief from rising gas prices. We have been putting forward really solid ideas that would actually do that.

Last fall, my colleague, the former NDP critic for agriculture, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, tabled a motion at the agriculture committee to study the rising costs of food. The motion put forward by the member asked for a study on the recent commitments, at that time, of the government to stabilize and lower food prices. It called for the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Finance to appear, and summoned the CEOs of Loblaw, Metro, Empire, Walmart and Costco. That study resulted in the report we are debating today, which is called “A Call to Action: How Government and Industry Can Fight Back Against Food Price Volatility”.

As I said, the report came out last May, and I could spend some time going through it, but I want to highlight some of the important issues and what the NDP has been asking the government to do about them. This all crystallized on May 31 when the leader of the NDP put forward an opposition day motion that read:

That, given that the cost of food continues to increase while grocery giants such as Loblaws, Metro and Sobeys make record profits, the House call on the government to:

- (a) force big grocery chains and suppliers to lower the prices of essential foods or else face a price cap or other measures;
- (b) stop delaying long-needed reforms to the Nutrition North program; and
- (c) stop Liberal and Conservative corporate handouts to big grocers.

Unfortunately, Liberals, Conservatives and the Bloc, surprisingly, all voted against the motion. However, I want to thank the Green members for supporting us. One Liberal voted for it as well, but I do not know if that was a mistake.

New Democrats were asking the government to force big grocery chains and suppliers to lower the price of essential foods or the government would put in place a price cap or use other measures. Big grocery chains have shown that they have control over their prices when they announce price freezes on store brands. All major grocery stores have their own brands, such as no name. A cap on prices on these items is within the control of grocery stores. If they do not voluntarily cap these prices, the government should force them to do so.

So far, Liberals promised to, “stabilize” food prices, but they have failed to do so. For more than 25 consecutive months, as of last May, food inflation outpaced general inflation, leaving Canadians with higher bills, and the Liberals did nothing. While food inflation is at a more reasonable level right now, in the past three years, as I said, food prices have increased by over 20%. We need government action to lower the prices of essential food items.

After asking grocery giants to come up with a plan to lower prices, the Prime Minister said, “If their plan doesn’t provide real relief for the middle class and people working hard to join it, then we will take further action and we are not ruling anything out including tax measures”.

● (1710)

We got all excited. Unfortunately, we were disappointed. Other countries, such as France, Greece and South Korea have taken steps to lower essential food prices. Price control measures are being used right now in Canada. Many provincial governments impose limits on rent increases. Prices for most forms of energy are also regulated in Canada; obviously, gasoline, diesel and so on are not. Big grocery chains, as I said, have shown they have control over their prices when they have announced price freezes. I just want to go into more detail on what these other countries have done.

In France, the government secured a deal with 75 major companies to lower the price of groceries for 5,000 products. If the grocery companies fail to reduce prices, the government can hold them publicly accountable. For example, the government called out major corporations, such as PepsiCo and Unilever.

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In Greece, the government announced gross profit caps for key consumer goods and services in the food and health sectors. In practice, the policy stipulates that the gross profit per unit cannot exceed that of the profits made before December 31, 2021. To ensure enforcement of these measures, international companies can be fined.

In South Korea, in 2023, the president established department-level task forces to monitor and implement food price control measures in key industries. For example, the ministry of agriculture assessed the prices of seven key food items, including milk, coffee, noodles and bread. In 2024, President Yeol adjusted his approach to establish a national-level task force responsible for implementing food price control measures.

What, again, is the NDP calling for? We are asking the government to force these big grocery chains and suppliers to lower the price of essential food for the next six months. If they do not do that, we suggest that the government impose a price cap on those essential foods. The government could take that period to develop options of price regulation measures if big companies of the industry fail to do so. They could look at what other countries have done, as I just mentioned, and how price regulation measures could work in Canada. There are many options at the government's disposal. It could be a straight price cap, in which essential food items cannot be higher than a certain price and cannot be increased above a certain price every year. The basket of food covered could be determined by looking at what other countries have done, or we could start from the 60 items in the Statistics Canada nutritious food basket and go toward all food items that are GST-free. As some economists have suggested, the government could start by forcing big grocery chains to lower prices of their private brand products.

For the NDP, it is critical that any measures taken do not hurt producers or small independent grocers. I will just step back here and say that we certainly want to protect farmers, what they produce and what they make. I grew up on a small farm. I know how hard it is to make money in agriculture, and we do not want to affect them. They are suffering more than ever from all sorts of issues, but these big corporations are causing this food inflation.

The government has other tools at its disposal, such as an excess profit tax, as they have used for banks, at the NDP's bidding. In addition, the government could always implement fines if the companies are not doing what it has asked them to do. It should certainly go the route of excess profit tax on the big oil companies for the prices at the pumps. The Conservatives can talk all they want about how the carbon tax is hitting people. It is the profits of the big oil companies that are really hurting farmers.

The government should stop feeding grocery greed with corporate handouts. When the Conservatives were last in power, they cut the corporate tax rate from 22% down to 15%. It is estimated that this cost the federal government \$60 billion in corporate handouts over a six-year period. The Liberals kept those corporate handouts in place. We estimate that the federal government has lost \$90 billion through its inaction. Just as another aside, this is all based on the long-debunked theory of trickle-down economics, which says that if we tax corporations less, we will all benefit. That does not happen. It never has.

• (1715)

Due to the Conservatives' corporate tax cuts, it is estimated that Loblaw's, Costco and Metro have received \$2.35 billion in handouts from the federal government. The New Democrats are calling for corporations to pay their fair share, and we are not alone. President Biden's 2024 budget will increase the U.S. corporate tax rate from 21% to 28%.

I would like to turn now to nutrition north Canada. This is a hugely important program in the north, where food prices have been extraordinarily high for many years. Nutrition north is designed to lower the cost of essential goods for retailers. It includes a retail subsidy for grocery stores and food producers, grant funding for local harvesters to boost local food production, and funding support for community food programs.

However, new studies show that the price of goods has gone down by only 67¢ for every dollar in subsidy provided by nutrition north. That is particularly concerning, as the subsidy is being delivered to corporations like the North West Company, owner of Northmart, which is bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars in profits and paying its executives millions of dollars in bonuses and salaries. While many of these stores operate in indigenous communities, few are owned by indigenous people who live in those communities and most are found in cities like Winnipeg or Montreal. Meanwhile, families in the north cannot afford basic fresh food.

The New Democrats have called for an audit of nutrition north to ensure that corporate greed is not interfering in northerners' access to healthy, fresh and affordable food. No company should be bringing in millions in profits while also needing a subsidy to deliver goods to northern communities. We also believe nutrition north should be reformed to become a social program, not a corporate subsidy, so that families will have more choice in what they put on their plates.

The report we are debating today came from an NDP motion for a study that was tabled almost a year ago. That motion arose from a promise made by the Liberal government almost exactly a year ago. I will finish by reading out a letter sent by my colleague, the MP for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, just last week to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry on the first anniversary of that promise:

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One year ago, your Liberal government convened a meeting with the CEOs of Canada's five largest corporate grocers, pledging to stabilize grocery prices and provide relief to families. Despite this promise, the cost of food and other essentials continue to soar, forcing many families to make the impossible choice between buying food and paying rent.

Alarming, food bank usage has surged to its highest level since 1989, with over 1 million people in Ontario turning to food banks in the past year. In my home province of British Columbia, almost 200,000 families are relying on a food bank every month.

While families struggle, corporate grocers are reaping historic profits. Between March and June [one quarter] of this year, Loblaws reported an astounding \$457 million in profit, all while forcing families to pay outrageous prices for essential items like baby formula.

Instead of stopping the corporate greed that is driving up costs, your government voted against concrete measures that would increase penalties for price fixing, help smaller grocery stores by protecting them against anti-competitive tactics from corporate grocers, give the competition bureau more powers to crack down on abuses like price-gouging consumers, and stop mergers that decrease competition and hurt Canadians—such as the Rogers and Shaw merger.

Canadians expect you to side with them, not the CEO of Loblaws. They expect you to take immediate action against corporate greed, not accept piles of cash to fund the Liberal Party.

But that's what you and your government have been doing, just like the Conservatives did beforehand. Canadians are fed up with how beholden the Liberals and Conservatives are to CEOs. It's a corporate coalition and Canadians have had enough.

The NDP will bring hope and relief to Canadians. We're urging you to stop listening to greedy grocery chains and instead support the NDP's plan to end grocery greed and lower food costs for Canadian families. This includes capping prices on essential grocery items, introducing an excess profit tax on large grocery chains, stopping shady shrinkflation practices, and ending federal handouts to corporate grocery chains.

● (1720)

Canadians are tired of useless meetings with CEOs, they're tired of watching you break promises; it's the people's time, and they demand bold action now.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I was not sure if the hon. member was quoting at first, but I do not think he was. I want to remind him not to use the word “you” nor address the government directly as opposed to through the Chair.

The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech. Near the beginning of his remarks, he made a comment that the NDP has been fighting for relief for Canadians, so my question is very simple. I just want to know how that is so, given the fact that New Democrats have voted for tax increases at every single opportunity that the Liberal government has given them, and that they have voted 24 times to keep the carbon tax, which is continuing to make life unaffordable. What have they been doing that has made life more affordable for Canadians?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, where do I begin? The NDP over the last few years has done so much for Canadians who are truly in need of the help we can provide. We have brought in dental care. Twenty per cent of Canadians cannot afford to go to a dentist. Now they can. Every one of us here gets a free dental insurance program, but not the poorest people in Canada.

We have brought in pharmacare. Canadians go to their doctor for free because of our health system, brought to us by the NDP, but when that doctor provides a prescription, people cannot get that prescription filled if they cannot afford it. Ten per cent of Canadians cannot afford to fill their prescriptions.

We are concentrating on helping the Canadians who need help the most, and we have been very successful in doing that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There were some cross-discussions there, and I would ask members to please, if they want to have cross-discussions, take them outside.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, through the supply and confidence agreement between the Liberals and the NDP, we were able to deliver a good number of things to provide relief, whether it was the grocery rebate or the carbon rebates that go out on a quarterly basis. We can talk about the national school food program. All of that was done with a sense of co-operation. Changes to the Competitions Act are dealing with issues the member opposite has raised. A number of initiatives have made a difference to the degree that we now have a 2% inflation rate.

My question to the member is this: Would he not agree that by working together, we were able to accomplish a lot of the things that are so important to Canadians?

● (1725)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, to a large extent, I do agree. I came here to work collegially and co-operatively with everyone here to get the help my constituents needed. That is what I am here for. I am not here to fight political fights. I am concentrating, and I think the whole NDP caucus is concentrating, on what is good for Canadians.

When we entered the confidence and supply agreement, some of us were a bit concerned about co-operating with the government, because we knew what the Liberals had done in the past, but we thought it would help Canadians. We brought in dental care. The Liberals and the Conservatives had voted against dental care within the last couple of years. We brought in pharmacare. The Liberals and the Conservatives had voted against pharmacare. Yes, we appreciate that co-operation, and I think we have accomplished a lot.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I know my colleague is very interested in agricultural issues. However, I would like to come back to a fairly major issue for the farming community in my riding of Shefford. There was a question earlier about the Liberals, but it could have easily applied to the Conservatives at other times. It is about supply management.

We have been waiting for this bill for over a year now. At one point, both the Conservatives and the Liberals were blocking it, but is it not time to set aside political partisanship and move forward on this crucial and important issue of supply management for producers in Quebec and elsewhere?

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I would agree that the NDP has always supported supply management. We think it is a very good way of organizing the farmers who produce our dairy, our milk, our cheese, our poultry and our eggs. These things are essential to Canadians. That is an example of putting a cap on prices and managing prices to help Canadians and farmers at the same time.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent speech and for all the intelligence, wisdom and experience he brings from the agricultural sector. I want to ask him about the cost of the climate crisis. The Conservatives seem to know the price of everything and the value of nothing. There is an old adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

What is the cost to Canada's agricultural community of failing to deal with the climate crisis?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I will concentrate on the agriculture sector in my riding. South Okanagan—West Kootenay is largely in the fruit industry and in wine, grapes and vineyards. That industry has been literally hammered in the last two years by climate change because we have had these remarkably mild winters followed by, over a matter of 12 hours or a day, a radical shift to sub-zero temperatures, which are very cold for us. There are temperatures below -20°C.

We almost never get such temperatures. That has killed off a lot of the vines. It has certainly destroyed the grape crop for this year. It has killed off the peaches, the apricots, a lot of the plums and the cherries. Of the fruit industry in the Okanagan, the cherries are the most lucrative crop that can be grown. It is much better than growing grapes. Those crops have been literally destroyed this year by climate change. That is just a snapshot of how climate change is affecting agriculture in this country.

• (1730)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I welcome the member to the ag committee. I have served on it for four years and look forward to his contributions.

At the start of the member's speech, he talked about being excited about the possibility of the Prime Minister and the Liberals taxing grocery stores more to try to lower food prices. He said that might be one of the options.

Can the member give me an example of when we have taxed someone more and the price went down?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Regina—Lewvan for that question. Maybe he does not understand how taxes work. This would be tax on profits. The grocery companies have had record profits. In the last few years, they have made billions of dollars in profits while Canadians struggle to put food on the table. This would tax those profits, and it would not af-

fect the bottom line. I am talking about the big corporations, such as Loblaws, Sobeys and Metro. It would be taxing their excess profits.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, would my colleague from South Okanagan—West Kootenay outline for us here in the House whether the federal NDP would adopt the same policy as the provincial NDP, axe the tax and give Canadians some relief by eliminating the federal carbon tax?

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that question because I know he was a member of the B.C. government that brought the carbon tax to Canada.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I apologize and withdraw that statement; it was one of his neighbours.

All I will say is that the federal NDP would have a very strong climate policy, the best in this House. It would be better than the Liberals and better than the total lack of a climate policy from the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to move on.

The hon. member for Beauce.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Foothills.

Today, I would like to acknowledge the important work that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food has done over the past few months. I will quote in particular the 18th report, which is on food price stabilization across the country.

Let me be clear, we agree with majority of the committee's report and its recommendations. However, some aspects of the report need to be highlighted, and Canadians need to be aware of the Liberal government's policies and decisions that are contributing to increasing food prices and jeopardizing Canada's food security.

Unfortunately, this is a report that was done twice, which is a waste of both the House's precious resources and time that Canadians do not have to waste. Two years ago, we finished the same report and tabled our findings, but the government chose not to respond to any of our recommendations. That is a big part of my frustration. At the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, we work very hard together, but few of the recommendations have been implemented by the government since I have been a member of that committee, which is nearly four years. I am very disappointed because we gave this a lot of thought. Our work and the recommendations we make reflect the importance that should be given to the agriculture sector and agri-food development.

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Last year, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry wrote to the committee asking us to study this very subject as part of what I consider a politically motivated PR stunt. He did not even realize that the initial report already existed. This happened in the space of three months. The Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry said that he would stabilize food prices by Thanksgiving of 2023, but he did not keep his word. In the report, as well as the Conservatives' dissenting opinion, we find many solutions that could be implemented today to help ease the difficulties facing all Canadians.

I would like to list a few of the most important solutions.

Witnesses at every meeting brought up the carbon tax. It is wiping out our farmers' revenues and forcing millions of Canadians to use food banks. The cost of farm inputs and transportation is skyrocketing, and the upshot is that more and more Canadian families are going hungry. One in five Canadians is skipping meals just to survive.

However, my "Liberal Bloc" colleagues will say that the carbon tax does not affect Quebec. How out of touch with reality can they be? Just yesterday morning, I met with people who were telling me about the impact that this tax is also having in Quebec. We do not produce everything in Quebec, and most of the products that come from Canada are directly affected. This tax also affects grocery prices. Every time a Quebecer shops at the grocery store, they indirectly pay the carbon tax, which, as I just said, is applied to goods and transportation all along the supply chain. Farmers and homeowners also pay the carbon tax directly when they fill their propane tanks with propane, which is all imported to Quebec from elsewhere in Canada.

The inflationary deficit is another important point. The government has dug us into such a deep hole with inflationary deficits that future generations will have to pay the bill for years to come. Farm succession plans are in ruins, and the next generation does not even know if they will continue farming. They can thank the Liberals, the Bloc Québécois and the NDP for that. Food bank usage has never been higher. Millions of Canadians have to turn to food banks to put food on the table.

• (1735)

In my riding, an organization called Moisson Beauce, which serves over 50 organizations throughout the greater Chaudière-Appalaches region, is struggling to meet demand. I can corroborate that information. I met with people who work at this organization just 10 days ago. It is extremely sad. I have never seen anything like it in my entire life in Beauce. These comments come from the people and the many volunteers who work at the food bank.

Risk management programs need to be improved. As my Bloc Québécois colleague mentioned earlier, I do not know how many of the committee's studies have recommended reviewing all risk management programs and aligning them with the realities of the agricultural sector in 2024.

Considering the changing weather conditions and financial realities, such as rising interest costs, the government must take the lead and make significant changes to further protect farm families. Last year, 44% of fruit and vegetables were sold at a loss. That is an alarming number, and it raises the question as to why the govern-

ment is not doing something about that. It would rather bring in produce from abroad by truck or plane while taxing farmers and causing unnecessary pollution with all these imports.

Revenues continue to fall. Net farm income in 2023 in Quebec fell by 42.9%, which is quite significant. One in five farms in Quebec have also reported not being able to repay their debts because of rising input costs, transportation costs and, especially, interest costs in recent years. The cost of the Liberal carbon tax is also one of the main reasons, and it needs to be axed now.

An important issue I would like us to look into is the fertilizer tariffs. There was the incoherent Liberal plan to charge a 35% tariff on Russian fertilizer, which is still in place today and is costing farmers a fortune just to run their operations efficiently. The government made that decision at a time when it was extremely difficult to procure fertilizer at a reasonable price around the world. Farmers are being fleeced, paying much higher than market value for the fertilizer they need to grow crops and feed the public.

Our party and many stakeholders have called for this tariff to be removed and the money returned to farmers, but the Liberals refuse. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has even made an exception in recent months so that critical minerals from Russia are exempt from tariffs, yet she still refuses to give farmers a discount on such essential products as fertilizer. All of that to say that the government's ideological pursuit of penalizing greenhouse gas emitters through carbon tariffs and taxes without properly recognizing those who have been mitigating, eliminating and sequestering greenhouse gas emissions for years, if not decades, is short-sighted.

Inflationary taxes and bad policies increase production costs for businesses and farmers, contributing to higher prices. We cannot tax farmers, truckers and grocers without impacting consumers at the grocery store.

A Conservative government will act quickly to remedy the situation. Fortunately, all parties will have the opportunity to make a common-sense decision this Wednesday to bring down the Liberal government. Canadians will be listening, and I hope my colleagues will move in the right direction.

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• (1740)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if my colleague across the way can explain why the Conservatives say the issue of farming and agriculture is so important to them when they have had dozens of opposition days and not once have they ever listed it as a priority issue. I find that unfortunate. Instead, they want to use it as a tool to filibuster, and that is somewhat disappointing.

Does the member believe enough in what he has said and in other aspects of agriculture that he would recommend that his caucus start bringing forward opposition day motions to deal with important issues about our farmers?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I find it rather odd that the member for Winnipeg North is asking this kind of question. He is asking me whether I am comfortable with what I just said. Yes, I am very comfortable.

On Wednesday, Parliament will have the opportunity to tell this government that it disagrees with all of its policies. I listed several of them in my speech. I hope that, on Wednesday, members will be able to vote to trigger an election as quickly as possible.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech, particularly when he said at the end that a Conservative government will supposedly act quickly to deal with everything that is going on.

Farmers are hurting. They are hurting as a result of flooding and drought. They are hurting because of all the products that they sometimes have to use more and more often because their crops are bad and they are not getting the support they need from the government. I think that food is an essential need. I think that the work of farmers is essential.

When the Conservatives talk about the carbon tax, I would like to know, since they are going to act quickly to solve problems, what they intend to do to really fight climate change, which could impact our food supply.

• (1745)

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, it is simple because I was a farmer my whole life. I left the profession just five years ago. I can say that the important thing for farmers right now is to axe the carbon tax, which is having an impact on their day-to-day work. I think the important thing is to work on developing new technologies to improve that.

Until these new technologies are available to our farmers, let us stop placing the burden on them, saying that food produced in Canada is expensive and importing products from other countries.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am going to ask a question somewhat similar to the one I asked the Bloc Québécois member earlier, concerning the recommendation to pay attention to the management of the temporary foreign worker progra.

Some people want to see temporary immigration to this country lowered. Others say that an exception may be in order, considering the very important role that temporary workers play in the agriculture and agri-food sector. I also hear people in the processing field urge caution, saying that temporary workers are important too. We need them. We need them in construction as well. We need them in the health and social services sector.

I would like to know my colleague's opinion on that. Does he think we should have more, fewer or about the same number of temporary workers?

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, obviously, agriculture, agri-food and processing are very important sectors in my region. We have a lot of temporary foreign workers in the agri-food processing sector.

I think we need to better define the categories of workers we want to have. My riding was home to an Olymel slaughterhouse, which shut down about a year ago, affecting over 900 workers, including roughly 200 foreign workers. It is not that we do not have a labour supply of our own, but clearly, those folks were willing to come and work in our slaughterhouses.

I think we just need to be careful. We are talking about our food supply. I think that, as Canadians, we need to feed Canada first. If we want to feed our own population properly, we have to be able to process products locally. Because there are not enough Quebec and Canadian workers in our ridings, we still need temporary foreign workers. The categories need to be very clearly defined.

[*English*]

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to speak to this concurrence debate on a Conservative supplementary report on the variance in food prices.

It is interesting to hear my Liberal, NDP and Bloc colleagues not really talking about the impact that the carbon tax and other Liberal-NDP policies are having on Canadian farm families and our supply chain, which in turn, are driving up prices for Canadians and consumers, who are witnessing this first-hand at the grocery store shelves. We have talked a lot over the last week, our first week back in the House of Commons, about the impact we are seeing on food security in Canada. These numbers are truly startling, when we are seeing the number of Canadians who are now experiencing food insecurity in our country, a G7 country, up 111%. That is almost nine million Canadians struggling to find their next meal, millions of Canadian parents unable to feed their kids and 25% of our population struggling to put food on the table. These are numbers that I certainly never thought I would see in my lifetime.

The Liberals have been saying all afternoon that Canadians have just never had it so good, and I do not know what they are talking about. The stats are startling, and they are not only the stats on Canadians experiencing food insecurity but also the government's own data on on-farm income shows that it decreased 3% in 2022.

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On-farm income is down \$9.1 billion, from \$13 billion in 2022, which is a drop of 41.7% from 2022 to 2023. Let us put this into some more specific numbers. In British Columbia, net farm income is down 36%; in Alberta, it is down 55%; in Saskatchewan, it is down 42%; in Quebec, it is down 43%; and in New Brunswick, it is down 55%. The member for Winnipeg North is saying that Manitoba farmers have never had it so good, but in that member's own province, that income has decreased 38%.

Why is this happening? It is because the carbon tax is costing Canadian farmers almost a billion dollars a year. It is continuing to go up year after year, but that is only what we are seeing in direct costs. They are also seeing higher costs on fertilizer, fuel, feed and every other input they are putting into their farm operations. Machinery and employment, all of these things, are seeing their prices go up.

On trucking, we have just heard that the Canadian Trucking Alliance has said that the impact that the carbon tax is having on their industry alone will be \$4 billion by 2030. Bison Transport is not a huge trucking company, but it is a fairly substantial trucking company in western Canada. One of its owners is a constituent. Bison Transport paid \$7.8 million in carbon taxes last year. That is one trucking company. It is halfway through this year, and it has already paid \$4.5 million in carbon taxes. When its year-end is done, it will have paid close to \$10 million in carbon taxes. That is just one trucking company, and they are passing those costs on to the consumer.

It is very difficult to square the circle of the Liberals saying that the carbon tax has no impact on food prices. Give me a break. Of course it does. That does not even talk about rail. CPKC and CN also charge producers and their vendors a carbon tax on everything they haul. Saskatchewan farmers paid \$17 million in carbon taxes to the railways last year. That is \$17 million, and we are wondering why farm incomes are so low and why we are seeing such a stark reduction in farm income.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture has talked to all of its members about its operating expenses and their farms. Operating expenses on Canadian farms are up 19%, the largest increase since 1979. What is the coincidence between 1979 and 2024? I will let members think about that for a second. They are the Liberal governments led by the current Prime Minister and his father, and they dump those costs onto Canadian farmers without any thought as to the consequences that will happen to Canadian consumers.

● (1750)

Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, the pre-eminent expert on food prices and the food supply chain in Canada and a professor at Dalhousie University, commonly known as the “food professor”, said that the Liberal-NDP carbon tax increases wholesale food costs by 34% in every single category.

The Liberals like to talk about the experts, the 200 economists who say the carbon tax is not increasing the cost of living. I would like to know who those experts are because the pre-eminent expert on food costs and the supply chain in Canada has clearly stated that the Liberal-NDP carbon tax increases food costs in all categories by 34%. Why is this number so different from what the Liberal government professes? Dr. Charlebois said that the CRA and Finance

Canada are not properly quantifying the costs of the carbon tax for food supply or food production. I am very surprised that the Liberals would be selective on which numbers they use.

The Liberal member across the way has talked all day about using facts and figures. The Manitoba pork industry has never been stronger. I just told members about how Manitoba's agriculture farm income is down 38%. That is a fact. That is his own government's data. By this data, in Canada's pork industry, the number of hogs in Canada is down 265,000 head. I wonder why his numbers are so different from his government's numbers. That number is actually expected to go down another 2% in 2024. It is horrible when Liberals have to listen to the facts and the data that their own government has compiled.

As the opposition, we brought forward four recommendations that would address the volatile price of food and food for Canadians.

The first is to axe the tax. Eliminate the carbon tax, which is driving up the cost of everything consumers buy, including food.

The second is to do an in-depth study of the impact of both carbon taxes. I have to admit, whether it meant to or not, the government has now done that work. Carbon tax 1 punches a \$25 billion hole in Canada's economy. We now know, as a result of an Order Paper question by my office, that carbon tax 2, the so-called clean fuel standard, adds another \$9-billion sledgehammer hit to our economy. Therefore, both carbon taxes make up a \$35 billion hit to Canadians. That is money coming out of their pocket. It is damaging their paycheques and certainly hurting Canada's economy.

The third recommendation is to eliminate the front-of-pack labelling policy path that the Liberal government is going down. It is a completely activist, ideological policy; certainly, no one has asked for it. It will cost the industry \$8 billion. Does the government think the industry is going to just absorb those costs? That is like our NDP colleague saying that it is going to be a tax on profit. I am sure Galen Weston is going to happily take that tax out of his pocket and his profits and just not worry about it. Of course, those costs are going to—

An hon. member: He can afford it.

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Mr. John Barlow: It does not matter if he can afford it; he is going to pass it on to consumers. Madam Speaker, that is a ridiculous argument. What businesses out there, when the government increases taxes on them, say that they are sorry, that they are making too much profit?

● (1755)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would ask hon. members to respect when a member is speaking.

The hon. member for Foothills.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I appreciate your putting the NDP in its place here.

The last policy is the plastics ban the Liberals are putting forward, which we know will drive up the cost of food, especially fresh produce, by 56%.

All of these policies are driving up costs for Canadian consumers. Our argument to the Liberal-NDP government is this. It should stop talking about the things it is going to do and actually do them, because the answer is right in front of it. The answer is to axe the tax, the plastics ban, the front-of-pack labelling and the clean fuel standard. We will then see grocery prices come down for Canadians. If the government will not do it, a Conservative government will do it, and it should call a carbon tax election so Canadians can decide.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, at the very least, to say there is a 34% increase in grocery prices because of the carbon tax is absolutely ridiculous. I would love to see a substantiation of that. The Parliamentary Budget Officer and the Governor of the Bank of Canada are saying something dramatically different than what the member just finished saying.

Having said that, can the member explain to those following the debate why Erin O'Toole and his Conservative candidates, including the member opposite, had an election platform that said they supported the price on pollution, the carbon tax that they are now opposing? Why was the Conservative Party so poorly misled? Who misled them? What caused the Conservatives to change their minds? Was it the extreme right?

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I do not know who the member is speaking about, but I certainly campaigned in my riding in the last election on getting rid of the carbon tax, and I know my colleagues did as well.

The Liberal member does not like the facts. He is questioning the study by Dalhousie University on the impact the carbon tax is having on food prices. He talked about how amazing the pork industry is in Manitoba. I cited his government's own data, noting that the number of head of hogs is down by 265,000 and net farm income in Manitoba is down by more than 30%. Those are stats.

An hon. member: That is not true.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, the member is saying that is not true. Those are stats from Stats Canada, his own government's data.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is most interesting that it was Conservatives in Canada who

brought in the first carbon tax. It was Conservatives in Alberta and then Conservatives in British Columbia who introduced the price on carbon in this country. The Conservatives here campaigned on it federally in 2019, but they have amnesia.

My question is about the cost of not dealing with the climate crisis. It is true that the carbon tax is a pricing mechanism that is supposed to lead to people reducing their carbon. If we did not have that, we would have more carbon emissions. Here is the cost. The Canadian Climate Institute's report says that by 2030, Canada could face annual losses to real GDP of \$35 billion, and that depending on whether or not we get our emissions act together, we could be looking at \$78 billion to \$101 billion annually by 2050 and \$391 billion to \$865 billion by 2100.

What is the cost to the Canadian economy of failing to get our carbon emissions down? Tell me what that is.

● (1800)

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I am really having a difficult time. I do not know if my NDP colleague has spoken to his leader, but to save their hide in a Manitoba by-election, they announced that they no longer supported a consumer carbon tax. The member has some indignation over the cost of doing nothing, but his party and his leader have just announced that they are going to do nothing because they understand the political price they are paying by supporting the Liberals' carbon tax. They are trying to save face and fool Canadians, but Canadians are not buying that trick.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Before I give the floor for another question, I will remind members that we are here to talk about the administration of government, not political parties.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier in the debate, NDP members were talking on and on about grocery lobbyists. I am thinking that Gur-ratan Singh is somewhere thinking, "I'm right here, bro."

The NDP members talk about grocery lobbyists, but they never talk about their own connections to grocery lobbyists. I wonder if the member has any thoughts on why that is.

Mr. John Barlow: Madam Speaker, I find it a little hypocritical that the New Democrats and the Liberals have been challenging us on our support for or alleged talks with grocery lobbyists. The Liberals gave \$14 million to Loblaw and Galen Weston for freezers because they were having a tough time with their record profits. The NDP leader's brother is a lobbyist for Metro.

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They all have their fingers in the pie, but we are the ones listening to Canadians to ensure that we are bringing the best messages forward to them. Seventy per cent of Canadians do not support a carbon tax. We are the only party in Canada that is speaking up for Canadians and we will axe the tax.

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will share my time tonight with the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster.

I am pleased to rise on behalf of the people of Saskatoon—Grasswood here tonight to speak about this concurrence in committee report. Canadians have sent a clear message to the government: They are struggling to keep up with the cost of living and are not getting the support they need. In the middle of this historic cost of living crisis, the Prime Minister decided to hike the carbon tax by 23%. This is just one step in his plan to quadruple the carbon tax over the next six years, a tax that will continue to increase the cost of food for all Canadians.

The panicking Liberals are back to resorting to every trick in the book, trying desperately to prevent farmers from getting a carbon tax carve-out for grain drying, barn heating and other farm operations. The amendment would be another blow to the wallets of Canadians. It would reduce fresh produce availability by some fifty per cent, while costing the industry a remarkable \$5.6 billion. I want to talk tonight about how the government and the industry can fight back against rising food price volatility.

I come from the province of Saskatchewan, where people are proud to say that we feed the world. However, times are now changing desperately for producers in the province, as costs have soared under the Liberal-NDP government.

As chair of the Saskatchewan caucus, I can say that we have had extensive talks with SARM, which is the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. During our talks with president Ray Orb and the entire board at SARM, they brought up the inflationary pressures from the government that are simply killing rural Saskatchewan. The carbon tax, which had increased by 23% as of April 1, led to SARM members' writing letters to every member on the agriculture committee.

The premier of Saskatchewan, Scott Moe, led six other provincial premiers who were opposed to the government's carbon tax increase. Even in the legislature of Saskatchewan, the opposition NDP agreed with the Sask Party on the carbon tax. Saskatchewan has been joined by Alberta, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in asking for a carbon tax carve-out for the farmers and to pass Bill C-234 in its original form.

We should talk about Bill C-234 because it would provide relief to Saskatchewan farmers, but let us recall it was the Liberal-controlled Senate that gutted the bill in that place. The Senate amendments would cost Saskatchewan farmers \$9 million this year, and by 2030, an added cost of \$96 million. That is from one bill, Bill C-234.

Provinces like B.C., where MLAs once actually supported a carbon tax, have turned right around. They have turned their backs on the federal government, although we all know it is flip-flop for Pre-

mier Eby, as he knows he will probably be going down in the next 28 days.

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture surveyed the impact of the carbon tax on crop production, livestock and greenhouse farms across this country. It found that the carbon tax accounted for up to 40% of their energy bills. In my province alone, farm efforts to sequester carbon have gone basically unrecognized by the NDP-Liberal government.

The policies by the NDP-Liberals are simply punishing farmers. The government's ideological pursuit to penalize greenhouse gas emitters through the carbon tax, to me, is very short-sighted and inequitable. Farmers have, for years, maybe even decades, demonstrated an ability to deliver meaningful reductions in emissions through the adoption of new technologies, through education and through innovative practices, not through taxes.

● (1805)

In Saskatoon, we hold the crop production show every January at Prairieland Park, which, by the way, is in my riding. Thousands of producers come from all over western Canada and the United States to talk about farming innovation. Then, in July, just a couple of months ago, we had Ag in Motion just outside of Saskatoon, in Langham, bringing tens of thousands of producers together from all over the world to find best practices. One could not get a hotel room within a 100-kilometre radius of Saskatoon; everything was full for that four-day show. I cannot forget about the Canadian Western Agribition show in Regina each November, as it services farmers and ranchers from all over the world, and we are innovative in our thoughts going forward.

Farming groups are on the leading edge of innovation. We have led for years, for decades, trying to find innovative ways to produce food for the entire world. I compliment the innovative companies that have set up in my province, like Bourgault; Agtron; Brandt Industries; Schulte Industries; Bin-Sense, a new company that just started in Saskatchewan; Redekop Industries; and Wilger Industries, which, by the way, sell their product to John Deere and Case worldwide. Many other companies have surfaced in Saskatchewan. All one has to do is go to the small communities in my province. Every little town has set up something on agriculture, and that is what is keeping them alive. Saskatchewan has led the world for decades on zero tillage. It has led on direct seeding, crop rotation and rotational grazing.

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With the Bank of Canada confirming that the carbon tax was responsible for at least 16% of inflation last October, it is no wonder that the food professor that we have talked about from Dalhousie University, Dr. Charlebois, recommended a pause on the carbon tax for the entire food industry. We in the Conservative Party also want to axe the tax. We know that it is hurting every citizen in this country. Why? Two million people are visiting food banks today in this country, with 25,000 in my city of Saskatoon, a city of just under 300,000 people. We have 25,000 people per month visiting the Saskatoon Food Bank, in a province that produces food for the entire world.

Yesterday, I had the chance to pop into a grocery store in downtown Ottawa. I was shocked. Three tomatoes cost \$5.50, three apples cost \$5.00, raspberries were \$6.00 and the list goes on and on.

We had a chance to visit Yorkton Grain Millers about a year, a year and a half ago. It supplies oats. It has one production facility in Canada and several others in the United States. The day that we arrived at the mill was fantastic. There were trucks lined up 24-7. These trucks transport oats from as far as 200 kilometres away.

The carbon tax we have talked about is affecting the trucking industry deeply. It is hard to compete against other jurisdictions that do not have a carbon tax. We saw it first-hand in Yorkton and how the producers around the Yorkton, Manitoba and Saskatchewan area are feeding off grain millers.

My dad was the head miller at Robin Hood in Ontario, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. If he were alive today, he would be shocked, because it is the cost of production that is going through the roof that has hurt every Canadian coast to coast to coast.

● (1810)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am really intrigued by the Conservative math, and I am looking for confirmation. The previous speaker said that if we got rid of the price on pollution, the cost of food would go down by 34%.

Does the member opposite believe what his Conservative colleague put on the record? He said that 34% is the increase in the cost of food as a result of the price on pollution.

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, the professor from Dalhousie University said that food is up 34%. He is the professor saying to get rid of the carbon tax.

We have been saying for years to get rid of the carbon tax. Saskatchewan has led all the other provinces in trying to get rid of the carbon tax. It has a direct effect on every farmer, every producer and every person in my city. Every person in my province of 1.2 million is affected by this carbon tax. It is not good news. If members do not believe that, they should know that the Moose Jaw food bank ran out of food and could not provide services to those who needed to go there.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague is a strong representative for his constituency. However, we are talking about the cost of living and grocery prices. One of the things I think about when I think about the cost of living is the horrendous history we have in this country

from when Stephen Harper was Prime Minister and the cuts he made to all of those services Canadians depend upon.

The Conservatives like to talk about tax cuts, but we know that tax cuts actually do not help the very poorest and most vulnerable within our community. These are things such as support for health care to help those people and a dental care program, for example. Harper and the Conservatives cut \$43 billion from health care when they were in power. They cut EI. They cut the social programs that Canadians depend upon. They have no interest in protecting those who are most vulnerable.

Even today, when I asked his colleague if he had another suggestion besides this obsession with the carbon tax, if he had any other solution on reducing grocery prices, he said that he was not going to answer that question. That is because he does not have an answer. Does this member have an answer for that?

● (1815)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I used to be a school trustee, and now the Liberals and the NDP are trying to bring out a food program. What do members think the problem has been in the last nine or ten years? It is the carbon tax that has increased the price of food. I know that for a fact. I have kids in the school system. I have kids in York, in Saskatoon. I have another who teaches in Lethbridge. It is the same. The carbon tax has affected each and every household in this country.

When we look at the price of food, it has gone up. That is because of 10 years of the NDP-Liberal government and its insistence on a carbon tax. It has hurt the lower echelon of our economy more than any other. In here, the 338 members can afford the increase. However, in my province of Saskatchewan, over half cannot. They have to supplement their groceries by visiting a food bank. This is not only in Saskatoon but also in Regina, Moose Jaw and every other community in my province.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will end with a simple question to calm things down a bit.

I have had the opportunity to meet regularly with Canadian processors located in the riding of Shefford, more precisely in Granby. I have met them alongside my colleague, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, on more than one occasion.

I would like to invite my colleague to speak to recommendation 7, the one about the code of conduct. This is a crucial and important subject for Canadian processors.

What does he have to say about this recommendation?

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, there are lots of recommendations we can talk about in the House here tonight, but the number one recommendation is to cut the carbon tax. We have seen from coast to coast to coast that the carbon tax has really hurt families in this country. I can go through the list of small communities that have no more food in their food banks because they have seen an increase in use, and I am sure in Quebec it is the same thing. People are in need. The family of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster has the floor.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Madam Speaker, after nine years of the Liberal government, we know that life has never cost Canadians more. Across the country, Canadians are going hungry in record numbers. The Prime Minister's reckless budgeting and failed policies have caused the worst inflation in 40 years, and food prices have skyrocketed. This year alone, families will spend \$700 more on groceries than they did last year, and that number keeps growing year after year.

Food Banks Canada has reported a 50% increase in visits since 2021 with a record-breaking two million visits in a single month. Hard-working Canadians should not have to rely on food banks to not go hungry. However, that is the government's record. Only one in six adults visiting a food bank is unemployed, meaning they do not have a job. In other words, that means five out of six Canadians who are visiting a food bank are employed. These Canadians cannot make ends meet. Their paycheques are overstretched and they are not keeping up with the rising costs caused by the Prime Minister's inflationary deficits and taxes.

What is certain is that the Prime Minister's plan to quadruple the carbon tax is only going to make things worse. The carbon tax is adding to the cost of groceries at every single point in the food supply chain. At the end of the day, Canadians will pay the price. Conservatives have said over and over again in this House that when we tax the farmer who grows the food, the trucker who ships the food and the grocer who sells the food, it is going to cost Canadians more.

It is not just Conservatives the Prime Minister is ignoring. The Canadian Trucking Alliance recently reported that the NDP-Liberal coalition's carbon tax added \$2 billion to long-haul trucking costs this year alone. That figure will go up to \$4 billion in 2030. The Canadian Trucking Alliance was clear that these costs “cannot be absorbed [by truckers] and must be passed on to customers.” That means Canadians. That is moms and dads, students and seniors who are on fixed incomes. They are all picking up the bill for the Prime Minister's punishing carbon tax.

Food insecurity should not be a problem in a country like Canada, but more and more Canadians do not know where they are going to get their next meal from. The increased costs on farm businesses threaten their long-term viability. Our farmers produce safe, nutritious, good-quality food, but if the cost of doing business continues to increase exponentially, it will eventually put our hard-working farmers out of business. That is the threat not only to the

agriculture industry but to Canadians and all those around the world who depend on the food grown here in Canada.

Our farmers pay retail prices for everything they buy for their farm businesses, but they sell products at cost. Farm businesses already had tight margins and the costly carbon tax is a massive hit to their bottom line. There are massive carbon tax bills and they are only growing. Saskatchewan farmers paid \$12 million last year in carbon taxes on natural gas and propane to dry grain, heat and cool livestock barns, and grow their food. With this year's carbon tax hike, that number will go up to \$15 million. By 2030, it is estimated that the carbon tax will cost a typical 5,000-acre farm in Canada \$150,000 in carbon taxes.

• (1820)

Our farmers cannot afford the carbon tax. It is absolutely critical that the government pass Bill C-234 in its original form. We cannot afford to lose our Canadian farm families. Passing Bill C-234 in its original form would also acknowledge the work that our farmers are already doing to safeguard our environment. Our farmers are global leaders in sustainability. They have been mitigating, removing and sequestering greenhouse gases long before the Prime Minister and his punishing carbon tax.

For years, our farmers have delivered meaningful reductions in emissions through the adoption of new technologies, education and innovative management practices. Our farmers care for the environment because it is in their DNA to do so. They know how important it is for their farm businesses and for future generations. It does not make sense to punish our farmers, who are already doing so much to protect the environment, with costly and punishing taxes.

The Prime Minister's carbon tax is not about the environment at all. It is actually just a tax plan. If it was about the environment, the Prime Minister would recognize the sustainability work of our farmers. Taxing our farmers does nothing to help with the environment. In actuality, it harms their ability to reinvest in their businesses and adopt the latest technologies.

Bill C-234 in its original form would remove the carbon tax on propane and natural gas for greenhouses, heating and cooling livestock barns, and grain drying. The PBO has reported that Bill C-234 in its original form would save farmers nearly \$1 billion by 2030. What that really means is that the Prime Minister wants to take \$1 billion from our farmers, who already have very thin and often unpredictable margins, so that he can pay for his out-of-control spending habits.

Passing Bill C-234 in its original form will keep those dollars in the businesses of our farmers and will help keep farming a more viable business. However, we know that the Senate has gutted Bill C-234, which threatens the savings. The removal of barns and greenhouses from the carbon tax exemption and the shortening of the sunset clause fall very short of what this bill was trying to achieve.

These amendments were not requested by farmers or by farm groups, nor was it requested by Canadians. In fact, polling shows that the majority of Canadians support scrapping the carbon tax on farmers. Farmers across commodities were unified in their support of this bill in its original form. Shamefully, the Prime Minister used Liberal-appointed Senators to gut this bill, and according to the PBO, the gutted bill will eliminate \$910 million in relief to farmers.

When it comes to the carbon tax, the Prime Minister is not listening. He is not listening to Canadians who are going hungry. He is not listening to the premiers. He is certainly not listening to Conservatives, and he is not listening to our farmers. Canadians cannot afford to have the Prime Minister continue to bury his head in the sand while his finance minister pretends that Canadians have never had it so good.

The Liberal government needs to pass Bill C-234 in its original form and stop burdening our farmers with enormous costs so that they continue to do what they do best, which is to increase their productivity, do more with less and lead in sustainability and innovation, all while growing safe, nutritious and good-quality food for Canada and the world.

• (1825)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the strategy of the Conservative Party, as its leader says, is to cut the carbon rebate and cut the carbon tax, thereby reducing the cost of food by 34%. I wonder if the member genuinely believes what her other colleagues are saying on that point.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Madam Speaker, I genuinely believe that, when the leader of the Conservative Party becomes prime minister, he will cut the carbon tax, which will be a relief for all Canadians.

I would like to remind the House that, on December 8, 2022, we had an opposition day motion, which was to remove the carbon tax from all food production. We were the only party that supported it. It is shameful.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[*English*]

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.

The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division, please.

Adjournment Proceedings

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the division stands deferred until Tuesday, September 24, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

If motions are now finished, we should proceed to petitions.

• (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Yes, but we only have 10 seconds remaining.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan will have to present at another time.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is good to be back in this place after the summer, a summer, though, in which I heard a great deal from my constituents about how frustrated they are with the cost, the crime and the corruption they are seeing under the NDP-Liberal government. The government has so badly failed, and that is why tomorrow the Conservatives will bring forward a motion of non-confidence in the government, and we will see where the various parties stand. Conservatives are clear that the tenure of cost, crime and corruption over the last nine years must come to an end.

We will see which parties want to allow the government and the Prime Minister to continue and which parties in this place want to make their case to the Canadian people and give the people a chance to elect a government that reflects their aspirations and hopes for what the future of this country can offer.

In the context of the cost, crime and corruption, we are seeing scandal after scandal that incorporate all three, scandals that involve significant cost to the taxpayer, that involve potential criminal activity that in some cases will likely lead to criminal charges that have already spawned RCMP investigations, and that clearly involve forms of corruption.

Adjournment Proceedings

I am following up tonight on a question I asked about the arrive scam scandal, a scandal that members will recall led to Kristian Firth from GC Strategies, the principal company involved in the scandal, being hauled before the bar of the House of Commons because he refused to answer questions asked at committee. I pointed out in my question that GC Strategies got tens of millions of dollars in the arrive scam scandal for no work. It simply received the contracts and then subcontracted. It did not do any actual IT work. It did not build the app. It just received a contract and subcontracted.

The company was found in 2015. What else happened in 2015? That is the same year the Prime Minister and the government took office. The Liberals came into office promising change. The only promise they fulfilled was real change; a lot of things certainly changed in the last nine years. In the same year, GC Strategies was founded. The company has gone on to do very lucrative business with the government, and its activity is staff augmentation. It receives contracts and subcontracts.

We have an app that could have been built in a weekend by an actual IT firm, but instead of hiring a firm with IT expertise, the government hired subcontracting middlemen who got the contract and subcontracted all the actual work. Right before Kristian Firth came before the House, there was an RCMP raid as part of an RCMP investigation into GC Strategies' activities.

There are the costs; Canadians spent tens of millions of dollars on the glitchy app that did not work and sent over 10,000 Canadians into quarantine by accident, Canadians who met all the requirements. There is cost, waste, inefficiency, corruption and the RCMP investigation into criminal activity. The government persists in using the GC Strategies model, in wasting huge amounts of taxpayers' money.

It talks about how other parties would cut. I submit that with the waste we have seen with GC Strategies, there is a lot of opportunity to save taxpayers' dollars without having any noticeable impact on frontline services.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the hon. member's question.

The Government of Canada shares the member's concerns about alleged wrongdoing in our procurement process, as do all parliamentarians and Canadians across the country. This is why we voted in favour of the motion to call Mr. Firth to appear in the House to answer questions, and we trust that his testimony was fulsome and forthright in responding to those questions.

Canadians are equally concerned about what they have been hearing in the media and in the committee, and we are using many tools of inquiry and following many avenues as we seek to understand what went wrong in the case of ArriveCAN. It is frustrating that we have had to take the extraordinary measure of a public rebuke here in the House of Commons to get answers to those questions, but the government did vote in favour of doing so, and that consensus speaks to how seriously every member of the House takes the issue.

There is a complex network of people, policies and procedures in place to ensure that government contracts proceed efficiently, with clear value for taxpayer dollars, and when something goes awry, or worse, as it appears to have been the case with the ArriveCAN contracts awarded to GC Strategies, it is necessary to act decisively to restore trust in the system. The government has taken a number of actions in response to this issue, and I would like to detail a few of those actions.

Last November, at the request of the Canadian Border Services Agency, Public Services and Procurement Canada issued stop-work orders to GC Strategies, as well as Dalian and Coradix. This halted work on all active contracts with the CBSA while the various investigations moved forward. All departments and agencies with active contracts with these companies were asked to verify their CVs connected to those contracts and that the appropriate consent to use those CVs was obtained.

In March of this year, PSPC suspended the security status of GC Strategies and Dalian Enterprises until further notice, and this effectively prevents these companies from participating in any federal procurement with security requirements. More broadly, PSPC has taken concrete actions over the past year to strengthen the oversight of all professional service contracts falling under PSPC authority.

The department is actively engaging with client departments and agencies to ensure that these new measures are implemented quickly and efficiently, and our government is extremely troubled by allegations of fraudulent activity at a time when Canada's people and resources were in a tremendously vulnerable state.

We know that ArriveCAN was a useful tool to help keep Canadians safe in a time of crisis, but even in exceptional circumstances, it is absolutely necessary that public money be spent with due diligence and that all activities be properly documented. The early development of the application has been an object lesson. The government shares the member's concerns with this member and his desire to hold those responsible to account. This is why, as we continue to support the various investigations and inquiries in this matter, we appreciate all parties' support.

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• (1835)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the hon. member says that all parties voted in favour of the motion to bring Kristian Firth before the bar. Actually, when Kristian Firth came before the bar, the government refused to participate in the questioning. They did not want the questioning to proceed, and it is clearly on the record that they refused to participate, so while members of all the opposition parties, even the Green Party, participated in the questioning, the government did not.

I am just struck, listening to the parliamentary secretary, by how often corruption just happens to the government. They are dismayed by all the things that are happening in the government that they are supposed to be running. The core problem with the government is that, while pursuing malicious policies that undermine the common good, they would like to pretend that somebody else is responsible for everything that goes wrong.

Will the minister and the parliamentary secretary take responsibility for all the corruption that has happened under their watch?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, like I said, all parties are troubled by the circumstances surrounding contracts awarded for work on the ArriveCAN application. Canadians and Parliamentarians deserve and demand answers, as does the government. There are many inquiries and investigations into the ArriveCAN contracts issue, and we fully support all of that work. It is important that we allow these activities to conclude so we can make decisions based on a full picture of what happened.

As we continue to work across party lines to uncover the facts, we expect candid and complete testimony at all committees, and in the case of Mr. Firth and GC Strategies, that did not happen. That is why we voted for Mr. Firth to present himself here in the House, and we will continue to support the investigations and inquiries into this matter.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I am back again this evening to continue calling for a windfall profits tax on the oil and gas industry. I am doing so, first of all, because life continues to become less affordable for folks in my community, and corporate profits have a lot to do with it. In fact, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found in January 2023 that for every dollar spent on higher prices in the last two years, 47¢ was converted into corporate profits in four industries, with mining and oil and gas leading the way.

Lots of attention, in this place at least, has been placed on the carbon tax, but here are the facts. Much more responsible for the increased costs of day-to-day living is the gouging of the oil and gas industry. In fact, in 2022, when the carbon price went up 2¢ a litre, the profits of the industry went up 18¢ a litre. There are no rebates on that gouging. In 2022, the five largest oil and gas companies operating in Canada alone made more than \$38 billion. That was after they repaid shareholders \$29 billion in increased dividends and share repurchases.

Meanwhile, the climate crisis rages on. Canada is warming at twice the rate of the global average, and the Canadian Arctic is warming at about three times the global rate. The impacts of the climate crisis are being felt across the country with more severe and

more extreme weather events, including wildfires that consumed almost 46 million acres in 2023.

The government could both address the affordability crisis and fund climate solutions by taking a step it took with banks and life insurance companies during the pandemic, and that is introducing a windfall profits tax on the oil and gas industry. It is what I proposed in Motion No. 92 over a year ago. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has already studied it. A one-time tax on 15% of profits over \$1 billion would generate \$4.2 billion, every dollar of which could go toward proven climate solutions that make life more affordable, such as, for example, public transit, to reduce fares and improve service at a time when the government is talking about the next public transit fund not starting until 2026. This money could get that going a whole lot faster.

It is also well supported, most importantly by Canadians. In a recent nationwide poll, 62% of Canadians supported a windfall profits tax on oil and gas. It is likely why the idea has such strong support among my colleagues in different parties, including the Bloc, the NDP and the Liberal Party. It is partly why the UN Secretary-General, as another example, has called on “all developed economies to tax the windfall profits of fossil fuel companies”, like environmental organizations across the country. As the David Suzuki Foundation said, “Momentum is building for a windfall profit tax on oil and gas companies’ excessive profits. It’s easy to see why: the fossil fuel industry has made the affordability crisis harder for people while making out like bandit.” Canadians for Tax Fairness has said, “A windfall profits tax is one way to make sure that O&G companies...aren't capitalizing on our affordability crisis.” Other countries have done it, like the U.K. and those in the EU. In fact, the Liberal government planned to put it in last year's budget, but pulled it at the last minute after intense lobbying from the industry.

It is clear from the polls that Canadians want to see more from the government on affordability and the climate crisis. Why not introduce a windfall profits tax and demonstrate that it has the big ideas necessary to meet the moment we are in?

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• (1840)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. friend and colleague from Kitchener Centre for his continued advocacy on this important issue and policy step. It is important, and our government firmly believes that at a time when middle-class Canadians are struggling to get ahead, and when it feels to so many like their hard work is not paying off as much as it used to, it is necessary for the government to improve fairness in Canada's tax system. As we know, since 2015, our government has reduced taxes for the middle class and we take steps forward on this very seriously.

The member knows that since I was a very young guy, I have always been an environmentalist and a staunch advocate for climate action. We have had many conversations about this and many other issues. I want to state, though, that I do not find the government's contributions and focus on things like active transportation and public transit to be trivial. In fact, they have been massive steps forward.

In Milton, for example, one of the first announcements I made was \$4 million for a new public transit system. This is in a suburban community without a lot of density. We are just getting there when it comes to public transit being a necessity for our community, but our government has been there as a partner. Whether that is through the gas tax, or through the transfer that we do with the municipal funds, our government really has been there.

Since 2015, our government has reduced taxes on the middle class twice. It has implemented a number of measures to ensure the wealthiest individuals and corporations are contributing their share, most recently with capital gains changes. Some of these things are tough. Hard things are hard. When a government decides to take steps forward to find a fairer way to deal with taxation and the services Canadians require, including child care, dental care, pharmaceutical and other important services that all Canadians rely on at a free or affordable rate, we know that the wealthiest people in Canada are powerful and have the ability to push-back and, yes, lobbying, as the member pointed out.

Therefore, we take those risks; we take them confidently and we step forward for Canadians because we know it is the right thing to do. We believe it is time to ask the wealthiest Canadians to contribute a bit more. It is true that the wealthiest Canadians have gotten wealthier over the last five or six years. We have talked a lot in this House about this K-shaped curve, which, following the pandemic, shows that Canadians who were struggling a bit before the pandemic are struggling more now and folks who had a lot now have more.

Taking this step will allow us to move forward with bold actions announced in the most recent budget and to build a fairer future, with transformative instruments for housing and innovation, with respect to the clean economy and for younger generations. These major investments require new revenues and that is why we have proposed in budget 2024 to increase the inclusion rate on capital gains realized annually, above a quarter of a million dollars by individuals and on all capital gains realized by corporations and trusts,

from one-half to two-thirds effective this past June 25. We expect this new measure will generate more than \$19 billion in new revenues over the next five years. Thanks to these new revenues, we will be able to build better supports for those who need it most and make investments that will increase fairness for everyone.

I reflect back on some of the efforts by the first Trudeau government, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, to create a stronger social safety net and more non-market housing to ensure everybody had a place to live. I know a lot of MPs in this House have conversations frequently with people who are really frustrated and struggling and in legitimate need of housing. We have a lack of affordable housing in my community. In fact, I spoke to a gentleman just recently who is living in his truck and has fallen on really tough times. We need to find solutions for gentlemen like him. These measures to tax the wealthiest Canadians—

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talked about finding solutions. We have one for him right here.

If he is looking for \$4.2 billion that could be invested in making life more affordable for folks in Milton, the same way it would in Kitchener Centre, and if he is wondering where we can find the wealthiest folks to make sure we redirect those funds toward those who need it the most, we have the answer: It is the oil and gas industry, with \$38 billion from the top five companies alone. If we even just put a 15% tax on profits above a billion dollars, the way other countries already have, the way economic experts are calling for and the way Canadians are calling for, we could use that money to invest in the public transit I know the parliamentary secretary is a champion for and to invest in retrofitting folks' homes.

The question is the same: If the government pretends to understand the climate crisis and the affordability crisis, why is it not moving quickly to put in place a windfall profit tax on the excess profits of the oil and gas industry?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden: Madam Speaker, I take exception a little bit to the suggestion that we have not taken note of what oil and gas executives and the mega corporations have been doing. They were at the environment committee, and I demanded answers from some of the CEOs. Frankly, what I heard back from the CEOs was inadequate. It was a demonstration that they actually do not know where they are invested and the impact, particularly on the oil sands side, they are having on the environment.

It is absolutely devastating, but I disagree with the suggestion that the government has not taken all necessary actions to both combat the climate crisis and buoy our economy through what so many economists said, two or three years ago, was a certain recession. We have avoided that recession. We have balanced our priorities to make sure we have protected jobs. We have lowered our emissions. At this time, interest rates are down, inflation is down and gas prices are down.

CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, over the summer recess, I had the opportunity to speak with many constituents, as well as many local businesses. I heard first-hand how the carbon tax burden is affecting them. I was invited to tour the Virtex Grain Exchange in my riding, where non-GMO canola oil is produced. The Virtex Grain Exchange is another testament to the resilient spirit of Canadians fighting to make a living after nine years of the Liberal government's disastrous financial policies, none more so than the carbon tax, yet another example of the Liberal government quashing entrepreneurship.

As if it were not hard enough to start a new business under the Liberals, their carbon tax is another barrier they have implemented that stifles the growth of small and medium-sized businesses. The Virtex Grain Exchange is being pummeled by the Liberal carbon tax as the price of operation continues to rise, with no end in sight. It is currently being forced to pay over \$250,000 annually on the carbon tax. For a company its size, \$250,000 would go a long way toward upgrading equipment or toward research and development. Instead, the money is going to fund the out-of-control spending habits of the current government.

In fact it came out earlier this year that the promised rebates to small and medium-sized businesses had not been paid out, as the government was sitting on \$2.5 billion of unpaid rebates. If that money had not been taken from businesses to begin with, it could have been invested in Canadian industry, allowing businesses to grow and to employ Canadians.

The Liberal government refuses to listen to Canadians about the burden the carbon tax places on their personal finances as the carbon tax increases each year, artificially driving up the cost of everything. While the Liberals refuse to listen to Canadians on the issue of the carbon tax, it seems that the NDP spent the summer finally listening to its constituents and has finally pulled its support for the carbon tax after voting for it at least 24 times. However, this is too little, too late. Canadians are paying attention and will hold them to account.

Can the government, which has lost the support of the House and of Canadians, commit to calling a carbon tax election to allow Canadians to have their voices heard?

• (1850)

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change and to the Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by correcting the record. We have not lost the support of the House. There has not been a confidence vote that the government has lost. In two days, on Wednesday, there is going to be a confidence vote, and all parties have stepped up to say they are

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just not buying what the Conservatives are putting out there. It is based on false premises. They are, frankly, not being terribly honest with Canadians. This doomsday narrative that they are projecting does not reflect the Canadian sentiment right now.

Canadians are struggling. It is a challenging time out there economically, but the trajectory is really good. Right now, inflation is down to 2%. Interest rates are on their way down; they are going quickly, faster than they are in the United States. Gas prices are actually extremely low, and they are about to get even lower in Ontario because of the winter gas mix coming.

As a result, every aspect of the economy is improving. We have to flip to the back pages of the Financial Post these days to find the doomsday narrative that matches what the Conservatives are saying. We cannot take our foot off the gas pedal. We need to keep working hard for Canadians and finding solutions to improve affordability. The only policy suggestion the Conservatives have made over the last couple of years is to remove the Canada carbon rebate.

A province such as Saskatchewan, which generates the vast majority of its electricity with coal, also needs to ensure that it is ushering in innovation. In 2024, such a country as Canada cannot be relying on technology from 150 years ago to generate our electricity. We can do much better than that. The neighbouring province to my colleague's constituency in Manitoba just brought forth a really great subset of green electricity regulations. It is investing in wind. It already has one of the greenest grids in Canada and Manitoba, so kudos to Premier Kinew. However, Saskatchewan continues to boast that it burns coal to generate electricity, as we did at the turn of the last century. It is time to get with the times. We are better than that. We can be much better than that.

The leader of the Conservative Party and the failed former leader of the Conservative Party, the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, continually suggest that programs like dental care do not exist in Canada. I am sorry. A quarter of one million Canadians have already accessed care, and 2.5 million Canadians have signed up for their dental care plan card.

The Conservatives have also never acknowledged that the Canada carbon rebate even exists in the House, because it does not fit their doomsday narrative. The Canada carbon rebate has proven to be a safety net in some small way for families who are struggling through these times. Yes, gas prices are coming down, but we have been there. We have been there with new programs, with new policies and with money in Canadians' pockets.

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I would encourage the member to learn a bit more about how some of the processes work in Canada. Just recently, on June 13, Environment and Climate Change Canada published the data provided to the PBO on carbon pollution pricing relative to the national and provincial gross domestic products for the 2022-30 period. That is over nine years. The data in this report does not represent a comprehensive economic overview of pollution pricing's impact. It only addresses the specific requests of the PBO. However, even the PBO has recognized that carbon pricing is the least disruptive way to reduce emissions. In fact, it was both Preston Manning's and Stephen Harper's preferred method of reducing emissions, something that we have a responsibility to do, not just with our global colleagues, but also for future generations.

• (1855)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, that condescending response is just another example of how, when Canadians try to tell the government about how they are struggling, it refuses to listen. Instead, it is intent on drowning out the voices of Canadians with its own deranged ideology. The government has doubled the price of housing and made it easier for criminals to get back on the street; it has caused the day-to-day cost of living to skyrocket.

Canadians are not being fooled by this member or by the Prime Minister. They know the carbon tax makes their lives more unaffordable, and they are struggling after nine years of the corrupt NDP-Liberal government. They are tired of the crime, the corruption, the out-of-control spending and the carbon tax. The Liberal government is fast losing its mandate to lead, and Canadians are ready for change. That was made clear in their devastating loss in Toronto—St. Paul's in June. Instead of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to stand to talk about one of our most successful policies in the last nine years.

When our government took office in 2015, Canada's carbon emissions were rising fast in multiple sectors. It was not just the oil and gas industry, but it was particularly in oil and gas. Since then, they plateaued and are now starting to come down. They have been coming down for years in a row and, just recently, they were another 2% lower.

As I have stated, times continue to be tough, but inflation is down to the Bank of Canada's target range of 2%. As a result, interest rates are down in Canada. That is taking the heat off of many Canadians. That means their mortgages are easier to afford.

In just a couple of weeks, on October 15, 2024, families in Saskatchewan will receive \$376 for the Canada carbon rebate. I look forward to discussing this issue more in the House of Commons.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:58 p.m.)

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