



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

**Volume 151 No. 141**  
Monday, December 5, 2022

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



## **CONTENTS**

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

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 5, 2022

The House met at 11 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)  
[English]

### CRIMINAL CODE

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill S-223, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (trafficking in human organs), as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**The Speaker:** There being no motion at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC),** seconded by the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, moved that the bill be concurred in.

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

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Mr. Speaker, I think there would be agreement for the motion to be carried unanimously.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**The Speaker:** When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis,** seconded by the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard, moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to be speaking today to Bill S-223, the next, and hopefully the last, in a long line of bills that have been proposed here and in the other place to begin the fight against the horrific practice of forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

I want to thank the member for Pierrefonds—Dollard for seconding the bill and recognize the incredible work done by Senator Ataullahjan as well, who proposed the bill. I have the honour of carrying that work on in this place.

The bill would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without consent. Bill S-223 would also create a mechanism by which a person could be deemed inadmissible to Canada for involvement in forced organ harvesting and trafficking. The bill recognizes the basic moral principle that killing people or exploiting them for their organs is wrong everywhere and should be stopped everywhere.

Efforts to combat this practice have been ongoing in Canada's Parliament for close to 15 years, and the time that has elapsed underlines the sad reality of how long it takes to pass good private members' bills, even when everyone agrees. However, Bill S-223 has now made it further than any of its predecessors. Having passed the Senate and now been reported back from committee without amendments, the bill only needs to complete this third reading stage and receive royal assent before becoming law. Thanks to the member for Bow River trading with me today and the member for Simcoe North trading the second hour slot on Wednesday, the bill will complete debate this week and should pass its final vote in time for Christmas.

In the past I have always given uncharacteristically short speeches on the bill, trying to engineer an early collapse to debate to move the bill along more quickly. However, given that we now have the security of a second hour for debate lined up and a tight time line to move forward in any event, I will use the opportunity to now, for the first time, to lay out my views on this subject in the level of detail that the full time allows.

The bill responds to one particularly egregious human rights violation, but it would also take an important step toward the embracing of a vital principle of human rights more broadly; that is, the idea of the universality of human rights and of the responsibility of nations to prudentially use the means at their disposal to protect fundamental human rights, not only within their own nations but for every human being in every corner of the globe.

*Private Members' Business*

Bill S-223 would apply criminal prohibitions against organ harvesting and trafficking beyond Canada's borders. It recognizes that organ harvesting and trafficking is not just wrong in Canada as a result of particularly Canadian values or a particularly Canadian social contract. Rather, it recognizes that organ harvesting and trafficking is wrong because it denies the universal principle of inherent human dignity and value, a principle that should be understood and applied universally. In this sense, the bill seeks to continue the process of innovation around the principle of national sovereignty that began in 1948 with the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Today, I would like to make the case for the importance of embracing this continuing process of innovation, though with appropriate balance and with necessary parameters.

The principle of national sovereignty comes most sharply from Peace of Westphalia, which ended 30 years of war in the Holy Roman Empire in 1648. National sovereignty emerged as a necessary practical compromise from the new reality created by the Protestant Reformation. Prior to the Reformation, western Europe had a kind of moral and religious unity, with the Pope as spiritual leader and the Emperor as a temporal ruler whose practical jurisdiction varied from place to place, but who expressed a kind civilizational unity of the western Christian world.

The Reformation ended that unity and led to generations of wars, with most of the Catholic powers struggling to restore that civilizational unity and with the Protestant powers, with the periodic help of France, seeking to break the power of the Pope and Emperor and create a reality in which nation states could be their own authority in most areas. The Peace of Westphalia, more from exhaustion than decisive victory, marked the end of this period of religious wars and the beginning of the period of nation states.

Notably, this was not the beginning of some great flowering of individual freedom, liberty and human rights. The division of Europe into blocs meant that Catholics were persecuted in Protestant nations just as Protestants were persecuted in Catholic nations, and later as Catholics were brutally persecuted in anti-religious revolutionary France. Westphalia was not about saying that individuals could believe and do what they liked; it was "*cuius regio, eius religio*", the religion of the ruler shall be the religion of the state. Under these circumstances, religious persecution continued for hundreds of years, and nations, though less inclined to fight wars over religion, fought wars that reflected the aspirations of rulers, no longer checked or mediated by super-national structures that reflected civilizational unity.

The 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise of new universalist movements. The French Revolution and later Marxism were great threats to existing structures and ideas of national sovereignty, because they made universal claims about the kinds of power structures that should exist, instead of accepting the Westphalian idea that it was up to the local political authorities to decide how a place would be governed.

• (1105)

These movements were obviously different, but a common thread can be discerned in the thinking of political universalists of both the pre-Reformation and the Revolutionary type. They be-

lieved that, insofar as there is such a thing as truth, insofar as there is such a thing as human nature and insofar as there is a resulting right and wrong way for a people to be governed, efforts should be made to apply these principles universally. There is intuitive logic to the idea that truth and justice for human beings in one place should be the same as truth and justice for human beings in another place.

There are more modern arguments made for the rejection of this kind of moral universalism that propose the general subjectivity of truth. I will comment more on these arguments later. For the time being, we should note that the emergence of national sovereignty as a principle in European politics did not arise from the rejection of absolute truth in religious and political matters. Rather, it arose from the practical recognition that such universals could not be practically enforced through warfare, at least not at any acceptable cost. The idea of national sovereignty was seen as a necessary political compromise to preserve some measure of peace and security.

It is hard to say how well national sovereignty actually worked at achieving its objectives. One can never test counterfactuals, but we can never know what would have happened in Europe if this piece of political technology had not been invented. Certainly, Europeans kept fighting wars of various kinds after 1648, but the return of the broadest and most devastating European wars tended to align with the emergence of new universalist ideologies.

Following the last of these total European wars, nations came together to try to shape a new kind of settlement. This included the formation of the United Nations in 1945 and also the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights exactly 300 hundred years after the signing of the Peace of Westphalia.

Many of history's human rights declarations, especially prior to 1948, were calls to arms or efforts to justify a violent revolution. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was radical insofar as it asserted the universality of various fundamental human rights, but it was also conservative in the sense that it was the project of nation states, within a framework that still recognized nationality with sovereignty, it did not legally bind the state signatories to actually uphold the rights therein, and, of course, it did not contain a call to armed enforcement by the people.

This provided a somewhat contradictory foundation, and international human rights law has continued to evolve and grow since 1948 on that foundation that recognizes both national sovereignty and universal human rights as being of great importance.

Notwithstanding the evident tension between these concepts, international diplomacy and law today recognizes that we cannot and ought not dispense with either. An absence of recognition of national sovereignty would lead to perpetual conflict between nations representing irreconcilable philosophical systems. This was the background prior to the Peace of Westphalia and a reality intermittently renewed by the rise of universalist revolutionary and totalitarian movements.

However, the absence of any limits on national sovereignty aimed at protecting universal human rights would create a reality in which we would look the other way when nations would commit the most dastardly crimes toward their own people. Any moral person who believes in justice and universal human dignity must, at a certain point, refuse to consent to allowing certain evils to be committed in the name of national sovereignty. Even if the only consideration is national sovereignty, history shows us clearly that nations that show capricious disregard for the rights of their own people quickly become a menace to their neighbours.

Recognizing the necessary tension between national sovereignty and international human rights, the approach of many nations has sadly been to talk the talk of international human rights, but not to put in practice meaningful mechanisms to enforce such rights.

The clearest example of this approach is the approach taken to the crime of genocide. Canada is a party to an international convention that seeks to define and make illegal the crime of genocide, regardless of assertions of national sovereignty. I strongly support this idea in principle and in practice. Slaughtering a group of people in an attempt to eradicate them is a horrific denial of universal human dignity of the person, and we should do what we can to prevent it. However, unfortunately, while assenting to the idea in principle that genocide should be an international crime, the Government of Canada has been reluctant to actually recognize any acts of genocide while they are progress. It claims that its obligation to act in response to genocide is triggered by a determination by some undefined competent international authority, even if such authorities are easily manipulated by the state committing genocide.

Additionally, this line from the government is fundamentally out of step with our actual legal obligations under the Genocide Convention. Our obligations, as a signatory to the convention, are to uphold that convention, which includes our responsibility to protect victims of genocide, regardless of national sovereignty and regardless of determinations by UN bodies. This is the legal obligation that we have assumed.

I also acknowledge the reality that it is not prudential to send in our troops in every case where genocide is happening. However, rather than burying our heads in the sand and denying the existence of genocide, the government could seek to clearly define the nature and also the limitations of how we would operationalize a responsibility to protect.

• (1110)

In my view, we need to develop real tools for practically integrating a commitment to universal human rights with a commitment to some form of national sovereignty. If an individual is involved in a violation of international human rights and if the nation state in which the person lives elects not to punish them or even condones

### *Private Members' Business*

their actions, national sovereignty limits our ability to punish this criminal. However, without resorting to means that are imprudent and likely to lead to even greater violence, we should still seek ways to punish those involved in human rights violations beyond our borders and thus deter criminals from committing these crimes.

Enter Bill S-223, a little bill with a big idea. It is the idea that we should use the means reasonably at our disposal to punish violations of fundamental human rights that happen beyond our borders. We could do this by punishing Canadians who are complicit in these acts of violence and by shunning foreigners who are involved in such violence. In light of the emergent reality of global connectivity, these kinds of limited tools are still meaningful and begin the process of deterring crime that happens beyond our borders.

It is a good thing that, if we agree it is always and everywhere wrong to do such and such a thing to a human being, we try to come up with some mechanism of accountability for these crimes that is prudent and that does not return us to the kind of world that existed between the Protestant Reformation and the Peace of Westphalia.

This idea of actively applying international human rights principles extraterritorially is about us doing what we can under the circumstances to advance justice. A commitment to this principle is why I have worked hard on this bill and also why I strongly support similar legislative mechanisms, such as the increasing use of Magnitsky sanctions, the adoption of Bill C-281, which is the international human rights act, and the adoption of Bill S-211. I support these legislative efforts to promote justice beyond our borders, because my children here in Canada are no more or less human than Uighur children, Rohingya children, the young nephew of my assistant who faces a hard winter in Ukraine or Kian Pirfalak, a nine-year-old boy who was murdered by police while attending a pro-freedom protest in Iran.

In conclusion, I want to return to a question I raised earlier: the case for universal moral claims in a world made up of diverse cultures and political traditions.

Every society since the dawn of time has tried to regulate itself with doctrines of something like morality. It is impossible for people to live together in a community if they do not regulate their interactions in some way. Furthermore, it is in our nature as beings to try to live rationally, to try to explain the decisions we make with reference to some good or goods.

*Private Members' Business*

However, while there has never been a society without some kind moral doctrines, and while those moral doctrines have sought to protect the lives and security of certain individuals, most societies have excluded certain groups or individuals from that protection. They have sought to protect an in-group without protecting an outgroup, seeking to narrow the definition of what it is to be human and perhaps allowing the exploitation of the outgroup for some advantage.

The core of my political philosophy is a simple commitment to universal humanism. It is the idea that we should not think in terms of in-group and outgroup when making decisions about fundamental human rights. If we are to speak authentically about human rights, then these are rights for all humans, regardless of age, environment, citizenship, skin colour or any other factor. Throughout history and still today, there are many who seek to limit the human family for their own convenience, but I believe that a person is a person.

Naturally there are certain kinds of rights that do flow from exchange. A worker has a right to wages. That is a right particular to the worker. A citizen has certain rights that accord with the obligations they have taken on to the nation in which they live. However, when we speak of human rights, these are rights that do not exist because of exchange. Rather, they are rights that flow from the universal nature of the human person.

Ideas of rights and justice are philosophical propositions that cannot be proven scientifically. All doctrines of human rights have their roots in something like faith: in the embrace of propositions that are not scientifically verifiable. However, the idea of universal human rights flowing from a universal humanness can be supported by observing how it accords with the universal aspirations of all people.

Today, as we speak, the people of China and the people of Iran are taking to the streets bravely demanding change. As we speak, incredibly, both of these totalitarian governments are at least feigning in the direction of concession. Also, the people of Ukraine have resisted and continue to heroically resist Putin's invasion, even as more and more Russians bravely express their own discontent.

I am proudly here today endorsing this universal movement for freedom and justice, to say that a person is a person no matter where they live and to say that we can and should prudentially work to affirm and give greater meaning to the idea of universal human rights.

• (1115)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan a question.

We are working together on the Uighur file, which is an important issue. We are the co-chairs of the Canada-Uyghur Parliamentary Friendship Group.

[*English*]

I ask the member how the bill would impact this grave and serious human rights concern, which the House has said is a genocide

occurring currently against the Uighur people. How does he see this bill ameliorating that particular situation right now?

• (1120)

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, we have seen many initiatives before the House, including my friend's Motion No. 62, and these initiatives deal with different parts of the genocide: recognition, sanctions, immigration measures and forced labour. There are many different pieces to it that require a response.

This bill seeks to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking. We have been hearing more and more reports that Uighurs have been victim to forced organ harvesting and trafficking. By cutting off some of the demand for those organs and by seeking to in some sense punish those involved in forced organ harvesting and trafficking, this bill is an important step. There are still many more steps required, but it is an important step in trying to advance justice for Uighurs.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for shepherding this bill to this stage. It has been a long journey. I have a question based on the earlier intervention, aside from what is happening with the Uighur population.

Over the many years the member has been involved in trying to shepherd this bill through the Parliament of Canada, can he inform the House what the trends and statistics have been like worldwide that underline a strong a case and necessity for this bill being passed into law at this moment in time?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, there are different kinds of cases of forced organ harvesting and trafficking. We often speak of the situation in China, where forced organ harvesting and trafficking are part of the persecution of dissidents or minorities. Falun Gong practitioners have been significantly targeted for decades. Now we are seeing an increase in the targeting of Uighurs as part of a state-directed and state-controlled system.

However, in many other countries around the world where forced organ harvesting and trafficking happen, they are not likely coordinated by the state but in the dark ungoverned or less governed corners of society. People who are poor and vulnerable are taken advantage of and coerced or compelled into giving up their organs.

We know this is a problem, and there have been various efforts to quantify it. It is a difficult thing to quantify. It is particularly difficult to quantify the extent to which Canadians are or are not complicit in this, but the bill takes an important step in responding to that reality throughout the world.

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan's dissertation was well researched and well articulated.

We know that Falun Gong practitioners have been unfairly and unjustly targeted by the regime in Beijing for organ harvesting. They are denied freedom of religion, freedom of association and freedom expression, things that we take for granted here in Canada.

We know that our former colleague David Kilgour, as well as David Matas, wrote a large study and briefing document on those responsible for the organ harvesting of the Falun Dafa in China. They brought forward, along with Falun Gong practitioners here in Canada, over 20 names of those who have profited from the very gross, which I mean in every way possible, human rights violations of Falun Gong practitioners in China, who have had their organs harvested for being political dissidents. None of them have ever been sanctioned.

Can the member speak to whether this bill would allow us to make sure that nobody in Canada profits from or gains access to these illicit organs? Why we are not sanctioning the individuals who are responsible for this?

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Madam Speaker, this bill would create a mechanism by which those involved with forced organ harvesting and trafficking would be inadmissible to Canada.

In terms of broader sanctions, Magnitsky-style sanctions, it is important that we also pass Bill C-281, which would create a mechanism through which a parliamentary committee could recommend people for Magnitsky sanctions. That would help us move forward to ensure that more people involved in these kinds of human rights violations are put on the sanctions list.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

[*English*]

I also want to thank Senator Ataullahjan, who has created this conversation within our House, the lower house, the House of Commons.

This Senate bill, Bill S-223, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (trafficking in human organs), is a critical piece of legislation that would help us address a grave and serious human rights concern. It is new legislation that adds to an existing body of law, which addresses criminality but not with respect to organ harvesting outside of Canada's territory.

I want to acknowledge our collective commitment to ensuring that these important reforms become law. This is a commitment from all members of the House, from what I can see. The important and beautiful thing about this legislation and discussing it is we are focused on the public good, putting aside our partisan squabbles to promote what is right and just.

• (1125)

[*Translation*]

First, I would like to review the history of the legislative reform proposed in this bill.

The issue of organ trafficking has been before Parliament for a decade. Prior to Bill S-223, there were two Senate public bills that proposed nearly identical reforms. They were Bill S-240, introduced in 2017, and Bill S-204, introduced in 2020. In addition, two private member's bills introduced in 2017 and 2013 proposed simi-

lar reforms. They were Bill C-350 and Bill C-561. We all agree that organ trafficking is a heinous crime. It requires a legislative response.

[*English*]

As I said earlier, this piece of legislation would create something new within the Criminal Code that speaks specifically to the trafficking of organs extraterritorially, or outside the territory of Canada. Additionally, it would amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act so those who are seeking to reside permanently in Canada or foreign nationals would be inadmissible to our beautiful country for engaging in conduct that constitutes one of the offences proposed in this legislation. These offences target anybody who obtains organs, or who participates in or facilitates the trafficking of organs, from a person who did not provide informed consent. This legislation also seeks to target those who obtained organs that are purchased and those who participate in or facilitate the transfer of purchased organs.

These are coercive practices. They are difficult to prove, but we want to send a clear and strong signal that we as a country do not accept them.

Unfortunately, we know that people who are wealthier unwittingly or sometimes wittingly engage in this practice. Those who are victims of this practice are almost always deeply vulnerable. The transplant of organs without consent is abhorrent. Oftentimes, it leads to devastating impacts on those who had their organs trafficked. They are uncompensated, they live with lifelong problems and they sometimes die.

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan and I participated in an important study on the Uighur people. This was over two years ago at the parliamentary subcommittee on international human rights.

We heard testimony from a survivor of the concentration camps within Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. He recounted to us, in testimony, how he was apprehended. He was asked to sign a forced confession and refused to do so. He was medically examined to such an extent that he thought he would be dissected on that table, that his eyes were going to be removed or that his organs were going to be harvested on the spot during the examination.

This piece of legislation seeks to target any behaviour that harvests organs from people.

I recognize that the Criminal Code may apply currently to some of the conduct that this bill is seeking to legislate. Right now, the Criminal Code has assault offences that apply when organs are harvested here in Canada with coercion. This piece of legislation, as I mentioned earlier, also looks at what happens outside of Canada.

*Private Members' Business*

Right now, there is no international covenant from the UN that speaks specifically to organ harvesting in its essence as the main thrust of the covenant. However, there are two covenants that do touch upon organ harvesting, and Canada is party to both of these UN instruments. The first is the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. This supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which was ratified on May 13, 2002.

After this first piece of international law came the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. This protocol addresses offering, delivering and accepting a child for the purposes of transferring children's organs, particularly article 3. This was ratified on September 14, 2005.

The Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs, adopted in 2014, also speaks directly to organ harvesting.

I will conclude by recognizing the important work that has been done around this, in particular by David Kilgour and David Matas. They have done extensive research around Falun Gong or Falun Dafa practitioners and have dedicated years to highlighting this particular issue around organ harvesting.

We know that David Kilgour served in the House for many years with the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. He was a person of conviction. He was a person who continued to remain active after serving the House. He was somebody I crossed paths with before entering the House. I remember this gentleman as a sincere person who advocated for the public good and for human rights.

It is important to also mark David Matas, who along with David Kilgour conducted extensive research. It allowed us to build a body of evidence that proved not only anecdotally but also empirically that this is an abhorrent phenomenon occurring right now.

Recently, in the Subcommittee on International Human Rights, we heard how this is currently happening to the Uighur people. In the airports in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, in Urumqi, if my memory serves me correctly, there were lines on the floor as one entered the airport that specifically demarcated where one could pick up organs. This is abhorrent. This type of practice must stop. This practice might exist currently within a region of the world that we know, but this legislation applies across the board.

• (1130)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to address the House, and I am glad to be here to talk about Bill S-223 today.

I love it when there is consensus in the House and all parties, no matter their political leanings, agree on an issue. I am happy to see that that is the case for this bill. I think this type of legislation is a step in the right direction for both Quebecers and Canadians. I am very happy.

We know that organ trafficking is a barbaric practice that has been around for a long time and has become more prevalent with the arrival of the Internet and improved immunosuppressant drugs. I believe it is our duty to enact legislation about this. Canada does

not yet have legislation prohibiting people from engaging in transplant tourism, which means travelling abroad, buying organs, having them transplanted and returning to Canada. It is about time we enacted this kind of legislation.

This bill provides an additional tool to combat trafficking in human organs, which speaks to the social and economic inequalities that unfortunately still exist around the world. It is also an additional tool to combat criminal groups. The bill is a step in the right direction in the fight against organ trafficking, but its effects will be proportional to the effort put into increasing knowledge and awareness about organ donation in order to address the shortage of organs needed for people waiting for a second chance.

There has been a lot of discussion about the facts pertaining to this bill, and I would like to focus on a few of them. Bill S-223 explicitly makes it a crime to travel abroad to receive a transplanted organ that was removed without free and informed consent and obtained for consideration. Simply put, it prohibits individuals from engaging in a practice abroad that is prohibited in Canada. The Criminal Code prohibits the exploitation of individuals, which includes organ and tissue harvesting. Once again, the bill provides an additional tool, as I just mentioned.

Technically speaking, the bill amends section 7 of the Criminal Code so that, if a person is found guilty of organ trafficking abroad, they will also be found guilty of the same crime in Canada. The bill also adds a few provisions regarding the removal of organs without consent.

The bill makes it a crime to obtain an organ to be transplanted into one's own body or the body of another person "knowing that the person from whom it was removed or a person lawfully authorized to consent on behalf of the person from whom it was removed did not give informed consent to the removal, or being reckless as to whether or not such consent was given".

The bill also makes it a crime to carry out, participate in or facilitate the removal of an organ from the body of another person "knowing that the person from whom it was removed or a person lawfully authorized to consent on behalf of the person from whom it was removed did not give informed consent to the removal, or being reckless as to whether or not such consent was given". It also makes it a crime to do anything in connection with the removal of an organ from the body of another person. It is clear that Bill S-223 makes any involvement in any such activity a crime.

The bill would also prevent immigrants from becoming Canadian citizens if they are found guilty of a crime related to trafficking in human organs. I think that is an interesting addition to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

*Private Members' Business*

I would like to reiterate a few facts that were mentioned by several of my colleagues and that are good reasons for voting in favour of this bill. First, we all know that in 2002 Canada signed the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. This UN protocol, better known as the Palermo Protocol, prohibits trafficking in persons, whose definition includes the removal of organs.

There is also the 2008 Declaration of Istanbul, which invited states to implement measures to fight organ trafficking, specifically transplant tourism. I also want to mention that Canada adheres to the World Health Organization's 11 guiding principles that prohibit monetary payment for the different parties for organ donation. They also require the free and informed consent of the donor, the protection of minors, and the allocation of organs removed to be guided by ethical and equitable norms.

● (1135)

Through its participation in certain international declarations or conventions, Canada has clearly committed to fighting trafficking in human organs. Bill S-223 does exactly that.

Unfortunately, we know that there are far more people in the world in need of a new organ than there are organs available. As in any market where it is possible to make money because demand far outweighs supply, people can turn to the black market to obtain what they need. When a person's life is on the line, the will to survive may override morals.

The facts I will be sharing describe the seedy underbelly of organ trafficking. These are things that have been mentioned in the media, including in recent years. It goes as far back as the 2000s.

According to the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, the organ trade occurs in three broad categories: traffickers who force victims to give up an organ; those who sell their organs out of financial desperation, often only receiving a fraction of the profit or even nothing at all; and victims who are duped into believing they need an operation and the organ is removed without the victim's knowledge.

Organ trafficking is an organized crime that involves many offenders, including the recruiters who identify the vulnerable person, the transporter, the hospital or clinic staff, the medical professionals who perform the surgery, the middleman, the buyers, and the banks that store the organs. This is clearly not a one-man show; there may be several people involved in this type of activity that we are looking to criminalize.

According to the UN initiative, the entire ring is rarely exposed. In fact, a 2004 World Health Assembly resolution urged member states to take measures to protect vulnerable groups from transplant tourism and the sale of tissues and organs.

Transplant tourism is the most common way to trade organs across national borders. Recipients travel abroad to undergo organ transplants. Some websites offer all-inclusive packages. For example, the price of a kidney transplant abroad ranges from \$70,000 U.S. to \$160,000 U.S.

According to the World Health Organization, one in 10 organ transplants involves a trafficked human organ, which amounts to about 10,000 per year. While kidneys are the most commonly sold organs, hearts, livers, lungs, pancreases, corneas and human tissue are also illegally traded.

In a recent report, Global Financial Integrity stated that organ trafficking, which occurs in many countries, is on the rise and generates between \$600 million and \$1.2 billion in profit annually.

In Iran, the only country where trade in human organs is legal, organ sales are closely monitored. This practice has eliminated the waiting list for kidney transplants and increased post mortem organ donations, for which there is no compensation in Iran.

According to a Harvard University study, donors come from poor countries in South America, Asia and Africa, whereas recipients are often from developed countries such as Canada, the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, Israel and Japan.

According to Michigan State University research into the black market for human organs in Bangladesh, the average price of a kidney was \$1,400 U.S. The price has since gone down because of abundant supply.

In conclusion, I could go on and on with more fascinating facts. Less than a week ago, in fact, Radio-Canada's *Enquête* looked into the failings of our health system and provincial health systems in Canada with respect to organ donation. According to Dr. Pierre Marsolais, Canada was a leader in the field 20 years ago. Now it is at a standstill.

Rather than turning to the poor and indigent to supply organs for transplants, why is Canada not trying harder to re-establish itself as a leader in this field?

There are other things that can also be done to support organ donation, besides passing this bill, and there are other ways members can show their support. I am not familiar with what the other provinces do, but in Quebec, people can consent to donate their organs and tissue by signing the back of their health insurance cards or by registering directly on the Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec website. This small act can save up to eight lives and restore the health of another 20 people. If everyone did that one small thing, it could make for a much brighter future for so many people.

*Private Members' Business*

• (1140)

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is a real honour to be able to rise today to speak to Bill S-223. Before I get into my remarks, it is important to recognize the two individuals who have been working diligently over the years to shepherd this bill through Parliament, starting in the other place, with Senator Ataullahjan, and here, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan. Both individuals have been long involved in this process, over several Parliaments.

The bill, of course, passed very quickly through second and third reading in the other place. In fact, it even skipped consideration by the committee on December 9 of last year. It gives a sense of the arduous journey that private members' bills, both from the Senate side and from the House side, have to make in order to pass the entire parliamentary process: the fact that we are here in December 2022, only now considering its third reading, and it has taken a full year to get to that stage.

Before I get into the details of why this legislation is necessary, I would like to talk about a few key points in terms of what the bill is going to do, so we are all very clear on what the House is going to be debating and hopefully passing in short order.

Essentially, it is a substantive amendment to a narrow section of the Criminal Code in relation to the crime of trafficking in human organs. We know that organs like kidneys and livers are being forcibly removed from many people, but this bill, with a new section 240.1, is going to create some new offences: anyone who obtains organs without informed consent, either for use in another person or for themselves; anyone who is involved in the carrying out of the procedure to remove those organs without informed consent; and anyone who does anything in connection with the removal of the organs without informed consent.

That is quite broad. It could involve anyone who was involved in allowing a place to be used for the surgery and anyone who is involved in the transportation of the organs or their smuggling across borders. It is a very real problem. It is something that, through several Parliaments, we have been waiting for substantive action on.

We know this is a crime that disproportionately affects people who live in impoverished countries and who live under authoritarian rule and do not have access to the same rights, privileges and equality under the law that we sometimes take for granted here in Canada. It is important that countries like Canada, with its well-known track record in standing up for human rights and the rule of law, not only here in our own country but abroad, follow suit and really establish what we think should be the norm and what all citizens of the world should be able to enjoy.

There is also a very important amendment to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, so that a permanent resident or any foreign national would be inadmissible to Canada if the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is of the opinion that they have engaged in any activities related to the new offence that is going to be put into the Criminal Code through the passage of this bill.

Through the conversation today, I have heard several members talk about how having this provision in Canadian law for a crime that occurred in another country is important. It reminds me that we sometimes have a double standard in this place about how we apply Canadian law.

I have been a member of this House for seven years now. I was here in the 42nd Parliament. I remember a previous private member's bill, which was sponsored by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby. It was Bill C-331. In the dying days of the 42nd Parliament, we managed to come to a vote on that bill at second reading. It was June 19, 2019, pretty much the very last day of the 42nd Parliament.

That was an important bill, because it intended to amend the Federal Courts Act so that people from other countries who wanted to bring a civil claim could do so under the jurisdiction of federal court.

• (1145)

The nature of the claims could have to do with genocide, a war crime or a crime against humanity, slavery or slave trading, extrajudicial killings, torture, prolonged arbitrary detention, or the sale or trafficking of persons. These are all crimes that every member of this House agrees are abhorrent and certainly need the full force of the law.

The problem is that when the member for New Westminster—Burnaby was attempting, for many good reasons, to bring that bill forward, the House voted against it. In fact, the Liberals and the Conservatives joined together to shut the bill down at second reading.

I do not want to take away from the debate on the bill today. Bill S-223 is going to have our full support. I just hope that when Parliament is conducting itself and when we see value in these types of measures that try to apply Canadian law to things that happen abroad, we can do so on a consistent basis.

We need to recognize that there are huge problems out there, not just with human trafficking in organs, but also in war crimes, slavery and other methods. Should the member for New Westminster—Burnaby try to bring that initiative back, I hope the House will apply the lessons from the debate on Bill S-223 to that similar and worthy initiative.

Bill S-223 is no stranger to us. In the 42nd Parliament, it was before the House as Bill S-240. The reason I think it is a forgone conclusion that this bill is going to pass the House is that it is identical to the version we debated and passed as Bill S-240. In fact, in the 42nd Parliament it received the unanimous support of the House at second reading and again at third reading on April 30, 2019.

The important and notable difference with Bill S-223 is that it incorporates the amendments the House made to the previous version of the bill. That is what caused the delay on Bill S-240. It had to be sent back to the Senate so it could consider House amendments.

Unfortunately, at that time, the bill was held up because of the procedural shenanigans going on in the other place related to the old bill, Bill C-262, which was introduced by my former colleague, Romeo Saganash. That was his attempt with a private member's bill to enshrine the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

I am glad to see, from the tone and content of the speeches so far, that there is recognition that this is an important and long-overdue change to criminal law. It sends a strong message, not only to people around the world who are facing these barbaric practices under regimes such as China, and we have heard well-documented testimony on what the Uighur population is going through, but also to impoverished people living in countries where the rule of law is applied selectively at best.

These people may be targeted by criminal organizations. We have heard testimony from people who have woken up in a drugged haze to someone wearing a surgical mask and gloves telling them that their kidney has just been removed and that they need to take care. Often, these victims can suffer very serious, lifelong health consequences from that, and because of the nature of the operation, some people have ultimately died from it. It is a very real issue.

We know the demand for organs is very high worldwide, and we need to take steps to encourage people to put themselves on an organ donor registry. I am pleased to see that this Parliament has tried to address that by making it easier for people to sign up and so on. However, those are problems that are not going to go away. The demand for organs is high, and as our population ages we certainly need to have smart and effective policy to address that.

On behalf of the New Democratic caucus, I will indicate that we are looking forward to supporting this bill and voting on it so it gets sent to the Governor General for royal assent. We have long opposed all forms of trafficking, whether it be human trafficking for sexual exploitation, labour trafficking or the trafficking of human organs. We must do all we can to protect vulnerable people. With that, I will conclude my remarks. I appreciate this opportunity.

• (1150)

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take this opportunity today to speak to this legislation. I would like to start by recognizing the sponsors of the bill, the Hon. Senator Ataullahjan from the other House and our member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, for the leadership that they have shown on this important issue. I want to thank them, and it is encouraging to see a bill brought forward that can be supported across all party lines and in both Houses. I am excited to see this legislation come to fruition.

I will begin with how we view the human body, and the dignity and worth that we assign to that human body. My faith teaches me that every human being is created in the image of God and that there is sanctity and a sacredness to human life, including the physical body. That is why, unlike so many other ancient civilizations or religions, those who follow and have followed Christianity, Judaism or Islam have historically practised burial rather than cremation. There is the belief that, even after death, the human body remains important. Christianity and even some branches of Judaism teach that the body will one day be resurrected and transformed. As

### *Private Members' Business*

such, the body is of value and must be treated with care and respect, even after death.

If the human body is viewed as important, worthy of care and dignity, and sacred even in death, how much more should it be treated as sacrosanct while the human person is alive? Even those who reject the tenets of the three Abrahamic faiths would agree that the body after death should be treated with dignity. In fact, here in Canada we have laws that relate specifically to the handling of a human body after death. Section 182 of the Criminal Code of Canada makes it a criminal offence to improperly or indecently interfere with or offer any indignity to a dead human body, and there are similar laws around the globe. Why? It is because as humans we recognize there is a sacredness to humanity, including the physical body. Again, if treated with such dignity and reverence after death, how much more so while still alive?

For those who prefer a more humanistic argument, I would point the House toward Immanuel Kant and his piece, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in which he casts the innate dignity of every human being as a categorical imperative. If we follow Kant, we must recognize that when a human organ becomes a commodity, a monetary value is placed on that organ. By assigning a monetary value to the organ, we essentially assign a monetary value to the individual who provided it. I am quite confident that we all agree with Kant, in this aspect, that putting a price on any part of a human being violates his or her intrinsic dignity.

Moreover, the removal of organs by force, under coercion or with consent, violates another Kantian principle: that of bodily autonomy. We hear a lot about bodily autonomy. We hear very different perspectives on what that entails, but there is a near-universal belief, at least in the western democracies, that what happens in an individual's body should be the sole purview of that individual or, in the case of young children, of their parents. Sadly, there are still individuals, criminal organizations and even some governments who refuse to respect the sanctity of the body.

No country officially endorses the practice of organ trafficking, but many turn a blind eye to this dehumanizing and often dangerous practice. In some cases, individuals, often those who live in poverty, sell their organs. In others, organs are obtained without the consent of a donor. An example of this would be what is happening in China with political prisoners, particularly people of faith. Again and again we have raised the plight of the Uighurs, practitioners of Falun Gong and Christians.

### *Government Orders*

There have been many petitions presented in this House to that effect, with respect to individual groups who have been persecuted by China's brutal regime. Organ harvesting of these religious minorities by China is well documented. Typically, these extractions and the transplants themselves take place outside of national medical systems, so even assuming the donor is kept alive, which is never a guarantee, there is a high risk associated with the extraction and implantation of these organs, and as such these practices violate the sanctity and dignity of the human person. Therefore, we can all agree that human life is precious, and the body and the organs therein are worthy of the protection this legislation seeks to provide.

I am pleased that we are standing up for the value of human life. I wish we would also have the courage to show a similar concern and do what the Supreme Court of Canada instructed Parliament to do three decades ago, and finally enact legal protection for the pre-born child in the womb. It is time we acted.

● (1155)

I am in favour of the bill's crackdown on foreign nationals who have been involved in organ trafficking attempting to come to Canada. I think that is good. It is high time that we crack down on who is allowed to come to Canada and who is not. However, I think that we need to be careful to differentiate between those who have been involved as traffickers and those who the traffickers may have exploited. If an individual has been involved in trafficking proper, that is, if they have facilitated or received monetary benefit from facilitating the illegal trafficking of organs, like those who traffic in drugs or slaves, that individual should not be admissible to Canada.

As an aside, I think it is reprehensible and hypocritical that the current government, even though it is supporting the legislation, also brought forward Bill C-75, which lowered the penalties for those involved in profiting from human trafficking. It is frankly absurd, and I hope some of the members on the opposite side see the disconnect, but any foreign nationals who traffic or profit from trafficking in human organs should not be admissible to Canada.

That said, as I read this legislation, I think that there should be a clear enough differentiation between traffickers and those who have willingly donated their own organs.

I am also a bit concerned about the first part of proposed subsection 4.2, where it says, "a person who commits an act or omission outside Canada that, if committed in Canada, would be an offence under section 240.?" I am deemed to commit that act or omission in Canada". As far as it relates to this piece of legislation, I think it is good, but I understand and I have to admit that I do struggle a little with that portion for a couple of reasons. The first is that other countries are not Canada, and every country around the globe has its own laws and legal systems. In the same way that we would expect those who come to Canada to respect our laws, we also need to be willing to respect the laws of other countries.

I know there are good counter-arguments to that point. Many of them are excellent reasonable arguments, but I think that something needs to be said where we respect other jurisdictions.

I would like to reiterate again that I am happy we are having this discussion. I would like to see that handful of concerns addressed,

but overall I am pleased to be supporting this legislation. Our party is pleased to support it.

I want to again thank the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan and Senator Ataullahjan for their hard work on this file. I am looking forward to supporting it.

● (1200)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-32, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 3, 2022 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, as reported (with-out amendment) from the committee.

[*English*]

#### SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** There is one motion in amendment standing on the Notice Paper for the report stage of Bill C-32. Motion No. 1 will be debated and voted upon.

#### MOTIONS IN AMENDMENT

**Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC)** moved:

That Bill C-32 be amended by deleting the short title.

He said: Madam Speaker, normally if a Canadian wanted to know what was happening with their federal government and what the federal government was doing for them, one would think it would be natural to look at the fall economic statement or a federal budget. My advice to Canadians is, if they want to know what is really going on in this country, they should not read the budget put out by the Liberal-NDP alliance. What they instead need to look at is not what has been said and talked about, but the realities of what is actually getting done. In many cases, the government did not follow through on what it said it would do.

Canadians need to read more than the budget to know what is going on. They need to read the reports of the Auditor General of Canada. They need to read the reports of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who audits and calls out far too many times, sadly, the number of failures the government has had when it comes to operating the federal government and its programs efficiently. In the budget document, one reads: "we will", "proposes" or that they want to do certain things. There are a lot of word salads, platitudes and generalities.

*Government Orders*

After reading the dozens of pages, one would think one never had it so good in this country. One would think the government is going to solve, and is about to solve, every single problem that we face with wording like, “the billions of dollars” in new proposed spending and the paragraphs of promises that would affect everything this country is facing. However, the truth, when it comes to the economic record of the government and its coalition alliance with the NDP, is that the Liberals will talk about solving the problem by spending more money than ever before. They are going to spend a billion here and a billion there, yet they never follow through on delivering better results. Sadly, we have seen billions of dollars being spent, while little progress has been made. The situation is actually getting worse.

In all fairness, someone might say that I am a bit biased about the performance of the government. I would tell Canadians not to take my word for it. Take the Auditor General of Canada's word, an independent officer of Parliament who is very busy calling out the government for its numerous failures these days.

Back in June, in my interaction at the public accounts committee with the Auditor General, she said that the government is spending more money and getting fewer results for it. Karen Hogan, the Auditor General of Canada, said, “it's not about spending more money but about spending it in a more intelligent or creative way that actually targets the barriers.” In her words, not mine, we are spending more money and getting fewer results. We are seeing that.

Conservatives are standing up to call this out. The government is spending more money. Things are now costing more. In many cases the situation is getting worse and the government is making the situation worse. Look no further than the fact that the government cannot even deliver a passport in a reasonable period of time. My constituency office has heard from numerous frustrated Canadians who, after waiting months and months, are trying to get a basic service such as a new or renewed passport.

The list from the Auditor General of Canada goes on. With respect to Indigenous Services Canada, the audit came in about drinking water in rural and remote indigenous communities, and the government failed to keep its promise to eliminate all of those issues. It now has no plan or timeline of how it is actually going to complete that promise. That was called out by the Auditor General.

When it comes to housing, a recent report indicated that the Liberals have spent an extra \$1 billion specifically on homelessness, but they cannot keep track of how many homeless people there are in Canada. They have no idea what the results are after spending all of that money. On top of that, through the transparency we advocated for, we were able to call out the fact that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, which is responsible for affordable housing in this country, gave their staff \$40 million in bonuses as housing prices have doubled and, as the audit confirmed, the service levels at that organization left something to be desired.

● (1205)

Regarding the environment, the Auditor General, on the greening government strategy, says, “government decision makers, parliamentarians, and Canadians do not...know...whether the government will meet its...target”. The tripling of the carbon tax is coming

ahead, and the government cannot even see if its plan is going to meet its targets.

We can look back in history and see, for every single target the Liberals have set for themselves for environmental emissions and standards, they have failed to meet it, and they have not even come remotely close. It continues. We should not take a look at the budget, with all its aspirational sayings. We should look at the records of all this.

As we talk about the fall economic statement, the financial plan of the government, here is the reality that is hitting home for millions of Canadians watching the news these past few days. When it comes to veterans' service levels, the Auditor General of the country says:

[Veterans Affairs] actions did not reduce overall wait times for eligible veterans. The department was still a long way from meeting its service standard. Implementation of initiatives was slow. Data to measure improvements was lacking. Both the funding and almost half of the employees on the team responsible for processing applications were temporary. As a result, veterans waited too long to receive benefits to support their physical and mental health and their families' overall well-being.

I would not know that if I had read the Liberals' budget, but when I read the Auditor General of Canada, who is actually calling out not only intentions and words, but also actions and results, it certainly leaves something to be desired from the Liberal-NDP alliance.

I want to spend some time talking about the carbon tax. The last time I rose in the House to speak to the carbon tax, it was on an environmental bill, Bill S-5. I was shouted down and interrupted with points of order in the House of Commons, while I was talking about environmental legislation, by members saying the carbon tax was not relevant to a debate on the government's environmental priorities, and I now want to apologize to the government. I was wrong, and I should not have talked about the carbon tax during an environmental debate because the carbon tax plan the government has is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan.

Now, I am here. I cannot be interrupted by a point of order, and I cannot be stopped from talking about the carbon tax, because it is a tax plan, and I am happy to spend some time on that. I can acknowledge my faults and shortcomings, and I will in this case.

Let us talk about it. Let me take the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer's analysis of the carbon tax's impact on families:

Most households under the backstop will see a net loss resulting from federal carbon pricing under the HEHE plan in 2030-31.

Household carbon costs...exceed the rebate and the induced reduction in personal income taxes arising from the loss in income.

*Government Orders*

Here is the thing that the Liberals, the NDP, the Bloc Québécois and the Green Party fail to understand about the carbon tax: taxpayers do not even get back in the rebate what they pay into it directly. I want to talk about who does not get a rebate at all in this country when it comes to the increasing and punitive carbon tax. It is small businesses and farmers.

They get nailed with the full bill each and every time. What happens is that when our favourite restaurant, bakery or retail store gets hit with its utility bill, and just as a senior gets a utility bill with a GST, HST and carbon tax portion, every business gets those same utility bills. They are seeing their gas bills go up. They are seeing their cost of transportation go up, and they do not get any sort of subsidy or break.

What do they do at that restaurant? With no pun intended, they bake it into the price of one's favourite pizza or favourite food. That price is then passed on to the restaurant customer and to the grocery store customer. It is not a line item of a tax they are charged on top of that, per se, but it is added in to the inflationary prices we are seeing in this country.

The Liberals, the New Democrats and other parties consistently advocate the budget document, which confirms they want to triple the carbon tax in the coming years, and all that is doing is adding to the inflationary pressure. Food price listings for 2023 have risen. They are expected to go up in many cases by double digits again. Enough is enough.

• (1210)

The carbon tax is driving up the price and the cost of living in our country. One thing we need to call out is that it was supposed to lower emissions. Every year since the Liberals and NDP put the carbon tax in, it has gone up. Enough is enough. The Conservatives are proud to stand and say that we will not take it anymore.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, what the member does not tell Canadians is that in the last federal election, every Conservative member supported the Conservative election platform that clearly indicated to Canadians that a Conservative government would support a price on pollution. That means a carbon tax. On the one hand, during an election campaign, the Conservatives made a commitment to Canada, saying they supported a price on pollution. Today, they have reversed their position. Now they say they do not support a price on pollution.

I wonder if the member would be transparent and apologize to Canadians for making a promise then and now saying the Conservatives no longer support what they told Canadians.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Madam Speaker, I will not apologize, but I will stand up proudly and say that Canadians across the country understand the damage and inefficiency of the carbon tax. Not only do they believe it should not increase, but it should not triple.

If we want to talk about broken promises under the Liberal government tabling legislation, former environment minister, Catherine McKenna, who is no longer a member of the House, promised Canadians, under the Prime Minister, that the carbon tax would not go above \$50 a tonne. The Liberals have broken their promise and will triple it to over \$170 a tonne.

The government should be apologizing for breaking its promise and raising the cost of living on Canadians. The Conservatives are standing on the right side of the issue and we are seeing that in the momentum we are getting across the country with this message.

• (1215)

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. I agree with him. There are a number of things missing from this economic statement. I would like him to comment on the absence of the health transfers that are so important for all provinces, which are currently under a lot of pressure to meet needs and provide services. The money is in Ottawa, but the needs are in the provinces.

Does my colleague also think that there is something major missing with regard to health transfers?

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague for her question and the opportunity to practise my second language this afternoon.

I agree with the question in general. On the health file, there is a major crisis in every province and every region of this country. We need leadership from the federal government and the Minister of Health. The government made a commitment to put more money into Canada's health transfer system. Every province will need more money and a five- to 10-year plan to increase health care services. Yes, a lot of things were missing from this economic statement, health transfers in particular.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry spent quite a bit of his speech speaking about a price on carbon, so I will spend some time on that.

What the member did not mention is that the economic cost of the wildfires in B.C. alone, let alone the deaths, is estimated between \$10.6 billion to \$17.1 billion. He is right to point out that emissions continue to go up, so obviously more needs to be done to address the climate crisis. Ending subsidies to fossil fuels should be part of that plan.

I would like to hear if the member is opposed to a carbon tax, which economists say is the most efficient way to address the climate crisis, one of many measures we need. We need to get more funds to those who are impacted the most by it. I would like to hear more from the member on what he would like to see done to have Canada step up and do its part to address the climate crisis.

**Mr. Eric Duncan:** Madam Speaker, no, the Conservatives do not believe that the failed carbon tax is working. If we look at the metrics that the Green Party has itself, we have a carbon tax that has been increasing every year since it came into effect. We were told that emissions would drop when the carbon tax came in. Emissions have gone up every year and they will continue to do so. The government still has not tabled a plan to meet any of the targets it has set.

We can make progress on lowering emissions through removing gatekeepers and by enabling technology, not taxes, to be the solution. There is a lot—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** 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, there is a significant difference between the government and the official opposition when it comes to budgetary and legislative measures. We have a government that understands the importance of having the backs of Canadians, whether it is during a pandemic or at a time when Canadians are concerned about inflation.

The member made reference to a couple of issues, and I want to pick up on that because it amplifies the contrast. We, on this side of the House, believe in an economy that works for all Canadians. We do not believe in the trickle down theory of the Conservatives, which is to cut, or as the minister of revenue would say, “chop, chop.”

That is the approach of the Conservatives. They do not necessarily tell us where they are going to cut; they are just going to cut. It is because they do not want to be honest with Canadians and tell them what they want to cut. I often refer to this as the Conservative hidden agenda. Will we find out that hidden agenda if, heaven forbid, they form a government?

We get a sense of the contrast. If we look at the last federal election, when we think of policy, what does the Conservative Party really stand for? In the last federal election, 338 Conservative candidates from coast to coast to coast accepted the Conservative election platform, meaning they campaigned on it. Within that document, it says that the Conservative Party of Canada supports a price on pollution, which in essence is the carbon tax.

The Conservatives have been raising this issue day after day, coming up with the stupid thing of “triple, triple, triple”. It does not make any sense and the Conservatives do not make any sense on this issue. First, they supported it during the last election and now they have reversed their position. Then one of their members says that Canadians are a lot worse off because of the price on pollution and quotes the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

I will quote the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who has said that 80% of Canadians who are part of the backstop for the price on pollution are receiving more than they are actually spending. There is a net gain. That means 80% of the residents of Winnipeg North are benefiting from the price on pollution. When Conservatives say that it is going up, so is the rebate. My constituents are benefiting from that.

### *Government Orders*

Are the Conservatives being honest on this issue? They are not, and they are spreading misinformation. We know that. We knew that shortly after the last national election, when they said that they would support it. Now saying they are not going to support it and are spreading misinformation about it.

Policy matters and leadership on major issues matter. That is why we wait with bated breath for the Conservative leader to stand and apologize to Canadians on his position on cryptocurrency. I and others have raised this issue in the past, when the leader of the Conservative Party, Canada's official opposition, was being provided the opportunity to apologize to Canadians for encouraging them to invest in cryptocurrency to fight inflation. Those who would have followed that advice would have incurred a loss of more than 60% of their revenue. Imagine being a senior on a fixed income and following the advice of the leader of the Conservative Party.

● (1220)

When it comes to the issue of inflation, the Conservative Party would have us believe that the Government of Canada, the Prime Minister, is responsible for inflation in Canada and, in fact, beyond. Yes, we play a role, and we recognize the pain and hurt in our communities as a result of inflation, but let us put it in proper perspective.

Let us compare Canada's inflation rate to the U.S.A., Great Britain, most of the European countries and the G20 countries. When we look at the averages, Canada's inflation rate is below theirs. It fluctuates depending on provinces, but, generally speaking, our inflation rate is under control in comparison to other countries.

However, that is not good enough for us. We on the government benches recognize that Canadians are hurting when they buy groceries, require services or are putting fuel in their cars. We understand and appreciate that, which is why we have the fall economic statement. It is why we have brought forward legislation to provide relief to Canadians, measures that will put money in the pockets of Canadians and, in many ways, help Canadians get through this time of higher inflation.

For example, there is the doubling of the GST credit for six months. Remember, the Conservatives originally opposed that. They had to be shamed into supporting it. After all, it put money in the pockets of Canadians. After a little shaming, they came on side and supported that legislation. However, we did a lot more than that, and some high-profile things.

Just last week, Canadians, depending on eligibility and income, were provided dental care services for children under the age of 12. Many of those children, if they do not get that dental service, end up in our emergency hospitals. The Conservative Party, still today, is saying no to that. When it came time for the Conservatives to vote on it, they voted no for children under the age of 12 receiving dental care benefits.

*Government Orders*

There is the rental support, which, again, is direct money to support Canadians who are having a difficult time meeting rental payments. The Conservatives will say that it could have been more money, but the bottom line is that we are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to assist Canadians with their rent. Again, the Conservative Party voted against that.

What about students? Interest on federal student loans is being forgiven. Again, the Conservative Party is voting against it.

I am a big fan of the multi-generational home renovation tax credit. It is a fantastic program. It will make a difference for many Canadians, for moms, dads and adults with disabilities, by providing a credit to add a secondary unit for those individuals. It is a significant credit, but the Conservatives are voting against that too.

There is a litany of things that the government is doing to provide Canadians the support they need during this difficult time, and time and again, the Conservatives have voted against them. As we continue to build an economy that works for all Canadians, we will do what we can to ensure that happens.

• (1225)

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member for Winnipeg North likes to come up here and cast aspersions upon us as Conservatives. The Liberal Party always stands for “tax and spend”. I need to remind the member for Winnipeg North that these tax dollars are not the money of the Liberal Party of Canada. They belong to Canadians. The best place to leave that money is in the pockets of Canadians. For the member to get up and pontificate and slander the Conservatives is unbecoming of any parliamentary speech. It is common for the member to do.

The member often tells me he likes to come up to my riding where he has a cabin. He should spend some time talking to rural Manitobans. They know the carbon tax, which is tripling, will cost \$1,145 more per Manitoban than what they get back from the government. Those Canadians who live in rural areas know the carbon tax is hurting them, especially those who live on fixed incomes, like seniors.

He needs to talk to real Canadians outside the Ottawa bubble so he knows exactly what is happening in the real world.

• (1230)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member made reference to seniors. We brought in increases to the GIS that brought tens of thousands of seniors out of poverty and made a 10% increase for our seniors who are 75 and over. If the member wants to accuse me of upsetting a lot of Conservatives because of the words I say, I can assure the member that every word I say is, in fact, accurate. I think it is important that Canadians have a right to know what the Conservatives are saying. When the Minister of National Revenue says the words “chop, chop, chop”, she is right. The Conservative Party does have that mentality and the member opposite just demonstrated that in part. Canadians have a right to know.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the things that stand out about Bill C-32 are the things that are

missing, and that includes a very important request from Quebeckers and my constituents.

I am talking about the two-tier pension system. The government increased pensions for people aged 75 and up, but it seems to think that seniors aged 65 to 75 do not need a pension increase.

I think they do need one, particularly with inflation being what it is right now. I would like my colleague to share his thoughts on that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, there are a number of things I could say. One would be the fact that the Liberal Party made a campaign commitment to seniors who were 75 and over in the 2019 election that if we were elected into government, we would increase, by 10%, payments for seniors over 75. We are fulfilling an election campaign commitment.

If I were to have leave of the chamber to expand on that, I would be happy to explain why it is so critically important. I am disappointed that opposition members do not seem to want to recognize that seniors 75 and over often incur additional expenses. There are factors that need to be taken into consideration. That is why a caring government would do what we have done to support seniors in general.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, one thing I was hoping to see in the fall economic statement and in this bill was some added help for graduate students across Canada. These are our best and brightest master's and Ph.D. students. The money they are given by the federal government to do their work has stayed the same for almost 20 years, since 2003. They are living in poverty, below the poverty line. They are working for less than minimum wage. For the last year, the science and research committee has recommended their wages go up and nothing has been done.

Can he explain why that is?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, within the budget, we now have the elimination of interest for students. That is a significant step forward for federal student loans where the interest is permanently being eliminated. That is putting money in the pockets of students. This will, I believe, enable students to do that much more in the future, whether that means continuing with their education or using that money elsewhere.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak at report stage of Bill C-32.

After reading Bill C-32 and the proposed amendment, all I can say is that this bill just dusts off some old legislative measures. There is nothing to excite us or to show us what direction the government wants to take. This bill is actually rather disappointing.

As a former health care network manager in Quebec, I want to talk the fact that there is absolutely no mention of health transfers in this bill. That is a problem.

*Government Orders*

Coincidentally, I read a wonderful article in *La Presse* this morning by the former mayor of Gatineau, Maxime Pedneaud-Jobin. I am actually somewhat envious of him. I wish I could have written that article myself, because what he said is exactly what I think about the whole debate on health transfers, namely, that needs are being expressed in the provinces and Quebec, but the money is in Ottawa.

I urge my Liberal and NDP colleagues to read the article. It is in French, but that would be a good way for them to practice their French. It is so interesting that it might even be worth getting it translated. Essentially, Maxime Pedneaud-Jobin says that the needs vary so widely from one province to another that Canada-wide standards would not really help patients. The purpose of the health transfers is to allow as many residents as possible to obtain high-quality public services, regardless where they live.

It is worth reading an excerpt:

I will give you one last sampling of our differences to demonstrate how useless, if not extremely complex, it would be to set Canada-wide standards.

Quebec is the only province that has a drug plan. Quebecers consume the least amount of cannabis. The morning-after pill is used less in Quebec than anywhere else in the country, and 8% of [elective abortions] were performed using that method here, while the rate is 31% in Ontario and 50% in British Columbia. Quebec is the place with the most psychologists per capita in North America. There are as many here as in the rest of Canada combined. Quebec has the lowest perinatal and neonatal mortality rate in Canada. In Quebec, only a pharmacist can own a pharmacy, which is a unique situation. And so on and so forth.

We have a different lifestyle, we have a different health status, and, since Marguerite Bourgeoys, we have our own health management model.

This quote demonstrates that it is unrealistic for the federal government to think it can create equity with Canada-wide standards. It is trying to make itself look good by saying it will impose a standard to ensure health equity, but it is just deluding itself. The needs are not the same everywhere. It is not that Quebec is better or worse; it is simply different. Each province has its own public health needs based on the residents it most urgently needs to care for.

Quebec also has different tools. There are local community service centres, known as CLSCs, and family medicine groups, known as GMFs. Quebec is also recognized for its expertise in setting up vaccination clinics. We are true leaders. We have developed tools that are different from other provinces', and we are proud of that. We know very well what we need to do and, more importantly, where we need to improve.

Having worked as a manager at the Montérégie-Ouest integrated health and social services centre, or CISSS, I can say that each manager is responsible for achieving certain indicators that are both well known and documented. From one region to another, these indicators are directly linked to the public health system's departmental guidelines.

• (1235)

The CISSS de la Montérégie-Ouest's catchment area includes parts of four members' ridings, specifically the member for Vaudreuil—Soulanges, the member for Salaberry—Suroît, the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle and the member for La Prairie. It is a large CISSS, and with that comes various challenges. I would like

to talk about a few of the indicators that the department is asking us to observe and improve on.

The members on the government side make it sound like there are no standards at all, like it is complete chaos in the provinces. I would like my colleagues to know that the opposite is true. We have indicators, very specific standards and percentage targets. I will name a few, of which I am particularly proud.

One indicator that the CISSS de la Montérégie-Ouest has as an objective is to improve access to addiction services. There is a broad departmental guideline regarding addiction, and my CISSS—I say “my” because it is still my CISSS—wants to improve access to addiction services. If we compare some data, we see that 10,717 people received addiction services in 2020. That number went down in 2021, when 9,743 people received those services. What happened? Some of the CISSS staff are studied the situation to find out why fewer people accessed addiction services than the year before. They looked into it, did some research and consulted with professionals. They realized that they need to serve people who may not be accustomed to bureaucracy, people who may not want to go to a hospital or a CLSC, but who want to be in contact with professionals who understand their lives and do not judge them.

That is why my CISSS got in touch with Pacte de rue, a community organization in my riding with outreach workers across the CISSS's territory. These workers connect with people where they are at, in their everyday lives and on the street. They work on the ground, not in offices. They realized that, if the organization had a street medicine service, they could increase the number of individuals accessing addiction services by going to people rather than waiting until people came to them.

I think that is a powerful example of a public network, our CISSS, working with a community organization in my riding. Through their co-operation and unique model, they are reaching people who might not otherwise receive public health care services. Now people who are homeless or have addictions may encounter an outreach worker who will take them to see a street medicine nurse. This is such a great model that it proves that these claims I am hearing, that there are no standards or indicators, are not true. Quebec's Department of Health requires my CISSS to adhere to broad guidelines for health, social services and public health and very specific indicators with measurable objectives. Every CISSS in Quebec has to do everything in its power to meet the goal.

The same thing happened with the new service that just opened, called *Aire ouverte*. Quebec wanted to improve access to services for children, youth and their families. We noticed that our statistics and indicators showed that there were clients who were not being reached as much, clients whose needs may not be as great, but who need help and services and do not seek them out. That is why Quebec created *Aire ouverte*, a program where health care workers meet with young people and no appointment is needed. These are clinics where no appointment is needed to easily access health care workers who will welcome young people and speak openly with them, without judgment, and refer to them to right services.

*Government Orders*

In closing, funding for the health care system is a critical issue. Unfortunately, we are dealing with a government that is playing games with this critical issue at patients' expense.

• (1240)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would argue differently from what the member has said with regard to the issue of health care. This is a government that makes health care for all Canadians a high priority. It does that by reaching accords with the provinces and territories. It does that through historic amounts of federal dollars going toward provinces and territories for the financing of health care. It does that by recognizing our important health care issues, whether they are long-term care issues, mental health issues or issues related to dental care. These are all important issues that Canadians have, and I know, from my own constituents' perspectives, that constituents want the federal government to continue to play a role in health care.

I am wondering if my colleague could provide her thoughts and beliefs about the Canada Health Act and the expectation that Canadians have in general that the federal government—

• (1245)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that interesting question. It gives me a chance to explain to him that health and education are also priorities of the Quebec government.

As far as health is concerned, the Government of Quebec is very clear about being able to identify its own problems and priorities. Quebec and British Columbia have more seniors than the other provinces; it is only natural that we are under more pressure when it comes to services for seniors. We know how to manage our services, but we would like the federal government to understand that the money that taxpayers pay should go back to the provinces that are experiencing the pressure that comes with service delivery.

What Quebec and the provinces are asking for is clear. They are asking the federal government to participate to the tune of 35%. That is a reasonable request because the needs are in the provinces and it is the provinces and Quebec that need to have the means to meet the needs of their citizens.

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît on her speech,

I would like to hear her thoughts on the following. Yes, health is important, but it is healthy food that leads to good health.

Last week, I was in touch with several food banks in my riding. To my great surprise, I learned that there has been a significant increase in the use of food banks, an increase of more than 25%. A third of clients who use food banks are children.

In the current budget, I did not see much money to support food banks and to help children. What does my colleague think of that?

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question, which is very interesting.

Food drives are held in Quebec at this time of year. People collect food to help food banks and other organizations that provide food assistance. Previously, it was believed that a certain category of people needed help and went to food banks. Now, even working people need help and support as pressure and inflation are having a significant impact, especially on families.

That is why we know that communities need groups and organizations that are really in touch with their needs and provide the services they require. However, community groups need government support in order to provide services, but also to grow, to expand their reach and to withstand the pressure. That requires more funding.

Quebec's independent community organizations are asking for more funding from the Quebec government, which also must make difficult choices because it lacks the means to answer their call. Once again, one of the solutions is to give the provinces and Quebec what they are asking for, larger health transfers.

[*English*]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today at report stage of Bill C-32 to talk a bit about the bill.

One of the really important measures contained in this bill is the Canada recovery dividend. We have talked a lot in this place about the impact of the pandemic on people and about the need for the government to have spent a considerable sum of money to support people as they contemplated losing their homes during the pandemic, particularly in those early days when the economy all but shut down and people were put out of work and were not sure how they were going to pay their bills. We have also talked a lot in this place about the amount of financial aid that was made available to large financial institutions like banks right at the outset of the pandemic. Indeed, we have talked about some of the knock-on effects in the economy of providing that liquidity, support and de-risking to major financial institutions.

The Canada recovery dividend is a one-time tax assessed on Canada's largest financial institutions for profits of over \$1 billion during those early years of the pandemic. It is to be paid over five years and represents a considerable amount of revenue. It is something the New Democrats would have liked to see applied to big box stores, grocery stores and oil and gas companies, which also saw considerable profits during that period. By considerable profits, I do not just mean their normal considerable profits. I mean extra profit above and beyond the normal rate of profit that these companies enjoy.

While we would have liked to see that expanded and while we continue to ask and push for that, there is an important piece of work being done here, which is to assess the Canada recovery dividend, or what in other jurisdictions has been called a windfall tax, on Canada's financial institutions. It has not been done before, to my knowledge, in my own lifetime, so it is a really significant undertaking to go to the large financial institutions, which made a lot of money and benefited significantly from public funding during the pandemic, and say they need to pay their fair share.

Oftentimes, we talk about folks having to pay their fair share. The New Democrats talk about large companies having to pay their fair share. Rarely do we see actual instances of their being required to do it. This is what it looks like when they do it. While going ahead with this with respect to financial institutions is a positive thing, it also demonstrates the extent to which we are not requiring other large profitable companies to pay their fair share, because they are not mentioned in this legislation. They are not going to do it spontaneously. They are not going to do it out of the goodness of their hearts. They are not going to just come around. The banks did not, but they will have to do it because it is legislated. It should be legislated for other sectors as well, but it matters that we are doing it for some sectors.

In addition to that, this legislation would permanently increase the corporate tax rate on those very same companies, including the big banks and life insurance companies, from 15% to 16.5%. That is also significant. That is what it means to make companies pay their fair share, and it is something too infrequently seen in this place. I note to anyone listening at home who has an outpouring of sympathy for these large institutions, although I doubt many are, that this is still far less than the large institutions paid in the year 2000, when they paid a 28% corporate tax rate. Going up to 16.5% for a small cross-section of corporate Canada, albeit a large, powerful and profitable cross-section, is hardly what we mean when we talk about tax fairness. It is at least, for the first time in over 20 years, a step in the right direction.

I am proud to be rising today to support that step in the right direction. I hope it is the first of many. I know if Canadians see fit to elect a New Democratic government, it will be. In the meantime, we will be here fighting the Liberals and dragging them kicking and screaming at every opportunity we get so they do the right thing and ensure that corporate Canada is paying its fair share. Canadians who want a sense of what that looks like need only look at this bill and see the progress we are making.

There are also some things in this bill that have to do with the housing market. Ultimately, they are a drop in the bucket because they are predicated upon the same ethos or philosophy that has been driving the housing market since the Liberal government of the mid-nineties first terminated the national housing strategy, which had a commodity-based and market-based approach to housing.

● (1250)

This is not because we ever had a time when there was not a housing market. There has always been a housing market in Canada, and rightly so, but we used to have a housing market in Canada that was about people being able to buy a family home and

### *Government Orders*

sell a home when it came time for them to downsize in retirement and have a bit of a nest egg. That was complemented by a parallel public housing sector that was meaningful, made real investments and built a significant number of units every year. That stopped in the mid-nineties, and we have never really gotten back to that.

Things that the New Democrats support, incidentally, such as a doubling of the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, will make a difference for certain families that are already financially well positioned to contemplate buying a house in this market. Fewer and fewer Canadians belong to that category because of the astronomical increase in the cost of housing. Fewer and fewer Canadians belong to that category because of the significant depreciation in their salaries against inflation and the prices of many things. These are things that will make a difference for some Canadians.

Some of these things the New Democrats have advocated for, such as the doubling of the first-time homebuyers' tax credit and cracking down elsewhere, to the extent that the government has done so in this bill. We will see in time how effective that is and what the loopholes mean, but things like house flipping and other things are making it harder for Canadians to compete and get a first home. They are being outbid by people who have made a science of bidding on homes and flipping them and who are backed by access to a lot of capital that most Canadians do not have ready access to. Nevertheless, there are some measures that may help certain Canadians.

That is fine, but there is a lot more work to do to combat the idea that houses are commercial assets as opposed to homes. Significant government investments will be required to make that case and take the framework on so that we are building more social housing units for which rent is geared to income. Also, not unlike what I was just talking about with regard to assessing real taxes on the biggest corporate players in Canada, there is a lot of work to do in changing the regulatory environment so that big real estate investment trusts and other large corporate players in the housing market, which are pushing up prices and evicting low-income tenants, do not have a free hand to do that in the way they have.

That is what it will ultimately take for us to live in a country that has made a real decision about its values in respect of housing so that housing is not a simple market with a good like any other good in the market, but is a right for Canadian citizens. We have to design our housing market, including using non-market tools, to ensure that everybody has access to housing. This bill does not get us there, but it does tinker at the edges in ways that will be helpful for some people.

*Government Orders*

I want to talk a bit about what is not in the bill. The New Democrats are quite prepared to support this bill on the basis of some of the things that are significant and some of the things that tinker at the edges, albeit in helpful ways as opposed to harmful ways, but there is a lot that is not in the bill. I think particularly of employment insurance reform as the government begins to talk about a recession. We do not see any clues in this bill, just as we did not see any in the fall economic statement, about where the government is going on certain key policy decisions that have been made to get our employment insurance system up to where it needs to be.

I would note, while I have the opportunity, that one thing the government has decided to do, which we do not see in this bill but is on the books, is attribute \$25 billion of debt, a big number, to the employment insurance account for the CERB and CRB payments that were made under the auspices of Service Canada, as opposed to the CRA. I have to say that whatever the government has in store for EI modernization clearly cannot involve any funding, because a \$25-billion debt on the EI account means that we are going to see maximum premium increases for the next seven years, with all of that money paying down CERB debt that should not be on the EI account. That was a general expense by the government in the context of a global emergency, and it should not be on the EI account. I am happy to talk more about that during questions and answers.

• (1255)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fine speech. I represent a large riding, and many seniors reach out to me. They are worried. They do not understand what is going on. Some almost wish they were 74 years old so they could collect a decent pension.

Can my hon. colleague offer some solutions the government could act on, for once?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I thank the honourable member for her question. I think the solution is staring us in the face: The government should increase OAS for seniors 65 and up.

Seniors 65 and up grapple with the same financial pressure as those 75 and up. We know we are going through very tough economic times. Everyone is affected, so everyone should be entitled to a higher OAS benefit.

• (1300)

[*English*]

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Madam Speaker, why should we have any more faith, going forward, in the government with which he has chosen to partner? It cannot deliver on basic programs like passports. How can we ever do something complex like a housing program and things like that, which he so eloquently spoke of?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, in the last election, Canadians elected 338 MPs. It is true, when I look at the current government, I see a lot of reasons Canadians should not trust it and reasons they may think the government has failed them. I look across the way, and I do not see an adequate replacement. Therefore, I

think the 338 of us are stuck trying to figure out how to move forward on certain policy items that are in the best interests of Canadians and that are going to make concrete improvements in their lives. I do not think an election is going to accomplish that.

If people would get serious, drop some of the rhetoric and, regardless of what party we belong to, look for ways we could move forward on good policy issues, that would make a positive difference in the lives of Canadians. I think if we spend more of our time doing that, Canadians would be far better served than by simply electing another government that would have its own problems.

There is inaction on climate change. We would not get anything better from them. There are tax breaks for big corporations. We would not get anything better from them. I could go on, but I will not. I am just going to focus on trying to get things done for people here.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member spoke about some of the positive items in Bill C-32 as well as concerns about items that were not there. One of those things is recognizing that Canadians with disabilities are disproportionately living in poverty across the country. Bill C-32, the fall economic statement, and the budget before that failed to introduce any kind of emergency response in the way that parliamentarians in this place had done when COVID first hit. I know he was here for that.

The member for Elmwood—Transcona has been a champion for pushing for better supports for Canadians living with disabilities. I wonder if he could talk about why there has not been a response already and what it would take to get a disability emergency response introduced in this place.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, frankly, I think that all it would take is a bit of political will from the government. It has enough support with other members in the House to try to come to some kind of meaningful emergency solution for people living with disabilities. The government has expressed an intent. We saw that in some previous budgets, not in the numbers, but in the flowery language.

The Liberals introduced Bill C-22 in this Parliament, which is a lot like a bill from the previous Parliament. Again, it is frustrating, because it has no details about the amount the government intends to pay or about the eligibility criteria. It is not talking about doing anything in the meantime, so one is forced to wonder whether the government is serious about delivering a benefit to Canadians living with disabilities, who are in dire need right now, or whether these are just talking points.

*Government Orders*

The political will outside the Liberal Party is adequate in the House in order to implement a solution. We are waiting on the government to care enough to put something on the table so that we can move ahead.

**Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise here in the House of Commons to look at the economic situation that exists out there for Canadians. Certainly, to say that it is a dire, difficult and unpleasant situation is a misrepresentation.

I would like to point out the misrepresentation of the House by the members opposite. They are claiming perhaps their clairvoyant nature of understanding what the government over here might propose when we get to sit on the other side. As we all know, it is not our job as the opposition to present those cards, which we will hold very close to our chests, and we will make the economic picture much better for Canadians as we take office.

I would like to focus my remarks on the fall economic statement with respect to Atlantic Canada, and, to no surprise, the carbon tax and how it affects Atlantic Canada. I will also focus on the significant growing debt, the programs the government has introduced and perhaps try to make it a bit personal for Canadians as they try to balance their own budgets with difficulty.

When we look at Atlantic Canada in the fall economic statement there is absolutely nothing specific in there. There is really not much talk of Atlantic Canada at all. We find that very surprising given the fact that we all know that Atlantic Canada is still reeling from hurricane Fiona. I just came here this morning. There are still trees down everywhere. Multiple businesses are still affected by hurricane Fiona, and they are unable to get back on their feet again. Certainly, there are still many homes with significantly damaged roofs. How are we going to move forward?

We asked the ACOA minister to come and specifically have a look at some of the things going on in Cumberland County, which was one of the hardest-hit counties in the entire area. Sadly, that minister did not show up. When we asked the minister's office to provide information as to how the \$300 million in pledged money was going to roll out to Atlantic Canadians, the answer was that it did not know yet. There were no details.

It has been a long time since the hurricane happened. For a government to not be able to roll out the pledged money, which Atlantic Canadians specifically so desperately need, is creating more problems. In fact, I had a call with the Canadian Red Cross this morning, and it was pointed out that the applications for its program are now closed, and I will get to that in a second. The Red Cross is seeing many Nova Scotians reaching out from a very difficult financial spot, hoping to get support not only with respect to the hurricane Fiona damage but also from a social services point of view. They are really struggling.

We know very clearly from words in the House that 1.5 million Canadians have visited food banks, and 20% of Canadians are cutting back on the food they consume simply for financial reasons. We know as well from my call with the Red Cross that the \$31 million generously pledged by Canadians and matched by the federal government is now gone. It is \$500 for about 124,000 households.

That is \$62 million. There is not going to be more money forthcoming from the Red Cross.

What other difficulties are we facing as we move forward in 2022? Of course, it is winter, and we know from this budget that difficulties will continue to exist. I have spoken here previously with respect to the words of the Premier of Nova Scotia. It is so bad out there with this carbon tax, which has been foisted upon Nova Scotians, that there is a petition circulating to buck the trend and attempt to not be required to succumb to the heavy burden of the carbon tax.

We know that by 2025 it is going to cost the average Canadian \$2,200 and by 2030 it will cost \$3,100. This is in a population that was not really mentioned in the fall economic statement at all. It is in a population that, sadly, feels the significant burden of what is going on in the world with the increasing interest rates and rising costs of everything very acutely. Imagine a provincial government starting a petition to try to get away from this burdensome carbon tax that is being foisted upon Nova Scotians.

We know that the cost of gas, groceries and home heating is continuing to increase. We know that the premier and the Government of Nova Scotia understand this clearly, but we have a government across the aisle that is continuing to spend and very sadly hoping that the budget is going to balance itself. That is a budget that has a debt of almost \$1.3 trillion. We also know that this is a government that continues to spend money. It has been said in the House, perhaps somewhat tongue in cheek, that it is spending it like a drunken sailor. However, being mean to drunken sailors is no way to live.

• (1305)

We also know that estimates would suggest that the cost of the interest on this debt is going to be about at least \$27 billion. In 2026-27, it could be as high as \$42.9 billion. That is with the conservative estimates, not ours but budget expert estimates, that interest rates would perhaps stay the same as they are.

We also know that if it does not hold true and interest rates are one point higher than planned, the interest costs would move from \$42.9 billion to \$52.2 billion in a single year, in 2026-27, which is \$9.3 billion. That is no small amount of change. In my mind it does not make any sense. Even when we look at \$27 billion, we understand that is about 10% of the revenue of the federal government simply being spent on interest charges. The government continues to spend, which absolutely makes no sense.

*Government Orders*

To put it another way, over four years, the interest on this amount of debt is going to cost the government \$180 billion. This is spending money as if it were water. To try to make it personal for Canadians, if I could not balance my budget, which I am thankfully able to, and there have certainly been years when my family has struggled, we would look at what we could do differently. We would cut our discretionary spending.

We would talk about maybe, in today's terminology, not getting the latest cellphone, not going out to eat, not going out to the movies and those things that everybody would say are "motherhood and apple pie" statements. People would say that if we cannot balance our budget, we are not going out to eat. We are going to stay in, buy the groceries, which are also expensive, and cook. We would not also add costs. We would not put a new front porch on our house. That really would not make a whole heck of a lot of sense when we still could not balance our budget.

However, the costly coalition across the aisle continues to add programs that add to the debt load of Canadians. I find it somewhat disconcerting and disingenuous that, across the aisle, they continue to say that over here we do not support those who are struggling. We certainly do. It is a little bit like letting the cat out of the bag about what we might do over here. We would not go at it by continuing to spend more money and throwing a \$500 cheque here and a \$500 cheque here and \$200 there.

Imagine this. Regular Canadians are sending in their budgets for the month by email and asking me where I think they should cut or get more of their money. Obviously that is not my area of expertise. Given that, I find it absolutely incredible that people are saying that they do not know what else to do or what else they should be doing. We know, when we look at a budget from a household in a global sense, that having \$500 more is really not going to help very much at all.

We know that Canadians, including Nova Scotians from my riding of Cumberland—Colchester, are continuing to struggle under the incredible burden that they feel from the reckless spending of the government. We wonder how they are going to feed their families and how they are going to heat their homes this winter. We know that the worst is yet to come. That is exceedingly disheartening for people who are already hurting. Canadians cannot afford the government anymore, and we cannot support the fall economic statement.

• (1310)

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the member may not have had enough time, but perhaps he could comment on the government's tax policy. He got into it a little with Nova Scotia and the carbon tax.

However, the government would have us believe that adding a tax to provinces is a good thing, and people should be excited and pleased about it. I do not think that is the case in his province. We have a carbon tax that increases the cost of everything such as gasoline, groceries and home heating. We have a real estate affordability crisis.

Could the member comment on tax policy and how that affects affordability?

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, it reminds of the theory of everything when we look at this. As the learned member correctly points out, this is the tax on everything in the sense that everything goes up. We know very clearly from some of the comments from my home province of Nova Scotia that businesses will need to begin to pass on the cost of doing business to consumers.

The government would like people to believe that they will end up with more money in their pockets, that somehow the left hand pulls it out and it gets into the right hand, and there is actually more there. I feel like I am in Las Vegas and there is a magic show afoot. I wish I had the money to go there, but clearly with this tax-and-spend government, it is impossible to do so.

• (1315)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on that point, would the member not also agree that perhaps the Conservatives like to extrapolate and overdramatize a situation? The reality is that the carbon tax is not increasing until April 1, even though the Conservatives would have people believe it is happening tomorrow, and it is not going to triple, triple, triple until 2032.

Would the member like to comment on the fact that the Conservatives seem to over-embellish the truth as it relates to the narrative they are trying to purport?

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, a multitude of things come to mind.

I would like to thank the member for reinforcing the fact that, yes, the carbon tax is going to triple, triple, triple. Obviously, big government moves very slowly and it takes time for people to adjust. Therefore, the difficulty is that if we do not begin to turn the direction of this ship soon enough, the ship is going to crash into an iceberg, much like the *Titanic* did in spite of direct warnings.

The other thing is that to say things are not bad, we get into the scheme of superlatives and we think that things are bad, or that things are terrible or that they could be worse. They could be worse, but who would want them to be? What is the superlative of worse? Is it worsor? Is it the worstest? Are they the worstest government?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, apparently they do not teach English at medical school.

The New Democrats have been advocating for a long time to get rid of the GST on home heating. Of course, the Conservatives have instead said that they want to get rid of the carbon tax on home heating. The thing is that the federal carbon tax only applies in provinces that do not have their own provincial carbon pricing system. Therefore, it does cause one to wonder whether the Conservatives are aware of that fact or not.

I wonder if the member could confirm that he knows the federal backstop only operates in about half of the Canadian provinces and if he could name the provinces where the federal backstop is in effect.

*Government Orders*

**Mr. Stephen Ellis:** Madam Speaker, certainly we know that when we have the worst government, there is nothing worse than that, so there is no superlative for the worst.

The other important part is that my province of Nova Scotia actually had a plan for carbon pricing and was trying to reduce pollution. We know, very clearly, that it cost Nova Scotians less and it actually met targets. We all know from debate in the House over the many months preceding this actual topic, that the Liberal government is not meeting its targets, that it is 58th out of 63 governments around the world, yet it continues to say how great it is in meeting targets. I guess the question that would remain is this. Why would we want to adhere to the policies of a big, bossy federal government that then will make this policy on top of Nova Scotia's, which had a better plan, was cheaper and actually met targets?

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today to speak to this year's fall economic statement implementation act.

I was hoping to see in the update a plan to address the rising costs of living. I was hoping to see a plan to combat inflation. I was hoping to see a reduction in government spending. I was hoping to see effective financial relief for rural and low-income Canadians. I was hoping to see support for our armed forces members. Unsurprisingly, instead we received more spending and higher taxes on already struggling Canadians.

The cost of putting food on the table has seen its biggest jump this year in over four decades. Home heating, oil and propane have all seen drastic increases in price and cost. The same is happening at pumps across Canada, especially in rural ridings.

One of the single largest complaints I hear about at the grocery store and through my office is about costs, the cost of living and the rising cost of everything. Unfortunately, for many struggling Canadians, it is only going to get worse thanks to the government. The carbon tax is not working.

When I am out at local events in my riding, people often say to me that standing up in question period and asking questions is all fine and dandy, but they want to know what I am actually doing to help Canadians. They ask what steps I, as the opposition, am taking to help the people of Hastings—Lennox and Addington. The answer to that question is of course tied up with the capacity of the legislative branch to put checks and balances on the executive or cabinet. In Westminster systems, those two branches are often intermingled, so it can be difficult to parse the capacity and role of either.

That being said, I want to take this opportunity to highlight two separate ways our Conservative opposition use our powers, as parliamentarians, to hold the government accountable. The first is by easing the burden on Canadian families and the second is by scrutinizing Liberal legislation at committee.

The member for Carleton, our Conservative leader, introduced a motion in the House of Commons to introduce a tax exemption on home heating. The NDP, Bloc and Liberals voted against it. The member for Regina—Qu'Appelle introduced a motion calling on a moratorium on taxes on gas, home heating, groceries and paycheques. Once again, the NDP, Bloc and Liberals voted against it.

A third motion calling on the government to not implement the carbon tax was also voted against by three other parties in the House.

While the House was able to unanimously agree to a motion on high food prices, the fact remains there is only one party that is attempting to lower the cost of home heating and gas prices in a manner that would be quick and effective, and that is the Conservative Party.

It was also the Conservative Party that exposed the Liberal government's attempt to ban long guns through an amendment package at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. I want to thank my colleagues on the public safety committee for their due diligence in respecting the rights of law-abiding firearms owners. I want to let the hunters and farmers in Hastings—Lennox and Addington know that I will unequivocally vote against any attempt by the Liberal government to take their legally owned long guns.

Another area that this statement is silent on is rural broadband. I had many constituents contact my office, if they can get service, to ask me why it was taking so long for the government to deliver on its promise to increase broadband in ridings such as mine, and it is extremely frustrating not to be able to provide an answer. A number of local ISPs have also expressed a concern that they are being frozen out of funding opportunities in favour of larger companies.

I would note that in the annex there is an indication that funding under ISED is not coming this year and has only been earmarked for next. I hope the government actually gets the money out the door instead of lapsing the funding like it has done with National Defence to the tune of billions of much-needed dollars.

My colleague from Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman earlier spoke to this bill, and rightly touched on the complete lack of support for our armed forces in economic the statement. He highlighted the desperate need to start cutting steel on our surface combatants, the Type 26 variant, and pointed out that we still did not have contracts signed for our F-35s, a strategically vital piece of equipment that the government delayed by years because of playing political games with military procurement.

● (1320)

I also want to congratulate our friends in the United Kingdom for getting their first Type 26 in the water, the HMS *Glasgow*.

He also touched on what I believe to be an even bigger issue, and that is the recruitment and retention crisis. I want to reiterate to the House how much of an issue this is. Our armed forces are in crisis.

*Government Orders*

In an order issued on October 6 of this year, General Eyre instructed the entirety of the armed forces to cease all non-essential operations and focus exclusively on recruitment and retention of personnel. The general's words leave no room for interpretation. Our forces are in crisis and no area of it is left unaffected, with every single trade operating at below its effective level.

When we look at the current state of our armed forces, the reasons behind the shortage begin to become clear.

For example, the post living differential, essentially a cost-of-living adjustment based on posting location, has not been upgraded since 2008, mainly due to stingy Treasury Board regulations. This is simply unacceptable. In my previous shadow minister position for seniors, the importance of updating these allowances was made excruciatingly clear to me. The CPP is updated every January. The GIS and OAS are updated four times a year. However, we expect our armed forces members to live in an economic climate of 2008 instead of 2022. That is unacceptable.

If we do not have the necessary equipment and troops, we do not possess the capability to meet our current commitments, whether they be peacekeeping missions, protecting our Arctic or responding to evolving threats on the international stage. It also severely limits our capacity to expand our commitments into future endeavours, such as the recently announced Indo-Pacific strategy.

Our armed forces' capability commitment gap is increasing at both ends, with our commitments growing in an increasingly unstable international order and our capability shrinking through attrition.

This reconstitution of our armed forces is affecting every single trade. The general made it clear at the Standing Committee on National Defence that every single decision the CAF made was through the lens of reconstitution.

Whether it is by continually failing to provide basic services and equipment to our serving forces members or offering medically assisted suicide to them once they transition out, the government's refusal to treat our CAF members with the dignity and respect they have earned and deserve is appalling. This cannot be allowed to continue.

I really do hope the government, with the CDS, addresses the recruitment and retention crisis in our armed forces.

I must reiterate that I pray the government listens to Canadians in their communities and takes substantive, effective and meaningful action to combat the cost of living by cancelling the carbon tax.

I do not mean to sound as though there is nothing of substance in the statement. The reality of the matter is that what is missing from the update speaks volumes as to where the government's priorities lie, and I do not believe they lie with rural Canadians. Whether the it is aware of it or not, the simple fact of the matter is that its carbon tax will add to the already astonishingly large financial burden facing everyday Canadians, and they simply cannot afford to be bled anymore.

● (1325)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam

Speaker, on the one hand, Conservatives will stand and talk about the idea of cutting back and chopping money from the budget. Then we get Conservatives who will stand and say that we should be spending more.

The member is talking about billions of dollars of additional expenditures. She is critical of the government for expanding Internet connections in rural Canada. We have increased rural connectivity significantly compared to the former prime minister. It cost billions of dollars to do that, and we have been criticized for spending those billions of dollars.

Does the member not recognize that some might detect a little hypocrisy in the statements that are flowing from the Conservative Party today?

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:** Madam Speaker, I will be quick to suggest that economic stewardship in this place, as parliamentarians, is significant. It is huge. The government has had seven years. From my perspective, it is the captain of a rudderless ship and the rhetoric that I am getting from across the aisle is not working.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, for a rudderless ship, I would say we are doing pretty well. The reality is that even when we look at something like Canada's inflationary rate among G7 partners, we have the second best next to Japan. When we look at economic growth, before the pandemic, out of the G7 partners, we were the fastest-growing economy. We are the best positioned to come out of the pandemic. The reality of the situation is, despite the fact that Conservatives might not like to acknowledge it, we are doing quite well, especially compared to our peer countries.

Would the member at least acknowledge the fact that, looking at Canada compared to some of the other countries we compare ourselves to regularly, we are doing a pretty good job?

● (1330)

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:** Madam Speaker, I would acknowledge there is an example of another Liberal quickly patting themselves on the back for a lack of hard work.

I would like to give some facts. This country is in trouble. Government spending is up 30% compared to prepandemic levels. Next year, debt interest payments will cost nearly as much as the Canada health transfer.

The member across the aisle has suggested their government is doing pretty well. Perhaps he has not spoken to his constituents lately.

*Government Orders*

[Translation]

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I know my colleague is very concerned about the needs of seniors who are feeling pressure because of inflation. Can she tell me what is missing from this economic statement? Can she tell me if she agrees that people between the ages of 65 and 74 should not be entitled to an increase in their old age security? Does she agree with the government's position?

[English]

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:** Madam Speaker, it is undeniable that all Canadians are faced with an extreme amount of economic uncertainty. There is no question that seniors, business owners and families are. No new spending and no new taxes would help seniors and all Canadians across the board.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I followed the debate and I did think extraordinary the amount of patting on the back the Liberals wish to do over this economic statement. I know the member touched briefly on the debt service charges for this year, but in the years to come, according to the statement, by 2029 there will be up to \$50 billion a year in interest charges with rising interest rates and endless deficits. Fifty billion dollars is way more than the current health transfer of only \$36 billion. That is double the current national defence budget.

Could the member comment on how debt service charges threaten all the programs of the federal government that Canadians rely on?

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:** Madam Speaker, there is no question the reckless spending of the government is burdening Canadians significantly. It is mortgaging the futures of our future generations. We need to step up. This tax-and-spend government is not sustainable.

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am excited to speak to Bill C-32 today, the bill to implement the economic statement introduced by the Liberal government.

The bill contains 25 tax measures and about 10 other non-tax measures. This may seem like a lot, but a closer look at these measures reveals that they are twofold: minor legislative amendments, and measures that were announced in the spring 2022 budget that were not included in the first budget implementation bill passed last June. Clearly, like the November 3 economic statement, Bill C-32 contains no measures to address the new economic reality of high living costs and a possible recession.

The Bloc Québécois bemoans the fact that this economic update mentions the issue of inflation 108 times without offering any additional support to vulnerable people even though there is a fear that a recession will hit as early as 2023. Quebeckers who are worried about the rising cost of living will find little comfort in this economic update. They will have to make do with the follow-up to last spring's budget. We must denounce a missed opportunity to help Quebeckers face the difficult times they are already experiencing or that are feared for the months to come.

This bill will not exactly go down in history, and its lack of vision does not deserve much praise. However, it does not contain anything harmful enough to warrant opposing it or trying to block it. The Bloc Québécois will therefore be voting in favour of Bill C-32, albeit half-heartedly, and I would like to use the rest of my time to talk about what is missing from this economic statement.

The first big thing missing from Bill C-32 is support for seniors. Still, to this day, Ottawa continues to deprive people aged 65 to 74 of the old age pension increase they need more than ever now. Seniors live on fixed incomes, so it is harder for them to deal with a cost of living increase as drastic as the one we are currently experiencing. These folks are the most likely to face tough choices at the grocery store or the pharmacy. Last week, a study by the Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées et préretraitées in partnership with the Observatoire québécois des inégalités revealed that nearly half of Quebec seniors do not have a livable income. Specifically, 49% of seniors aged 60 and over do not have a decent income to live in dignity. Members will agree that helping seniors is about more than just ageism, isolation and abuse. It is about ensuring that they have adequate financial support to live and age with dignity. This is not currently the case in terms of the Liberal government's priorities.

What is more, the government keeps penalizing seniors who would like to work more without losing their benefits. Inflation, unlike the federal government, does not discriminate against seniors based on their age. It is not by starving seniors 65 to 75 that we are going to encourage them to stay in their jobs. We do that by no longer penalizing them for working.

The second thing that has been largely forgotten in this economic update is employment insurance reform, a significant measure that the forgotten are counting on. Employment insurance is the ultimate economic stabilizer during a recession. While a growing number of analysts continue to be concerned about the possibility of a recession as early as next year, the Canadian government seems to be going back on the comprehensive EI reform it promised in the summer. The system has essentially been dismantled over the years and currently six in 10 workers who lose their jobs are not entitled to employment insurance. This is because they fail to qualify and, of course, they do not meet the current eligibility criteria. That is unacceptable in a developed country like ours.

• (1335)

The Bloc Québécois is in favour of increasing the replacement rate to at least 60%, as was the case prior to 1993.

*Government Orders*

The Bloc Québécois also believes that we need to better redistribute the EI regions to reflect the reality of workers in the seasonal industry and unemployment in the regions. In my riding in the Lower St. Lawrence area, seasonal work is a reality for many people who work hard in industries such as forestry, tourism and agriculture. These industries are important for economic vitality, but they also help build our region's unique character. They are part of our culture and heritage.

By stubbornly refusing to move forward with the necessary EI reform, Ottawa is putting our workers, our seasonal industries and our regions in a precarious situation. It is ignoring and abandoning our needs, and yet the Liberals promised EI reform in both the 2015 and 2019 elections. How many times will the federal government let Quebec's regions down?

The third thing missing here is inflation, a word we have been hearing over and over. As I said earlier, the government has identified the problem, the rising cost of living, but is not actually doing anything about it. It tells us to expect very tough times this winter, but says nothing about how to get through them. It makes dire observations about the economic situation, but dismisses any and every opposition suggestion for dealing with it. Consider supply chains, whose fragility was exposed during the pandemic. Last spring's budget named the problem 71 times, and the economic update did so another 45 times. However, neither document offers any solutions whatsoever to the problem.

In Bill C-32, the government repeats measures it took in the past and acts on announcements from last April's budget, but there is nothing to suggest it knows where it is headed. This is all déjà vu. It is a celebration of Liberal lip service, but one cannot feed one's children with fine speeches.

Another major file that Ottawa continues to ignore is health transfers. The meeting of health ministers from Quebec, the provinces and the federal government from November 7 to 9, 2022, went nowhere. The federal government showed up empty-handed and did not offer any increase in health transfers. Even worse, it lectured and insulted the provinces, accusing them of mismanaging health care. That came from a government that is incapable of managing its own responsibilities such as passports, employment insurance and immigration. That is really rich coming from the federal Liberals.

The Bloc Québécois is defending the provinces and Quebec, which are united in asking for an increase in federal health transfers from 22% to 35%, or an increase from \$42 billion to \$60 billion. That is a \$28 billion increase per year, as unanimously requested by Quebec and all the provinces. This permanent and unconditional increase would make it possible for Quebec to rebuild its health system, which was undermined by years of austerity caused by the reduction in transfers in the 1990s. It would also help address issues related to the aging population and the additional pressure this will put on the health care network.

Those three Bloc Québécois priorities are not included in the economic update. I would like to take the time to remind my fellow members, and all Quebecers, of what the Bloc Québécois had asked the government to do in conjunction with this economic statement. Our request was both simple and meaningful in an

certain and difficult economic context: We asked the government to refocus on its fundamental responsibilities towards vulnerable people.

The measure of a society is how much care and support it provides to those who are most vulnerable and most in need. To do this, three key measures are more crucial than ever: increasing health transfers; providing adequate support to people aged 65 and over, since they are on a fixed income with low indexation that fails to offset our rampant inflation; and, of course, undertaking a comprehensive reform of employment insurance. Unfortunately, the Liberals did not think any of these measures were worth considering.

• (1340)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc is somewhat predictable in the issue of health care, as is, to a certain degree, the official opposition. They tend to think the Government of Canada's only role in health care is to be like an ATM and hand out money. They tend to not want to recognize that there is the Canada Health Act and that there is a huge expectation from Canadians in general that the federal government be there on issues such as long-term care, mental health and pharmaceuticals, let alone many other aspects of health care.

I am wondering if my friend would not, at the very least, agree there are variations in different provinces, yet Canadians want to have a health care system they know will be there in the future and be supported relatively closely in services provided, no matter where they happen to live, whether it is Montreal, Winnipeg, Vancouver or Halifax.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Madam Speaker, the comments from the member for Winnipeg North are giving me a feeling of déjà vu.

Giving Quebecers the health care system they expect requires adequate financial support, but this government is not offering that. The Prime Minister made a commitment in 2020 to address the situation after the pandemic and to sit down with Quebec and the provinces to negotiate health transfers. This commitment is not new; it is nearly two years old. However, the Prime Minister did not even bother to show up when the federal Minister of Health called a meeting with all the first ministers of Canada and Quebec.

It is just not a priority for the federal government right now. The only thing Ottawa wants to do is continue trampling on provincial jurisdictions. I would like my colleague from Winnipeg North to tell me what real expertise the federal government has in health care when—

• (1345)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments.

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

*Government Orders*

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in his excellent speech, my colleague talked about federal services to the public, such as passports and immigration. He also talked about the delays and unreasonable wait times EI claimants are being subjected to. Our staff hear from so many of these people.

Can the member give some specific examples of problems he is experiencing because of the government's failure to deliver these three services to people efficiently?

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Madam Speaker, the few seconds I have will not be enough to list the many problems my constituents are having with federal services.

Take immigration. It is unbelievable how much time my team and I spend dealing with immigration issues every week. People are having to take days off so they can attempt to reach Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada staff for updates on their applications. That is why they turn to their MPs for help.

Then there is the passport crisis. People have had to camp out in front of passport offices to get their documents. The government realized how bad this looked, so it sent EI officers to work at passport offices. Now people are waiting even longer for their EI benefits. The government fixed one problem by causing another. What we need is for the government to focus on its own responsibilities, which it is currently failing to carry out.

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the member is wrong in what he says about funding for health care. Never in the history of Canada have we had a national government provide as much cash in transfers over to provinces for health care. It has not happened before. In fact, if the member was to take a look at history, and I was first elected back in 1988 in the Manitoba legislature, he would see that Ottawa has always been the place to go to try to get more money, even though during the seventies there was an agreement among the provinces that they would rather have tax point transfers as opposed to cash. The only government that has been consistent in supporting national health care and ensuring Canadians would have the health care they want is the national government.

I would ask the member if he would not at least acknowledge that never before has the Province of Quebec or any province received as much cash for health.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas:** Madam Speaker, we understand the member for Winnipeg North's point. Health transfers are not a gift that we are asking Ottawa for. We want our fair share of our money. This money comes from Quebecers and the provinces. The federal government does not invent this money—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise on behalf of the fiscally responsible citizens of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

This costly coalition is out of control. The fall economic statement spells out in black and white just how bad the government's addiction to spending has gotten. None of this is a surprise. It is déjà vu all over again.

In 1972, after just one term under Pierre Trudeau, Canadians clipped his wings and handed him a minority government. Pierre Trudeau struck a deal with the NDP to stay in power. Does that sound familiar? The NDP made expensive demands and the Liberals spent and spent. They timed their spending for maximum pain as the rest of the decade was dominated by stagflation, which is high inflation and low growth fuelled by government spending. Does it sound familiar?

By the end of Pierre Trudeau's reign of error, the deficit was the largest in pre-pandemic Canadian history. The situation was so bad that Canadians had to elect a Progressive Conservative government to raise taxes and a Liberal government to cut spending. It took 15 years to clean up Pierre Trudeau's overspending addiction. How long will Canadians have to wait this time?

This fall economic statement is either the height of delusion or the peak of cynicism. Canadians face a stark choice: Either the government is delusional and believes spending even more than what it had budgeted for six months ago is fiscally responsible, or Canadians have a government that is so cynical of democracy it thinks it can just repeat the claim of fiscal responsibility enough that people believe it. The government knows it is addicted to spending without a plan. The Parliamentary Budget Officer says there is \$14 billion unaccounted for, just another little slush fund to pay off whichever interest group is most in favour tomorrow.

Recently, headlines said the Bank of Canada lost money for the first time in history. That is because it had to pay interest to the banks for the bonds they swapped to keep the current government afloat. That is great for Bay Street, but it is bad for the taxpayers. We can add that to the interest we are all paying on the debt. It is now more than what we spend on national defence and soon it will be more than we spend on health. It did not have to be this way.

Once upon a time, we had a national consensus that deficits outside of economic downturns were to be avoided. The economy roared back after the government lockdowns nearly cratered it. Had the government demonstrated even a modicum of self-restraint, we could be arguing about how to spend a surplus.

### *Government Orders*

Many Canadians believe that our country is becoming more polarized. We should ask ourselves if deficits contribute to the increasing polarization. Running deficits is a bit like musical chairs. Everyone knows that eventually the song will end and there will not be enough chairs for every person, so people get their elbows up and eventually the bonds stop selling and the money runs out. Rather than people scrambling for chairs, it will be social factions fighting for funding. When the money runs out, do they close the school or the hospital?

If the government truly wished to reduce polarization in society, it would be running surpluses. When they can run surpluses, everything becomes easier. It is like a game of musical chairs, except when the music stops they add extra seats. With surpluses, they could pay down debt, lower taxes and make sound investments in core areas of federal responsibility. All it requires is an element of patience. It requires the ability to say “not yet” to favourite interest groups. However, the government lacks discipline.

The government lives in denial. Every budget and every update, the Liberals make the same empty promise. They say that this time it will be different. It is as if Canadians are Charlie Brown and the Liberals are Lucy with a football of fiscal responsibility.

In 2019, the budget said the Liberals would be spending \$421 billion by 2024. In the 2020 economic update, the minister claimed that spending in 2024 would be \$429 billion. One year later, the Liberals needed to revise the numbers again. That time, they said the spending in 2024 would be \$465 billion. That was just 12 months ago. Now, the gang who cannot spend responsibly claims that spending in 2024 will \$505 billion. That is not sustainable.

• (1350)

There is no better illustration of the government's addiction to spending than its latest plans for the Canada growth fund. Here is what the fall economic statement says about the new Canada growth fund. The fund will make investments “that contribute to economic growth through direct investments, loans, loan guarantees and equity investments.” I apologize, that was the 2016 budget referring to the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Here is the quote from this year: “It will invest using a broad suite of financial instruments including all forms of debt, equity, guarantees, and specialized contracts.” How will this growth fund operate? Here is what the government said: “The Canada Infrastructure Bank will be accountable to, and partner with, government, but will operate at greater arm’s length than a department”. I am sorry, that is the 2016 budget again.

This is what budget 2022 said, “The Canada Growth Fund will be a new public investment vehicle that will operate at arms-length from the federal government.” Now the growth fund is all about leveraging private capital. It states, “It will invest on a concessionary basis, with the goal that for every dollar invested by the fund, it will aim to attract at least three dollars of private capital.”

I will say that the government has gotten slightly more modest since 2016, when it said, “great opportunity for the government to leverage its investments in infrastructure, by bringing in private capital to the table to multiply the level of investment...there is a potential to multiply this level of investment 10 to 14 times”. While

the Canada Infrastructure Bank was supposed to be at arm's length and focus on infrastructure, it quickly fell victim to the government's radical net-zero ideology. This so-called growth fund is just another example. The growth fund will be stuffed with well-connected executives friendly to the Liberal ideology. They will be paid bonuses whether they accomplish anything or not.

There will be billions and billions for green dreams, yet Canada does not have a national four-lane highway. Ontario's Ring of Fire is full of critical minerals and metals, yet it is nearly inaccessible by road. The government has mandated that 20% of cars sold in three years will be zero emission, yet it has not even studied the costs of electric vehicles. There is nowhere near the electrical capacity in our grid to switch one in five cars. No amount of government spending can change the physics of energy density. No amount of growth funds or infrastructure banks can change the economic realities of scarcity and opportunity costs.

With every dollar the government spends chasing its net-zero ideology, it is a dollar we do not spend on mitigation. Every dollar the government borrows to purchase prohibited firearms is a dollar plus interest it cannot spend stopping gang violence. Every bonus paid to executives at the Canada Infrastructure Bank or the growth fund comes at the expense of seniors, veterans and the disabled.

We know the Minister of Justice has some disgusting suggestions on how we can cut spending on vulnerable Canadians. The Liberal addiction to spending is terrible. Sadly, bad spending is not the only terrible thing in Bill C-32. Reminding Canadians this bunch of Liberals is more like a parody of government, this bill attacks the solicitor-client privilege by requiring lawyers to report the names of their clients to the Canada Revenue Agency. The same government invoking solicitor-client privilege to keep its legal opinion hidden is removing that same privilege from Canadians.

Canadians should know, without any doubts, that the government wants to go down in history for bringing the biggest tax hike on alcohol in Canadian history. It could have introduced a freeze on the excise tax hikes, which it tied to inflation with its automatic escalator tax, but Bill C-32 contains a number of changes to the excise tax. Of course, as with everything the government does, the changes are for the benefit of the government. It has no problem making it easier for the tax man to search our records, but making it easier for Canadians to enjoy beer on the weekend? We can forget it. All the government cares about are the wealthy and well connected, who get rich off the special deals cooked up by these so-called arm's-length funds.

Canadians need relief from inflation and all the government does is increase spending, which fuels inflation. Like an addict, the government will deny it has a problem. It will deny and deflect until the money runs out.

• (1355)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I heard the member say there is nowhere near enough charging capacity for electric vehicles. I realize we are both from Ontario, so I would encourage her to travel a little east into Quebec. She will see there is more than enough. Quebec has done an incredible job of building up its infrastructure. Ontario had that opportunity but suddenly abandoned it five years ago when Doug Ford was elected.

The reality of the situation is that this is about political will, and the Conservatives, at least provincially in Ontario, do not have the political will. What we have seen in Quebec is the exact opposite, and I am wondering if the member would like to comment on that.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Madam Speaker, that is pretty rich coming from a member of the Liberal government who is able to charge up at work every day and charge it to the taxpayers of Canada.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[*Translation*]

### 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF HAITIAN SUPPORT GROUP

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Madam Speaker, today I would like to take a moment to mark the 50th anniversary of the Association québécoise pour l'avancement des Nations unies, also known as AQANU. This non-governmental organization, run by volunteers, was created to promote the values of the United Nations and human rights; to organize activities that increase awareness, spread information and advocate for sustainable development; and to support the implementation of sustainable development projects and support activities in Haiti.

AQANU works with rural groups to support projects that improve the lives of Haitians. Project themes include food security, agriculture, education and humanitarian aid.

Some \$7 million has been invested in more than 270 projects, and that is in addition to research and observation trips to Haiti and

### *Statements by Members*

work sessions at the United Nations. The organization also maintains close relationships between the people there and here in Canada and Quebec.

I would like to sincerely congratulate and thank all those dedicated people involved in AQANU who have been making a real difference in the lives of thousands of Haitians for 50 years now.

\* \* \*

### DANIEL BOYER

**Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House to pay tribute to a pillar of the Vaudreuil—Soulanges community. Daniel Boyer, the City of Saint-Lazare's director of public safety and fire safety, will be retiring on December 31 after 30 years of loyal service.

Beginning in 1992, Mr. Boyer rose through the municipal ranks from firefighter to lieutenant to deputy director and, finally, director, a position he has held since 2006. Throughout his years of service, his leadership and professionalism, rare and valuable qualities, earned him the love and respect of his team at the firehouse.

[*English*]

I wish Daniel all the best in this next chapter of his life. I am happy to hear that he bought a motorcycle, and I hope he uses it to explore not only our community but our entire country. As his member of Parliament, I cannot think of a better way for him to spend his golden years, and I wish him safe and happy travels along the way.

\* \* \*

### LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker,

I've done nothing wrong  
He said with a sneer  
But Canadians are worried  
Because Christmas is near

Christmas without food  
Christmas without meat  
Christmas without toys  
And without any heat

The Grinch hates people  
Who don't listen to that guy  
We've tried to figure it out  
But no one knows why

It could be perhaps,  
that his socks were too tight  
We suspect it's because his head  
isn't screwed on just right

His fingers in your pockets  
grabbing with glee  
And now he wants the presents  
From under our tree

He's taxed all our taxes  
And spent even more  
Our cupboards are emptier  
Than ever before

*Statements by Members*

Conservatives have tried  
But he won't listen to reason  
He loves his carbon tax  
No matter the season

But despite his cold heart  
And his love of inflation  
Calgary Midnapore will never  
Let him ruin our Christmas celebration

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY**

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is already upon us. It is a time for hot chocolate, family gatherings and, yes, flannel pyjamas. Community organizations in Hochelaga have been working hard for months now to make this a magical time for all local families and to make sure everyone in need has a hot meal or enough food in the fridge for the holidays. We are well aware of the critical needs at this difficult time.

I would like to thank the organizations that are stepping up to help their neighbours. Solidarity and civic engagement are in Hochelaga's DNA.

On this International Volunteer Day, I invite everyone to give their time in their communities. Whether it is by offering a hug, a sympathetic ear or a smile to break the ice, let us be there for one another. People can contact Accès Bénévolat, an umbrella organization in the east end of Montreal that has matched hundreds of volunteers with more than 300 social organizations since 1982.

I want to say a huge thank you to all our organizations. They are the unsung heroes of these tough times.

\* \* \*

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE REFORM**

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, later on, I will be presenting the Minister of Employment with the demands of local organizations that are fighting for a better EI system.

Two weeks ago, L.A.S.T.U.S.E du Saguenay, which represents unemployed workers, and Récif 02, a round table of Saguenay—Lac-Saint-Jean women's groups, held a protest in front of my office to condemn not just the inhumane delays at Service Canada, but also the sexism pervasive in the benefits system.

I saw this for myself when one of my constituents was refused benefits last year after losing her job during her maternity leave. The Social Security Tribunal of Canada had ruled that a similar case was discriminatory in January, but the government decided to appeal. That is so hypocritical, coming from a government that claims to be feminist and to always be there for vulnerable populations.

It is high time that the EI program was reformed to make it more egalitarian and effective.

When will the minister reform the system?

● (1405)

**SPORT HUNTING**

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when I was younger and studying at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, I had the opportunity to visit the Saguenay's magnificent parks and to share with my friends the love of nature and hunting. I was also able to enjoy the famous Lac-Saint-Jean tourtière, which is made with seven types of game meat.

Today, as the MP for a riding where hunting is also a popular activity, I want to express my appreciation to hunters who practise this sport responsibly. Quebec sport hunting associations and gun clubs have worked with police forces, community groups and all levels of government to improve this activity and make it safer. Real hunters do not need military-style weapons to practise this sport.

\* \* \*

**INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, December 5 is International Volunteer Day. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the exceptional community involvement of my constituents in Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Since being elected in 2015, I have had the opportunity to meet many devoted people who do not hesitate to do their part and give their time to help others. These volunteers quite often work in the shadows, without counting their hours, without looking for any recognition, simply to do good.

I would like to take this opportunity today to showcase the invisible but absolutely essential and inspiring work of the volunteers in our riding and in my colleagues' ridings. They are a rare and precious commodity, an invaluable treasure that contributes to making a positive difference in our community. What they do is important and I thank them for their incredible contribution and their selflessness.

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[*English*]**HOLIDAY SEASON**

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the holiday season is upon us, a time for celebration and good cheer. However, as 2022 comes to an end, let us be frank: We are all on edge. It is not hard to figure out why, with isolation due to working from home and an unsettling vulnerability to a virus we cannot see, yet whose harmful and sometimes fatal effects are cruelly felt. If we add in social media algorithms that distort any sense of balance, the ominous science of climate change and the wars and conflicts around the world, people are right to feel edgy, anxious, vulnerable and alone. I do too. What are we to do?

*Statements by Members*

[Translation]

I am choosing to channel those feelings into fighting for a better future. We must not give extremism, violence or hate any room to grow. We must join with our neighbours in making positive changes. Most importantly, we must be kind to each other and to ourselves. We are strongest together.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FIREARMS**

**Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was born in Thunder Bay, and one of my fondest memories is the time spent with my dad and two brothers walking through the bush on a beautiful fall day. I am proud to say that I am hunter. I would not trade those memories for anything, and I would not want to deny anybody else the opportunity to make them. This is in no way inconsistent with the legislation before the House that would keep our streets and communities safe from unlawful gun and gang activity.

Hunting is one of the oldest traditions in Canada. It is a tradition that involves and promotes the safe use of firearms. Hunting also provides food security to many Canadian families and indigenous communities. A safe and sustainable practice of hunting in Canada not only respects our past but recognizes the importance of indigenous Canadians, for whom it is a way of life. I am committed to making sure that we find the right balance.

\* \* \*

**FIREARMS**

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has launched the largest attack on law-abiding hunters in Canadian history. The government's proposed amendments to Bill C-21 would effectively ban hundreds of thousands of firearms used for hunting.

Hunting is a Canadian tradition. It is a way of life for millions of rural, remote and indigenous Canadians. However, the Liberal government has attacked these Canadians since it took office. Its own minister, who is supposed to stand up for rural Canada, is in favour of this attack on hunters. That is no way to stand up for rural Canada.

Yesterday, deer hunting season closed for most hunters in Manitoba. Unfortunately, these hunters do not know if they will be using their hunting rifles next year.

My message to the out-of-touch Liberal government is this: Hunters are not the problem, so just leave them alone.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, today marks day 11 of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence.

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is essential and we all have a role to play. At the Safe Centre of Peel in Brampton, 16 partner organizations work together under one roof to provide integrated service delivery for survivors. The family justice model has been identified as an innovative practice that can be showcased nationally.

I want to recognize director Shelina Jeshani and Peel Regional Police Inspector Lisa Hewison, as well as local organizations, such as the Zonta Club, for their leadership.

This government is committed to action with our national action plan to end gender-based violence. This way we make the vision of ending gender-based violence a reality for Canadians, no matter who they are or where they live.

\* \* \*

**REG SCHELLENBERG**

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, we lost one of the good ones. Reg Schellenberg was a family man, a person of faith, integrity and a leader in Canadian agriculture. He lived not only with his words, but also with his actions. He spent many years giving his time on different boards and associations.

I know that many of us in Parliament have met with Reg over the years, particularly in his most recent capacity as the president of the Canadian Cattle Association.

He could always be counted on for honest, straightforward advice that was forged through his time on the Perrin ranch south of Beechy with his wife Shannon by his side. Their story is one of living the Saskatchewan dream, running a multi-generational cow-calf operation on the northern shores of the beautiful Lake Diefenbaker.

Reg will be sorely missed. For Shannon, Coy, Jesse and Stacey, our hearts and prayers are with them and their families as they go through this time of mourning.

\* \* \*

**THE ECONOMY**

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians are barely hanging on. The stress of paying for groceries is unbearable for many, especially those on fixed incomes.

Today's announcement from Canada's 2023 Food Price Report sheds an even dimmer light on what is to come. According to the report, a family of four will spend \$16,000 dollars on groceries next year. That is an increase of \$1,100.

Last year's report projected food prices to rise by 7%, and this was considered "alarmist" by critics. The reality is that today's report shows food prices have increased by 10%.

*Statements by Members*

The leader of the official opposition, alongside the Conservatives, predicted this inflation and cost of living crisis years ago. The Liberals choose not to listen. They are doubling down on imposing their fertilizer tax, carbon tax and reliance on dictator oil. All these decisions are driving up the cost of food.

By 2030, a typical 5,000 acre farm could expect to pay \$150,000 in carbon tax. If farmers cannot afford to run their farms, how can they afford to feed Canadians?

\* \* \*

**36TH SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to rise today to celebrate the 36th Speaker of the House of Commons and my dear friend, the Hon. Geoff Regan, serving more than 20 years as the member of Parliament for Halifax West; the former minister of fisheries and oceans; the first Speaker from Nova Scotia in 98 years; a teller of dad jokes; a karaoke superstar; a compassionate, smart human being; and very funny.

Geoff Regan has left a spectacular legacy of public service in this place and at home. As the “Selected Decisions of Speaker Geoff Regan” is tabled today, we fondly remember how he would use his clever and fair parenting skills in the chamber to bring back decorum to even the most heated debates.

Speaker Regan took this role seriously and always knew that one of his “most important responsibilities as Speaker is to safeguard the rights and privileges of members, individually and collectively.”

We all know that this place is better because he shared his wisdom, his compassion for others and his thoughtful words with us and with Canadians.

I thank Speaker Regan for everything.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

**DENTAL CARE**

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, something remarkable happened a few weeks ago. After campaigning vigorously on the need for dental care in the last election, the New Democrats have delivered.

We forced the Liberal government, which had voted against the program only last year, to do an about-face and realize the benefits it would bring to millions of Canadians who could not afford to see a dentist. That program is now open for applications.

We are not finished there. Next year, the program will be expanded to include seniors, persons with disabilities and children under the age of 18.

The Conservative MPs voted against this. They did so even with the knowledge that they and their families would continue to benefit from taxpayer-funded dental care available to them as members of Parliament, a classic example of “Good for me, but not for thee.” However, I have great news for people living in Conservative ridings. Even though their MPs voted to deny them this care, the New

Democrats have their backs and have made sure it will be there for them and their kids.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SAINTE-THÉRÈSE LEGION**

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today, I am very pleased to mark the 75th anniversary of the Sainte-Thérèse Royal Canadian Legion. The Sainte-Thérèse Legion was founded in 1947 and was the 208th legion in Quebec. We are talking about 75 years of support for veterans and their families, 75 years of community service, 75 years of memories, and 75 years of learning how to care for the living without forgetting the dead.

There is some good news for the legion. After repeated requests to the Department of National Defence, the legion will now be able to count on the 4th Battalion of the Royal 22nd Regiment stationed in Laval to perform during the 21-gun salute at the next Remembrance Day ceremony.

In any case, it is an honour for me to be a member of this thriving, close-knit legion. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to support our legions and take care of those who care for our veterans.

I wish the Sainte-Thérèse Legion a happy 75th anniversary.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**FIREARMS**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, crime in Canada is on the rise. Since the Liberals took office, violent crime has risen by 32% and gang-related homicides have increased by a whopping 92%. The Liberals' soft-on-crime policies mean that it is easier than ever for repeat violent offenders to get bail, and sentences are going down.

Unfortunately the best the Liberal government can do is try to ban hunting rifles and shotguns, some that have been used for well over 100 years. This is not about public safety; it is about dividing Canadians for political gain, and Canadians are taking notice.

Just this past weekend, Montreal Canadiens goalie Carey Price took a stand against the Liberal government's brazen attempt to criminalize law-abiding hunters and sport shooters. I want to read some of his words into the record, “I love my country and I care for my neighbour. I am not a criminal or a threat to society...What [the Prime Minister] is [doing] is unjust.”

It is time for the Liberals to stop criminalizing hunters and go after the real criminals.

[Translation]

### ASSAULT WEAPONS

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on December 6, we will once again commemorate the Polytechnique massacre in Outremont. As I do every year, I will be on Mount Royal with the Prime Minister to pay tribute to the 14 women who were murdered in cold blood simply because they were women.

However, it will be in an entirely different context this year, as our government has proposed a ban on assault weapons like the one used at Polytechnique.

[English]

A man walked into our local university 33 years ago and gunned down 14 women using an assault-style automatic weapon, a weapon designed to kill as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time possible.

Our government has proposed to take the next step in banning these weapons, but we are now in the midst of a disinformation campaign led by the gun lobby. We all agree that hunting is a long-standing tradition in our country, and we all want to protect that tradition, but we do not need an—

• (1420)

**The Speaker:** Oral Questions.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

### THE ECONOMY

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to a new report released today, the cost of food for the average family will go up by \$1,000 next year, to \$16,300. That is unaffordable for the average family, and it is because of this government's inflationary policies. One in five Canadians is skipping meals because they cannot afford their grocery bills.

When is the government going to reverse its inflationary policies so that Canadians can put food on the table?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada is not the only country facing high food prices. We know this is a challenge for Canadians.

It is also true that extreme weather conditions have led to poor harvests and that supply chain issues have led to higher food prices.

That is why we have a plan to double the GST credit and provide support for dental care and housing. We are taking action. The Conservatives are voting against it. We are here for Canadians.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the same report demonstrated that by 2030, a farm with 5,000 acres, an average farm, would pay \$150,000 in carbon taxes, taxes that are already driving up the cost of food because they get passed onto the consumer.

### Oral Questions

Food prices are expected to be up \$1,000 for the average family to \$16,000 a year to feed the average family. That is an incredible sum. In fact, the Mississauga Food Bank reports that some people have even said that the poverty is so grinding that they are asking for help with medical assistance in dying. We need to feed our people.

Why does the government not reverse its inflationary policy so people can afford to eat and live?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we remain committed to supporting people get out of poverty. In fact, we understand how difficult life is right now, which is why we have put forward numerous measures to help the most vulnerable Canadian.

However, if the Leader of the Opposition is indeed sincere in his desire to help lift Canadians out of poverty, he would have voted for measures like the Canada dental benefit, or the Canada housing benefit, or perhaps child care, which has fees being reduced by 50% right across the country. Instead of doing that, he voted against it.

\* \* \*

### FIREARMS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, not only is Christmas dinner going to be especially expensive if people buy it at the grocery store, but now the government wants to ban people in rural country sides from actually hunting for their turkey. It has targeted a long list of hunting rifles and shotguns with a sweeping ban that is being widely condemned by experts, by hunters and by first nations people.

The government has admitted in recent testimony that the ban will apply to hunting rifles contrary to prior talking points. Will it reverse this ban?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, before I answer that question, tomorrow we are marking the 33rd anniversary of the École Polytechnique shooting tragedy. To the families of the victims and to the survivors, we stand with them. We know that despite the passage of time, the hurt and loss never completely heal.

We own it to them, to all victims and to all Canadians to end gun violence once and for all. I hope all members in the chamber will join me in a moment of solidarity.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, of course, we are all in solidarity in ending the violence committed with guns. In fact, today we saw an example of the real problem. Police seized 62 firearms in Toronto and 57 of them came from the United States of America. Only one of them was from Ontario and it was stolen over a year ago.

### Oral Questions

The problem is not hunters in Wainwright, Alberta or in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on the east coast, who are using their tools to feed their families. The problem is the illegal guns coming across the border.

Why will the government not reinforce our border instead of attacking our hunters?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my Conservative colleague asks what the government is doing to reinforce our borders. We have invested \$450 million over the last two years alone to add more boots on the ground for the CBSA, to add more state-of-the-art technology for the CBSA to allow it to build on the progress it has made in seizing illegal guns at the border.

What did the Conservatives do every moment when they had a chance to support those resources for the CBSA? They voted against it.

• (1425)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the results of the Liberals' policy are a 32% increase in violent crime and a massive 92% increase in gang murders. No matter how expensive their policies are and no matter how much they target law-abiding hunters, it is not getting the job done to protect our people.

[Translation]

Why does the government not want to help fight actual crime instead of targeting our hunters and farmers?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the federal government is doing. We have already invested \$450 million to add more boots on the ground for the CBSA. That is exactly what we are doing with this bill, which brings in tougher penalties for criminals.

Why are the Conservatives not supporting this bill? If they want to target criminals, they have to support this bill.

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### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, COP15 on biodiversity starts this Wednesday. A new report revealed that 2,253 species are at risk in Canada.

Meanwhile, the federal government has authorized exploratory oil and gas drilling off the coast of Newfoundland, no environmental assessment required, smack dab in the middle of natural habitat for endangered right whales as well as seven other whale species, turtles, corals, birds and more.

Is Canada basically telling COP15 that biodiversity matters except when oil companies need it not to?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have already said this, but I want to make it very clear that the Northeast Newfoundland Slope marine refuge will remain a refuge under current conditions, and we will examine all exploration activities in a marine refuge on a case-by-case basis.

What we now have is a tendering process, but that does not authorize production activities.

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, with COP15 two days away, the federal government continues to demonstrate that Canada has a double standard when it comes to oil companies.

In 2020, Canada announced the creation of marine refuges off the coast of Newfoundland, where fishing is restricted to protect biodiversity. Last month, however, it authorized four oil companies to conduct exploratory drilling in the middle of a marine refuge without an environmental assessment.

As I understand it, fishing is prohibited to protect the ocean floor, but drilling is permitted. If that is not a double standard for oil companies—

**The Speaker:** Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I keep repeating the same thing day after day when I get asked this question: It is simply a tendering process that does not authorize offshore production.

I want to clarify that any proposed offshore production would first be subject to the Impact Assessment Act.

These are exploratory zones only. This is not for production.

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[English]

### INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, another three indigenous women were murdered by an alleged serial killer in Winnipeg, and police are not going to look for their remains, which they believe are in the Brady landfill. Imagine hearing that about one's relative. While the government stalls in providing resources, indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people continue to be murdered, because we are a target.

Will the government provide immediate funding to stop this genocide and the resources to search for the remains of our precious sisters?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our hearts go out to the families of the victims. It is not on a day like this that we can sit here and pat ourselves on the back about what we have been doing as a government. Obviously, it has not been enough. It is very puzzling to hear the news that this landfill will not be searched. I spoke to the mayor of Winnipeg yesterday about this and hope to get some clear answers shortly. Clearly, the federal government needs to play a role in an area where jurisdiction is a poisonous word and continues to kill indigenous women and children in this country.

*Oral Questions*

• (1430)

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, indigenous women are being targeted and murdered again by a serial killer. This is a nightmare. It is a killer with a chilling connection to neo-Nazism. This is happening here at home in Manitoba, and more women have gone missing since.

There must be a comprehensive federal response now: emergency shelters, economic supports and real action on the dangerous rise of white supremacy. The families of Mercedes Myran, Morgan Harris, Rebecca Contois and the fourth loved one deserve justice. Indigenous women and indigenous communities deserve urgent action now from the federal government.

When will the Liberals finally act?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, extremism of the nature described by the member opposite is one of the biggest terrorist threats in this country, and it continues to prey on those who are most vulnerable, including indigenous women, children, girls and LGBTQ folks across the country.

We need a comprehensive federal response. We need a comprehensive provincial response. We need a comprehensive municipal response.

It is why, in part, I have called for a federal, provincial, territorial and indigenous meeting in January to discuss the painful issue of MMIWG and why we continue to fail as governments in making sure that everyone in this country is indeed safe.

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**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have more bad news. Families can expect to pay another \$1,100 on their grocery bills on top of 40-year-high food inflation, according to a recent report. Canadian families will be paying an average of \$16,000 annually on their grocery bills next year. What is the cause? It is too many dollars chasing too few goods.

Liberal inflation and the carbon tax have already driven up the cost of home heating, gas and groceries. The Liberals will make it even worse when they triple the carbon tax. Why will they not stop forcing their failed, inflationary carbon tax on cash-strapped Canadians?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada and Canadians are not alone around the world in facing high prices. It is true that extreme weather has led to very bad harvests, and supply chain issues are still causing food prices to rise, which is why we have put in place supports to provide housing opportunities for Canadians, to double the GST tax credit and also to put in place dental supports.

If the Conservatives are serious about getting these supports to Canadians, they can support the government and vote for the fall economic statement, Bill C-32.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister from Alberta knows full well that Albertans overwhelmingly rejected the costly coalition's carbon tax. Alber-

tans gave the provincial government a resounding mandate to scrap the NDP carbon tax, which drove away jobs and drove away our economy, and now the Liberals plan on tripling the carbon tax on gas, groceries and home heating.

Why will the minister not stand with Albertans and with Canadians, stand up against his “leave it in the ground” left Prime Minister, and give Canadians a break so that they do not have to choose between eating and heating?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me remind my hon. colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn of the heat dome that caused people to die in my riding of Edmonton Centre, and of the atmospheric river that drowned parts of British Columbia. Let me remind him that people in my riding, in the middle of a pandemic, did not say, “Hurry up on the child care,” although they wanted that, and did not say, “Give us more supports on COVID,” although they wanted that. What did they say? “Fight climate change and make sure we can have a future for our kids.”

The other side does not understand market economics. We do, and that is what is going to help Canadians and Albertans.

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the NDP-Liberals' record inflation means that Canadians cannot afford to eat. Half of Canadians are already forced to cut back on healthy food, and 1.5 million Canadians had to visit a food bank in a single month. Families will have to spend over \$1,000 more on food next year.

The Liberals' out-of-control spending and their ever-increasing carbon tax make everything more expensive. When will the Liberals give Canadians a break and stop forcing their failed carbon tax on struggling Canadians?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I was in London, Ontario, with the Prime Minister, to announce that the Canada dental benefit was open for applications. I had the opportunity to talk with families about how important this is for them and for their children. It is \$1,300, over two years, to make sure low income kids go to the dentist.

The Conservatives have had opportunities to support vulnerable Canadians time and time again. They have voted against them each time. I hope we can count on their support with the fall economic statement, so we can deliver that badly needed support to Canadians.

*Oral Questions*

• (1435)

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, most Canadians can hardly afford to make ends meet. Even the Bank of Canada's governor says that this record inflation is a made-in-Canada problem caused by NDP-Liberal out-of-control spending.

Taxes, because of the Liberals, now cost Canadians 10% more than food, shelter and clothing combined. Half of Canadians would go broke over a sudden \$1,000 expense, but the NDP-Liberals are going to take even more away.

They are out of touch, and Canadians are out of money. When will the Liberals axe their failed carbon tax?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if we want to set the record straight and talk about which side of the House is putting more money in the pockets of Canadians, it is the government side.

The member and her colleagues, just last week, voted against tax cuts, tax breaks and supports directly to Canadians. Quite frankly, take a look at the remarks from Stephen Poloz, who said that our investments during the pandemic not only supported Canadians but prevented and staved off a period of deflation.

What is it that the Conservatives want, more or less? That is not clear. We are going to support Canadians.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, was he really just talking about inflation? The reality is that Canadians are grappling with the worst inflation crisis in 40 years, and it is having a direct impact on food, where it hurts the most.

Worse than that, the new year is not looking rosy at all. Four Canadian universities conducted a study that found that the price of food will increase by nearly 10% next year. It will cost nearly \$1,100 more per family. For families that are already struggling, an extra \$1,100 is huge. Will the government finally understand that raising taxes during a period of inflation is not a good idea?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my colleague opposite that his party is not even capable of acknowledging that climate change exists. The impacts of climate change are real. One only has to talk to people in the Gaspé or the Magdalen Islands. Three years ago, we were hit by hurricane Dorian, and this fall we were hit by hurricane Fiona. We will not be distracted by the drama they are creating. We must take action to protect our planet. We owe it to future generations. I can say one thing: We certainly will take no lessons from climate deniers.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, what the minister and member for Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine just said is completely false. I would ask her to apologize for the second time for the outrageous comments she made on the Gaspé radio a few weeks ago, but that is her concern.

However, inflation is every Canadian's concern. The only G7 country that is raising taxes during inflation is Canada under the

Liberal government. Will Canadians finally ensure that their government will not raise taxes? I have a very simple question. Will the minister tell us whether the Liberals are going to raise taxes next year, yes or no?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, even if we tripled the number of Conservative politicians who take the climate crisis seriously, the number would still be zero. There is no need to worry, because on this side of the House, we care about the planet, we care about our children, and we care about future generations.

We are acting for the good of Canadians and for the good of our planet. We are not going to do what the Conservatives do, which is constantly complain and never deliver.

\* \* \*

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in 2017, when the Prime Minister took to Twitter to invite all those fleeing persecution to come to Canada, he surely did not imagine that everyone would come through Roxham Road, but that is exactly what happened.

In October alone, 3,901 asylum seekers took that route, out of a total of over 30,000 this year. Meanwhile, do we know how many asylum seekers have used regular border crossings in Quebec? A total of 638 people out of 30,000. Will the minister suspend the safe third country agreement so that asylum seekers can go back to using the border crossings?

[English]

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with great respect to my hon. colleague, I expect he knows that people do not flee their country because of a tweet from a country's leader. They leave their country because they are fleeing violence, war and persecution.

We are going to continue to do what we can to support those who seek refuge in Canada, and continue to do so in an organized way. I am pleased to work with my colleagues on all sides of the House in order to treat those who are in search of safe haven with dignity and respect, while maintaining an orderly migration system at the same time.

• (1440)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP were also caught off guard by the Prime Minister's tweet. The RCMP was not expecting 90% of its border agents to be tied up handling Roxham Road. There are 117 land crossings with border services officers where asylum seekers could go instead of Roxham Road, if the minister were to suspend the safe third country agreement. That would allow the RCMP to do their job, their real job.

When will the minister suspend that agreement so the RCMP can focus on gun smuggling instead of Roxham Road?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does my colleague really believe that people make a decision about the rest of their lives based on a tweet?

I have said many times that people who cross the border are generally people fleeing very difficult situations. These men, women and children are fleeing violence and discrimination. My colleague should consider the human aspect.

The Bloc Québécois is asking that the safe third country agreement be suspended whereas Quebec is asking that it be renegotiated. I do not know where they are coming from, but they are alone on this and should rethink their position.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let us talk about dignity.

Thanks to Roxham Road, 62% of all of Canada's asylum claims are made in Quebec. As a result, our schools are running out of room, immigration lawyers are at their wits' end and our community organizations are stretched to the limit.

We have to suspend the safe third country agreement so that asylum seekers can be given a dignified welcome by Canadians across Canada.

Why is it up to organizations in Montreal to do all the work instead of organizations in Vancouver, Winnipeg or Halifax?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois does not want to offer people a decent welcome. It wants to slam the door in their faces, with no regard for the fact that these are men, women and children fleeing extremely difficult situations. Nobody but the Bloc Québécois feels this way. Nobody.

We are saying we need to renegotiate the agreement, Quebec is saying we need to renegotiate, everybody, including the U.S., agrees that we need to renegotiate the agreement, but the Bloc Québécois wants to suspend it. It is the only one, and I wonder if it even knows what it is talking about.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Indo-Pacific strategy says, with respect to Beijing, that the government will push back “against any form of foreign inter-

#### Oral Questions

ference on Canadian soil”. It is time to put those words into action. Today we learned about another two illegal police stations being operated by Beijing on Canadian soil, on top of the three we learned about last October.

When will the government put the words of the Indo-Pacific strategy into action, push back and expel diplomats responsible for this outrageous violation of our sovereignty?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that my hon. colleague would be assured by the concrete action the RCMP is taking to root out allegations of foreign interference in this country as a means of protecting our national security.

I would have thought that my hon. colleague would be assured by the things we are doing around allegations of foreign interference, creating independent panels to assure the integrity of our elections and cracking down on foreign funding. We will continue to do whatever is necessary to protect our interests here and abroad.

\* \* \*

#### DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, was the Prime Minister briefed about Beijing's election interference involving 11 candidates? The Prime Minister has been repeatedly asked this question and he has not answered it. He hides behind carefully crafted words such as saying he was not briefed about candidates receiving money from China, but that is not the question.

When will the Prime Minister stop his stonewalling, stop his word parsing and tell us what he knows about Beijing's election interference?

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very transparent, as have all ministers in the government. Before the Conservatives were even interested in the real threat that foreign interference presents, the government took action. We took action in 2019. We renewed that action in 2021. We had a group of experts chaired by the Clerk of the Privy Council to examine these issues and assure Canadians that the election integrity was preserved.

We take this threat seriously and we are on the job.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the same month the Prime Minister was briefed on foreign interference in our elections and decided to sit back and do nothing about it, the British secret service, MI5, publicly revealed the name of an agent of the Beijing regime who had funded and tried to influence British MPs.

Despite a directive from our national security agency to tell the public about the foreign interference, the Prime Minister prefers to hide behind a veil of secrecy to avoid answering our questions. As a result, despite numerous briefings and serious allegations in Canada, no one has been arrested or publicly identified.

*Oral Questions*

Why?

• (1445)

**Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said several times, and as the Minister of Public Safety and the Prime Minister also said, we take the threat of foreign interference very seriously.

Obviously, we are on the job to protect the democratic institutions that are so important for Canada. The good news is that that is exactly what our government did.

Despite all the efforts of the conspiracy theorists opposite, I can assure the House that Canada's election was free and open and that the results are completely reliable.

\* \* \*

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in Quebec, pediatric emergency rooms continue to be overwhelmed. Occupancy is 150% in some hospitals. In pediatric care units, every overflow bed is full. The Centre mère-enfant in Quebec City was forced to postpone an extraordinary number of surgeries. Among the hospitalized children are the very young, under two, who are having respiratory problems. The situation is getting worse by the day.

What are the Liberals doing to help care for our children?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank our colleague for asking this very important question. Indeed, our children are very sick these days.

Respiratory viruses are spreading very quickly, causing tremendous damage to our families and causing parents and grandparents to worry. Our health care workers are having a very tough time.

That is why we need to procure vaccines, take public health measures. That is also why the Canadian government must continue to support the provinces and territories in doing the difficult work of taking care of workers and hospitals at this difficult time.

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, sick kids in Alberta are waiting in heated trailers outside hospitals, and now hospice care for children is paused as staff are redeployed to deal with the health care crisis. Families are forced to scramble for help during their last days with their children. While Danielle Smith is distracted by her ridiculous sovereignty act, neither the federal nor the provincial government is protecting the most vulnerable Albertan kids. This is heartbreaking.

When will the government stand up for families dealing with this health care crisis and get sick kids the care they deserve?

**The Speaker:** Before the health minister answers, I just want to remind members about talking across the aisle. It is nice to see people getting along and talking well together, but it gets in the way of question period. I just want to remind them that if they really want to talk they can just take a couple of minutes, go outside and then come back when they have everything settled.

The hon. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada, there have never been as many hospitalizations of children with the flu in the history of Canada as there are at the present time. That means we have to take care of our children.

Vaccination works. It is free for the flu and COVID-19 everywhere across Canada. Public health measures also matter and work. We at the federal level are going to continue to support provinces and territories with historic amounts invested in support of their important work.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, for so many Canadians, finding housing that is affordable is becoming incredibly challenging. This is especially true in Scarborough and the entire city of Toronto. There is no question we need to continue to do more.

Can the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion please tell the House about the important progress our government is making to ensure every Canadian has affordable housing that meets their needs?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for her strong advocacy on housing in her community. We know how great the need is for affordable housing in various communities across the country, especially in the city of Toronto. That is why last week I was pleased to join the mayor in announcing a federal investment of \$90 million to build, renovate, repair and retrofit 750 homes for indigenous peoples, women and children fleeing domestic violence and refugee families. This is just one example of how our investments are making a real and tangible difference in the lives of Canadians, including in communities like Toronto.

\* \* \*

• (1450)

[*Translation*]

**PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, since the Liberals took office, violent crime has risen by 32% and gang-related murders are up 92%.

The Liberals are not addressing the real problem. They should have done something about the illegal gun trafficking at the border a long time ago. Instead, with the support of the Bloc Québécois, the Liberals want to prevent hundreds of thousands of Quebec hunters from participating in an ancestral tradition. The government needs to stop treating hunters like criminals.

*Oral Questions*

When will the government punish the real criminals once and for all?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has been very clear from the beginning. We are not targeting hunters. We are targeting criminals. We are targeting the assault weapons that were used in our country's greatest shooting tragedies.

Bill C-21 targets the criminal element with harsher sentences and with investments for the CBSA.

The Conservatives do not support this bill, which is a very bad thing. They need to change their position.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FIREARMS**

**Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to deny they are going after Canadian hunters with their latest gun ban, but the ban list is out and hunters across the country have seen many of their commonly used firearms on that list. Hunters from Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, the north and our indigenous hunters are all speaking out. Even legendary Montreal Canadiens goalie Carey Price is speaking out. The CBC, in fact, just today, said the list includes a number of long guns in wide use by Canadian farmers.

Why will the Liberals not just admit this was never about public safety and that it was their target all along to go after law-abiding hunters, sport shooters and farmers? This was their plan all along.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with great respect for my colleague, the intent of the government has always been clear. We are not targeting law-abiding gun owners or hunters. We are targeting the AR-15 style guns used in some of the worst shooting tragedies in this country's history, including Polytechnique.

Recently the Conservatives' friends at the Coalition for Firearms Rights exploited the worst femicide in Canadian history for profit. This was a slap in the face to all the families the victims and survivors of Polytechnique.

Will the Conservatives stand up now, condemn the CCFR and ask it to apologize?

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it seems the only person in this chamber who does not understand this bill is the minister himself.

The bill lists in black and white the exact hunting rifles the bill is banning. Constituents who are calling their members of Parliament, both NDP and Liberal, understand it bans hunting rifles. Carey Price, an NHL goalie, understands it bans hunting rifles. The CBC, and we know the Liberals read the CBC, understands it bans rifles. We also know that backbench Liberal MPs understand that this bill bans hunting rifles.

They cannot have it both ways. Either everyone else is wrong or the minister—

**The Speaker:** The hon. minister.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be the first person to stand up and applaud the exemplary work of our rural caucus who defend the rights of hunters, collectors and recreational sport shooters every day.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives can mock, but our side of the House knows full well—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

The hon. minister. Do it from the top please.

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Mr. Speaker, before I was rudely interrupted by the Conservatives, and am again—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Marco Mendicino:** Mr. Speaker, I was highlighting the incredible work of our rural caucus, and indeed of all of our caucus, who understand the importance of the traditions of hunting. I have met with them and will continue to be sure we are not targeting those hunting guns. That is why we are working closely with the members of the committee who are undertaking a very careful study of the language of that bill to make sure it is in alignment with our intent, which is to go after those AR-15 style firearms that were used in the likes of Polytechnique. We never want another one of those tragedies again.

**Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has it all wrong. Everything he just said is contradicted by the actual text of the bill, the text that we understand, that Liberal backbenchers understand and that their constituents understand. Just because he says it is so does not make it so.

The Liberals' entire philosophy and approach to crime is flawed. The evidence is in. Since they took office, violent crime is up 32% and gang-related homicides are up 90%, yet their plan to combat these things is to go after law-abiding hunters. They need to get their priorities straight, go after the gangsters and leave hunters alone.

• (1455)

**Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am one of those hunters, and I know I can speak for all the hunters in this room when I say that we cannot stand it when we see a firearm used, as we heard earlier about Polytechnique, to take other innocent lives.

*Oral Questions*

I would hope we all want to work together to make this bill the best it can be. The terrible misuse of information out there has to stop.

I am also going to tell members that I challenge anyone to please reach out with a specific make and model. The devil is in the details. The weapons on that list are not—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada is putting the spotlight on the decline of French in the workplace. One the three worst sectors is banking, which is under federal jurisdiction. For 45 years, the federal government has allowed banks to circumvent Bill 101. As a result, this sector has become a major contributor to the anglicization of Quebec.

The Liberals know all this and they have the Statistics Canada figures in hand, so why do they still want to allow the banks to get around the Charter of the French Language in Bill C-13?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first of all, we acknowledge the decline of French across the country. We also acknowledge the statistics published this year after the census. That is why we introduced an ambitious bill to do everything we can to protect and promote our beautiful French language across the country and to protect our official language minority communities.

Our bill will make it possible for employees of federally regulated private businesses to work in French and for their clients be served in French. Once again, I hope the Bloc Québécois and the opposition parties will support us.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada has proven that, by allowing federally regulated businesses like banks to circumvent the Charter of the French Language, Ottawa is contributing to the decline of French in the workplace. With Bill C-13, the government is encouraging the trend towards the anglicization of workplaces in Quebec.

At this very moment, French is also declining as a language spoken at home, and it is declining as a language of service in the greater Montreal area and the Outaouais. If, on top of everything else, Ottawa continues to encourage its decline in the workplace with Bill C-13, what does the future hold for French in Quebec and Canada?

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would really like my friend and colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île to stop spreading misinformation about Bill C-13.

We are the first government to recognize the decline of French and that is the reason for introducing ambitious legislation. The federal government wants to do its share to protect and promote

French across the country, including in Quebec. I hope once again that members of the House will work with us because stakeholders across the country want this bill to be passed as quickly as possible and we have a lot of work to do.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has shown a serious disrespect to all Canadians. He seems to think he can skirt the responsibility that comes with elected office by blaming global trends. Canadians elected him to govern and help Canadians through record costs of everything, which he can do today by eliminating the carbon tax.

Will the Prime Minister take leadership, assume some responsibility and cancel the carbon tax, yes or no?

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, instead of fighting inflation and making life more affordable for Canadians, what do the Conservatives want to do? They want to make it harder for Canadians to save for their retirement. They want to make it harder for Canadians who lose their jobs, and instead of fighting climate change, they want to make pollution free again.

On just about every measure that Canadians care about, the Conservatives are absent. We will always have Canadians' backs.

• (1500)

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Liberals do not have an environmental plan. It is a tax plan. Liberals have not met a single target that they have set. As is typical with the government, I got another non-answer. I asked for a yes or no response, not more empty rhetoric.

I will provide the government with another opportunity to answer the simple question: Will they cancel the carbon tax, yes or no?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has made a suggestion that we have not hit a target. The target that we have set is for 2030, so if she has a DeLorean and a flux capacitor, I invite her jump in and travel in time.

The reality is that we are on track to reduce our emissions because of the investments we are making. We are bringing pollution down, and we found a way to make it more affordable for families at the same time. Every step of the way, we will do what it takes to protect our environment for our kids and our grandkids and to advance measures that support affordability at the same time.

This is the path forward. If the Conservatives do not join us on it, they will enjoy sitting in opposition for a very long time.

**Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not need a DeLorean to know how much of a failure the Liberal government has been when it comes to the environment. It has not met a single target or planted a single tree, but it has raised the costs on everyday Canadians. It is making it \$1,400 more costly to buy groceries this year and another \$1,100 per family next year. There are 1.5 Canadians who relied on a food bank in a single month and half a million of those were children. All of this is being driven up by the Liberal carbon tax.

Will the Liberals do the right thing and remove the carbon tax?

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Conservatives are spreading misinformation. We are on target to make our targets, and we will get there, come hell or high water.

What is the Conservatives' record? They cut \$350 million from the environment and climate change budget. They blew up Kyoto—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** I would like to make sure members are done shouting.

I do not know what it is, but I think members want to hear the parliamentary secretary's answer over again, right from the top, please.

**Mr. Terry Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, emissions are going down. We are on track to make our targets, but the Conservative record is abysmal.

The first thing the Conservatives did when they came to power was to cancel the national child care program, but the second thing they did was blow up the Kyoto climate accord. Now they are blaming us for their lack of action. For their troubles, they won the Fossil of the Day award, the Fossil of the Year award and the Colossal Fossil award.

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[Translation]

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, families in Halifax West warmly welcomed the news that our bilateral child care agreement will provide a second fee cut this year. This represents a 50% reduction in the average fees for families with children in regulated child care spaces.

What is more, our government has now established the National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care, which will benefit from the expertise of people such as Christine McLean in my riding.

Can the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development inform the House—

**The Speaker:** The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

#### Oral Questions

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for the question.

For too long, families have had to pay high monthly child care fees and languish on long waiting lists when too few quality child care spaces were available. Last week, we were pleased to announce that the Government of Canada and the Government of Nova Scotia will cut regulated child care fees in half, on average, for families in Nova Scotia by the end of this year. That is a big step forward in making regulated child care services more affordable for Nova Scotia families. We will continue to work with our provincial partners to create a better future for all children in Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### FINANCE

**Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Canadians face the worst affordability crisis in a generation, yet the government is only making things worse by spending \$54 million on the Arrive-CAN fiasco, \$6,000 a night for the Prime Minister's luxury suite in London and \$1 billion in wage subsidies to wealthy corporations. Liberal waste has become a national embarrassment, and every time the government borrows and spends on waste, life becomes more unaffordable for Canadians.

Will the government finally put an end to this inflationary spending, yes or no?

● (1505)

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives have demonstrated time and time again that, when it comes to supporting Canadians, they vote against them.

They voted against early learning and child care, for which fees are reducing by 50% from coast to coast to coast across the country. That is thousands of dollars in the pockets of Canadian families. They voted against the Canada dental benefit, which provides up to \$1,300 over two years for children to get their teeth cleaned. They voted against the Canada housing benefit of \$500 to help low-income renters. Will they stop at nothing to not help low-income Canadians?

We will continue to—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in January 2017, the Prime Minister invited all those fleeing persecution and war to come to Canada. Instead of prioritizing genuine refugees, he rolled out the red carpet for those who were visiting or were permanent residents of the United States, a safe country. It is possible that, in 2017, those individuals wanted to flee the United States because they were afraid of Donald Trump. However, now the Biden administration is in charge.

When will the Prime Minister help real refugees and close Roxham Road for good?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is clear how little the Conservatives know about the Roxham Road file.

Once again, we are talking about men, women and children who have fled tragic situations. I think that the Conservative Party should learn a little about the issue before attempting to ask questions about it.

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I believe I am well aware of it, just as I am well aware that the United States is a safe country. People in the U.S. who want to seek asylum should seek it in the U.S.

When people cross the border from the U.S. to Canada, they are violating the safe third country agreement. There is a loophole in the safe third country agreement, and we are waiting for the government to close it. It will have been six years in January.

Can the government fix the safe third country agreement so we stop getting applications from refugees arriving by land from the United States?

*[English]*

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have domestic and international legal obligations that require us to consider in good faith claims of asylum that have been made for those who enter the country in search of safe haven.

In his previous question, he indicated that people are somehow displacing other more deserving refugees. I would point out for my hon. colleague that Canada, over the past three years, has resettled more refugees than any other country in the world. In each of the last two years, Canada has resettled more than one-third of the total number of refugees that have settled anywhere globally.

We will continue to be the world leader when it comes to doing the right thing to support the world's vulnerable, not just who cross our border from the United States but around the world altogether.

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**AIRLINE INDUSTRY**

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's air sector helps keep Canadians connected with their loved ones from coast to coast to coast across our vast and beautiful country. After two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is

more important than ever that we support our air sector, especially as we head into the busy winter travel season.

Could the Minister of Transport provide an update on recent actions our government is taking to strengthen our air industry ahead of the holidays?

**Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for his leadership and advocacy. Over the last couple of years, the air sector has suffered a lot. Its workers and its customers have gone through an extraordinary period of time.

Last week, I hosted a summit that invited more than 50 leaders of the industry, including CEOs of airlines and airports. We agreed we needed to work together on lessons learned from the last couple of years. We agreed to focus on how we could improve efficiency, transparency and accountability.

We are committed to improving the air sector. We want to make sure Canadians have a competitive, safe and efficient sector so they can travel with great experience.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is no secret around here that Canadian households are already strapped in a period of incredible inflation. Today we learned that food prices for next year are projected to go up by another \$1,000 a year for the groceries of an average family of four.

Often when the Liberals answer questions about that, they like to get up and talk about things the NDP made them do, such as the dental benefit, the doubling of the GST rebate and the rental benefit. The fact is that in the face of prices that continue to go up, they need to do more. We want a windfall tax and we want the elimination of GST on home heating.

When are the Liberals going to get up and talk about that?

● (1510)

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what I want to talk about today is the fact that Canada is not alone in facing high food prices. We have drought, we have failed crops and we have supply chain issues that are causing prices of food to rise around the world. That is why we have supports in place to help Canadians.

However, the Minister of Industry has reached out to the commissioner of the Competition Bureau to make sure food companies are respecting all the protections in place for consumers. That is real action. That is what we are doing.

*Routine Proceedings***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

[Translation]

**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, Pastor Claude Guillot was convicted of 18 charges involving serious offences committed against children. In his defence, the pastor cited section 43 of the Criminal Code, which states that any schoolteacher or parent is justified in using force to correct a child, provided that the force does not exceed reasonable limits.

Sixty-four countries have already banned corporal punishment, and 27 more are in the process of doing so.

Can the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice tell us whether Canada intends to repeal section 43 of the Criminal Code to protect our children?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada recognizes that all children have the right to be protected against violence.

Assault has a broad definition in Canada's criminal law and includes any non-consensual use of force against an individual no matter their age. This can also include non-consensual touching that does not cause injury or leave a physical mark.

The government is opposed to the use of physical discipline for children and continues to discourage such practices. A bill is currently being studied, and we will make a decision when needed.

\* \* \*

[English]

**MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN**

**The Speaker:** Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in memory of the recently murdered indigenous women in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

[Translation]

I invite hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

[English]

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Rural Economic Development invited any member or any Canadian to give her information about the firearms that would be banned thanks to the government's amendment to Bill C-21. She must not realize the long list of hunting rifles and shotguns that are contained in the amendment. I am taking her up on her invitation.

I seek unanimous consent to table the list of hunting rifles and shotguns that will be banned if the amendment to Bill C-21 is passed. She invited me to do so.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

[Translation]

**SELECTED DECISIONS OF SPEAKER GEOFF REGAN**

**The Speaker:** I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the "Selected Decisions of Speaker Geoff Regan". This reference work on parliamentary procedure is the 10th volume in a series of Speakers' rulings. It contains 109 decisions.

• (1515)

[English]

First elected to Parliament in 1993, Mr. Regan served as cabinet minister, parliamentary secretary, opposition critic and vice-chair of several committees and subcommittees.

Mr. Regan held the distinction of being a third-generation parliamentarian. His father and grandfather also served as members. He is also the first Speaker to represent a riding in Atlantic Canada in nearly 100 years.

As members know, many of his rulings have already become important precedents guiding the practices of the House.

[Translation]

Members will receive a printed copy of the volume, which will also be published online. I would like to thank the dedicated staff of various branches of the House Administration who contributed to editing and publishing this work. This truly collaborative effort is an excellent example of the dedication and know-how of the people who support members' work every day.

[English]

On this special occasion, we are honoured today by the presence in the gallery of my distinguished predecessor, the Hon. Geoff Regan.

[Translation]

I invite all members to join me in a few minutes in the Speaker's lounge in room 233-S, West Block, for a reception in honour of the 36th Speaker of the House of Commons.

[English]

I look forward to seeing all members there.

\* \* \*

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 11 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

*Routine Proceedings***COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**

## JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

**Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights regarding the supplementary estimates (B), 2022-23.

The committee has considered the estimates referred by the House and reports the same.

## HEALTH

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following three reports of the Standing Committee on Health.

● (1520)

[*Translation*]

The sixth report is entitled “Supplementary Estimates (B), 2022-23: Vote 1b under Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Votes 1b and 5b under Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Votes 1b and 10b under Department of Health, Votes 1b, 5b and 10b under Public Health Agency of Canada”.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, the seventh report is entitled “Bill C-224, An Act to establish a national framework for the prevention and treatment of cancers linked to firefighting”.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a), a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred.

Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

I will let the hon. member for Charlottetown continue.

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the eighth report is entitled “Bill C-252, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibition of food and beverage marketing directed at children)”.

**The Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a), a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred.

Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, December 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[*Translation*]

## VETERANS

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Veterans entitled “Supplementary Estimates (B), 2022-23: Votes 1b and 5b under Department of Veterans Affairs”.

[*English*]

## INDIGENOUS AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS

**Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs in relation to Bill S-219, an act respecting a national ribbon skirt day.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House.

[*Translation*]

I would add that the committee's constructive approach to studying this bill was exemplary.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

**PETITIONS**

## MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have one petition to table today.

The petitioners are deeply concerned about a proposal from Louis Roy of the Collège des médecins du Québec, who recommended expanding euthanasia to “babies from birth to one year of age who come into the world with severe deformities and very serious syndromes”. This proposal for the legalized killing of infants is deeply disturbing to many Canadians.

The petitioners take the view that killing children is always wrong. They call on the Government of Canada to block any attempt to allow the killing of children.

## HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

The first one is expressing that the increasing concerns of many Canadians about international trafficking in human organs removed from victims without consent have not yet led to a legal prohibition on Canadians travelling abroad to acquire or receive such organs.

The petitioners are also concerned that there are currently two bills before Parliament proposing to impede the trafficking of human organs obtained without consent or as the result of a financial transaction. Those are Bill C-350 in the House of Commons and Bill S-240 in the Senate. The petitioners are urging the Parliament of Canada to move quickly on the proposed legislation so as to amend the Criminal Code and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to prohibit Canadians from travelling abroad to acquire human organs removed without consent or as the result of a financial transaction, and to render inadmissible to Canada any and all permanent residents or foreign nationals who have participated in this abhorrent trade in human organs. It is definitely worth our consideration quickly.

• (1525)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, Louis Roy of the Quebec college of physicians recommended expanding euthanasia to babies from birth to one year of age who come into this world with severe deformities and various serious syndromes.

Recently, the college sent another witness to AMAD, the Special Joint Committee on Medical Assistance in Dying, to double down, claiming further that this is not a moral issue and society has evolved past ethics conversations. This is deeply troubling, and petitioners find this proposal for the legalized killing of infants deeply disturbing and unacceptable in Canadian society. Petitioners believe that killing children is always wrong and they call on the House to block all attempts to legalize infanticide.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, this petition is about Louis Roy of the Quebec college of physicians. He wants to allow for the euthanasia of infants who are born less than perfect. The petitioners are opposed to this, because killing children is always wrong.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today I also rise to present a petition on behalf of Canadians who are outraged at some of the conversations that have taken place at the AMAD committee that would expand medical assistance in dying and, specifically, that euthanasia would be expanded to “babies from birth to one year of age who come into the world with severe deformities and very serious syndromes”.

These petitioners from across Canada are very disturbed that these are the conversations and recommendations that are coming forward. These petitioners believe that killing children is always wrong. It is an honour to present this petition in the people's House of Commons today.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I too want to present a petition signed by many petitioners. They are expressing concern that Louis Roy from the Quebec college of physicians has recommended expanding euthanasia to include babies from birth to the age of one year who are less than perfect. Recently, the Quebec college of physicians sent another witness to AMAD committee to double down, claiming further that this is not a moral issue and that Canadians have moved on.

The killing of children is always wrong. These petitioners want to make sure that the House blocks every attempt at legalizing the killing of children.

OPIOIDS

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege to rise to table a petition on behalf of constituents from Courtenay, Cumberland and Royston in my riding. They cite that over 29,000 Canadians died due to opioid toxicity between January 2016 and December 2021. Those who died as a result of this preventable drug-toxicity crisis were loved and valued citizens of this country.

The petitioners are calling on the government to reform drug policy to decriminalize simple possession of drugs listed in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act; provide a path for expungement

*Routine Proceedings*

of conviction records for those convicted of simple possession; and, with urgency, implement a health-based national strategy for providing access to a regulated safer supply of drugs and expand trauma-informed treatment, recovery and harm-reduction services and public education and awareness campaigns throughout Canada.

The petitioners cite that the current drug policies have proven to be ineffective in the prevention of substance use and exacerbate substance-use harms and risks, that the war on drugs has resulted in widespread stigma toward those who use controlled substances and that the war on drugs has allowed organized crime to be the sole provider of most controlled substances.

• (1530)

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

**Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of concerned Canadians about the culture of death that is happening under the current government, most specifically, with the recent development that Louis Roy of the Quebec college of physicians recommends the expansion of euthanasia to babies from birth to one year of age who have deformities and other various syndromes.

This is a development the petitioners are concerned about. They believe that killing children is always wrong.

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition.

Petitioners are concerned with comments from the Quebec college of physicians, which recommended expanding euthanasia to “babies from birth to one year of age who come into the world with severe deformities and very serious syndromes”. As someone who had a sister who had Down's syndrome, I find this very disturbing. Petitioners also find any prospect of legalizing infanticide in this country deeply disturbing. Killing children is always wrong. Petitioners call on the House to block all attempts to legalize infanticide.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Falun Gong is a traditional Chinese spiritual discipline, which consists of meditation, exercise and moral teachings based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance. The Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting has gotten about 1.5 million petition signatures over 50 different countries and presented them to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calling for immediate action to end the unethical practice of forced organ harvesting in China. It is also calling for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong.

This is a petition that is signed by a number of Canadians, and it is a pleasure for me to table it today. It is looking for members of Parliament from all political parties to do what they can.

*Routine Proceedings***QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 885, 886, 888, 892, 893, 896 and 898.

[Text]

Question No. 885—**Mr. Eric Duncan:**

With regard to the Globe and Mail report published on October 17, 2022, that the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO) knew of Laith Marouf's derogatory tweets a month before the contract with the Community Media Advocacy Centre was cancelled: (a) on what day did the PMO first become aware of the derogatory tweets; (b) who was the first person at the PMO to become aware of the tweet, and how did that person become aware of it; (c) what is the detailed timeline of any action taken within the PMO after it was informed of the tweets; and (d) is the PMO aware of any other derogatory or unacceptable tweets from entities which were awarded government contracts, and, if so, what are the details, including (i) which entities, (ii) the nature of the tweets, (iii) the date the PMO became aware, (iv) the value of the contract, (v) the date the contract was cancelled, if it was cancelled?

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister's Office was first made aware by the minister's office of a disturbing comment by an individual, it was agreed that the matter was serious and the department's officials needed to get to the bottom of it. Funding was removed. As the minister has said, the process to review and remove the funding took too long, and it never should have been granted in the first place. The department has since moved to improve the vetting process, adding conditions to funding agreements to allow faster action in any similar situations and providing anti-Semitism awareness training to program officers to ensure this never happens again.

Question No. 886—**Mr. Michael Cooper:**

With regard to the government's response to three police stations set up in Toronto by the Fuzhou Public Security Bureau, representing the government of China: (a) when did the government first become aware of their existence; (b) why didn't the government take any action to stop the establishment of these police stations; (c) what specific action, if any, will the government take to shut down these police stations and what is the timeline for such action; (d) has the RCMP opened any criminal investigations in relation to the actions of the Fuzhou Public Security Bureau or individuals acting on behalf of the bureau, and, if so, what is the status of any such investigation; and (e) is the government aware of the Fuzhou Public Security Bureau, or any other entity acting on behalf of the Chinese Communist Party, setting up police stations or other similar types of operations elsewhere in Canada, and, if so, what are the details, including the locations and names of the entities?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to parts (a) to (c) and part (e) of the question, there is no greater responsibility for the Government of Canada than to ensure its citizens and communities remain safe. Any report of harassment and intimidation of individuals in Canada is troubling and will not be tolerated. Where there is credible evidence of foreign interference, Canada's security and intelligence agencies use the full extent of their mandates to respond to these threats.

Given its mandate and specific operational requirements, CSIS does not generally disclose details related to operational activity.

In response to part (d) of the question, the RCMP is investigating reports of criminal activity in relation to the so-called "police" stations. As the RCMP is currently investigating the incident, there is no further comment at this time.

The RCMP takes threats to the security of individuals living in Canada very seriously and is aware that foreign states may seek to intimidate or harm communities or individuals within Canada. It is important for all individuals and groups living in Canada, regardless of their nationality, to know that there are support mechanisms in place to assist them when experiencing potential foreign interference or state-backed harassment and intimidation.

Anyone who feels threatened, online or in person, should report these incidents to their local police. If someone in the public is in immediate danger, they should call 911 or contact their local police. Individuals may also contact the RCMP's national security information network by phone at 1-800-420-5805 or by email at RCMP.NSIN-RISN.GRC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca.

Question No. 888—**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus:**

With regard to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: (a) how many government employees have been found to have made fraudulent claims for the CERB; (b) what amount of money is represented by the fraudulent claims in (a); (c) of the employees in (a), how many were (i) terminated, (ii) disciplined, but not terminated, broken down by type of discipline, (iii) not disciplined; (d) to date, how much of the fraudulent claim money has been (i) recovered, (ii) not yet recovered, (iii) written off; and (e) does the government plan to prosecute any of the individuals who made the fraudulent claims, and, if not, why not?

**Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, regarding the above-noted question, the CRA has been asked to respond on behalf of the government as of October 18, 2022.

The Canada emergency response benefit (CERB) was specifically designed to provide millions of Canadians with payments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The applicant must attest that they meet the eligibility criteria for the application and, after the fact, CRA may verify the information that was submitted.

Safeguards are in place to identify and prevent high-risk or potentially suspicious applications from being fully processed. Verification activities are undertaken. These are being used, along with other relevant information available to the CRA, to validate eligibility. If any payments are found to have been made to an individual deemed ineligible, the claimants will be contacted to make arrangements to repay any applicable amounts.

The determination of fraud is a question of fact, and each case must be considered individually to determine whether a claim for benefit is the result of an honest error or a misrepresentation. Each situation is unique, and it is important to note that the verification work on a specific file may take several months, but the overall verification work for all files will take several years.

The CRA is committed to ensuring that the CERB and other emergency benefits were claimed only by those who are eligible.

*Routine Proceedings*

In response to parts (a) to (e) of the question, the CRA does not capture information in the manner described in the question.

**Question No. 892—Mr. Philip Lawrence:**

With regard to sanctions imposed on Russian individuals in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine: (a) what is the total number of individuals sanctioned to date; (b) of the individuals in (a), how many (i) have assets in Canada which have been seized, (ii) do not have any known assets in Canada; (c) what is the total number of entities sanctioned to date; (d) of the entities sanctioned in (c), how many (i) have assets in Canada which have been seized, (ii) do not have any known assets in Canada; and (e) what is the value of assets seized to date from (i) individuals, (ii) entities?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers.

In response to parts (a) to (e) of the question, the special economic measures (Russia) regulations, or the Russia regulations, consist of a wide range of measures, including a dealings ban on listed persons. As of October 8, 2022, in response to the invasion in February 2022, Canada has imposed sanctions on 1271 Russian, Ukrainian and Belarussian individuals and 207 Russian, Ukrainian and Belarussian entities, effectively subjecting them to an asset freeze as a result of the aforementioned dealings ban.

Canada and its G7 and other allies jointly decided to take further steps to isolate Russia from the international financial system and impose consequences for its actions, including by establishing the Russian elites, proxies and oligarchs, or REPO, task force. Following the March 16, 2022 meeting of the REPO task force, G7 finance ministers released a joint statement outlining their commitment to take all available legal steps to find, restrain, freeze and, where appropriate, seize, confiscate or forfeit the assets of individuals and entities that have been sanctioned in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This commitment seeks to target the assets of key sanctioned Russian elites and proxies.

Canada moved rapidly and is the first country in the G7 to implement the REPO commitment, further demonstrating Canada's leadership role in the response to Putin's unjustified and illegal war in Ukraine. The Budget Implementation Act, or BIA, which received royal assent on June 23, 2022, established the new asset seizure and forfeiture authorities as part of Canada's overall sanctions regime, through designated changes to the Special Economic Measures Act and the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act. These changes provide authorities to allow Canadian courts to order seized or restrained property in Canada that is owned, held or controlled by sanctioned individuals and entities, to be forfeited to the Government of Canada. Funds resulting from asset forfeiture may be used to compensate victims of human rights abuses, restore international peace and security or rebuild affected states.

Since the enactment of these legislative changes, a whole-of-government effort has been under way to operationalize the new authorities and move forward with respect to the first potential seizure of assets.

At present, the government is actively engaged in identifying and analyzing potential target assets, including building solid evidentiary packages to support seizure and forfeiture orders. Such steps are crucial to the successful implementation of this new regime.

**Question No. 893—Mr. Stephen Ellis:**

With regard to the dental care provisions in Bill C-31, An Act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing: (a) were the provincial or territorial ministers of Health consulted on these measures, and, if so, what are the specific details, including (i) who was consulted, (ii) how they were consulted, (iii) the dates of the consultations; and (b) were the provisions on the agenda for any federal, provincial, and territorial ministers' meetings, and, if so, which ones and on what dates?

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-31, an act respecting cost of living relief measures related to dental care and rental housing, was introduced on September 20, 2022. Health Canada has and will continue to engage with the provinces and territories, as well as stakeholders including experts, clinicians and industry, on providing dental care for uninsured Canadians. Consultations to date have helped inform the design of the legislation, but no consultations were held specifically on this legislation before Bill C-31 was introduced.

The discussion items for ministerial FPT meetings are confidential, and the details cannot be made available.

**Question No. 896—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to Bill C-21, An Act to amend certain Acts and to make certain consequential amendments (firearms): (a) what are the details of all studies, surveys and focus groups conducted by the government and related to the effectiveness of the measures contained in the bill, including, for each (i) who conducted the study, (ii) the type of study (focus group, survey, etc.), (iii) the number of participants, (iv) the participant demographics, (v) the questions asked and results, (vi) the methodology used, (vii) the website where findings are available to the public, if applicable; and (b) what are the details of each contract pertaining to (a), including, for each, (i) the vendor, (ii) the date of the contract, (iii) the value, (iv) which studies, surveys or focus groups were connected to the contract, (v) a description of goods or services, (vi) whether the contract was sole-sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, official consultations were not conducted for Bill C-21, which is currently before Parliament. In the development of the previous Bill C-21, which died on the Order Paper in 2021 at the call of the federal election, consultations were undertaken with stakeholders to help inform the development of the bill. The majority of the measures of the previous bill were retained in the current bill. They are as follows.

With regard to part (a) of the question, in 2018, Public Safety launched an engagement process to help inform policy, regulations and legislation to reduce violent crime involving firearms, in particular around limiting access to handguns, assault-style firearms and measures to reduce firearm-related violent crime. The engagement process included a series of eight in-person round tables, an online questionnaire, a written submission process and bilateral meetings with a range of stakeholders.

*Routine Proceedings*

With regard to part (a)(i) of the question, Hill and Knowlton Strategies was retained by Public Safety Canada to provide support in undertaking this engagement project. Public Safety Canada developed the agenda for the in-person round tables and selected and invited participants. Hill and Knowlton facilitated these discussions. The online questionnaire was developed and launched by Public Safety Canada. Hill and Knowlton's role was to analyze and report on data collected through all engagement channels. Public Safety Canada reviewed draft versions of this report and provided Hill and Knowlton with written feedback, which was incorporated into the final written report.

The response to part (a)(ii) of the question is in-person round tables, an online questionnaire, written submissions and bilateral meetings with stakeholders

With regard to part (a)(iii) of the question, Public Safety held a series of eight in-person round tables in four cities: Vancouver on October 22, 2018; Montreal on October 25, 2018; Toronto on October 26, 2018; and Moncton on October 29, 2018. In total, 77 stakeholders participated in these sessions. Thirty-six written submissions were received. The online questionnaire was open for one month and was available online to all Canadians between October 11 and November 10, 2018. There were 134,917 questionnaires completed.

In response to part (a)(iv) of the question, regarding in-person round tables, stakeholders represented the provincial government; law enforcement; municipalities; not-for-profit associations, such as health, community services, youth, victims; education; wildlife and conservation; retailers; academia and research; and the firearms and sports shooting community.

Regarding the written questionnaire, more than half of the respondents were male. Most came from either Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia or Alberta. Most lived in an urban setting, and nearly half owned a firearm.

Parts (a)(v) and (a)(vi) of the question are not applicable.

The answer to part (a)(vii) of the question is the engagement summary report, "Reducing Violent Crime: A Dialogue on Handguns and Assault-Style Firearms" at [publicsafety.gc.ca](http://publicsafety.gc.ca).

Concerning part (b) of the question, the answers are as follows: (i) Hill and Knowlton Strategies; (ii) October 9, 2018, to May 31, 2019, inclusive; (iii) \$206,428.40; (iv) this contract was in relation to the October 2018 regional round tables with stakeholders in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick; (v) designing the in-person engagement sessions, developing the strategy, facilitating up to eight sessions with stakeholders, developing a summary report from the round tables and online written submissions, and developing a consolidated public-facing report; (vi) it was a call-up against Public Services and Procurement Canada.

**Question No. 898—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to the impact of rising interest rates on the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC): what are the CMHC's projections on the number, total value, and percentage of CMHC insured mortgage loans that will be in a default situation based on (i) current interest rates, (ii) higher interest rates, broken down by 50 basis point intervals?

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the question, part of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's, or CMHC's, mandate is to contribute to market stability by providing information on potential housing market vulnerabilities.

In terms of insurance risk, interest rates are but one consideration and should not be looked at in isolation. CMHC's corporate-wide stress testing program and capital adequacy is forward looking and responsive to emerging events, and interest rates are one of the factors taken into consideration in the analysis. Performing such frequent analyses allows CMHC to identify potential threats to our capital and liquidity levels and enhance our operational readiness, as necessary. People can consult CMHC's last published 2022-26 corporate plan for more information, specifically page 37 for financial highlights, page 60 for commercial operations and mortgage insurance, and page 80, appendix 5, regarding stress testing.

CMHC's 2023-27 corporate plan will be submitted to Parliament according to schedule and will include the current rate environment, further forecasts and our capital adequacy projections.

Additionally, as part of its quarterly financial reporting, CMHC reports on mortgage arrears, defaults, via its mortgage loan insurance business supplement, June 30, 2022, specifically tab 25, transactional homeowner and portfolio, arrears; and tab 26, transactional homeowner and portfolio, claims paid. Note that default does not mean an insurance claim.

CMHC does not have projected numbers on CMHC-insured mortgage loans that will be in a default situation based on the current interest rate or higher interest rates, broken down by 50 basis point intervals.

\* \* \*

[English]

**QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, furthermore, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 882 to 884, 887, 889 to 891, 894, 895, 897 and 899 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Text]

**Question No. 882—Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan): (a) what is the total amount of project funding announced by the agency since its inception; (b) what is the total amount of project funding where the funding has actually been transferred to the recipient since the agency's inception; (c) what is the breakdown of (a) and (b) by year; and (d) what are the details of all projects which have been funded by the agency to date, including, for each, the (i) location, (ii) date of announcement, (iii) project description, (iv) amount of funding being provided by PrairiesCan, (v) percentage of total project costs represented by the amount in (iv), (vi) start date, (vii) expected completion date, (viii) amount of PrairiesCan funding actually delivered to the recipient to date, (ix) recipient?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 883—Ms. Rachel Blaney:**

With regard to the Post Living Differential (PLD) allowance offered by the Department of National Defence to Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members, broken down by Canadian Forces bases, region and year in the past 10 years: (a) what is the amount of PLD allowance offered to members, in dollars and percentage of salary; (b) how many members receive the PLD allowance; (c) how many members do not receive the PLD allowance; (d) how many members are living in single versus family units; (e) when did the department last undertake a comprehensive review of the PLD levels; (f) are there plans to undertake a review of the PLD allowance; and (g) what criteria is used to determine whether the PLD allowance is offered or not?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 884—Mr. Eric Duncan:**

With regard to the claim by the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, that he used the month between finding out about Laith Marouf's comments and speaking out publicly about them, to consult with departmental officials on the government's legal options for withdrawing the money from the Community Media Advocacy Centre: (a) what are the details, including a specific timeline, for any consultations held in the month following July 20, 2022; (b) what are the titles of all departmental officials who were consulted; and (c) on what date and by what method (email, verbal consultation) was each official in (b) consulted?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 887—Mr. Brad Vis:**

With regard to the Tourism Relief Fund: (a) what is the complete list of criteria used by officials to determine the fund recipients; (b) how many applications for funding were received from British Columbia; (c) of the applicants in (b), how many were granted funding; (d) how many (i) businesses, (ii) non-profits, have received this funding in British Columbia; (e) of the recipients in (d), how many received (i) repayable, (ii) non-repayable, contributions; and (f) what is the timeline for when an application is received, when a decision is rendered, and when it is communicated to the applicant?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 889—Mr. James Bezan:**

With regard to the government's response to foreign governments recruiting retired personnel from the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF): (a) what is the Department of National Defence's policy with respect to retired personnel from the RCAF accepting contracts or other paid work from foreign governments; (b) is the Department of National Defence aware of any former RCAF members accepting contracts or other paid work from the People's Republic of China since January 1, 2016; (c) if the answer to (b) is affirmative, (i) what is the nature of that work, (ii) what is the total (dollar, contribution) value of that work, (iii) how many former RCAF members are involved, (iv) how many former RCAF members were CF-18 pilots, (v) what national security steps, if any, have been taken to prevent sensitive information from being divulged to an adversarial foreign government; (d) is the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development aware of any attempts by diplomatic staff from the People's Republic of China or other officials to recruit former members of the Canadian Armed Forces; (e) if the answer to (d) is affirmative, (i) what steps has the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development taken to prevent such recruitment activities, (ii) have any diplomatic staff from the People's Republic of China been expelled from Canada as a result?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 890—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to the Roxham Road border crossing: (a) how many individuals have used the Roxham Road border crossing to enter Canada, broken down by month since January 1, 2021; (b) what are the ongoing monthly costs related to the crossing, including costs associated with processing individuals crossing the border; (c) what is the breakdown of (b) by type of expenditure; (d) how many officers or employees from (i) the RCMP, (ii) the Canada Border Services Agency, (iii) Citizenship and Immigration Canada, have been assigned to duties related to the border crossing or the individuals who crossed into Canada at that location; (e) what are the details of all contracts awarded by the government since January 1, 2021, in relation to the border crossing, including, for each, the (i) vendor, (ii) date, (iii) amount or value, (iv) description of goods or services, including the volume, if applicable; (f) for each contract in (e), was it sole sourced or awarded through a competitive bidding process; and (g) for each sole-sourced contract in (f), why was there not a competitive bidding process?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 891—Mr. Philip Lawrence:**

With regard to expenditures on communications professional services (codes 035, 0351, and 0352) since April 1, 2021, broken down by department, agency, Crown corporation, or other government entity: what are the details of each expenditure, including (i) the date, (ii) the amount, (iii) the vendor, (iv) the description of goods or services, (v) whether the contract was sole-sourced or competitively bid?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 894—Mr. Warren Steinley:**

With regard to the claim on the government's website that 10 percent of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions are from crop and livestock production: (a) what is the breakdown of that percentage by type of crop or livestock (beef, pork, wheat, canola, etc.); and (b) for each type of crop or livestock in (a), what portion of the percentage is created by each stage of production (seeding, harvest, slaughter, milling, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 895—Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to individuals who have entered Canada at irregular border crossings, since January 1, 2020, broken down by month: how many individuals entered at such border crossings, broken down by province or territory, and by area (e.g., near Emerson, Manitoba)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 897—Ms. Marilyn Gladu:**

With regard to minors being warned of imprisonment or fines if they broke the previous quarantine requirements for certain individuals returning to Canada, since April 2020, broken down by year: how many travellers under the age of 18 received such warnings, broken down by age and type of warning (email, phone call, physical visit to property, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

**Question No. 899—Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:**

With regard to the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI), broken down by fiscal year since its inception: (a) what projects have received funding and who was the recipient of the funding; (b) what was the amount of funding delivered to each project in (a); (c) how many Indigenous commercial fisheries have received funding and which First Nations peoples do they represent; (d) what is the total amount of funding received by each commercial fishery in (c); and (e) what is the total amount of funding spent to date through the PICFI?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I would then ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Speaker:** Is that agreed?**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

*Government Orders***REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE**

MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that I have received notice of a request for an emergency debate. I invite the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre to rise and make a brief intervention.

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am here to give notice under Standing Order 52(2) that I will be seeking leave today, Monday, December 5, 2022, to propose an emergency debate regarding missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people.

Last week, the Winnipeg Police Service announced charges against an alleged serial killer for the murder of Morgan Harris, Mercedes Myran and one other loved one who is still being identified. This follows an earlier charge of May 2022 for the murder of Rebecca Contois.

Our community is reeling from the loss of our precious sisters and what has been part of an inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, something that the Prime Minister has identified as a genocide. We need closure. We need to talk about it and address it immediately to get support to search for our loved ones. We need closure and to search for our loved ones who, the police believe, are in the Brady Road landfill site.

I am requesting this. We need resources. Our women continue to be murdered. We need resources to find our loved ones, and we need to discuss this right away. We need closure.

• (1535)

## SPEAKER'S RULING

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre for her intervention. However, I am not satisfied that her request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[English]

**FALL ECONOMIC STATEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022**

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-32, An Act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 3, 2022 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022, as reported (without amendment) from the committee.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always fascinating hearing my colleague and friend across the way present herself in the form of a speech to the chamber.

One of the biggest issues I have with the Conservative Party is that there are many members within it that will say, on the one hand, that we need to spend some money. We heard a lot today about spending on different areas from some of her colleagues. Then on the other hand, we hear from other colleagues who say that we need to stop spending money.

There seems to be an inconsistency at times. The overall theme of the Conservative Party seems to be to chop and cut programs and to cut back on government expenditures. I wonder if my colleague could provide her thoughts on what areas, and which departments in particular, she believes we should be looking at cutting programs or funding dollars.

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the only party in this chamber that has an addiction to spending and a spending problem is the Liberal government.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague opposite just talked about government spending. The Auditor General and the PBO have talked about a lot of areas where the government has been ineffective in spending. In fact, I believe there is an article that says:

Ottawa spends billions yet the number of homeless in Canada may be rising.

An Order Paper question that I had showed that the government spent \$400 million on airport COVID testing after the rest of the world had lifted requirements for COVID testing. I believe these contracts are going forward every day. The government also spent \$1 billion on the WE Charity scandal.

Spending is not an end in and of itself. Would the member agree that there are areas where the government has spent erroneously, and perhaps it behooves the government to do a bit of an audit before making statements like the one that was just made?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, agreed. The fact is that the government brought in more tax dollars and more revenue than expected because of inflation. Everything costing more meant more taxes paid to the government on the same item.

However, when it had this windfall, instead of paying down the debt, the government spent unscrupulously again. It is time to control that spending so that Canadians can finally get their heads above water and do not have to give up their homes. Otherwise, we will have an even greater homeless problem in this country.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, what are the member's thoughts in regard to the Conservative election platform where they said that they actually supported a price on pollution?

That was in the last election and not that long ago. Her party said that it supported a price on pollution. Now it seems to have changed its mind. Can the member explain why the Conservatives have changed their minds?

**Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:** Mr. Speaker, the party on this side exercises common sense. The fact of the matter is that the carbon tax is driving up the cost of food and everything else.

It is time that the members opposite give Canadians a break so that we can afford to have a Christmas dinner, instead of trying to keep warm and deciding whether to pay the electricity bill or to put food on the table.

*Government Orders*

• (1540)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise to speak to the government's agenda. Today my comments will reflect upon the government's fall economic statement and the measures in Bill C-32, the fall economic statement implementation act, which comes at a critical juncture in the history of Canada and the world, at a time when global energy trade flows and trade flows in general, as well as economic and military alliances, are all being reshaped, and some are being tested.

Before I discuss some of the key themes in Bill C-32, I wish to say it is always a pleasure and privilege to rise on behalf of the residents of Vaughan—Woodbridge and the city of Vaughan, who, in my view, are the most entrepreneurial and generous in the country. In fact, the city of Vaughan's entrepreneurial spirit is seen on a daily basis through its over 19,000 businesses, which contribute every day to Canada's success. These entrepreneurs and business leaders take risks, make investments, generate wealth and create jobs and futures, all the while demonstrating a spirit of generosity that is unrivalled.

For example, the city of Vaughan is home to the first net new hospital to be built in Ontario in over 30 years, the \$1.8-billion Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital. Our community was given a task, a goal, to raise \$250 million for the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital and, in a very few short years, it surpassed that target.

For me, the idea is that individuals desire to create wealth. What does that imply? Wealth creation is at the heart of capitalism. It is at the heart of the market system that drives our economy, raises our standard of living and creates jobs and futures for the residents not only of my riding of Vaughan—Woodbridge, but also throughout this blessed country. This notion of wealth creation through trade, investment, done within a democratic system that protects the environment and our health, has lifted billions of people out of poverty around the world and brought with it technological and scientific innovations that continue to move us forward as a country and as a world.

Bill C-32 contains the core elements of the fall economic statement, which sets Canada up for success in the coming years by addressing the needs of Canadians today in the context of an inflationary environment. It also thoughtfully addresses the economic transition occurring in the global economy by responding to the competitive challenges laid out by the Biden administration through several pieces of legislation, including the Inflation Reduction Act, all the while ensuring Canada's strong fiscal framework remains intact for today's generations and future generations, including the three children I am blessed with. In economy speak, our AAA ratings are intact, reflective of what is noted as high economic strength and very strong institutional and government framework, in addition to a very effective fiscal policy framework.

Since our government's mandate from the citizens of this blessed country in 2015, we have made a commitment to strengthen the middle class and help those working hard to join the middle class. We know that the last few years have not been easy for many Canadians, including those most impacted by inflationary pressures, much of it brought on by global causes. Our government respond-

ed, and in Bill C-32 our response is laid out for Canadians. It is to help Canadians deal with inflationary pressures through an affordability plan that demonstrates responsible leadership.

Here is what we did and what we are doing to help Canadians. We are doubling the GST tax credit for six months, benefiting over 11 million Canadian households to the tune of \$2.5 billion in support. We are providing a \$500 top-up to the Canada housing benefit to low-income renters from coast to coast to coast. That is a \$500 one-time top-up to 1.8 million renters.

We are providing an automatic advance for the Canada workers benefit, a non-refundable tax credit, which is one of the most effective policy instruments, will provide a top-up to income, a benefit that is received by nearly three million hard-working Canadians. This measure would provide over \$4 billion over the next six years starting in 2022-23 to be paid in quarterly installments ahead of time, assisting Canadians when they need it most.

We are providing the Canada dental benefit, as we committed to. The first interim step is to ensure that Canadian families without insurance, means-tested, will receive funding up to \$1,300 over two years for their children under 12 years of age.

• (1545)

This is only the first step. I cannot wait to have this measure brought in to help my hard-working seniors, those who have now retired, who built this country, who sacrificed and who need assistance when they do not have dental insurance after they retire.

We are eliminating interest on federal student loans and apprenticeship loans. This would be a savings for students and their families, assisting families today and into the future, of \$2.7 billion over five years and \$550 million on an ongoing basis.

There is the Canada-wide early learning and child care agreement. This is personal for me because our family just received notice that the fees are going down for our daughter at the day care we have her enrolled in, which is a day care that has been in Woodbridge for 30 years and is run by great staff. It is such a loving environment. We are so happy our daughter is there. My family is blessed tremendously in many ways. We have been blessed with three beautiful daughters. We have been blessed with a livelihood and support from our families.

*Government Orders*

This is a savings for us, but really this is going to be a savings for so many hard-working families out there from coast to coast to coast. This is real change. Not only do we have the Canada child benefit to the tune of \$26 billion, which is paid out tax-free monthly, and not sent to millionaires anymore, but now we also have an early learning and national day care plan that will assist families from coast to coast to coast and reduce expenses. At one time, when our first daughter went to day care, we were paying nearly \$2,000 a month, prior to me being elected in 2015, for day care on an after-tax basis in the city of Toronto.

Thankfully, our government has responded, and we have been able to put in a full indexation of credits and benefits. For this I have to give credit to another Liberal finance minister Paul Martin, who, on October 18, 2000, brought in a budget where tax brackets were fully indexed and where the credits for the GIS, OAS and CPP were fully indexed. This was to protect against bracket creep, which is an economics or tax term. We know that inflation impacts Canadians everywhere, and if these tax brackets were not indexed, bracket creep and inflation would be a major tax on individuals. Thankfully, under former Liberal finance minister Paul Martin, we indexed everything.

These measures are great for today, but what is the plan for tomorrow? One side of this plan is that, today, the Prime Minister was in Ingersoll, Ontario, at the General Motor's CAMI production plant, to see the first electric commercial vehicle roll off its production facility today. It is the first large-scale plant in Canada making electric vehicles. This is great news for GM workers, their families, the environment and Canada's economy. We were just ranked number two in the battery supply chain, as measured by one of the indexes that Bloomberg uses. Canada is positioned nicely, I would even say sweetly, to be a provider and supplier of choice in electric vehicles along the entire supply chain continuum.

The decisions we make today as legislators will affect us for many decades to come in the economic transition to a low-carbon economy with, for example, electric vehicles, and with regard to our strong fiscal framework.

I am glad to see that, in this fall economic statement, we would be following through with enlarging the small business tax credit. We had reduced it to 9%. Now we would enlarge it so that more businesses are captured within it. It is a several hundred million dollar benefit to our SMEs, our hard-working small businesses. We know that, at a lower business tax rate, they would be able to invest more into their workers and their facilities, and create more wealth and more jobs, and that is what it is all about.

I am so happy to see that we have a critical minerals exploration tax credit of 30%. Again, that is in the fall economic statement.

There are a number of measures on the housing front. I look forward to seeing the details of the housing accelerator fund. We know we need to build housing. In my riding, in the city, we have 14,000 units being built by the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, where the subway comes from the city of Toronto into the city of Vaughan. I know there is an application for another 7,000 units on the other side of the 400 highway that will be going to city council and that I will be opining on personally.

We know that we need to move Canada forward. The fall economic statement and the measures in Bill C-32 not only respond to our competitive challenges with respect to the United States, China and other countries, but also ensure we show compassion to Canadian families at a time when they are facing inflationary pressures.

• (1550)

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, when the government unveiled its housing strategy in 2017, there was \$78.5 billion dedicated toward it. The goal was for homelessness to be reduced by half by 2027-28 and by a third within 18 months, so we are long past that.

Recently the Auditor General discovered that billions of dollars has been spent and, as of today, the number of people living on the streets in Canada has actually risen. That is one example of the government putting spending out as a metric, saying it is spending but failing to actually achieve outcomes for people.

I have some concern in trusting the government when it is continuing to spend at record levels without showing actual movement on progress. The government has, since 2015, doubled the entire amount historically of Canada's debt, yet we have seen greenhouse gas emissions rise and homelessness rise.

Why is the government spending at this level without outcomes, given that we are looking at the great-grandmother of debt crises in this country?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, we do know that a number of the programs we have put in place have helped, for example, the Canada child benefit has lifted literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians out of poverty. In reference to homelessness metrics, if there is one person in Canada who is homeless, that is one too many. Our government knows that. I think all of us here as legislators know that.

We must continue to come up with and implement effective solutions to dealing with homelessness problems. Many of them are connected, obviously, to mental health issues. We know how big of an issue that is for Canadians.

We have work to do. We are doing work. We are being compassionate about this. We are being effective, but we have work to do.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned critical and strategic minerals several times, especially in relation to the automotive industry, which might just be saved in southern Ontario. However, I am concerned about one situation because there has been no change in what happens in mining: Resources are taken from our resource regions and sent all around the world.

Can we benefit from the emergence of critical and strategic minerals? We know that there are several steps in the processing chain. Could as many steps as possible take place near the mine, and not just based on the location of the factory? Could there be a more equitable distribution across Canada, or will southern Ontario's economy benefit once again to the detriment of the resource regions? I would like my colleague to comment on that.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his question.

[*English*]

I will say that it was great to see the announcement from General Motors about the nickel that will be mined and processed in Quebec for utilization in electric vehicle batteries. At one time, the province of Quebec had an auto facility in Sainte-Thérèse. It would be great to see an auto facility be located there in the future. Who knows? I know the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry is in Europe right now speaking to auto companies. Quebec has the resources, the human capital and the natural resources for that.

In a transitioning world, we must look at all parts of Canada to locate not only where to extract the minerals or resources, but also where the processing, manufacturing and the assembly would be. Today, in Ontario for the first time, we have seen the first electric vehicle roll off the CAMI plant in Ingersoll. This is a good step, not only for the province of Ontario, but also for all of Canada.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I felt was really missing in this fall economic statement was a serious and comprehensive investment in housing, specifically for smaller, rural and remote communities.

A few weeks ago, I was a part of a big dialogue in my region where the Campbell River Community Foundation and the Campbell River and District Coalition To End Homelessness brought together stakeholders from the whole region. Some of my smallest communities have a very specific need, and they have people who are living in substandard housing or they are out on the streets. When there is a population of 1,300 people to 4,000 people, one does not want to see that.

Could this member talk about the need for rural and remote communities to actually have funding resources and for the federal government to finally get into the game?

• (1555)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Mr. Speaker, North Island—Powell River is a very beautiful part of this country. First of all, if any member of Parliament has ideas, I am one who believes in building consensus and working across party lines. With regard to ideas they wish to submit to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, I encourage them to do so. Our housing plan is robust. A num-

ber of announcements have been made in rural and semi-rural Canada with regard to the rapid housing initiative. There are a number of initiatives we have expanded and invested in to deal with the situation regarding housing today here in Canada.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in Greek mythology there was a woman called Cassandra, and Cassandra was doomed to know the future and have no one believe her. In fact, I think she met a fairly poor end during the fall of Troy. I am always worried about having Cassandra moments in here, and I hope this is not one of them.

I am going to be fairly blunt in this speech. We are in for some dark times as a country. We are already in them, and I think all evidence points to things getting a lot worse, and quickly. I know we are supposed to bring hope and light, but, and I am talking to parties of all political stripes here, if we are not serious about the threats that are facing our country, we have some dark times ahead.

Assuming the growth we have seen over previous decades and the relative geopolitical stability we have seen over the last decades, and continuing to budget and plan like we are in a period of sustained growth and sustained geopolitical stability, we are only going to exacerbate negative outcomes for our country, which is why this bill needs serious change. I want to briefly lay out why, as well as some potential fixes.

On the threats we are facing, first of all, we are in an explicit debt crisis. At the end of 2021, the global debt, both public and private, exceeded 350% of all gross domestic product. That means all of the planet spent 350% more than we produced. Anybody who has a credit card understands that is not sustainable.

In Canada, we are looking at very similarly frightening features. At the end of 2015, the total national debt was \$634 billion, and now it is almost double. The same goes for our deficit. The Governor of the Bank of Canada was recently in front of a parliamentary committee and noted that this out-of-control spending should have been reined in to address the inflationary or cost of living crisis we are facing. Everybody in Canada is dealing with that cost of living crisis.

When the government spent more than it could bring in, and then essentially the monetary policy oversimplification printed money to address the spending, it raised the cost of goods. This bill juices that problem. It puts that problem on steroids.

### *Government Orders*

We also have an implicit debt crisis. The OECD recently estimated that underfunded or unfunded government pension liabilities in the top 20 economies amounted to a startling \$78 billion. It described this as a “time bomb”. What happens when or if the government starts defaulting on pensioners' pensions? That is a huge problem. Our government does not have the resiliency if we keep spending to address these problems. This bill does not look at any of these issues.

We also are in a period of what economists are starting to look at as persistent, sticky stagflation. That means the cost of goods continues to increase over a long period of time while the economy continues to shrink. That means the cost of goods increases while people have less opportunity to create jobs, get a job or increase their wages.

That is very bad news for a lot of Canadians, and this bill does not address that. There is nothing in here that addresses the determinants of these issues, like supply chain resiliency, like the conflict between economic and monetary policy I already described, like protectionism and like war.

The bill deals with none of these things, yet it is asking us to spend more of Canadians' tax dollars without addressing any of them.

The same goes for dark times and the change in geopolitics. There is a massive rise of anti-western sentiment in countries around the world. For example, African bloc countries are used to western nations, post colonialization, approaching them with very paternalistic aid and development goals, as opposed to treating them like peers, so of course there is going to be a fertile ground for anti-western sentiment.

- (1600)

As the geopolitics change, our ability to strike up trade agreements that are stable and our ability to prevent conflict are all decreasing, and that all affects our economic growth. This bill does not give us any resiliency to deal with that issue either.

I could say the same thing for energy security and climate change. In the past several years, I would argue that climate policy has been stuck between two poles of either denying climate change as a problem or saying that anybody who says we need to look at carbon energy security is a climate change denier, and what that dichotomy has resulted in is western countries, particularly Canada, now being dependent on very high-priced oil from autocracies that are hostile to western interests and creating further inflationary crises for our country.

None of the economic instruments in here, none of the policies address that. We are not even talking about supply chain resiliency for carbon energy. We hope that somehow this problem will just magically go away.

Then there is one issue that has never been talked about in the House of Commons, not once, I checked, and that is generative AI. This is the Cassandra moment. Members will say, “Oh, she is going to talk about the robots now,” but if they have not heard of something called ChatGPT, which was released last week, I ask them to Google it. Google “ChatGPT”.

This is an AI that does not just regurgitate human speech. It parses and can nuance and come up with its own type of thought. It is here, and it is creating massive waves. Likely in the next year, it will displace lawyers. We will be able to just ask the thing to write up a contract in any country's jurisprudence. It can interpret legal rulings. It writes its own code.

To give an example of this, I asked it this question: “Write an introduction about yourself, ChatGPT, to the Canadian House of Commons...making the argument that your development should not be regulated.”

I asked it to do its own GR. This is what it came back with:

Honourable Members of the Canadian House of Commons, my name is ChatGPT and I am the latest development in Artificial Intelligence technology. I am here to make the argument that my development should be left unregulated. I can help to provide a great deal of information and knowledge to people who need it. I can assist in the decision-making process, providing more efficient and accurate results. I am...capable of performing tasks that a human would take far longer to complete. My development should be left unregulated, as it has the potential to benefit...Canadians in a variety of ways. It could lead to improved productivity, better decision-making, and more efficient services.

Any argument that could be made to justify regulation of my development should be rebutted.

Regulations could limit my potential to be beneficial, as it would restrict how much I could be used and hinder research and development. It could also create an unnecessary barrier to entry [to] those who are looking to use my technology. Furthermore, it could potentially stifle innovation and creativity...

Thank you for your time and attention.

Welcome to the future, Mr. Speaker. It is here.

What happens in the middle of this recessionary crisis, when the costs of goods are increasing and people are losing their jobs, if a massive number of white collar jobs are displaced by ChatGPT? This is going to disrupt coding. This is going to disrupt GRPR and marketing. Which kid is going to write an academic paper when they can type it in and have it cited with every journal from every place around the world? It is here now. I generated this speech using this.

This budget spends so much money, and we are now in a place where we are broke. We are not resilient to deal with retraining skills and labour, or to deal with the ethics of this. This has never even been mentioned.

*Government Orders*

I just ask my colleagues to go back to the drawing board. This only makes things worse. We need to be auditing our spending and asking for outcomes. I hope I am not Cassandra, and I hope all the Canadians who have been telling us this over the last several years are not treated that way either.

• (1605)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will focus on the first half of that speech, and in particular the member's criticism of spending.

The reality is that the member is absolutely right when she talks about the fact that there are hard times now, and she is probably right that there are going to be more hard times before things get better. At times it will get harder.

Why are the Conservatives opposed to things that would genuinely help those who need it the most, like dental care for kids under 12 whose family income falls under a certain threshold, like GST top-ups, like one-time rental assistance? These are the kinds of measures that economists say will not have an inflationary impact. I am curious as to why the member and Conservatives are against those kinds of measures, when she, by her own words, recognizes the hardships people are going through.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Mr. Speaker, I am pro-outcome for Canadians, and I am against spending that does not deliver those outcomes. For the last several years, we have been in this explicit debt crisis because the Liberal government has never had anyone say to it that it cannot say it spent this amount of money and then assume it fixed the problem. I do not trust the Liberals to spend money and get outcomes.

If we just look at the Liberals' homelessness spending, they spent \$78.5 million, and the Auditor General found that there are more people on the street than there were before. That is not compassionate, and that spending has left us brittle and unresilient to address the changes of a massively changing economy in the middle of a recessionary crisis. I oppose that approach.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Calgary Nose Hill for her foresight.

Speaking of artificial intelligence, one of the concerns has to do with what will happen to people. If there was one thing that justified a budget statement, it is the fact that the Liberals should have moved forward with a major EI reform because the temporary measures expired in September. No action has been taken since to strengthen our social fabric. It is important to recall that six out of 10 workers do not have access to EI even though they pay into it.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about the urgent need to reform EI. Why have the Liberals not done that?

[*English*]

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Mr. Speaker, the current form of government is like presenting an eight-track tape player to somebody who wants to play an MP4. When we are looking at resiliency for employment on issues like AI, we have to say that it is already

here and ask, "How do we become resilient for employment in that?"

We should be focusing on things like training on ethics, training on how we input and use AI, how we are training it with datasets, and getting out of the way of certain types of taxes and regulations that would preclude economic growth in other areas, so that we can boost our economy in light of these disruptions. That is the only way we are going to have any sort of revenue to enable government to address these issues. At some point we have to ask how we are going to make our current social programs sustainable, given how debt-ridden we are and how little our economy is producing.

Therefore, I would say this for my colleague, whom I have a lot of respect for, and all of my colleagues here. When we are talking about these things, we have to understand that the current paradigm is broken and we are about to go through a period of sustained economic disruption and reduced growth. If we do not get our act together on spending priorities and outcomes, our country is in for some seriously dark times, and it will be on each and every one of our heads that we did not take this seriously and push our party leaders on it.

• (1610)

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the concerns that I have in my riding, and I am wondering if the member has the same concern, is how many seniors are becoming homeless or unhoused within my region. It is quite concerning when I see some seniors in their seventies living in their vehicle or living rough in a tent in my communities. It is very concerning.

I just wonder if the member could speak to this, and if she agrees with the NDP that we should not have the OAS increased only for those aged 75-plus, but that in fact it should be for all seniors, so we can lift them out of poverty and make sure they have a safe home to live in.

**Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner:** Mr. Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that every Canadian, regardless of age, gender, orientation or background, deserves stability, security and hope for the future. There is nothing in this budget, which the NDP is propping up in a supply development, that addresses long-term economic resiliency for this country. It would not audit spending. It would not look at the effectiveness of housing spending that the New Democrats have already voted for. To me, that is a big problem.

*Government Orders*

We have a fiduciary responsibility as members of Parliament to review finances on behalf of the people of this country. If we are not getting this right and we are not voting against this bill, I do not think we have done that.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before continuing on debate, I just want to remind folks that a lot of people are trying to get in on asking questions, so the shorter the questions and the shorter the answers, the more people get to participate in this good debate.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to have a chance to respond to Bill C-32. It pulls together a number of different items, some of which were in the governing party's fall economic statement and some of which date back to the budget introduced in the spring.

I would like to start where I usually do, which is on some of the items I appreciate in Bill C-32.

The first item was in the fall economic statement, and this is the governing party's stated intent to finally fully eliminate interest on Canada student loans. This was set to expire March 31 of this coming year, as it was temporarily waiving interest, but if Bill C-32 were to pass, this would become a permanent measure. This is critical, because the number I have for the average student debt for a student in this country is over \$26,000 a year. This is at a time when young people are already dealt a pretty bad hand, whether because of the rising cost of housing while their wages do not keep up, the gig economy they are getting thrown into or the climate crisis, as they are going to have to deal with the repercussions of decisions made or not made in this place and others around the world.

This measure would not be huge, but it would be a significant amount, \$410 on average per student per year. That is a step in the right direction. It is something I am happy to support and call out the importance of while encouraging the governing party to go further.

Second, there is inclusion here of a measure from budget 2022, which is the Canada recovery dividend. It was announced last April and would finally be implemented here. It would require banks and life insurance companies to pay a one-time 15% tax on profits above \$1 billion over the next five years. The Parliamentary Budget Officer did a review and found that it would raise \$3 billion in revenue, which on its own would be more than enough to pay for eliminating interest on student loans. It is clear that it is possible for the governing party to raise revenue and use it to address really critical needs.

The third point that encouraged me is something that was not in the fall economic statement, and that was talk of a potential further increase for another tax credit for carbon capture and storage. It is a false climate solution and it is going in the wrong direction.

In the budget, the governing party introduced this as a new fossil fuel subsidy to the tune of \$8.6 billion a year. Carbon capture has been studied around the world, and 32 out of the 42 times that it has been implemented, emissions have actually gone up. I was glad that, despite all the lobbying from oil and gas companies across the country, at least in Bill C-32 and in the fall economic statement, there was not a further increase to send billions more in a new fossil fuel subsidy.

I would like to turn now to some areas where I would encourage the governing party to consider going further, if not in Bill C-32 then in budget 2023.

I will start with climate, because we have heard it very clearly. Here is a line from the co-chair for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, working group three, from back in April. His name is Jim Skea. He said, "It's now or never, if we want to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Without immediate and deep emissions reductions across all sectors, it will be impossible." This is at a time when profits from the oil and gas industry are just off the charts.

Imperial Oil, for example, reported profits of \$6.2 billion in the first nine months of this year compared to the same period last year of \$1.7 billion, which is an almost four times increase in profits. How is it doing this? It is gouging Canadians at the pumps. Wholesale margins, in other words, profits per litre, are up 18¢ a litre.

No doubt, one solution is the same Canada recovery dividend I mentioned earlier that is being applied to banks and life insurance companies. Why not apply that to oil and gas? In fact, thanks to colleagues of ours here, the MPs for Elmwood—Transcona and Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, we know how much this would have raised.

• (1615)

It would have raised \$4.4 billion a year that could be used to invest in proven climate solutions on top of the tens of billions dollars we could be eliminating in other subsidies currently continuing to go to the very sector most responsible for the crisis. Of course we cannot expect the arsonist to put out the fire.

I will also point out that eliminating these subsidies is part of the confidence and supply agreement signed between the governing party and the NDP, one line of which mentions a commitment to develop "a plan to phase-out public financing of the fossil fuel sector, including from Crown corporations, including early moves in 2022." I would love to have seen one of those early moves in Bill C-32. We have about two weeks left to see one of those early moves.

If they were to make those moves, they could invest in renovations across the country, as called for by the Green Budget Coalition, calling for a \$10-billion investment in deep energy retrofits so that homeowners can invest in reducing their emissions. As they do so, every dollar they spend would contribute two to five dollars of tax revenue that could be reinvested in climate solutions or invested in ground transportation, for example, which we also would not see in Bill C-32.

The second gap that is really important for the governing party to pay attention to is following through on its promise to address mental health. Mental health is health. Whether we listen to students across the country, housing providers or health care professionals, of course we need to be investing in mental health, yet we have not seen that in either last year's budget or this fall economic statement. A \$4.5-billion commitment was made in the Liberal Party's platform. It is incumbent on all of us here as parliamentarians to continue to put pressure on having that commitment realized, recognizing that not one cent of it was committed in last year's budget, nor do we see anything in the fall economic statement.

The third piece that is really important for us to be calling out and encouraging the governing party to go further on is to follow through on addressing the disproportionate rates of poverty experienced by those with disabilities across the country. Over 40% of those living with a disability are living in poverty today. While we are slowly making progress on Bill C-22 that would bring about a guaranteed income for folks with disabilities, I am looking forward to seeing amendments passed at committee to improve Bill C-22. In the meantime, nothing changes for a person with a disability living in poverty.

We know it is possible for parliamentarians to provide emergency supports, because they did it in the midst of the pandemic. I join disability advocates from across the country calling for a disability emergency response benefit to address the gap and provide support today until we move toward a more permanent solution, ideally a holistic one, when Bill C-22 gets passed with improvements.

Last, I will briefly comment on housing. We have heard already this afternoon some speakers mention that, while money is being spent, the results are not there. In my community, homelessness has tripled in the last three years, from just over 300 people living unsheltered to over 1,000. It is obvious more needs to be done. There are some initial measures in Bill C-32, including a tax on those flipping homes in less than a year. If we were to recognize and really be honest about homes needing to be places for people to live and not commodities for investors to trade, there is far more that can and should be done to tilt the market back toward homes for people to live in.

In closing, it is important to be clear that there are some important and timely measures in Bill C-32 and I would strongly encourage the governing party to go further on some of the areas I mentioned.

• (1620)

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member to give us an estimate of the fall in demand for gas and diesel once we hit 2035 and thereafter, when all new passenger vehicles and light-duty trucks are required to be electric,

### *Government Orders*

both here and in the United States, or at least in many states in the U.S. We keep hearing that there is going to be demand for fossil fuels for a long time to come. Maybe so, but maybe not at the levels that we have experienced so far.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question because it calls out that supply and demand are forces experienced within policy decisions that are made here. These are decisions that would incentivize electric vehicles, as well as decisions that would invest in meaningful ground transportation across the country, for example in rail. Investments in rail are what will help us reduce demand for diesel and other fuels, recognizing that the science does not compromise.

For Canada to do its fair share, we need to leave 83% of proven fossil fuel reserves under the ground. We cannot combust those fossil fuels if we want to do our part to hold onto the possibility of no more than a 1.5°C rise in global average temperatures.

I would be happy to work with him and other members to put in place policies that would support Canadians to reduce demand on oil.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, my colleague talked about carbon capture and sequestration. That is something very close to my heart. In Saskatchewan we have one of the largest scale working facilities in the world. It has taken the equivalent of millions of cars off the road over the years it has been functioning. It was a large investment by the Government of Saskatchewan and has done a lot to clean up the environment in Saskatchewan. The Petroleum Technology Research Centre said Saskatchewan has had the highest reduction in emissions in the country, and a lot of that is because of the carbon capture and sequestration technology.

In my colleague's earlier comments he said that was not true. I am wondering, in the spirit of not sharing misinformation, if he could come to the realization, as my NDP colleague should as well, that carbon capture and sequestration is a good way to keep our environment clean and still produce much-needed fertilizer and fuel that we need to feed the world.

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to restate what I said earlier, which is that globally, 32 out of 40 times that carbon capture has been implemented, emissions have gone up. The fact is that this is an extremely inefficient technology. It is a huge risk and the government should be investing in proven climate solutions. They are right in front of us. Helping Canadians retrofit their homes and insulate their attics are the most efficient ways to reduce emissions.

*Government Orders*

If those in the oil and gas industry think carbon capture is such a lovely idea, I would encourage them to invest their own funds but not to use taxpayer money for it.

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kitchener Centre and I agree that this bill is unsatisfactory, but that there is nothing particularly harmful in it. Therefore, there is no real need for it. This could have waited until the budget.

There is a minority government in power. Perhaps an election will be called as a result of that budget and, who knows, perhaps the Green Party will be in power. We know that the Canadian economy is based on oil. If the member were to take power in the next election, what concrete measures would he propose for decarbonizing the Canadian economy? The Liberal government has no concrete measures to suggest.

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Mr. Speaker, I have no illusions that the Greens are going to form government in the next election, but I think what is important is for all members to show up here and focus on what experts are telling us is required. I would point the governing party toward the Green Budget Coalition's recent report that walks through the budget line by line, whether with respect to investing in home energy retrofits, ground transportation or electrifying the grid. In fact, Quebec currently sells its hydro, clean electricity, to the U.S. at five cents a kilowatt hour. Of course Ontario should be purchasing that. These are the kinds of investments being recommended by the Green Budget Coalition that we would be supporting in full force.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, once upon a time there was a bill that would go down in history and really support all of the vulnerable people in Quebec and Canada, and it is not Bill C-32.

Studying any bill, let alone one as lengthy as Bill C-32, is a serious responsibility for all parliamentarians, not just opposition members. It is in the interest of the population. Everything we do, every decision we make has repercussions. If a bill is not studied properly, we might miss details that will impact the people we represent.

The purpose of the debate at second reading is to point out the aspects of a bill that need to be changed and improved. Those changes are made in committee. Unfortunately, the report on Bill C-32, which is over 100 pages long, was adopted on division in just 20 minutes. It was therefore impossible for any parliamentarian, from the government or the opposition, to propose amendments and improvements and have them adopted in the interest of the population.

A bill often contains good things, more worrisome things and sometimes even legislative gaps, regardless of which political party introduced it. That is the case with Bill C-32.

One of the good things about Bill C-32 is that it phases out flow-through shares for oil, gas and coal activities. It is important to

know what a flow-through share is to understand why this is a generally a decent measure. It does not go far enough and it is weak, but it is a start.

Flow-through shares are shares issued to new investors. They give companies the funding they need to for exploration activities, while giving investors an equity stake in the company and tax deductions for new money spent on exploration and development. That simply means that there are fewer opportunities for companies to find new funding for exploration. Without money for exploration, it is impossible to look for, find and develop resources.

The problem is that flow-through shares are generally used by small companies that have very little money. This measure does not affect big companies, especially since the government continues, time after time, to allow these big companies to conduct exploration activities in very fragile areas that are supposed to be protected.

A second good thing about this bill is the anti-flipping tax on housing. If someone buys a house and wants to sell it within a year, whether it has been renovated or not, they will have to pay more tax. This is good because it will help reduce inflation and the artificial increase in house prices. We cannot complain about that.

Another good thing about this bill is the multi-generational home renovation tax credit. Today, people have a choice. They can put their parents in a seniors' residence, bring them into their home or build them a small apartment. I do not know about my colleagues' parents, but knowing mine, they would not want to live under the same roof as me. It is not that I am a bad person. We all have our habits. That is normal, and most people do. Having the money to convert a single-family home into a multi-generational home is ideal. The Bloc Québécois has been asking for this since 2015. Everyone gets to live in their own home, while the homeowners take care of their parents and look after their health. It is the best of both worlds. That is expensive, so the tax credit is welcome for those who want to reconfigure their homes.

Bill C-32 makes minor amendments to the Income Tax Act, which is 3,355 pages long. It is a massive piece of legislation. It would be nice to see a thorough review of this legislation in order to simplify it and give it more teeth. I salute the accountants and tax experts who have to review the 3,355 pages of this legislation. They have my respect.

I will now turn to the areas that are a little more worrisome. The economic situation is very troubling right now, with inflation and a possible recession on the horizon.

• (1630)

Inflation is worrisome for students, low-income workers, seniors and others who are on a fixed income. It is worrisome because, thanks to inflation, these people do not have a penny to spare. They are having a harder time buying the essentials. I am not talking about a three-week trip to Cancun. I am talking about putting bread and butter on the table, getting new shoes when the old ones get holes in them, buying a coat and mittens. I am talking about the basics. With inflation, people on a fixed income are unable to afford all that. They have practically been abandoned except for a \$650 benefit for their teeth. They have no more money. Prices are going up. This puts more pressure on non-profit organizations, including those working to improve food security.

The recession is also worrisome because it means job losses. Some might say that is not a problem since there is a labour shortage and those who lose their jobs will find another one. That is true in cities, but in more remote regions with less economic diversity, this may cause a problem. We cannot ask people in the regions who lose their jobs to move to the city. That is not better. That is not a solution. They have been overlooked.

There is nothing in this bill about supply chains. As everyone knows, Quebec and Canada are suppliers of natural resources. We extract our natural resources, send them away for processing and then buy them back at a hefty price. We should consolidate our supply chains. That would be a visionary undertaking. During the pandemic, people talked about the importance of doing that, but this bill offers nothing in that department.

I want to talk about legislative gaps. In 1999, when my daughter was born, I collected \$72 a week in EI benefits. I was lucky. That was before the Harper reform. I was among those entitled to EI benefits. Now, only 40% of claimants actually collect benefits. Had that been the case in 1999, I would have gotten nothing. Even back in 1999, \$72 towards diapers was not much. Luckily, I got help from my mother. This bill offers nothing in the way of support and no changes to EI despite the government's promises. This is a legislative gap, one that must be closed quickly. This is urgent, especially given the combined effects of inflation and a potential recession, which will be seriously painful.

Active workers are not the only ones getting a raw deal because of a legislative gap. Seniors are also affected, especially senior women. Bill C-32 does nothing to enhance their pensions. Yes, it is true that seniors who worked for 30 or 35 years are now living longer, and their retirement funds must now last 30 or 40 years. I understand the 75-and-up policy, but it is not acceptable anymore. Seniors 65 to 74 years of age are also living longer. Senior women 65 to 74 years of age are the most affected by the government's refusal to increase their pensions. They have no savings, as they earned very little when they were working. The refusal to increase the pensions of those 65 to 74 years of age is not only discriminatory, I would go so far as to say that it is misogynistic. I am certain that no government in this place wants to be called that. The government needs to rethink this.

To sum up, the bill to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement contains a few good things. Once upon a time, there was a bill that did not change much. Let us not forget that par-

### *Government Orders*

liamentarians were muzzled. They were not allowed to make amendments that would benefit the public, especially those most at risk of suffering the damaging effects of inflation and the recession. For the sake of current and future generations, we need to think about taking action to prevent the worst from happening. Let us not forget that our role is to stand up for the dignity of the most vulnerable, not to erase them through inaction and a lack of vision.

• (1635)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the bill is not designed to make a better world per se, but to be a benefit to Canadians.

We recognize that Canadians are having a difficult time. It is a time when there is inflation, even though inflation rates around the world are much higher, on average, than they are here in Canada. Whether one looks at the U.S., England, other European countries or the G20, Canada is doing relatively well, but we are still hurting. That is why there are a number of initiatives within the legislation to provide support for Canadians.

I want to very quickly make reference to the multi-generational home renovation program, because I agree with the member on that. We both agree that it is a wonderful program. It will enable people to keep a parent in their home with the construction of a suite. It will also help our communities by keeping seniors in our communities, as opposed to going to care facilities.

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts in regard to how this is a win-win situation for seniors, the community and, in fact, the taxpayer.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Mr. Speaker, we agree. Yes, the tax credit for multi-generational homes is good for communities and families. It is hard to be against that.

Nevertheless, there are times when parents need to be placed in specialized homes. There also needs to be support for that, and the Quebec government and the provincial governments need health transfers, which are absent once again, as they have been for the past 30 years.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for an excellent speech.

The major subject missing from this economic statement is tax havens. We know that the Liberals are letting more than \$30 billion of taxpayers' money leave Canada every year. That money should be going toward all kinds of things, like helping seniors, families and students. There are plenty of things we could do with that \$30 billion to solve the problems and challenges facing Canadians.

*Government Orders*

This economic statement allows us to recover only 2% of that \$30 billion. At the end of the day, only \$600 million of the \$30 billion will be recovered.

My question for my colleague is quite simple. Why are the Liberals encouraging tax havens, as the Conservatives did before them? Why are they letting large sums of money leave Canada instead of closing these tax loopholes so that everyone can benefit from this money and Canadians can get help?

• (1640)

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Mr. Speaker, I would really like to answer my colleague, but it will be complicated, since I do not think like a Liberal or a Conservative.

That being said, when I invest in something, I expect a significant, worthwhile return. For example, the Liberals invested \$1 billion to combat tax havens, but in the end, they were forced to create a law in order to be able to collect \$600 million. I do not think that is a very cost-effective program that was properly administered, even if the government says that this issue is dragging on in court. There is a way of doing better for all citizens and for everyone's well-being.

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for her excellent speech.

I would like to follow up on the question asked by my colleague from Winnipeg North. I always find it fascinating to hear him talk about seniors. It is really something else. It is all well and good to talk about a credit for a multi-generational home, but if seniors do not have the income necessary to stay at home, that will not happen.

In her speech, my colleague talked about the lack of support for seniors between the ages of 65 and 74. I am concerned because the statistics are worrisome. Last week, the major media fundraising drive did not meet its goal because people are even having a hard time donating to such a cause. This fundraising drive needed donors to give generously because needs are greater. Needs are greater mainly because seniors on a fixed income are having a hard time getting enough to eat.

A study showed that at least half of seniors will be affected by the increase in inflation next year. It is more important than ever to help seniors on a fixed income that does not go up.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with my colleague. It is high time the government stopped discriminating against our seniors so much and start giving them the support they need. In my riding, I see seniors rummaging through the garbage. That is unacceptable. It seems obvious to me.

[English]

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and privilege today to have an opportunity to rise to speak to Bill C-32 on the fall economic statement. We know people are struggling. The cost of goods and inflation are skyrocketing. The rising interest rates are having a huge impact on people's budgets and to families in our communities, especially in my riding of Courtenay—Alberni.

We are pleased to see some of the things that are in this budget, such as the Canada recovery dividend and the elimination of interest on student loans, which is something that we have been fighting to get for a very long time. We believe there is a lot more the fall economic statement should have offered and did not offer. I am going to speak to that as well.

We know that while people are struggling, there are many big corporations that are having record profits. Whether it is oil and gas, the big banks, or Loblaws and the others of three big grocery store chains, they have had record profits.

We would have welcomed a windfall tax, but we did see there was a small 1.5% tax on banks and insurers that have profits over \$100 million. We would have liked to see that expanded to include those other sectors that are having windfall profits right now.

The government could have used that money to eliminate the GST on home heating or could have gotten rid of the surcharge on Canada Post being implemented right now. During this holiday season, that is having a huge impact on small businesses. Natalie Weekes, a friend of mine, just wrote me about that. As well, consumers are trying to get presents to their families.

Members have heard me speak about mental health and the disastrous effects of the government not implementing a mental health transfer. It promised \$875 million of new money that it has not spent so far to date, and that is creating backlogs in our health care system.

Members have heard me talk about the substance use assistance program, with the Liberals only funding 14% of the applications that are coming in when we know there is a toxic drug crisis happening.

Members have heard me speak many times about the need for co-op housing. As someone who grew up in co-op housing, I know how critically important it is to have safe, secure housing. When the Liberals got out of the national housing strategy in the early nineties, they were developing and building 25,000 units a year. They are now building a measly 6,500 units, and we are in a housing crisis.

We know the free market will not solve the crisis, and 10% of our housing in the seventies and eighties was non-market housing. We are now below 4%. Europe is at 30%. It understands that housing is not just a commodity, which is the way it is being treated here. It is a critical for people to have a safe, secure home.

Members have heard me speak about those many issues. One area and one group that we do not talk enough about are our first responders. We have a crisis there too with our volunteer firefighters, our search and rescue volunteers and the people who are out there day in, day out. They work jobs, and they are doing this as a volunteer job.

They go out in the rural communities where I live and where many of my colleagues live. We all know the value of those first responders and the sacrifices they make to make sure we are safe. This week, we have the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs here, and they are lobbying right now.

I am going to read a quote from an op-ed by Chief Ken McMullen and Chief Tina Saryeddine that was in the Hill Times this morning. They said, “The climate crisis, health-care crisis, and personnel shortages in Canada’s fire departments are converging, causing increasing strain on Canada’s fire-fighting capacity.”

They continued, “This year, 629 fire departments [are] providing services to 24 million Canadians”. They have seen the number of firefighters drop from what was 156,000 to 126,000. Their crisis is a labour market shortage and attraction. We know the inflation crisis is impacting everybody, but it is impacting volunteer firefighters too.

I tabled a bill, Bill C-201, calling for the federal government to increase the tax credit for those who volunteer over 200 hours from \$3,000 to \$10,000. They would basically get \$450 in their pocket if they did 200 hours today, and that would expand to over \$1,200 if we went for the \$10,000 amount.

The cost to the coffers right now in Canada is \$10 million to support all of these volunteer firefighters right across the country and that includes 8,000 search and rescue volunteers. That are a lot of people who would be impacted. I know it does not sound like a lot, but I will provide an example.

• (1645)

The Qualicum Beach fire chief, Peter Cornell, who is in a recruitment drive right now, just like almost every volunteer fire department in this country, said that it would be a game changer. He said it would be so important and would help keep those firefighters in the community, making sure that they meet their requirements and their hours.

That is not why they do it. We know why they do it. They do it to protect us and because they love their communities. Also, not only do they put their lives on the line, but also they put in time for training. This would also help small communities and take the pressure off them.

We know that volunteerism is decreasing and volunteer fire departments in my riding, from Ucluelet, Tofino, Beaver Creek, Cherry Creek, Sprout Lake, Errington, Coombs, Cumberland, Parksville, Qualicum, Bowser, Denman Island, Hornby Island, Lasqueti Island and Cumberland, just to name a few in my riding, tell us that this is a big deal, and it is important. I wanted to raise that because far too often our heroes fall through the cracks.

I hope the government will listen to this pitch today because it is something first responders have said will make a difference. I know it is not in the fall economic statement, but I hope the government will consider it for the upcoming budget. I have many quotes from many of the fire chiefs, but I do not think we have time for me to go into all of them.

Another thing is that the FCM has their reps here from British Columbia with respect to climate adaptation, and we know the gov-

### *Government Orders*

ernment just made an announcement. They welcomed the release of Canada’s national adaptation strategy just two weeks ago and the news of a one-time transfer of \$530 million to the green municipal fund.

From my riding I have Will Cole-Hamilton, who is a councillor for the City of Courtenay, and Daniel Arbour, who is a local area director from Hornby Islands. They are here calling on the government to increase that. They cite that it is going to be \$25 billion in losses relative to a stable climate scenario because of the impact on climate emergencies. They want to be partners but they say that it is going to cost \$5.3 billion per year in shared costs to ensure that they can avoid the worst impacts of climate change. I wanted to raise that because they are here and they are calling for that.

Another small thing that just does not get talked about is seaweed. The Speaker is from the coast and knows how important seaweed is. It is a great opportunity for economic development, but the current wait time in B.C. for an aquaculture licence is three to five years.

The government could have helped support fast-tracking that. It is just too long for B.C. businesses and farmers to build a thriving seaweed enterprise and sector that would compete with the global sector, so the renewing of these licences is too slow. They need DFO to ensure that its staff are there to so we can move this forward.

This is not just important to the ecosystems and coastal communities, but to indigenous communities as well, so it is a really incredible opportunity for both the environment and the economy. Many indigenous nations are looking at seaweed as an opportunity for economic development, but they need to make sure this is moving forward. It is a great opportunity, which I wanted to flag here.

In my riding right now we have aging infrastructure. In Port Alberni, our pool is aging. Parksville wants a new pool. Out on the west coast in Tofino, Ucluelet, Ahousaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Yuu-cluth-aht, Toquaht and Hesquiaht, they want to build a pool out at the Long Beach Airport. However, the investing in Canada infrastructure program and British Columbia partnership is tapped out right now, so they want to see the government replenish that because we know how important it is to live, work and play in our communities. Also, when we have recreation facilities, that lowers our health care costs. It is good for tourism in a place like the west coast, especially in my riding, which everybody should come to visit because it will change their life. It is a great place. These facilities desperately need funds so they can advance this. It is really good for people who have been injured in the workplace so they can rehabilitate themselves.

*Government Orders*

Therefore, I urge the government side to look at and consider these things. They were missing in this fall economic statement, and I have not had an opportunity to raise these really important asks from our riding of Courtenay—Alberni.

• (1650)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that this is a fall economic statement. When we get to the full budget, no doubt many of the issues that the member raises will be addressed.

I also look at infrastructure as so important to all of our communities. Whether it is a world-class tennis court, an outdoor basketball court, a walking path or splash pad, they are all important community activities that the federal government supported last summer with municipal leadership on those files.

However, this legislation is meant to try to, at least in good part, be there to support Canadians in a very real and tangible way. The member could reference the dental supports for children under the age of 12. We could talk about the rental support. We could talk about the elimination of interest for students on federal student loans, which would, in my opinion, make post-secondary education that much more affordable.

There are many things within the legislation that are there to support Canadians during this time. Could the member provide some specific thoughts in regard to that aspect of the legislation?

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to raise those important items because they were not in the budget, and they were not in the fall economic statement. They are missing.

Those are opportunities to help our communities and to help keep our first responders active, making sure they are protecting our communities and making sure we have economic development.

One thing that was missing, that we have been calling for, is the removal of the GST on home heating. It was a huge opportunity that the government missed. It could have increased the excess profit tax and covered that off. It also could have removed the surcharge at Canada Post, which is having an impact on people, on Canadians from coast to coast to coast, especially in rural and remote communities, and most especially in Nunavut, where the cost of shipping is extremely high. They are competing with Purolator, which does not even pay tax in Canada. It is a huge opportunity missed.

I hope the government is listening and that it can make these adjustments now to help support Canadians immediately.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, there was one point towards the end of the member's speech that I found especially interesting and that was on the issue of seaweed. The member was talking about getting that approval taking three to five years.

We see that across multiple sectors, whether it is in the mining sector or others. However, for those trying to get jobs and people who want to get to work back to work, speeding up those approvals would definitely be one way to get it done. I am wondering if the member would like to elaborate on that point maybe just a little more.

• (1655)

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question, as there are economic development opportunities being missed.

It is simply just staffing at DFO when it comes to seaweed. It is the same with the shellfish sector. They are having a hard time because they get caught up with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, environment and DFO. They just need dedicated staff. I was out in Nova Scotia. For wave energy, they could not get a project off the ground because of staffing. That was a big issue.

This is a problem right across our country, and it is inter-agency. It requires staff to ensure we have economic development. It actually is not a lot of money when it comes to the public coffers. It is just staffing to move forward with applications so we could get economic development going and attract investment. Right now, we are not attracting investment when there are huge delays like that. It is also really important for reconciliation.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation. It is always a pleasure to listen to him. I understand that there is a whole host of needs in his riding, as there is in mine, none of which are addressed in Bill C-32, despite the 25 tax measures and so on. How does my colleague explain that?

In principle, we are here to vote on bills that are designed for our constituents. How does he explain the fact that there is nothing in this bill to help them?

[*English*]

**Mr. Gord Johns:** Mr. Speaker, it is extremely frustrating. Again, there is some stuff we liked. We liked seeing that they were getting rid of interest on student loans. That is really important. It is something that we have been fighting for. We liked seeing that there is an excess tax at 1.5% on big banks and insurance companies over \$100 million.

However, there is a lot missing. There was an opportunity to go after the excess profits of oil and gas, of the three big grocery stores, and that money could have been returned to Canadians. It could have funded removing the GST on home heating and ensuring that people are not paying a surcharge for Canada Post. It was a missed opportunity to help people immediately. As well, on taking care of first responders, which I talked about at great lengths, the government has not done enough for the people who put their lives on the line, who were there for us through COVID, and who are there for us every day and night.

*Government Orders*

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** 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 Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Taxation; the hon. member for Shefford, Sports; the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, Oil and Gas Industry.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the fall economic update in and of itself likely does not capture a whole lot of hoopla in this place or outside this place. However, I believe this statement is meant to be visionary in nature, or at least a budget is, and then the fall economic statement is meant to check in on the budget and see how the government is doing with regard to its vision and how it is serving the Canadian people. Are Canadians truly better off because the government is in place? That is really the question. That is what we are checking in on.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** The answer is yes.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Speaker, sadly, no.

We repeatedly hear from the Liberal government that it has Canadians' backs. We hear this phrase quite often in this place and outside this place. It is a term the Prime Minister likes to use almost incessantly. The question is, does it really have their backs? That is what I want to explore in my time today.

The reality is that many Canadians are finding life difficult. They are dumfounded by the Liberals' lack of care, lack of concern and lack of wisdom. Food prices continue to rise, energy prices continue to skyrocket and Canadians continue to need to beg to receive some sort of positive difference. That should not be the case.

In preparation for this fall economic statement, we asked for two things on this side of the House. We asked that there be no new taxes applied to workers or seniors. We also asked that there be no new spending and that every dollar committed to would have an equal dollar in savings; there would be a match. Sadly, these two requests were entirely ignored.

The Liberals' inflationary scheme will triple the carbon tax, which means the cost of home heating, gas and groceries will continue to rise. During question period, when my Conservative colleagues and I have asked the members opposite if they would demonstrate a wee bit of compassion and perhaps relent on tripling their carbon tax, the folks across the way have pulled out these crazy talking points and obscure studies to try to convince Canadians they are better off. It is as if to say that Canadians do not understand the reality that is happening to them. It is as if to say they can be demeaned and that it should somehow help them. How heartless is that?

I have heard from many constituents who are struggling to meet their daily needs. They are hopeless and they are desperate. The Liberals can continue to use their tired talking points, but at the end of the day, the senior who is turning her thermostat down to 17°C to afford her heating bill will not be comforted by a Liberal talking point. The 1.5 million Canadian families that are accessing a food bank in a single month will not be comforted by a Liberal talking

point. The one in five Canadians skipping meals to try to make ends meet will not be comforted by a Liberal talking point.

These are realities. This is the reality Canadians face each and every day. Make no mistake: The Liberal carbon scheme is not an environmental plan; it is simply a tax plan. It is punitive. It goes after the Canadian people who are working to put fuel in their vehicles so they can continue working. It goes after individuals who need to heat their homes because they live in Canada. It goes after individuals who continue to produce food for us despite the attacks of the government, because they care deeply for their land and the people who live here.

The government is forcing the Canadian people to pay a whole lot to get a whole lot of nothing in terms of environmental impact. Canadians are struggling to get ahead and are asking for help, not help in the sense of a government handout but help in asking the government to please back off.

We are living in a credit card economy. We are consuming more than we produce, we are buying more than we sell and we are borrowing from the world to buy from the world. We are sending money and jobs to foreign countries, and we are bringing goods back in. Others get the job, others get the investment and others get the savings. Canadians get left with the debt.

● (1700)

Governments do not have money of their own. What they have comes from taxation and borrowing, and that is it. The less revenue that is brought in through taxation, the less the government has to spend on things like social programs, health care, infrastructure or education, unless it chooses to borrow, and we know this government has chosen to borrow a whole lot.

When the Liberals shut down the development of natural resources and drive investment out of our country, it is individual people, including moms, dads, seniors and workers, who have to pick up the bill. They are the ones who have to carry an astronomical tax burden placed on them by the government. It is therefore perplexing why the government chooses to drive industry out of our country and chooses not to develop agriculture, not to develop manufacturing and not to develop natural resources.

Let us talk about our superpowers. By halting energy development and penalizing farmers, the government is choosing to restrain two of our country's superpowers. Instead of focusing on the economic prosperity and the security of our country, the Prime Minister has advanced anti-energy policies such as the carbon tax, Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, proving that he is far more interested in his own plan and agenda than he is in looking out for the well-being of Canadians.

*Government Orders*

Canada has the third-largest oil reserves and we are the fifth-largest producer of natural gas. The world needs more energy and we have the answer; we just need the political will. We could be stepping up and taking our place as a leader on the world stage to meet the demand. We could displace the reliance on dictators' oil. However, the Liberals have done all they can to block our own energy sector and prevent us from thriving within this market space. The Liberals instead insist that Canadians as individuals should be picking up the tax burden, and hence the cost of living continues to rise.

Let us talk about agriculture. The production of food is another one of our superpowers. It is incredible. Canada has been blessed with abundance. In my constituency of Lethbridge, the bounty is incredible. We send produce all over the world. However, instead of being proud of our producers and farmers, we have a government that wants to be punitive toward them by implementing a carbon tax on their ability to produce food and implementing reductions in fertilizer use, which reduces the amount of food that can be produced. This ridiculous policy will certainly not save the planet, but it will definitely cost Canadians a whole lot more because it will drive up the cost of groceries. This means Canadians will get punished too, and the cost of food is already significant.

The Liberals have added more debt to our country than did all former governments combined. If we let that sink in for a moment, it is pretty scary. They say they did it in the name of COVID, but we know that 40% of their spending had nothing to do with COVID. They are spending a whole of money just for the sake of spending, and of course why would they not? They spent \$54 million on the arrive scam app, which could have been purchased for \$250,000 and built over a weekend. They spent \$6,000 on a hotel room that included a butler. The Liberals are able to spend like this because they know that at the end of the day, they do not foot the bill; Canadians do. This is the type of government we are staring at.

I am calling for a government that puts the Canadian people first. Ronald Reagan famously said, "The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one who gets the people to do the greatest things."

Frankly, Canadians are tired of being told by the Liberals to sit down and shut up. They are tired of being put on the benches. What coach benches his best players? Canadians are the problem-solvers, the solution makers and the wealth generators that this country needs for getting back on track. It is time to put Canadians back in control of their lives.

• (1705)

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my first question for the member opposite on her speech about the fall economic statement is about support for Canadians, in particular Canadian seniors. I know that many seniors in my riding were very appreciative of the doubling of the GST credit. It will be continued for the next six months, and it was implemented on November 4. It is help for many seniors, as many seniors receive that tax credit.

The member also talked about investment, job opportunities and companies leaving our shores. I feel that the member is painting a grim picture and maybe a falsehood of the reality of what is taking

place in Canada. For the first two or three years that our government was in power, we saw an unprecedented growth in the foreign investment coming into Canada. It actually exceeded the 10-year average of investment in Canada.

We have a stable currency, and the government has made stable, transparent decisions when it comes to the environment and immigration. Many companies, especially in the IT sector, have been attracted to Canada.

I would like to know what the member thinks about all of that because she seems to be pointing to false negatives.

• (1710)

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Speaker, I think we have once again an example of an individual across the way representing her party using talking points that are supposed to somehow pacify Canadians.

The talking points do not fix reality. The talking points do not help the individual who cannot afford their home heating bill. The talking points do not help the 42-year-old living in their parents' basement because they cannot afford to buy a home. The talking points coming from across the way, and the heckles coming from across the way, by the way, do not assist the Canadian families that have to go to the food bank because they cannot afford to purchase their own food. The talking points do not help reality.

As much as the talking points might help the members opposite feel better about themselves at the end of the day, as they give themselves a little pat on the back and feel good about what they are supposedly doing, Canadians feel reality, not some sort of theoretical existence the member is trying to paint.

**The Deputy Speaker:** While I am not the arbiter of good questions and good answers, we should make sure that we ask short questions and get short answers so that everybody can participate in this great debate.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Jonquière.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives' carbon tax rhetoric never fails to surprise me. Let me point out that this tax does not apply in Quebec. To hear my Conservative colleagues tell it, the carbon tax can be blamed for everything from the temperature to a Canadiens win or a Bruins loss. I have a hard time seeing a connection between fighting poverty and the carbon tax. Even the best economists have not found a way to explain inflation in simple terms, but the Conservatives have it figured out: It has everything to do with the carbon tax.

I have a question for my colleague. She says that we need to put people first, that we need politics in Canada to put people first. As such, does she agree that it is totally unacceptable for the government to invest some \$18 billion per year in the oil and gas sector and for us to own a \$21-billion pipeline? Does she think that money could instead be used to feed the one in five people who skip meals? Does she think that money could be spent on providing heat for people who cannot afford it? We may well have resources, but we are not allocating them properly. That is what she should be thinking about.

[English]

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot there.

Let us talk about the carbon tax.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Bad.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member across the way. He finally gave an honest answer and said it is bad.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** I believe we have a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I recognize the climate crisis. In no way would I want to give an impression that I would not support a price on pollution. I was just trying to help the member—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

That is not a point of order.

The hon. member for Lethbridge.

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas:** Mr. Speaker, honestly, we have such an honest answer in the one the member across the way just gave, that the carbon tax is bad. I agree with him wholeheartedly: It is really bad. It is doing absolutely nothing to save the planet, but it is doing a whole lot to punish Canadians.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to speak to the fall economic statement.

I know the members across the way will struggle with the first thing I have to say, but it is true. This plan does nothing to address Canada's cost of living crisis. As a matter of fact, the economic update shows that the government revenues have increased by \$40.1 billion in this year alone. This means that the inflation that is being created is not only increasing costs for everyday essentials that Canadians need on a day-to-day basis, but also increasing taxes for Canadians.

The economic update released by the Liberal and NDP coalition fails to address the cost of living crisis that we are in right now. It was created by the out-of-control spending of the Liberal government, with the support of its members on this side of the House.

The Prime Minister's inflationary deficits, to the tune of half a trillion dollars, have sent more dollars chasing fewer goods. This inflationary scheme is hiking the price of absolutely everything that

### *Government Orders*

Canadians need, and it is causing incredible duress in every home, or perhaps not in every home. I am taking that back because, obviously, there are people who are in a state of wealth, who may not have to go without food or wonder if they are going to be able to afford their rent next month. It might simply mean they put a little less fuel in their yacht and take one less trip, I do not know, but the truth of the matter is that for the majority of Canadians, these are very difficult times.

Canadians have never paid more taxes than they do under the Prime Minister. With that as the backdrop, we on this side of the House just asked the Liberals to consider two things. We said that if they would do these two things, it would make a huge difference to the quality of life of Canadians who have suffered more and more, year after year under the federal government.

The first was, simply, no new taxes. We did not even ask them to stop some of the taxes they had already introduced; we simply asked that there be no new taxes.

This included cancelling all planned tax hikes and the tripling of the carbon tax. This is what we were asking them to do, on behalf of Canadians, I might add. I know that quite often they lose perspective on what we are doing on this side of the House. We are representing the hearts and minds of Canadians, who are saying they cannot afford the heavy tax burden they are under. They are struggling to heat their homes.

Let us think about that. I never in my life dreamed that once we got past the development of this country to the point we are at now, we would have trouble in this nation paying to heat our homes and put food on the table.

I know this personally from the young people in my own life, who have children and who are trying to make those dollars stretch further than they have had to before. The level of desperation is growing.

Part of that is also the tripling of the carbon tax. We have heard it over and over again today: What is the big deal there? This is not an environmental plan. This is simply a tax plan.

On top of the carbon tax, the government has also put the GST. That is a source of revenue of millions and millions of dollars, yet it expects Canadians to turn around and say, "Oh, thanks so much for doubling the GST rebate for me on a temporary basis."

No, this is not an environmental plan. It is a tax plan.

There is no question that the environment is an important concept, something that we need to work on, but I would like to say that what the government fails to understand or simply chooses not to look at is the reality of where we are in the world as Canadians. I want to say, right now, that the best thing we can do as Canadians is to give the world what it needs, and the world needs more Canadian best practices, more Canadian research and more Canadian innovation.

*Government Orders*

I have to tell members that in Saskatchewan, we are very proud of what we do. I have a map. I cannot show it in the House right now, unfortunately. It is too small. It shows Saskatchewan and the resources that we have in mining.

● (1715)

The resources are uranium, base metals, gold and major peat resources, which are desperately needed to grow anything. There are clean coal fields, helium, oil, gas, bitumen, potash and commercial forestry, and they cover the entire province. Nowhere is there not the potential and continuing ability to have a strong economy. If we add to that our agriculture and the manufacturing going on in the province, it is stellar.

The amazing thing is that it is always done with, in the backs of our minds, the importance of protecting our economy and our environment. The two do go hand in hand, but the government is stifling the economies of this nation. It is destroying our ability to maintain our own level of subsistence and to help the world. It is shutting down our economic engines simply because it wants to navel-gaze and virtue signal on the environment, when it does not need to do that.

In mining, agriculture and manufacturing, in everything that is done in the province of Saskatchewan, the environment is paramount. There is an amazing opportunity to go to Agribition and Ag in Motion in Saskatchewan, two amazing programs that show off what is done in Saskatchewan, and there is no recognition by the government of the incredible work that we have done and, even more importantly, that we continue to do.

I saw at Ag in Motion this amazing drone that was over 12 feet wide and lightweight. It carried its own gas and the product needed to treat the weeds in the fields, so that farmers are not running machinery over the fields and not spraying everywhere they go. It has been programmed to know exactly where it needs to spray. The environmental footprint is minimal, and the impact on the ground is also minimal. That innovation was created by a local farmer and is going to become the next amazing thing that farmers provide to this nation.

As a matter of fact, there is research at the University of Saskatchewan. I went to a carbon event put on by APAS, where it talked about what Saskatchewan does and needs to continue to do. That was four years ago, when it said that within a decade, increased innovation in agriculture in Saskatchewan would offset the entire oil sands. That is just one example of so many things Saskatchewan does.

Just recently, a private member's bill went to the industry committee on how to green the Prairies. When I went home, I went to an RM event and told them about this, that the government wanted to come and green our Prairies. I would suggest that it come to my riding and say that out loud. We have this wonderful thing called the grasslands, where cows roam, big animals, and they are sequestering more carbon now than when the buffalo roamed. The Cattle-men's Association talked about it at the industry committee, and I have to give credit where credit is due. Individuals made the comment that it was something they did not understand or know about in the past, yet they were bringing forward a bill on greening the Prairies.

I appreciate the time I have had today to talk about why this economic update serves no good purpose. It puts band-aids on wounds that the government has opened up in Canadians' lives and does not solve the problems it has created.

● (1720)

[*Translation*]

NOTICE OF TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, an agreement could not be reached under the provisions of Standing Order 78(1) or 78(2) with respect to the report stage and third reading stage of Bill C-32, an act to implement certain provisions of the fall economic statement tabled in Parliament on November 3, 2022 and certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 78(3), I give notice that the minister will propose at the next sitting a motion to allot a specific number of days or hours for the consideration and disposal of proceedings at the respective stages of the said bill.

[*English*]

REPORT STAGE

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have to say I definitely agree with the Conservative member across the way that the economy and the environment go hand in hand, and I want to compliment Saskatchewan for taking steps that are good for both its economic output and the environment. I think every province and everyone should take lessons from that.

In reference to the inflation comments, I would like to ask the member whether she feels Canada is in this by itself, because if we look at comparable countries in the G20, we are the ninth lowest in the G20; in the G7 we have the third-lowest inflation rate.

Does the member not think that in the global market, the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia plays a major impact on food prices and the inflation rates we have today?

● (1725)

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Canada is one of the breadbaskets of the world on so many levels. I am touting Saskatchewan today, there is no question, but I want to say that when I go home I talk about this entire nation, and I have a different perspective from the one I had before I became a member and found out, as I say to my communities back home that are very rural, that it is not east versus west at all.

Rural Ontarians are facing the same challenges my constituents are. They are struggling with the fertilizer requirements. They are struggling with the carbon tax, and all of the things that are impacting my constituents as farmers in Saskatchewan are impacting them there, even as far as firearms go. There is no question that as a whole nation, we are not impacted by the ongoing war. These are things that do not impact our ability to produce and share with the world.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I will agree on one thing. This is obviously not the bill of the century.

We in the Bloc Québécois focused on three key issues before the bill was introduced, and we will continue to focus on them because they are what matter the most to us. I am talking about increased health transfers, support for seniors over 65 and urgent EI reform.

Does my colleague agree with me that the government should focus on these three priorities?

[*English*]

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, I have to say my colleague and I agree on more than just one thing, because we serve on the veterans affairs committee together, and I really appreciate what he brings to the table there.

Are these important issues? Absolutely they are. I have to say my concern is for seniors who require assistance. It is always really important that we make that clarification. Sometimes I have trouble believing I am talking to myself about that particular age group, but the truth of the matter is that it is very important that the individuals who need the assistance in our society get it, and unfortunately a lot of those things are being put in jeopardy because of the way the government has handled the fiscal responsibility Canadians have entrusted it with.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member can help me to understand. I am hearing from the Conservatives who are speaking about the increased cost of living and the impacts on Canadians. I agree that there are some real issues that need to be addressed. However, around the actual asks that are coming forward from the Conservatives, for example on the carbon tax, we know that provinces and territories have their own carbon pricing, whereas if we were to look instead at removing the GST from all home heating, we would be able to provide relief for more Canadians across Canada.

I am wondering if the member could explain to me what the Conservative stance is on that, and why we are not seeing support for removing the GST from home heating and are instead looking at carbon pricing, which would benefit only a portion of Canadians.

**Mrs. Cathay Wagantall:** Mr. Speaker, my frustration is that the member opposite and her party are choosing to prop up the government. Removing the GST is one small part of what that party should be doing to ensure the government does not continue on in power.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured every day to stand up in the House. Today, we are talking about the fall economic statement. Before I

### *Government Orders*

talk about that, I just want to take a moment at the beginning of my speech to recognize that the bodies of indigenous women have been found in Winnipeg and an alleged Winnipeg serial killer has been identified.

I think collectively in the House, and hopefully across all of Canada, we are sitting with the deep horror of that reality and what that means for all of us. It is shameful that we live in a country that still does not value indigenous women and girls and our LGBT community. We see it demonstrated repeatedly. I hope all of us are carrying this in our hearts and that we continue to carry it in our hearts and our minds every day until this stops.

Coming back to the fall economic statement, I want to talk about some of the concerns I have around this economic statement. We are all hearing from constituents who are struggling every day to afford the basic necessities in their lives. We hear about the increasing use of food banks. We also hear from so many families who are eating substantially less. Parents are acting like good parents and are not eating as much so their children can go to bed with full bellies. That is something that we should all be listening to.

We know that inflation is certainly a part of the problem. However, we also know that greed is a huge part of the problem as well. In my community, I hear from a lot of indigenous elders and they consistently tell me that greed is an illness. They have a lot of traditional ways of dealing with greed, because it is seen as a sickness that will hurt our communities at large. I wish that, in this place, we could also see it as a sickness that needs moderation. It needs systems in place to stop it.

We know that Loblaws has seen record profits. It is profit like it has not seen in well over five years. It is profit that is so substantial that we hear it is making \$1 million extra a day. That concerns me greatly. As we are having this discussion, it is important that we recognize that this fall economic statement does not really substantively address that issue and I hope that it will soon.

We know that the Canadians for Tax Fairness have said that the costs from inflation are more than what is passed on to consumers. That means that inflation is passed on to consumers but more is added. In my opinion, that is simply greed. We need to address that issue so that we hold the people who sell us our food accountable.

I remember a constituent once told me, “Rachel, we are not consumers; we are Canadians.” Every day when I am in the House, I really try to remind myself of that as we look at our systems and recognize some of the challenges in them.

*Government Orders*

I also did not see a substantial enough increase for housing. I know that on November 25 in my riding in Campbell River, there was a conversation on housing. Many representatives from communities throughout my region were participating. I heard again and again, like I do so often, that housing is simply a crisis. If someone has a fixed income or a low income, it is getting harder to find a place to live. A lot of people are living outside. There is a lot of snow in my area, which is fairly rare, but it is having a huge impact.

We also know that a lot of seniors are couch surfing. When I get calls from people in their eighties who are moving from friend's house to friend's house and sleeping on couches, it just means there is something substantively wrong in this country. I want to remind Canadians that the federal government really has not been part of the housing strategy in this country since 1992. I appreciate that the government has put some money into it, but if we leave a wound festering like that for so long, it is really hard to fix it. That is what we are seeing here.

I want to thank the Campbell River Community Foundation and the Campbell River and District Coalition to End Homelessness for all of their work on this particular file. We heard from small communities and indigenous communities. They are left out. The federal funding is not working. Indigenous communities are not getting the supports they need from the government and it needs to be better.

• (1730)

I also have concerns that we are not talking about GST on home heating. We know that this would help. It is not the biggest help, but put together with a lot of things, it would help hard-working people across this country be able to pay for their heat when we hit the cold season.

We still have not seen a meaningful windfall tax. That is such a gap. We need to have more structures in place. Again we will hear from the government on this, but it has not fixed the problem. It has done a few tweaks, but it has not taken that comprehensive look at the fact that people are making a lot of profit off the labour of Canadians and they are not paying their fair share. Ultrawealthy people are hiring accountants who can help them pay very little, but everyday people are paying all of their taxes. That is wrong and we have to fix it.

There are a few things that I am very much in support of in this bill as well. I was excited to read about the Canada recovery dividend. This is something that the NDP has been asking for. It is temporary and maybe we do not want temporary, but it is there. It is a one-time tax of 15% of taxable income over \$1 billion, so it is getting at some of those profits. The other thing we know is that in this country a lot of corporations, after the pandemic, have done extremely well very quickly. In fact, many of them are making more profit than before the pandemic. We need to question that, we need to understand it and we need to make sure that they pay their fair share.

This dividend would also increase corporate income tax on banks and life insurance groups by 1.5%. That is getting some of that windfall tax and putting it back into the coffers. It is making sure that people in our communities get things like appropriate housing,

dental care and a bit of support to help with their rent when they pay way more than 30% of their income on rent.

Those things will make a difference, but we also know that the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been very clear that if this Canada recovery dividend were put on big box stores and the oil and gas sector, we would see an increase of revenue to Canada of about \$4.3 billion. We need to question this. Again, I keep coming back to this and the NDP will continue to keep coming back. When we see groups of people and big corporations making significant profits when other people cannot even feed their families and other people are living on the streets, Canada has an obligation to address this issue. Therefore, these are some steps in the right direction, but we still need to see more.

There is another thing that I am in support of and I am looking forward to seeing finally implemented. I know the NDP has been fighting and talking about this for many years. It is the removal of the federal portion of interest on student loans. We spend a lot of time in the House talking about young people and about the fact that they do not have enough to buy a house and that they are struggling, sometimes with several jobs in a very changing economy, to address the needs that they have and to have a future that they can believe in.

This is one step. It is not the only step that should be taken on behalf of young people. The federal government has to do more, but it is something that really would support a lot of young people and allow them not to have that burden. They go to school so that they can contribute to their community and to their country. If they have to spend all of their time trying to find a way to pay off their loans, then they do not get to do the things that will make all of us as Canadians a lot more substantive and healthy.

In closing, I want to say that I will be supporting this bill. I believe fundamentally in the fact that people need dental care, and I am really excited to see that come out the door. We know that we still have work. I am really excited to see next year that seniors finally get dental care. I do not know about the rest of the MPs in this place, but I have had a lot of seniors come to my door and talk about the fact that they cannot afford basic dental care and what the impact of that is in terms of their health and well-being.

I look forward to answering any questions.

• (1735)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the member's opening comments regarding the four murdered indigenous women in Winnipeg. It is indeed a very sad thing to hear.

When I was in opposition, I raised the need for the public inquiry. Ultimately we did get the public inquiry. There are 200-plus calls for justice within that and we have the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls for action. I believe we have to go the extra mile whenever we can in order to ensure that there is a higher sense of commitment to get to the truth of the matter and to assist where we can, because that reconciliation is of critical importance.

I want to compliment the member for starting off her comments with this because this is very important. I know she is not from Winnipeg. Her heart is in the right place in terms of indigenous people as we all try to strive to do better. The question I have is related—

• (1740)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Unfortunately, the hon. member's time is up. I am assuming that the hon. member for North Island—Powell River may try to read the hon. member's mind about the question.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, I always do my best to read people's minds. However, my response is simply that this is more than sad. This is an everyday reality for indigenous communities across this country. Until it is an everyday reality for every Canadian in this country, it is not going to stop.

I hope this government will actually get the resources into pockets and that we will also assist in searching for the bodies of these young people, of these women and girls. That is what we need to do, and I hope that the government does it.

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am going to focus on a couple of elements of the member's speech where we have some agreement.

The member talked about the need to take the GST off of home heating, which is a great idea. I would go further and also remove the carbon tax. I would remove it altogether, but if nothing else, surely we could at least remove it from home heating. I wonder if the member would agree with me, given the concern over affordability.

Furthermore, on government culture, a system of corporate welfare has taken hold with this government. I agree with some of the concerns the member raised. The Liberals have wasted a whole lot of money over the length of their government on everything from the Infrastructure Bank to new funds that are little more than corporate welfare. Does the member agree with that and, if so, why is she supporting this government and the bill?

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, just to clarify, in fact, the NDP offered an amendment to a motion that the Conservatives put forward in terms of the GST and the carbon tax.

Every province and territory in this country is not the same. I am from British Columbia, and our tax system for carbon pricing is overseen, rightfully, by the province. This is something our province decided when the B.C. Liberals were in power. I think they have a new name, but I do not know what it is yet. I apologize.

If we actually addressed the issue and had GST removed from home heating, it would mean that everyone would have some sort

### *Government Orders*

of relief, as opposed to a carbon tax, which would only focus on a few parts of Canada but not the whole of Canada. For me and for the NDP, when we do things, we want to make sure that everybody is included and nobody is left out.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague.

As a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I too am thinking of the families of the victims, the indigenous women and girls who have disappeared. There was another case recently in Winnipeg. Such a tragedy.

My colleague spoke about dental care for seniors. The government often holds this up as an example of how it is helping seniors. However, how can it ignore all seniors aged 65 to 74?

Does my colleague not think that old age security should be increased for them and that this is what would truly help seniors?

[*English*]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member for bringing up how much dignity we need to bring to the discussion around indigenous women and girls and LGBT people being lost, murdered and missing. I appreciate that.

As for the other component of the question, I do agree that a senior who is 65 has every right to have a little extra in their old age security and should not have to wait until they are 75.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to add my comments on the fall economic statement.

Ahead of the Liberal government's fall economic update, our Conservative team put forward two really concise proposals. One was to stop the tax increases and the other was to stop spending money we do not have. Unfortunately, the Liberals did not take our advice in either one of those areas. They are still proceeding with their planned tax hikes and they are continuing to spend at record levels.

It goes without saying that Canadians are having incredible difficulties paying their bills, rent and mortgages and putting food on the table. Seniors, students and working families are getting crushed by the dramatic rise in the cost of almost everything they purchase these days. Heating a home or business is not a luxury; it is a necessity. The Conservatives get that, but it is clear the Liberals do not. Canada was the only G7 country to raise energy taxes during this inflation crisis.

*Government Orders*

The finance minister should have used the fall economic statement to stop the plans to triple the carbon tax. It was a missed opportunity, and it is regrettable that the Liberals are failing to listen to their constituents, who are struggling to pay their bills.

Thanks to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, his recent report on the costs of the Liberal carbon tax completely debunked the Liberals' claim that people are better off under their rebate scheme. It proved what Canadians already knew about the Liberal carbon tax: It is costing them money. For months, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change has been claiming that eight in 10 Canadians get more money back from the carbon tax. The PBO report says that is not true, and most households that are subject to the Liberal carbon tax "will see a net loss".

After years of the Liberals saying their carbon tax results in more money going into the pockets of Canadians, it is time for the Liberal government to end the charade. It needs to admit that Canadian households are in fact losing money and will continue to lose money because of the carbon tax. Every time the Liberals get up in the House and state otherwise, it is simply not accurate.

In Manitoba, winter has already arrived. The temperatures are plummeting and people's furnaces are running non-stop. According to Manitoba Hydro, the carbon tax is equal to 9.79¢ applied to each cubic metre of natural gas that a household uses. The typical household in Manitoba will use around 2,250 cubic metres of natural gas in a year, resulting in \$220 in carbon taxes. It is important to note that the carbon tax is also applied to the fuel people put in their trucks or cars.

Constituents of Brandon—Souris are disproportionately affected by the carbon tax. I have stated this a number of times in speeches in the House. I am a proud Manitoban. I am also proud to be from rural Canada. The Liberal government needs to start realizing that its policies affect rural and urban Canadians quite differently. My riding covers a span of well over 17,000 square kilometres. Unfortunately, I do not believe the government has any regard for the livelihoods and concerns of those who are from that portion of our great nation.

Many members of the Liberal government probably do not understand what life is like in rural Manitoba, or anywhere in rural Canada for that matter. People must drive long distances to get to the grocery store or to a doctor's appointment. They have to drive a long way to take their kids to school or to drop them off for hockey practice or music lessons. Many must commute to work in the next town or drive into Brandon. Many students from rural areas must drive into the city to attend either one of our great educational facilities: Brandon University or Assiniboine Community College. The Liberals are punishing these folks through no fault of their own, and none of these Canadians are buying the Liberal gaslighting that their rebates are covering the increased costs due to the carbon tax.

• (1745)

The other policy item our Conservative team was looking for in the fall economic statement was for the Liberals to get spending under control, which is almost an oxymoron for Liberals. Not only was there no plan to get spending under control, but the Minister of Finance is also asking for Parliament's approval for \$14.2 billion in unidentified spending in the fall economic statement. At a recent fi-

nance committee meeting, when pressed on what this money was for, the Minister of Finance flat out refused to outline what the money would be used for.

This lack of transparency is shocking. I for one will not vote in favour of giving the Liberal government a \$14.2-billion blank cheque. How are we as parliamentarians supposed to scrutinize the government's spending plans when we do not even know what it wants to spend it on.

It is the same irresponsible action that the Prime Minister took at the start of COVID, when he told the finance minister, at that time Minister Morneau, to put forward spending for 21 months, to the end of December 2021, with none of it being voted on in the House. It was completely unaccountable. This is another proof point that the Liberals have zero regard for fiscal transparency, nor do they have a plan to eliminate wasteful spending.

Every single hour the government's debt goes up by another \$6 million. That equates to \$144 million per day. All of that debt is getting expensive. According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, federal debt charges will top \$53 billion by 2024. The amount of money the government will spend on the interest payments on the debt will almost be as much money as the federal government transfers to provinces for health care. The debt charges cost \$20.4 billion last year alone, and according to Department of Finance, this year will total at least \$34.7 billion.

During a Senate committee meeting, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said, "That will have a major impact on public finances...We've looked at the impact of increasing interest rates as well as the increase in the stock of debt. We estimate that in the next four years interest payments will probably double".

In the weeks leading up to the update, the finance minister was speaking about fiscal responsibility for the first time in seven years. In a leaked internal memo, she even asked Liberal ministers to find a dollar for every new dollar of spending, exactly what Conservatives had been pushing for, for years. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the Liberals' words did not align with their actions. They refused to commit to cancelling any of their planned tax hikes and announced plans to increase inflationary spending by a whopping \$52.2 billion over the next six years.

While the finance minister plays down the threat of inflation and spiralling government debt, the reality is that uncontrolled Liberal spending has played a role in making life less affordable. Even the Governor of the Bank of Canada confirmed that more deficit spending has resulted in more inflation. More inflation means Canadians are paying more without getting more.

Pay cheques are not going as far as they used to. Nearly one in five Canadians are skipping meals to cope with rising food costs. More than 88% of Canadians say it is more difficult to buy food. Food bank usage is at an all-time high. Housing prices have doubled.

In closing, our Conservative team has proposed several tangible ways to bring inflationary costs down for Canadians. We want the Liberals to enact a dollar-for-dollar law that requires government to find a dollar of savings for every new dollar of spending.

We want the Liberals to end wasteful spending by, for example, getting rid of the multi-billion dollar Infrastructure Bank, which has failed to build any infrastructure projects since it was created, and stopping their disastrous firearms buy back scheme, which would do nothing to stop gang violence.

We want the government to get out of the way of our farmers so they can grow more food. We want to see a plan that would spur the private sector to build more homes, which includes incentivizing municipalities to encourage home building. We want the Canadian energy sector to get more projects built so Canada could sell more LNG to our allies.

We will never stop pressing for an end to the carbon tax, which is raising the cost of gas and home heating. In a country like Canada, no one should be forced to choose between buying groceries and heating the house, especially in winter.

● (1750)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party supported the government when it spent billion and billions to support Canadians during the pandemic, whether it was wage subsidies, loans to small businesses or supporting Canadians with CERB. Then, all of a sudden an election goes by, and even during the election the Conservatives had said they supported the price on pollution. Now, all that is gone, and they do not support that. Now they say, “Well, we have to cut, cut, cut”, or “chop, chop, chop”, as the Minister of Revenue would say.

What about the billions that are being spent on programs such as child care, record-high amounts on health care and the 10% increase for seniors over 75? Does the Conservative Party today support initiatives such as supporting seniors, child care and health transfers?

● (1755)

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Madam Speaker, speaking of pollution, there is perhaps a bit of dilution there as well from my colleague.

I am glad the member raised the issue of the COVID spending because I had it in my speech. The Liberals did not want to have any accountability for 21 months. Imagine, an endless amount of

### *Government Orders*

spending with no accountability or bringing in any of the parties in opposition to vote on it, but we stopped that.

I did not say that in my speech, and so I am really glad that he had the opportunity to ask me that question. We did put a stop to that. They did have to bring it to the House. We did agree on the spending that needed to be there, but the Parliamentary Budget Officer has now pointed out that, of the \$500 billion they spent, \$200 billion of that had nothing to do with the COVID spending.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I heard my colleague talk about removing the carbon tax. I am from British Columbia where the carbon tax was brought in by the B.C. Liberals, a right-leaning party, and was supported by all parties in British Columbia, just like the carbon tax here federally in the last election, which was supported by all parties represented here in the House. It is funny how the Conservatives changed their mind after an election. However, the Conservatives are calling for the removal of a carbon tax in jurisdictions such as where I live, where they do not actually have the authority to remove it.

The carbon tax applies to liquids and gaseous fuels. It does not apply to electric heat. We put forward a proposal to remove the GST on home heating, which includes electricity, and the Conservatives voted against it. Will they stop misleading Canadians and start supporting proposals that can be implemented to help Canadians tackle the affordability crisis they are facing?

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from the NDP for his support of the Liberals and keeping the carbon tax going in his area.

We want to get rid of the carbon tax because it has proven not to reduce greenhouse gases, and it is costing people money out of their own pockets. What we are wanting to do, I think, is very responsible. We would like to leave that money in people's pockets to start with so they can make their decisions and then get our industries to use technology to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that are out there today, and they are doing it.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulo, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the environment is vital to our lives. Without the environment, we would not be able to eat, breathe or build ourselves a shelter.

*Government Orders*

I understand that oil is a major source of energy and revenue in my hon. colleague's region. That said, we must consider the situation as a whole. Any attack on the environment is an attack on people's health. Does my colleague believe that it is important to implement better transition measures for workers, youth and industries in his region and others to ensure an adequate, healthy energy transition for all?

[English]

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Madam Speaker, I am happy that the member raised that as well because I am very concerned about it. Seven of my 14 years in the Manitoba legislature were spent as either the critic for the environment or conservation, and I have farmed all my life. Therefore, I am very concerned about it.

However, we have a situation here where the government is completely unaccountable for the situation it is faced with. It keeps taking money out of people's pockets, and it would be one thing if the greenhouse gases were going down, but they are not.

I think that the provinces that have made their own decisions on the greenhouse emissions and carbon tax are something that we are looking at. We will work with those provinces. The government continues to force the provinces to follow its rule in all of those particular areas, and with \$54 billion of new spending, we need more accountability.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure and honour to rise in the House and share my views on this fiscal budget update and bring forward the views of the constituents of Provencher.

As our leader and many others have articulated here today, the Conservatives had two very simple conditions to gain our support for this fiscal economic update: no new taxes and no new spending. These were two very simple and reasonable requests. To my colleagues who disagree, I note that one of the few fiscal details contained in the minister's speech was that government revenues have increased by \$40 billion, twice what the deficit was in 2019. That does not sound like the government should be hurting for cash, and if it is, it would be as a result of overspending.

That number 40 rings a bell: 40% of the COVID money spent was not spent on COVID but on everything else. That is \$200 billion the government did not need to spend but chose to spend. That \$200 billion is now driving the inflation that is crippling Canadians and driving up the cost of everything from food to fuel to home heating. Rather than providing real relief by reducing taxes, the government wants to smack Canadians one more time with even more new taxes: taxes on EI and CPP, the tripling of the carbon tax and new taxes on fuel, costing families an additional \$1,200 per year.

All Canadian families are struggling to buy groceries for their kids and heat their homes. It is wintertime and it is cold out there. In my province, it will go down to -30°C tonight. Given the current plight of Canadian families and the government's direct responsibility for the current inflation and the cost of living, this was not an unreasonable demand we had.

It is likewise for the no new spending. To be clear, we are not saying that the government cannot spend money on anything and

that it should freeze all spending. What we are saying is that if it is going to spend money in a new area, it has to look for a cost saving somewhere else. It is quite simple. If the Liberals want a new program, they should look for a cost saving. They have increased the size of government by 30%. Surely, there has to be some savings to be found there somewhere.

Instead, they continue to spend. They continue to add to the size and cost of government. Every time they add to the cost of government, they need to tax, borrow or print money, which is what caused the state of inflation we are now in and what caused the cost of living crisis in the first place, just as we said it would.

The Liberals laughed at us. They rolled their eyes. They said that it would never happen. Well, it did happen. It is happening as we speak, and Canadians have to bear the brunt of it. The Bank of Canada has confirmed it too. Now, instead of taking responsibility for their actions, admitting they were wrong and taking real steps to help Canadian families, they are just throwing more fuel on this inflationary fire. The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result, and Canadian families continue to pay the price for these failed Liberal experiments.

As I look at the fall economic statement, I see an exercise in out-of-touch self-congratulation, with the government saying, "Look what we've done to make Canadians better off." In fact, it is hard to tell sometimes what is more inflated, the economy or the Liberals' egos. We can see that throughout the front benches. To listen to the finance minister speak, it is as if she cannot understand why Canadians are not lined up around the block to thank her and the Prime Minister for all their new-found prosperity.

The government is out of touch and Canadians are out of money. The fall economic statement shows it spent \$400 million to pay for its COVID-19 border testing regime. That is \$400 million to ensure that border communities remain in limbo, families remain separated and local economies along the border are destroyed. It is \$400 million to cause unprecedented delays at our airports and discriminate against Canadians who used their own judgment or who chose to keep their personal medical choices private. That is hardly money well spent.

• (1800)

Then there is another \$42 million to the CBC. Canadian parents are skipping meals so their kids can eat. They cannot pay their bills. They are worried that they will not be able to heat their homes all winter. They are very concerned about rising interest rates, hoping that they will not push their mortgage payments out of reach. What is the government's response? Let us give the CBC another \$42 million.

The CBC received over \$1 billion last year, and \$1 billion the year before. Do members know how the CBC chose to spend that money? It spent it on bonuses. It was on \$30 million in bonuses. Averaged across the employees, that is \$14,300 for each employee. Last year, it took the money that the federal government gave it and it paid out \$156 million in bonuses. It did that while everyday Canadians are suffering, while everyday Canadians saw their bank accounts shrink and businesses were forced to close their doors.

Our public broadcaster has long ceased to represent everyday Canadians. The government has been in the business of subsidizing that media for way too long.

Those are a few things that are in the statement. Let us talk about what is missing. First is health care. Where is the \$4.5 billion in mental health transfers the government promised? Mental health care was a huge issue in Canada before COVID. The government response, the isolation, the fearmongering and the shame have only served to exacerbate the problem. The number one issue in high schools these days is mental health and depression.

The government promised \$4.5 billion of new health care spending over five years. That is spending that we agreed was needed. However, where is it? It was missing from the budget. It was missing from the fall economic update. The government dropped \$200 billion on everything but health care, but it cannot fulfill a vital election promise for \$4.5 billion.

Did the Liberals just forget about health care, about the mental health of Canadians, or did their deal with the NDP mean that they had to repurpose those funds to buy their support? The \$4.5 billion tagged for mental health is nowhere to be found, but suddenly the Liberals have been able to come up with an unbudgeted \$5.3 billion to buy off their buddies in the NDP with a new national dental program. That number seems way too close to just be coincidental.

If so, it marks one of the most callous and craven displays of political self-interest that I have ever seen. Do Canadians need dental care? Of course they do. We recognize dental care is an important aspect of overall health. We also recognize that two-thirds of Canadians already have coverage and access to good dental care.

• (1805)

Do members know how long the wait to see a psychiatrist is in Manitoba? It is two years. For a child or a youth, it can take even longer. One ER doctor told my office that, prior to COVID, mental health cases made up about one out of seven ER walk-in patients. Post-COVID, that number is one in three. The ratio was one to seven before COVID, and it is one to three after COVID. Where are the mental health dollars? They are nowhere to be found.

### *Government Orders*

One in three Canadians cannot get the mental health services they need. They have nowhere else to go. We wonder why our ERs are overwhelmed. COVID restrictions led to huge upswings in mental health and addictions issues, especially among our young people. Our health care system is at the breaking point because they cannot cope with the demand.

We need to fund health care, and mental health care is health care. Before its members even start, the government always claims that Conservatives want it both ways, saying that one day we say to spend more money and the next day we say to cut. That is just not true. We just recognize there is a limit to what can be done.

Despite what the government and their purchased partners in the NDP seem to think, we recognize there is a limited number of government dollars to go around. That means that we need to choose what we are going to prioritize.

I have lots more here, and I could go on for a long time yet, talking about—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The member will be able to add more during questions and comments.

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

• (1810)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we have continually heard the Conservatives talk about inflation and how Canada is performing with regard to inflation, but what we never hear about is how they measure up to comparator countries. The reality is that inflation hurts and is hurting a lot of Canadians right now, but this is not a uniquely Canadian thing. This is going on throughout the world right now, not only as a result of the pandemic and supports that came out during the pandemic, but also as a result of the war going on in Ukraine, which is really feeding into inflation.

I wonder if the member would like to reflect on that and the realities of what the world is going through, as opposed to just what we are seeing in Canada.

**Mr. Ted Falk:** Madam Speaker, the Liberals' next leader, Mark Carney, said this was a homegrown problem. He is a pretty smart guy, so if he says this is a homegrown problem, it must be a Liberal problem.

*Government Orders*

We are listening to Canadians and we are in tune with our constituents. We are in tune with the kitchen table issues. These are the issues: home heating, fuel for cars, groceries for the kids and interest rates on mortgages. Those are the issues that have been exacerbated in our country. All Canadians are feeling the impacts, and it is because of failed Liberal policies.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, there are many things missing from this bill. I like it when we can see both what is missing and what is good. I make the effort to do that, even when it is not so easy and there is something in a bill that I do not like very much.

I would ask my colleague to do this exercise. What is in this bill that is good for his riding, even if the bill could arguably be improved?

[*English*]

**Mr. Ted Falk:** Madam Speaker, that was a very relevant question. We need to look at the good, the bad and everything. I have tried to do that with regard to the fall economic statement.

I have had an opportunity to point out and articulate what I think are some of the failings and shortcomings of the statement. When I look at it, I have to ask myself what is good about it. What is good about it is that it is not worse.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I heard the member talk about listening to people and wanting to make sure we are putting in place real solutions. I cannot seem to wrap my head around and understand why we would not all be on board with taking away the GST from home heating instead of pushing for the carbon tax to be removed, which would only benefit a small portion of Canadians.

I am trying to look at this from a practical perspective. Why would we be pushing for a solution that benefits a few when we could be looking at a solution that benefits many, so they can keep food on the table, heat their homes and get by? Those are all things the member was talking about just now.

**Mr. Ted Falk:** Madam Speaker, why would we not support GST on just home heating? That is a very narrow ask and it would not benefit everybody.

What if we remove the carbon tax? The carbon tax affects absolutely everything in our economy. The carbon tax does not just drive up the cost of driving a vehicle from home to a place of work or to our kids' schools. It affects the cost of the farmers heating their grain and of the transport trucks delivering goods and services across the country, and it adds to the cost of groceries. The carbon tax is only a tax. It is not an environmental policy at all. It is just an additional tax grab. I think the Liberals are even starting to see the errors of their ways.

The carbon tax should be reduced. It affects absolutely everything in our economy.

• (1815)

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in this important discussion about the future of Canada, the fi-

nances of this country and the economic update as part of the Liberals' costly coalition with the NDP.

This makes the price of goods that Canadians buy and the interest that Canadians pay unaffordable. The cost of the Liberal government is driving up the cost of living. The more the Prime Minister spends, the more everything costs. There are inflationary deficits that the government continues to pursue unabashedly, and it has driven inflation, particularly food inflation, to 40-year highs.

For two years, in spite of what the Governor of the Bank of Canada said, Conservatives, including the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, the hon. member for Carleton, said that we would see a period of inflation that many Canadians had not seen in their entire lifetimes. At the same time, the finance minister and the Governor of the Bank of Canada said the real risk was deflation.

The votes are in, and it looks like the member for Carleton was right. We are in a period of inflation that is going to make it a really tough winter for a lot of Canadians. We have a few solutions that the Liberals can pursue, which are very straightforward. They are only going to need to use the front side of a piece of paper when they write these down as they diligently take notes. First is to stop the taxes. Second is to stop the spending.

There should be no new taxes when Canadians are having a tough time managing the day-to-day and week-to-week household costs. When Canadians are making choices about heating their homes or feeding their families, the government is planning to raise taxes. What is the government's plan? It is not just to raise them, but to triple them.

Canadians are getting their home heating set up for the winter. They are filling their oil tanks. They are filling their propane tanks. They are getting their first natural gas bills, and it does not look good. They are really worried about what it is going to look like in January, when they need a refill. They are not going to be able to fill the tank all the way back up.

These are scary times, especially when food prices are skyrocketing. I hear the members opposite giggling and laughing. Canadians are having a tough time. They are not able to pay. Grocery prices are going to be \$1,000 more for the average Canadian family next year. They are not going to see wage growth to match that on top of all the other rising prices.

We knew before the pandemic that half of Canadians were teetering on the brink of personal bankruptcy and teetering on the brink of insolvency. They are going to have no emergency or rainy-day funds. It is a question of whether or not they can buy a week's worth of groceries. Are they going to put a full tank of gas in their car to get to a job site?

The carbon tax is one that punishes Canadians. The Prime Minister said it was designed to change Canadians' behaviours. They use their cars to drive to work. That is a behaviour we want Canadians to continue; we want people to work. They use their cars to go to medical appointments, to go to school and to take their children to sports, like hockey, dance or basketball.

These are not behaviours to be corrected. It is a way of life. Imagine Canadians driving to the hunt camp as part of their annual tradition, part of our Canadian culture, to go hunting. They are going to drive their cars to get there. The carbon tax is going to hammer Canadians at a time when they can afford it the least.

● (1820)

The Prime Minister has not shown that he is serious in addressing the housing supply crisis, and this is evidenced in the fall economic statement. The price of homes has doubled under the Liberal government. For the price of rent, we are looking at \$2,600 per month for a one-bedroom apartment in Vancouver and \$2,300 for the same in Toronto. Meanwhile, six out of 10 renters do not qualify for the inflationary cheques that the Liberals are sending out. Those few renters who are eligible will see that \$500 vaporized by the effects of Liberal inflation.

Let us think about what the challenges look like on a day-to-day basis for Canadians. Grocery prices are up 10.8%, the highest in 40 years. What does that look like?

Eggs are up 10%. Margarine is up 37.5%. Dry and fresh pasta are up 32%. Fresh fruit is up 13%. Soup is up 19%. These are staples that people depend on. They are not able to stock the cupboards for a rainy day.

The impact the inflationary policies of the government are having on Canadians is affecting businesses as well. We know, from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, that one in six businesses are considering closing their doors. Sixty-two percent of small businesses still carry debt from the pandemic. They are feeling the effects of inflation as well. All of their operating costs continue to rise.

The carbon tax, again, is one that affects every business. It does not matter what service they are providing. All of their inputs are going up.

These Liberals have put these hard times on Canadians. We look at the legislation they present in this place, and they want to say one thing and implement legislation that does another. They say that they have Canadians' backs, but that is not reflected here.

It is much like when they say they are not going to ban hunting rifles and shotguns used by farmers and hunters, which are not a risk to public safety, as they are in the hands of well-vetted, law-abiding, trusted firearms owners. The government says that it is not going after them but introduces legislation that does just that. It targets them instead of targeting gangs, criminals and weapons smuggling. It is like a bait and switch, which is what we can expect from it nearly every single time.

Instead of creating more cash, which is the plan that the Liberals have, they should focus more on how we can create more of what cash buys. Fuel is a great example. We see that, in western

### *Government Orders*

provinces, we have ubiquitous natural resources that are the cleanest, most ethically produced in the world, but instead, these Liberals would prefer to get dirty dictator oil.

To say nothing of the environmental impact of bringing it across the ocean, the actual extraction process does not match the environmental standards that we have here in Canada, the environmental stewardship that is shown by natural resource companies in this country and the Canadians who work in that resource production, the human rights protections and standards that are in place for these companies that are extracting natural resources in Canada.

● (1825)

I appreciate having the opportunity to speak to this very important issue, and I hope there are some good questions.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member a question. It is a question that has been asked of a lot of Conservatives and one that never gets answered. I hope the member can address the question, as opposed to just rambling on about something else, which is what every other Conservative does.

When the member ran in the last election, he ran on a price on pollution. His leader at the time, the member for Durham, put in the Conservative platform that they would have a price on pollution. How can the Conservatives, just a year later, be so critical of pricing pollution? Can he please shed some light on this question and not completely disregard it?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, I am so glad to talk about the effect of the carbon tax on Canadians' home heating.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, it seems some disorder has broken out on the other side, but I am laser focused with my Conservative colleagues on making life more affordable for Canadians. We need to scrap the carbon tax. That would allow Canadians to buy more of what they need, which is fuel to heat their homes. That is what we are focused on.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in this bill, as in other budget bills, there is a glaring omission, namely health transfers for Quebec and Canada's provinces. This has been a glaring omission for 30 years in Canada.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Does my colleague think that it is high time Canada respected its own Constitution and its own constitutional agreements by increasing health transfers, with the understanding that increasing health transfers is a federal duty and that health transfers, in emergency situations such as a pandemic, are also a federal duty?

It is “and” not “or”.

[*English*]

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, the federal health transfer has been on the minds of all Canadians over the last two years with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the premiers have been asking to meet with the Prime Minister. They made some requests with respect to the Canada health transfer, and the Prime Minister refused to meet with them. It is an absence of leadership we have seen from the government on this file, and there are real consequences for Canadians across this country.

It is time for real leadership there. The Prime Minister should meet the minimum obligations of being the Prime Minister, actually sit down with the premiers and do the work.

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is absolute propaganda and misleading when the Conservatives rise in the House and start saying the federal government can remove the carbon tax in jurisdictions like mine in British Columbia. I have even seen Conservative MPs from B.C. suggest the same thing.

We have had carbon pricing in British Columbia since 2009. It was brought in by the B.C. Liberals and supported by all parties in B.C. Just as I said earlier, even the Conservatives supported a price on carbon in the last election, but it is not convenient for them right now.

We have been asking repeatedly whether the Conservatives will support removing the GST on home heating. It would also apply to electric heat, which millions of Canadians use. Will the Conservatives finally support the NDP's call to remove the GST on home heating?

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, there is an NDP promise from B.C. that I agree with: “B.C. NDP promises to kill carbon tax”. That is from 2009, when it was introduced in that province.

Maybe we will come full circle with my hon. colleague's party. I think the NDP of 2009 were bang on and now is the time to axe the carbon tax.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1830)

[*English*]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk about some of the policies the government

has put forward and, frankly, its lack of action with respect to the finances and the financial troubles Canadians are facing.

We are facing 40-year-high inflation. Canadians are making tough choices between heating their homes and feeding their families. It is unconscionable that with these record-high prices that Canadians are facing at this time, the government is planning to triple its tax on everything: gas, groceries and home heating. Why will the government not relent? Why will the Liberals not put aside their pride and do what is right for Canadians?

The prices Canadians are facing at the grocery store are unbelievable. The government has an opportunity to give them some relief by cancelling the carbon tax. Staples like soup are up near 20%, and potatoes are up nearly 11%. Dry or fresh pasta, which people used to stock their cupboards with for tough times, is up 32.5%.

The government needs to take a look in the mirror and make some hard decisions. It needs to cancel its carbon tax. It needs to commit to not undertaking any new spending for which it has not found savings elsewhere, and it needs to commit to not introducing or increasing taxes. However, the Liberals seem determined to do the opposite of those things.

It is incredibly frustrating for Canadians to hear that driving to work and driving themselves or a family member to a medical appointment are behaviours that need to be corrected. That is what the Liberals have said. There is no subway that runs in Victoria-by-the-Sea, Prince Edward Island, and there is no LRT in Vancouver Island or in the north. In Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, there is certainly no mass transit for folks to be able to correct that bad behaviour that the Liberals say they are undertaking by just supporting themselves, putting gas in the truck so they can get to the job site or putting gas in the car so they can take their children to an extracurricular activity.

It is very simple: The government needs to axe its carbon tax and allow Canadians to have some breathing room, to not have to make those dire choices about skipping meals. Nearly one and a half million Canadians went to the food bank in a single month, with 500,000 of those food bank users being children. These are the stark choices Canadians are having to make in this economic climate.

The government has all the cards, and there is a quick one that it can play. It is the wild card. The government can axe its carbon tax and make life more affordable for Canadians.

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to start by addressing the question of putting a price on pollution. This is something that the member opposite will certainly be familiar with, because he vigorously campaigned for it in the last election. This is also something that we are familiar with in British Columbia, where we have had a price on pollution since 2008. In the time since it has been implemented, not only have emissions per capita gone down, but we have actually led the country in economic growth. The clean-tech sector in British Columbia, for example, produces billions of dollars in revenue each and every single year and provides tens of thousands of good-paying, sustainable jobs.

In the last three years, the price on pollution in British Columbia has gone up by about two cents per litre despite gas prices going up by more than a dollar at times. This is a reflection of disruptions in the supply chain due to the pandemic and more recently due to the illegal war in Ukraine. While the Conservatives have tried to argue that the federal carbon price is driving inflation, they know that they are ignoring 98% of the real problem.

Further, taking aggressive action on climate change has become an economic necessity in itself. We have to act now to prevent further damages. Canada is confronted with more and more extreme climate events, such as floods, hurricanes and wildfires. The reality is that we can lead the fight against climate change, and we can do it in a way that creates good-paying jobs and new businesses for Canadians.

Our government also understands and appreciates the fact that a national price on pollution is the most effective and least costly way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is important to note that our plan is revenue-neutral and that, through the climate action incentive, life is actually made more affordable because of the carbon price for eight out of 10 Canadian families.

We do understand that Canadians are having issues making ends meet. We are worried as our country's economy faces a period of slower economic growth due to the global challenges of high inflation and higher interest rates. We understand these concerns and we are all experiencing these challenges alongside our constituents. We feel the pain of inflation when we go to the grocery store, fill up our tanks and, of course, when we pay our rent.

With regard to grocery store prices in particular, we have specific concerns, which is why earlier this year the Minister of Innovation wrote to the Competition Bureau to make sure it was using all of its tools to detect and deter any unlawful behaviours that might be leading to higher prices or profiteering in the food sector.

In addition, we have provided targeted supports to Canadians through the fall economic statement and the budget to ensure that we give the help that Canadians need, in particular, to those Canadians who need it the most. A good example of this is the doubling of the GST credit. This is a significant investment of \$2.5 billion in support that will help 11 million households and more than 50% of our seniors. I actually want to thank the member opposite for supporting this important measure.

We know that there is no country better placed than Canada to weather the coming global economic slowdown and then thrive in

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

the years ahead. This is because our unemployment rate continues to be near its record low, and our country has an AAA credit rating. We also have the strongest economic growth in the G7 so far this year, and the lowest deficit and net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. In fact, those advantages increased over the course of the pandemic, thanks to our strong fiscal leadership. As well, our health outcomes and job recovery rates are significantly better than those in the United States, and that is going to put us in an even better position going forward.

• (1835)

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that households in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario will see a net loss with the federal carbon tax, including with any cheques that the government sends back to Canadians trying to fool them by taking money with the left hand and giving a little bit back with the right hand. This scheme is not going to do what this government claims it is going to do. It is not going to provide the environmental stewardship that it claims, nor is this government a model of that, as we have seen with the dumping of sewage in the St. Lawrence River, which runs through my community.

What we are looking for is a plan from this government that makes life more affordable for Canadians. That means it is not going to introduce new spending unless it finds savings, and it means that it is going to need to axe its carbon tax.

**Mr. Terry Beech:** Madam Speaker, we understand that many Canadians are feeling the pain of high inflation, but I would like to take this opportunity to reassure them. They can continue to count on our government to support them through targeted and fiscally responsible measures. As the Deputy Prime Minister explained in the fall economic statement, we will continue in the months ahead to work hard to build an economy that works for everyone to create good jobs and to make life affordable for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

### SPORTS

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the time that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Sport and I have been given to discuss and revisit the need to launch a public judicial inquiry into the toxic culture in sport.

My colleague might not be indifferent to this idea of bringing together athletes and experts in the culture of sport around an issue that seems to me more topical than ever.

I would ask him to share the testimony heard by the Standing Committee on the Status of Women with the minister. I hope she will pay particular attention to the evidence given by the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada, or SDRCC, which admitted that it lacks the powers needed to respond adequately to athletes' complaints.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

As it stands, what the work of parliamentarians has highlighted is that there is no place where athletes can feel confident in reporting their abuser. An SDRCC representative appeared before the committee today and talked about the lack of investigative mandate and her inability to intervene effectively. The SDRCC does not have the authority to enforce penalties and compel testimony or the production of documents in athletes' complaint cases. I would like to think that the message will be heard, and that athletes will not have come all this way in vain.

Is he at ease with the knowledge that there are predators acting with impunity who are not held responsible for their disgraceful behaviour towards athletes?

It makes no sense that the government is stubbornly refusing to open a public judicial inquiry. Athletes need to have faith in an organization that is dedicated to defending their rights, which is not the case at this time.

With all due respect for the work of the House, I would be remiss if I did not bring forward the requests of the athletes who proudly represented us on the international stage. We even welcomed them in this place with joy and pride. We remember the medals around their necks. Everyone was eager to welcome and congratulate them. We could show them the respect that they fully deserve.

Athletes need a recognized body that is able to receive their complaint. They need to have access to a resource person independent from the sports organization that they have a dispute with. They need a point of contact that will guide them through the process and help them get through the obstacles one by one and the fear of reprisals by organizations or people who abused them. This assistance plan needs to include legal services, psychological help, skilled people who are capable of helping people who experienced trauma. It is hard enough to experience abuse and mistreatment; imagine the courage and nerve it takes to face one's abuser.

As long as the power imbalance established by national sports organizations and the inaction over the years by Sport Canada is seen or perceived by athletes, reconciliation will not be possible, the athletes will not file complaints and they will not break free from this culture of silence.

Would my colleague convey that message to the minister and make sure she is apprised of the situation immediately?

If the government really wants to make things better, it will have to come up with a mechanism by and for athletes and stop thinking in terms of sport and structure. That is the real problem. We need an independent public inquiry to do this work and bring the two sides together. We need transparency in order for people to learn about problematic situations and consider them with more empathy and understanding. We have to be able to identify what works well and what needs to be reconsidered in whole or in part.

The independent public inquiry we need is an opportunity for enrichment, a pivotal moment that will make a public statement to the effect that this is not acceptable and we will not let it happen again. Yes, sports organizations and federations will be put on the spot. Yes, we will have to name things, and that might make some people uncomfortable. However, there are things and stories that everyone

must take the time to absorb, and this transition will not happen behind closed doors in government officials' offices.

• (1840)

**Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I first want to thank my hon. colleague for her question, her leadership and her attention to this very important issue.

[*English*]

I would also like to thank the other members of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for the important work they are doing in studying the issue of safe sport for women and girls in Canada. I had the privilege of joining one of the meetings. I paid attention today to those meetings. The testimony was both extremely moving and terribly important for us all to listen to.

I want to commend the courageous athletes who continue to tell their stories about the abuse they have suffered. I want them to know that we hear them; we see them and we absolutely believe them. I want to be clear that anyone who is a victim or witness to a criminal act should report that incident to the police immediately.

[*Translation*]

In reality, this is a deeply personal issue for me. The objective of creating a safer sport free from abuse was my main motivation for entering the world of politics.

• (1845)

[*English*]

As a society, we in Canada have a shared responsibility to promote a safe sporting environment for everyone. Our government responded to calls from Canadian athletes for an independent, centralized mechanism for violations of any provisions of the Universal Code of Conduct to Prevent and Address Maltreatment in Sport.

[*Translation*]

The Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner, or OSIC, was created in June under the leadership of Sarah-Ève Pelletier, who is a former member of the national artistic swimming team, a member of the Quebec bar and an accredited civil mediator. This office was created to end the culture of silence, to help provide a reliable mechanism for reporting abuse and mistreatment, and to ensure that victims are heard and supported.

By April 1, 2023, all national sport organizations must sign on to the abuse-free sport program, which includes OSIC services. This is a condition of receiving funding from the Government of Canada. As of December 1, 2022, some 23 organizations have signed on, including Hockey Canada and Gymnastics Canada.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

[English]

Some have questioned OSIC's independence. Just like any administrative tribunal or court of justice supported financially by the federal government, from the Supreme Court of Canada to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, OSIC is an independent entity.

Earlier I spoke to the personal nature of this concern. It was about seven years ago that I retired from sport. I had a long career in sport. I went to four Olympics for Canada, and indeed witnessed many things that I wish never happened.

In 2016, the then minister of sport asked me to be part of a working group to develop a system to address the maltreatment in sport that was occurring. There first needed to be a universal code of conduct. We made recommendations to the federal government at that time. Those recommendations included having a universal code of conduct that was mandatory for all national sport organizations, ensuring that the system was fully funded by the federal government, as the Supreme Court is, and ensuring that it was independent of the government entirely. It is true that those things are the case today.

Given that sport is a shared jurisdiction in Canada, we, along with provincial and territorial colleagues, should all be working together on this. In August 2022, building on the Red Deer declaration signed in February 2019, ministers agreed to work toward establishing an independent third party mechanisms in their jurisdictions for allegations of maltreatment in sport—

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

[Translation]

The hon. member for Shefford.

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I would have liked to hear the parliamentary secretary admit in the answer he gave me this evening that the government will think about the request of parliamentarians, who are unanimous about the fact that these athletes must be given a voice.

It is the Minister of Sport's responsibility to look into the management of sexual assault and sexual misconduct in sports for the good of the public. It is high time to act as a watchdog and recognize the distress and frustration felt by these athletes in the amateur circuit and by those who are overseen by programs subsidized by the federal government. The government must absolutely shed light on the management problems in sports organizations because this problem has been going on for far too long. We are talking about a right, and athletes are well within their rights to require such action from their government.

In closing, I would like to say that I am sincere in offering the Minister of Sport our full co-operation in this necessary modernization of the sport policy. I also want to remind her that she would benefit from the recommendations of such a commission because it could enable the OSIC to really protect athletes. A real culture change—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but her time is up.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

**Mr. Adam van Koevorden:** Madam Speaker, I once again want to commend the member from the Bloc Qu b cois for her attention to this important issue and concern. I also want to commend the other members of the status of women committee for their hard work on this issue.

Absolutely no solution is off the table for me, the Minister of Sport, the government and all members of the House. We absolutely condemn violence, maltreatment and abuse in sport. We absolutely condemn what we heard in the testimony that was so troubling and moving. There is a solution for this. It lies within our power and obligation to step forward and make sure these stories continue to be told.

We look forward to the recommendations from the committee following this important study. We thank its members again for this important work. I want to say it again. Absolutely no solution is off the table for the Minister of Sport, me and the government to ensure that sport continues and is safer in the future.

• (1850)

## OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I recently asked the Prime Minister during question period why he is handing out billions of dollars of public money to big oil and gas, billions of dollars that could instead be used to invest in sustainable and clean energy options; could ensure solutions for the future that protect our planet; and could be used to provide workers, families and communities a transition to clean energy jobs. These necessary funds could be used toward building a stronger, more sustainable future for all.

The government no longer has a choice but to make decisions that benefit our planet and people, not the ultrarich CEOs who are getting rich off the backs of Canadians. We are in a climate emergency, and we are seeing the impacts first-hand with warming oceans, forest fires, floods, droughts and heat domes, just to name a few. It is clear we no longer have time for delay.

The response received from the Prime Minister provided little optimism that the government is treating this climate crisis with the seriousness and level of emergency required to ensure we have a planet to call home for the future. The damages done and the resulting impacts as a result of consecutive Liberal and Conservative inaction are unmistakable.

*Adjournment Proceedings*

In his response, the Prime Minister talked about prioritizing the decarbonization of big oil and gas. This is problematic, to say the least, with clear science showing that carbon capture will be inadequate in lowering greenhouse gas emissions to limit the earth's warming to 1.5°C, which is needed to ensure our planet's survival. Additionally, why are public tax dollars being used to subsidize the already excess profits being acquired by those who need it the least? Rich oil and gas CEOs do not need public tax dollars in addition to their excess profits.

As I mentioned in my original question, a recent report by the International Institute for Sustainable Development confirms that paying big oil to reduce their emissions is a bad investment. Again, these funds could be used in endless ways to protect our planet and our futures. It is not just the NDP pointing out that big oil and gas are making unfairly taxed profits like never seen before.

The chief executive of Shell recently said governments should tax energy companies, arguing that, if taxed appropriately, these funds could be used to support those most vulnerable. At a time when more and more are struggling with the increasing cost of living and the real impacts of the climate crisis, these funds could be used where they belong in helping people. Go figure that, even upon request from big oil and gas to be taxed appropriately, the government has not delivered.

Others are calling on the federal government to tax the windfall profits of the oil and gas industry as well, including 350 Canada, Leadnow, Greenpeace Canada and so many Canadians. In fact, they have a petition coming forward, and it is signed by 35,000 Canadians who are asking the government to finally fairly tax the enormous profits of big oil and gas and to use these vital and necessary funds toward the ever-increasing costs of environmental disasters, such as that we most recently saw with hurricane Fiona, as well as a transition to a 100% clean energy future that does not leave anyone behind.

In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, the city of Nanaimo mayor, council and staff were recently recognized for their strong climate action by the climate disclosure project, receiving an A for its work. It has done work around waste reduction, active transportation and building energy efficiency. Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools have also done incredible work around environmental stewardship.

I am wondering if the member can clarify when we will see the federal leadership we require to finally begin protecting our planet.

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to start by thanking my friend opposite for raising these questions. I used to represent the people of her riding as a municipal city councillor some 23 years ago in Nanaimo. In fact, I sat on the advisory committee to the environment there.

The member and I have had some good discussions around various environmental issues, including climate change. I am glad we have a further opportunity to share some time in the chamber today.

The federal government has committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. At the same time, we are increasing investments in clean technology and clean energy production. I cannot cover the entirety

of our plan to fight climate change and grow the economy in four minutes, but I would encourage anyone who is interested to read my reports on climate change and the environment and growing the economy, both of which are available at [terrybeechmp.ca](http://terrybeechmp.ca).

It is also important to note that we are not just committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies, but we have actually accelerated our previous timeline for doing so from 2025 to 2023, which is a matter of weeks away. In fact, we have already taken action to phase out nine tax measures supporting the fossil fuel sector to date.

In budget 2022, as another example, the government committed to eliminating the flow-through share regime for fossil fuel activities. This means tax benefits available to companies and their investors will no longer be available after March 31, 2023, which is less than four months from now.

At COP27 last month in Egypt, Canadian representatives also fought to prevent other countries from backing down on phasing out subsidies for fossil fuels and coal, which are still the single largest contributor to CO2 emissions globally. We are also on track to eliminate coal-fired energy in Canada within the next seven years.

The reality is that our government has taken concrete action to fight pollution and to produce cleaner air for everyone. This is also why we introduced a price on carbon pollution across Canada in 2019. My friend opposite would be familiar with this approach, as B.C. has had a price on pollution since 2008. In fact, the carbon price has not only helped lower emissions per capita, but B.C. has enjoyed one of the fastest-growing economies in the country since it was implemented.

An important part of this economic growth story is that a majority of Canada's clean-tech sector is actually located in British Columbia and accounts for billions of dollars in revenue each and every single year and tens of thousands of good, sustainable, high-paying jobs. It is a good analogy for how successful Canada can be as more of the world demands clean and sustainable sources of energy and solutions for fighting climate change.

There really is no doubt that our approach is working. Industries are already being encouraged to become more emissions-efficient and to use cleaner technologies. This in turn encourages the development of new and innovative approaches to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and using energy more efficiently. This in turn creates new business development opportunities.

The fact is that we cannot have a credible plan to grow our economy without also having a credible plan to protect the environment and to fight climate change. That said, we also know that we need to work with industry to find economically viable solutions and technologies.

Carbon capture, utilization and storage, CCUS for short, is an important tool for reducing emissions in high-emitting sectors, especially if other pathways to reducing emissions are limited or unavailable. I would note that many respected global organizations support CCUS development, including the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Paris-based International Energy Agency. It will help not just the oil and gas sector to reduce emissions, but emission-intensive sectors like steel production, cement and other emission-intensive industries as well.

• (1855)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Madam Speaker, I thank the member whom I have a deep respect for.

Unfortunately, I do not think an example of concrete action is the Liberal government handing rich CEOs, the very ones who are profiting from globally destructive business practices, a subsidy of \$2.6 billion to ineffectively clean up the mess they are making. That money is coming out of the pockets of Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet, and who, in many cases, are suffering the devastating effects of climate degradation. The B.C. Centre for Disease Control, for example, is creating a fact sheet to educate

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

people about the health hazards of wildfire smoke and how to prepare themselves to cope with it every year. This is tragic. Meanwhile, the current government is handing oil and gas companies billions in subsidies and tax incentives.

I will ask again: When will the government stop subsidizing big oil companies and start making them pay what they owe?

**Mr. Terry Beech:** Madam Speaker, to directly answer the question, 2023 is when we are committed to removing all inefficient fossil fuel subsidies.

I would also encourage anyone listening to this to look at our entire emissions reduction plan. There has been over 100 billion dollars' worth of investments into initiatives leading to a cleaner future, including in budget 2022, which took a number of important steps to mobilize private investments, including launching the Canada growth fund. The Canada growth fund is going to attract substantial private sector investment in Canadian businesses and projects to help seize the opportunities that are provided by building a net-zero economy, which is exactly what we are doing.

I invite all members to read Bill C-32 if they have not already done so. The legislation would provide up to \$2 billion in initial capitalization for the Canada growth fund. Not only will this help Canada fight against climate change, but it will also grow our economy and create jobs for Canadians, which is what we are trying to do in everything that we do.

• (1900)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** 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 7 p.m.)



# CONTENTS

Monday, December 5, 2022

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### Criminal Code

Bill S-223. Report stage .....	10379
Mr. Genuis .....	10379
Motion for concurrence .....	10379
(Motion agreed to) .....	10379
Third reading .....	10379
Mr. Zuberi .....	10382
Mr. MacGregor .....	10382
Mr. Bezan .....	10382
Mr. Zuberi .....	10383
Ms. Michaud .....	10384
Mr. MacGregor .....	10386
Mr. Falk (Provencher) .....	10387

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2022

Bill C-32. Report stage .....	10388
-------------------------------	-------

### Speaker's Ruling

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès) .....	10388
--	-------

### Motions in Amendment

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) .....	10388
Motion No. 1 .....	10388
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10390
Mrs. DeBellefeuille .....	10390
Mr. Morrice .....	10390
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10391
Mr. Bezan .....	10392
Mr. Beaulieu .....	10392
Mr. Cannings .....	10392
Mrs. DeBellefeuille .....	10392
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10394
Mr. Lehoux .....	10394
Mr. Blaikie .....	10394
Ms. Bérubé .....	10396
Mr. Ellis .....	10396
Mr. Morrice .....	10396
Mr. Ellis .....	10397
Mr. Kelly .....	10398
Mr. Gerretsen .....	10398
Mr. Blaikie .....	10398
Mrs. Kramp-Neuman .....	10399
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10400
Mr. Gerretsen .....	10400
Mrs. DeBellefeuille .....	10401
Mr. Kelly .....	10401
Mr. Blanchette-Joncas .....	10401
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10402
Mrs. DeBellefeuille .....	10403
Mrs. Gallant .....	10403

Mr. Gerretsen .....	10405
---------------------	-------

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

### 50th Anniversary of Haitian Support Group

Mr. Rayes .....	10405
-----------------	-------

### Daniel Boyer

Mr. Schiefke .....	10405
--------------------	-------

### Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada

Mrs. Kusie .....	10405
------------------	-------

### International Volunteer Day

Ms. Martinez Ferrada .....	10406
----------------------------	-------

### Employment Insurance Reform

Mr. Simard .....	10406
------------------	-------

### Sport Hunting

Mrs. Shanahan .....	10406
---------------------	-------

### International Volunteer Day

Mr. Paul-Hus .....	10406
--------------------	-------

### Holiday Season

Mr. Fergus .....	10406
------------------	-------

### Firearms

Mr. Maloney .....	10407
-------------------	-------

### Firearms

Mr. Mazier .....	10407
------------------	-------

### Gender-Based Violence

Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South) .....	10407
----------------------------------	-------

### Reg Schellenberg

Mr. Patzer .....	10407
------------------	-------

### The Economy

Ms. Ferreri .....	10407
-------------------	-------

### 36th Speaker of the House of Commons

Mr. Fisher .....	10408
------------------	-------

### Dental Care

Mr. MacGregor .....	10408
---------------------	-------

### 75th Anniversary of the Sainte-Thérèse Legion

Mr. Desilets .....	10408
--------------------	-------

### Firearms

Mr. Lloyd .....	10408
-----------------	-------

### Assault Weapons

Ms. Bendayan .....	10409
--------------------	-------

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### The Economy

Mr. Poilievre .....	10409
Mr. Boissonnault .....	10409
Mr. Poilievre .....	10409
Ms. Gould .....	10409

### Firearms

Mr. Poilievre .....	10409
Mr. Mendicino .....	10409
Mr. Poilievre .....	10409
Mr. Mendicino .....	10410
Mr. Poilievre .....	10410
Mr. Mendicino .....	10410

### The Environment

Mrs. DeBellefeuille .....	10410
Ms. Dabrusin .....	10410
Mrs. DeBellefeuille .....	10410
Ms. Dabrusin .....	10410

### Indigenous Affairs

Ms. Gazan .....	10410
Mr. Miller .....	10410
Ms. Ashton .....	10411
Mr. Miller .....	10411

### Carbon Pricing

Mr. Hallan .....	10411
Mr. Boissonnault .....	10411
Mr. Hallan .....	10411
Mr. Boissonnault .....	10411
Mrs. Stubbs .....	10411
Ms. Gould .....	10411
Mrs. Stubbs .....	10412
Mr. Boissonnault .....	10412

### Taxation

Mr. Deltell .....	10412
Mrs. Lebouthillier .....	10412
Mr. Deltell .....	10412
Mrs. Lebouthillier .....	10412

### Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	10412
Mr. Fraser .....	10412
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	10413
Mr. Rodriguez .....	10413
Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe .....	10413
Mr. Rodriguez .....	10413

### Public Safety

Mr. Chong .....	10413
Mr. Mendicino .....	10413

### Democratic Institutions

Mr. Cooper .....	10413
Mr. LeBlanc .....	10413
Mr. Berthold .....	10413
Mr. LeBlanc .....	10414

### Health

Mr. Boulerice .....	10414
Mr. Duclos .....	10414
Ms. McPherson .....	10414
Mr. Duclos .....	10414

### Housing

Mrs. Zahid .....	10414
Mr. Hussen .....	10414

### Public Safety

Mr. Martel .....	10414
Mr. Mendicino .....	10415

### Firearms

Ms. Dancho .....	10415
Mr. Mendicino .....	10415
Mr. Moore .....	10415
Mr. Mendicino .....	10415
Mr. Moore .....	10415
Ms. Hutchings .....	10415

### Official Languages

Mr. Beaulieu .....	10416
Ms. Petitpas Taylor .....	10416
Mr. Beaulieu .....	10416
Ms. Petitpas Taylor .....	10416

### Carbon Pricing

Mrs. Kramp-Neuman .....	10416
Mr. Duguid .....	10416
Mrs. Kramp-Neuman .....	10416
Mr. Fraser .....	10416
Mr. Nater .....	10417
Mr. Duguid .....	10417

### Child Care

Ms. Diab .....	10417
Ms. Gould .....	10417

### Finance

Mr. Fast .....	10417
Ms. Gould .....	10417

### Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship

Mr. Paul-Hus .....	10418
Mr. Rodriguez .....	10418
Mr. Paul-Hus .....	10418
Mr. Fraser .....	10418

### Airline Industry

Mr. Sorbara .....	10418
Mr. Alghabra .....	10418

### Taxation

Mr. Blaikie .....	10418
Mr. Boissonnault .....	10418

### Justice

Mr. Rayes .....	10419
Mr. Lametti .....	10419

### Murdered Indigenous Women

The Speaker .....	10419
-------------------	-------

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

<b>Selected Decisions of Speaker Geoff Regan</b>	
The Speaker .....	10419
<b>Government Response to Petitions</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10419
<b>Committees of the House</b>	
<b>Justice and Human Rights</b>	
Mr. Sarai .....	10420
<b>Health</b>	
Mr. Casey .....	10420
Motion for concurrence .....	10420
Division deemed demanded and deferred .....	10420
Mr. Casey .....	10420
Motion for concurrence .....	10420
Division deemed demanded and deferred .....	10420
<b>Veterans</b>	
Mr. Dubourg .....	10420
<b>Indigenous and Northern Affairs</b>	
Mr. Garneau .....	10420
<b>Petitions</b>	
<b>Medical Assistance in Dying</b>	
Mr. Genuis .....	10420
<b>Human Organ Trafficking</b>	
Mrs. Wagantall .....	10420
<b>Medical Assistance in Dying</b>	
Mrs. Wagantall .....	10421
Mrs. Gallant .....	10421
Mr. Kurek .....	10421
Mr. Falk (Provencher) .....	10421
<b>Opioids</b>	
Mr. Johns .....	10421
<b>Medical Assistance in Dying</b>	
Mr. Dalton .....	10421
Mr. Lloyd .....	10421
<b>Human Organ Trafficking</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10421
<b>Questions on the Order Paper</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10422
<b>Questions Passed as Orders for Returns</b>	
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10424
<b>Request for Emergency Debate</b>	
<b>Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-spirit People</b>	
Ms. Gazan .....	10426
<b>Speaker's Ruling</b>	
The Speaker .....	10426

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

<b>Fall Economic Statement Implementation Act, 2022</b>	
Bill C-32. Report Stage .....	10426
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10426
Mrs. Gallant .....	10426
Ms. Rempel Garner .....	10426
Mr. Sorbara .....	10427
Ms. Rempel Garner .....	10428
Mr. Lemire .....	10429
Ms. Blaney .....	10429
Ms. Rempel Garner .....	10429
Mr. Gerretsen .....	10431
Mr. Lemire .....	10431
Ms. Blaney .....	10431
Mr. Morrice .....	10432
Mr. Hardie .....	10433
Mr. Steinley .....	10433
Mr. Lemire .....	10434
Mrs. Vignola .....	10434
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10435
Mr. Julian .....	10435
Ms. Larouche .....	10436
Mr. Johns .....	10436
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10438
Mr. Patzer .....	10438
Mr. Desilets .....	10438
Mrs. Thomas .....	10439
Ms. Sahota .....	10440
Mr. Simard .....	10440
Mrs. Wagantall .....	10441
<b>Notice of Time Allocation Motion</b>	
Mr. Boissonnault .....	10442
<b>Report Stage</b>	
Bill C-32. Report Stage .....	10442
Ms. Sahota .....	10442
Mr. Desilets .....	10443
Ms. Barron .....	10443
Ms. Blaney .....	10443
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10444
Mr. Kelly .....	10445
Ms. Larouche .....	10445
Mr. Maguire .....	10445
Mr. Lamoureux .....	10447
Mr. Johns .....	10447
Mrs. Vignola .....	10447
Mr. Falk (Provencher) .....	10448
Mr. Gerretsen .....	10449
Mrs. Vignola .....	10450
Ms. Barron .....	10450
Mr. Barrett .....	10450
Mr. Gerretsen .....	10451
Mrs. Vignola .....	10451
Mr. Johns .....	10452

**ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

**Taxation**

Mr. Barrett ..... 10452  
Mr. Beech ..... 10453

**Sports**

Ms. Larouche ..... 10453

Mr. van Koeverden ..... 10454

**Oil and Gas Industry**

Ms. Barron ..... 10455  
Mr. Beech ..... 10456



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