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# House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 25, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1000)

[*English*]

### ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021

The House resumed from March 23 consideration of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot has one minute left on his feet.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as always, it is a true honour to stand in this place and fight for the people of Battle River—Crowfoot and, of course, to stand for the principles of peace, freedom and democracy, especially in an age when there have been such clear threats from actors around the world who would love to tear down the freedoms that we enjoy today—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I am very sorry. It was my mistake. We had one minute left for questions and comments, not to resume a speech.

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, thinking in terms of freedoms, my question to the member is this. How is it that the Conservative Party can actually say no to, and vote against, Bill C-8, when Bill C-8 is all about supporting Canadians in all regions of our country?

Does the member realize what the Conservative Party is asking him to do: to vote against supports for the pandemic? Does he realize that?

**Mr. Damien Kurek:** Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand for freedom and democracy in this place each and every day, but what

is absolutely untenable is the fact that members from the party opposite refuse to stand up against probably the most authoritarian Prime Minister that this country may have ever seen. Time and again, I hear from constituents who are thrilled that a few of their members are standing up against the tyranny that the PMO exerts over members of the backbench. As we saw—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is it.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Richmond Hill.

**Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as today marks the first time in the 44th Parliament that I am exercising my privilege to rise to speak on a government bill, I want to take a brief moment to acknowledge those who have helped to get me here to stand alongside my hon. colleagues and once again represent the people of Richmond Hill.

I want to thank the volunteers who put in countless hours to spread our message, as well as friends and staff who helped mentor and guide me, and helped further connect me with the community. Of course, I would be remiss if I did not thank my wife and my two children, without whom I would not have had the emotional support to continue this work. Lastly, I thank my larger family. They are the people who have trusted me to work for their best interests: my dear constituents in Richmond Hill, whose engagement and community leadership has consistently impressed me for the past six years. Indeed, my constituents will be the beneficiaries of the bill that I will be discussing today.

I feel privileged to rise in the House to speak on Bill C-8, an act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021, and other measures. In my riding of Richmond Hill, there are over 5,000 small businesses, with labour participation of over 64%. Richmond Hill is home to many of the workers who helped establish the foundation and growth of our economy. Many of them also constitute the membership of my community-led small business council, where I meet monthly with my constituents to hear their concerns and feedback on our government's support for their businesses.

*Government Orders*

First, let me acknowledge that Richmond Hill's small businesses have shown immeasurable resilience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. While our federal government has played a key role to the provision of critical supports so far, we know that it is vital to continue this assistance to ensure a continued strong recovery. Our efforts in providing crucial financial assistance to, and collaboration with, the provinces and territories ensure that the health and safety of Canadians are an utmost reflection of the priorities of our government on this front.

Since the onset of COVID-19, we have implemented income support, we have issued direct payments to families and seniors, we have helped businesses keep their workers and we have helped workers keep their wages. Bill C-8 is yet another manifestation of these priorities: it serves as an extra, supplementary tool in our tool box. The bill is constituted of seven parts, each of which addresses a key and prominent issue within our national and local communities, starting with the funding for the procurement of rapid tests and investment in therapeutics, moving to the protection of our children's health and safety in school, and leading to a re-emphasis on critical and targeted support for workers and businesses that will protect their financial and physical well-being. This is a well-rounded piece of legislation with a comprehensive, but targeted, approach.

With the onset of the pandemic, businesses in my riding stepped up by introducing new measures that enabled them to continue serving Richmond Hill safely and in alignment with public health measures. They fought COVID-19 head-on by enforcing vaccine mandates and reducing capacities to encourage social distancing. Many even installed protective barriers within their spaces to maintain the safety of staff and customers alike. Now, as provincial jurisdictions begin authorizing an easing of restrictions, we know that COVID-19 and its impact still persist, which is why our federal government will continue to support businesses in their safe operation.

In December, our government's Bill C-2 received royal assent. Within this bill, we acknowledged the spread of the omicron variant and its potential for further disruption to small businesses. As such, we integrated key economic support, including the extension of the Canada recovery hiring program, the establishment of the Canada worker lockdown benefit and further extensions to the Canada recovery caregiving benefit and the Canada recovery sickness benefit. These initiatives, among others in Bill C-2, have been and will be instrumental in keeping Canadian businesses strong and resilient in their recovery from COVID-19.

• (1005)

The new measures in Bill C-8 would add to the line of supports that become law by the passage of Bill C-2 in numerous ways. Proper ventilation and improvement to indoor air quality are key components of the continued fight against COVID-19, but this is also a costly endeavour.

Bill C-8 would alleviate this by proposing a refundable small business air quality improvement tax credit of 25% on incurred, eligible air quality improvement expenses. This tax credit would be for eligible expenses taken between September 1, 2021, and De-

cember 31, 2022. It would make safety against COVID-19 affordable for small businesses.

That is not all that Bill C-8 proposes in order to support businesses. Our government recently announced the extension of the repayment deadline for the Canada emergency business account loan. All eligible borrowers in good standing would qualify for partial loan forgiveness. The interest-free and partially forgivable loan provided by the CEBA has helped our small businesses, nearly 900,000 of them, stay afloat during one of the biggest economic challenges for our country.

This extension would facilitate short-term economic recovery for small businesses and greater repayment flexibility for those who had received support from CEBA. Nonetheless, businesses that benefited from CEBA are still burdened by the impact of the pandemic, and our government wants to help mitigate some of the financial stress.

Repayments on or before the new deadline of December 31, 2023, would result in a loan forgiveness of up to a third of the value of the loan. This can translate to about \$20,000 in loan forgiveness. Bill C-8 would take this a step further, as it would invoke a limitation period of six years for debt due under the CEBA program to ensure CEBA loan holders are provided consistent treatment regardless of where they live.

Through all of the realms in which our federal government has provided pandemic-related supports, one theme consistently emerges, which is our focus on the health and safety of Canadians. That theme is extremely apparent in Bill C-8, as we build on previous initiatives to keep students, teachers, staff and families healthy by authorizing payments for the purpose of supporting ventilation improvement projects in schools.

This expands on our government's supply of over \$3 billion in direct transfer payments to the provinces and territories for testing and contact tracing through the safe restart program. In fact, \$4 million of this funding directly benefited my constituency of Richmond Hill, as it ensured we had the resources to safely restart the economy. We also made significant investments in empowering the provincial and territorial health care systems to strengthen their testing capacity by purchasing and shipping over 80 million rapid tests to them at a cost of over \$900 million.

As the demand for rapid tests persists, Bill C-8 seeks to allocate an additional \$1.72 billion to the Minister of Health for the procurement and distribution of rapid antigen tests to provinces and territories and directly to Canadians. This initiative, combined with the funding through the safe return to class fund, demonstrates how the government is helping to keep our communities healthy and safe.

Today, I have touched on just some of the components of Bill C-8 that would deliver real results and crucial supports for Canadians. Bill C-8 would mean a safer and stronger Canada, and for my community it would mean a safer and a stronger Richmond Hill.

I strongly encourage my hon. colleagues to consider these key supports that their constituents would rely on for their financial, physical and mental health and well-being. I invite members to join me in supporting its passage through the House so we can continue having Canadians' backs.

• (1010)

**Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, one of the things I am concerned about is housing in Oshawa for seniors and youth. Conservatives brought forward Motion No. 54 to ask the Liberals to abandon their first-time homebuyer initiative, because it has literally only helped about 15% of the people it is targeted to.

With this budget implementation act, does the member see anything in it that would increase the supply of housing for Canadians who actually need it?

**Mr. Majid Jowhari:** Madam Speaker, housing and affordable housing have been the focus of our government since 2015. There has never been the amount of investment we have made in housing initiatives through our national housing strategy. Over \$75 billion has been invested, or is planned to be spent, over the next three and a half years at least. What we have seen is a very balanced and comprehensive approach to housing, whether it is increasing the supply of affordable housing, getting new families into the market, or refurbishing existing low-income housing to ensure people who need housing have shelter. As well, we have been addressing homelessness.

• (1015)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we agree with Bill C-8 in general. We find it kind of anemic, but we are okay with it.

The part that gives us pause is of course health transfers. Yes, the government transferred huge amounts of money during the pandemic, but that was a one-time thing. Quebec and all the Canadian provinces want a permanent transfer that covers 35%. That transfer is not in here, even though it could be fully or partially funded by anti-tax haven measures, which are also not in here.

When will we see these things in the budget?

[English]

**Mr. Majid Jowhari:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. We have the honour and privilege of being on the OGGO committee together.

### *Government Orders*

I would like to make a point on a comment my colleague made. She said, "ad hoc". I do not think our measures, as they relate to COVID-19, have been ad hoc, especially the ones that dealt with the safety and health of Canadian citizens. I think they have been broad, as I said, and they have been strategic. They have had a great benefit.

Our country is now in a position where nearly 90% of Canadians are vaccinated. We are seeing that the provinces and territories are relaxing some of the restrictions. Our government is, has been and will be there for all Canadians to make sure their health and safety are a priority to us.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague from Richmond Hill. I will be allowed to speak later, just after question period, and will lay this out with more detail and background, but one thing that strikes me about Bill C-8 is that it draws into sharp relief that much of the spending from the federal government is in provincial areas of jurisdiction. It can also be accused of being rather late coming on stream regarding money for schools, ventilation and rapid tests. I am not going to blame the federal government for this. These are provincial areas, and I am wondering why the provinces did not step up. When we look back at COVID, and I hope we do look back and analyze it, we will wonder why we did not have better provincial-federal co-operation early so that Canadians got the help they needed, and businesses, schools and so on got the help they needed, faster.

**Mr. Majid Jowhari:** Madam Speaker, as we all know, eight dollars out of every \$10 that was spent on COVID-19 was provided by the federal government. Our government has been at the forefront of COVID-19 from day one. We also talked about how broad and how strategic this expenditure has been.

As it relates to working with the provinces and territories, we are always there, in lockstep with the provinces and territories, to make sure that the health and safety of Canadians are made a priority. As the provinces and territories are removing some of these restrictions, we must figure out where our next role is. What we realize is that, for us to be able to keep Canadians safe as these restrictions are being removed, our area of focus should be schools and, therefore, the air we are breathing, as masks are being removed. We are focusing on that through Bill C-8, as well as on the businesses that would be—

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

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to speak to Bill C-8, an act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures. The Standing Committee on Finance spent a lot of time debating this piece of economic legislation.

*Government Orders*

Just as an aside, I would like to wish a very happy birthday to someone who just joined us in the House, the member for Joliette. One can hardly tell; I do not see a single new white hair. I wish him a happy birthday.

We describe this bill as anemic because it is sorely lacking in substance. It seems fitting for a worn-out government. This latest version does nothing about the labour shortage, offers no plan to improve productivity and significantly underestimates the magnitude of supply issues, being very weak in the solutions department.

Measures announced last spring to tackle tax havens have also been put off until later, that is if they have not fallen off the radar altogether, even though they are a much-needed revenue source. We are in the midst of the recovery, but it is hard to discern any economic leadership on the federal government's part.

Meanwhile, the successive crises since January, specifically the emergency measures crisis, the war in Ukraine and the increase in COVID-19 cases, remind us that we are not out of the woods yet. More importantly, with the new NDP-Liberal alliance and the tabling of the economic update, the Trudeau government has clearly shown its colours—

• (1020)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I must remind the hon. member that we do not refer to other members by name.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, the Liberal government has shown its true colours. It is about to come into conflict with Quebec and the provinces, since this means that it categorically refuses to increase federal funding for health care with no strings attached. Whether the Minister of Canadian Heritage likes it or not, this sets the stage for a real fight.

My speech will focus on three issues: the lack of health measures, the lack of measures for housing, and support for our businesses, especially those that will continue to be affected by the repercussions of COVID-19 for a long time to come, particularly the tourism and cultural industries.

First, on health, the federal government should mind its own business and look after what falls under its jurisdiction, such as procuring COVID-19 tests.

The government, however, is maintaining the Canada health transfer escalator at 3% until 2027. This is the legal minimum and below the annual increase in health care costs. We can never say this enough, but Quebec and the provinces are unanimously calling for an immediate payment of \$28 billion to cover 35% of health care costs, followed by a 6% escalator.

The message from the Liberal government is crystal clear: It believes it spent enough money last year on the pandemic, so it is refusing to provide its share of health care funding. That reasoning is flawed. COVID-19 spending is one-time and temporary spending, while the federal underfunding of health is a chronic problem that is choking the finances of Quebec and the provinces. Ottawa is therefore perpetuating the fiscal imbalance, but, most importantly, it is ignoring the lessons it could have learned from the pandemic.

As the critic for seniors, I have to say that we owe it to the victims to try to prevent these tragedies from ever happening again. As the critic for the status of women, I think it is sad that a government that calls itself feminist did not answer the call for help from caregivers and health care workers, most of whom are women who have been on the front lines since March 2020 because of this pandemic.

The Bloc Québécois will not give up its fight alongside Quebec and the provinces for a sustainable, unconditional increase in federal health care funding.

Second, we must tackle the supply of housing, as this is still another serious problem in Quebec. Today, to deal with this crisis, Quebec would need approximately 50,000 new social, community and truly affordable housing units, and that is a lot. I can speak to that because Granby has one of the lowest vacancy rates in Quebec. I am a member of a committee where the city and community organizations are working hard to try to find solutions. However, there is no magic wand, and the federal government must follow suit and take action.

Between 2011 and 2016, under the Conservatives, the number of affordable rental units in the private market for households with the greatest needs declined by 322,600, and this seems to be a continuing trend.

At this time, the Liberals are focusing on a suite of programs and initiatives that address all variables of the housing market except for the most important one, which is more available supply and more housing units. Putting more money in the hands of first-time home buyers, mainly by doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, will do nothing to increase the supply of social or truly affordable housing.

Scotiabank estimates that 1.8 million additional units would have to be built in order for Canada to match the inventory of G7 countries. That shows how much of a gap we have to fill. It is no coincidence that the Parliamentary Budget Officer's most recent report of August 2021 estimates that in the absence of additional funding to address this problem, the number of Canadian households in need of affordable housing will also rise to 1.8 million in five years.

It is important to understand that, if housing supply is the crux of the problem, then social and community housing must be the priority, not the English-Canadian vision of so-called affordable housing, which is growing more and more outdated, particularly in an overheated market.

Despite the incredible rise in housing prices, the housing problem in Quebec and Canada is having a much greater impact on the rental market than on the real estate market. That is why the most important indicator to focus on is housing supply, particularly housing for the most vulnerable, who are growing in number. Social and community housing must be the priority.

Right now, the Liberals' strategy is all over the place. Many of their initiatives have failed. We are already halfway through the time frame set out for the national housing strategy, and yet, according to a recent report from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the programs specifically dedicated to the construction of housing have spent less than 25% of their budget.

Now is the time to build. Housing will not materialize with a snap of the fingers. If we want to get out of this mess, then we need to exponentially increase our housing supply, particularly our supply of social and community housing.

The national housing strategy, which was launched in November 2017, shows that the government has a good understanding of the impact of housing outside Quebec but it does not take into account Quebec's way of doing things and the *AccèsLogis* Québec program.

Rather than relying on and promoting what works, the federal government wants to impose its vision, even though its programs do not meet our needs and realities, and focus on affordable housing to the detriment of social and community housing.

• (1025)

There is not enough funding, and that money is not being used effectively. Quebec and the provinces have exclusive jurisdiction over housing. Since housing needs vary quite a bit based on socio-demographic factors, and since provincial and municipal governments are more familiar with local issues, these governments are better able to assess and identify what people need.

Third, I want to talk about assistance for businesses. The Canada emergency business account, or CEBA, was designed to provide zero interest, partially forgivable loans to small and medium-sized businesses to help finance expenses that could not be avoided or deferred as they took steps to safely navigate the shutdowns resulting from public health measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

Since this program was first launched, the Bloc Québécois has called for amendments to the assistance programs to better meet the needs of businesses. For example, we called for more flexibility in the eligibility criteria. We brought up the issue of business debt early on. A survey done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, or CFIB, in December noted that more than one-quarter of businesses in Quebec might not make it through 2022. More than half of small businesses have not returned to normal sales, and the average debt of a small business in Quebec was almost \$100,000, going even as high as \$206,944 for a dine-in restaurant.

According to the CFIB, as of October 31, 1,454 insolvency cases had been filed in Quebec alone, which accounts for 60% of all cases filed in Canada. I should note that small businesses contribute 30% of Quebec's GDP. We are proud of our SME models.

Clearly, measures that only increase businesses' debt levels are inadequate. We therefore support this measure to extend the repayment deadline to qualify for loan forgiveness.

It would also be important for the programs to include businesses that opened after the beginning of the pandemic, like companies in the start-up phase. The Bloc Québécois has already shared other ideas for improving the situation for SMEs, including support for

online commerce and for card payment processing fees. We are calling on the government to negotiate with the card issuers to secure lower fees for online transactions.

In closing, the Bloc Québécois will continue to be there for the businesses and people of Quebec, because the future holds many challenges, from inflation to labour shortages. The Bloc Québécois will be in problem-solving mode, laser-focused on the needs and demands of Quebec.

I have one final point to make about Quebec's demands. We had concerns about Ottawa respecting Quebec's jurisdictions, which appear to be infringed upon by several of the bill's measures. That is why we voted in favour of the bill in principle, in order to better understand the scope of certain parts of Bill C-8.

Based on the testimony we heard and the government's responses in committee, we came to the conclusion that Quebec's areas of jurisdiction were indeed being encroached upon. This is the first time the federal government has dared to interfere in the area of property taxes by seeking to penalize non-resident, non-Canadian second home owners.

The intrusion could not be any clearer. It was illustrated and explained very well by constitutional expert Patrick Taillon, who testified before the Standing Committee on Finance in February 2021.

We introduced a single amendment that would correct the problem. We tried to find a compromise by proposing measures for property taxes, to make this acceptable to provinces that did not want it. Unfortunately, the Liberal committee chair ruled the Bloc Québécois amendment inadmissible before it could even be debated.

Once again, this government is trying to stick its nose in where it does not belong. It needs to mind its own business.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc party says that Ottawa should play no role in housing. The member says we should be providing a lot more money and investing in more programs, even though she says we should not be providing housing because it is not in our jurisdiction. The member says health care is not Ottawa's jurisdiction but that we need to provide a lot more money toward health care.

One would think that the Bloc's position is that Ottawa should be an ATM machine and that is it; let us just give the money. Canadians, no matter where they live in the region of Canada, recognize that Ottawa does have a role in housing and does have a role in health. It is called the Canada Health Act. We have the national housing strategy.

*Government Orders*

I am wondering if the member could provide her thoughts on this. Does she truly believe that Ottawa has no role to play in health or housing, especially when we reflect on the will of the people of Quebec?

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

I am going to have to repeat the same thing. My answer has several elements. They are called health transfers and they are provided for in the Constitution. As I explained, Quebec has health care and housing programs. Ottawa must transfer the money. That is how it works.

With respect to health care, Ottawa does not know how to manage our hospitals and nurses, but the Quebec government does have that expertise. The Liberal government has been cutting health transfers for far too long. We have ended up with an underfunded health care system. The Liberals say that the issue of health transfers will be addressed after the crisis, but we urgently need that money now because we are in a health crisis.

The same goes for housing. Quebec has its own programs. I sit on committees with provincial and municipal government representatives in Quebec. Everyone is saying the same thing. They know what to do.

Ottawa has a system of federal transfers, which support areas that it is not involved in. It has its own areas of jurisdiction, such as procurement, as I explained. As for the rest—

• (1030)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend  s):** Order. Questions and comments.

The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

[English]

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I agree with almost all of the member's speech and I would especially like to bring up some more issues on the tourism and hospitality sectors that she briefly mentioned.

I have been working a lot on that file lately. The tourism and hospitality recovery program was brought in before omicron, when it was assumed that the pandemic was over, yet it is not. Businesses are still struggling. She mentioned some of the companies that do not qualify, such as start-ups.

Another group of businesses that do not qualify for the program are businesses that are seasonal. Many tourism operators in Canada are seasonal, and yet these companies are basically prohibited from qualifying for this program. I wonder if she could comment on that.

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It gives me an opportunity to come back to something that I was only able to talk about briefly, and that is help for sectors that will continue to be affected for quite some time because of the pandemic.

My colleague is right that this program dates back to December, before the arrival of the omicron variant. That seems like a lifetime ago because a lot has happened since then. Since we are talking about tourism, I would say that we are coming to the realization that we still have a long road to travel.

That is why I talked about the importance of having more flexible, more tailored programs for sectors like tourism and culture that are still going to be affected for quite some time.

In committee, we asked the following question: Can we get resources to provide more support to self-employed workers in the cultural industry?

We were told that it was too complicated technically speaking. In 2022, can we find solutions, provide support and show some flexibility in order to help them?

Yesterday, members of the Bloc Qu  b  cois talked a lot about the importance of predictability. While attending meetings of the Haute-Yamaska RCM's strategic business intelligence committee, I noted that this is what tourism operators are calling for.

The Government of Quebec and the provincial governments have a plan for lifting restrictions, but the federal government does not. It is important for businesses to be able to plan ahead. These are measures that Ottawa could do something about in order to help these sectors, which will continue to be affected by the pandemic for quite some time.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

Ottawa has decided to interfere in the property tax jurisdiction. That is a first. There has been no attempt at collaboration to find a solution.

We said that the federal government could do so if the province gave its approval. Why does my colleague think that the government has once again refused to work with the provinces?

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche:** Madam Speaker, it comes down to the new NDP-Liberal centralist alliance that categorically refuses to compromise when it comes to staying out of Quebec's and the provinces' jurisdictions.

[English]

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in the House today to speak to Bill C-8.

The first thing I want to do is go back a bit in time. Madam Speaker, I think you were there as well for those times. It goes back to when Jim Flaherty was the finance minister. He had a budget that was called the "economic action plan". It was a main event back in those times. Economists and business owners and people from all over looked at this economic action plan as the path forward for the Canadian economy, especially in those times of the huge economic downturn in 2007 and 2008. It was really a shining light, I would say. It allowed us to get through that time and by 2015 to present the new Liberal government with a balanced budget.



*Government Orders*

Back in that time of 2015 and over the next four years, the government spent \$100 billion extra over what it collected. That will go into history and will be a guiding light for future governments. It goes back to when we were kids and our grandparents were telling us that when times were good, we should salt a bit away. That way, when times get bad, we would have a bit more to spend to keep going.

The Liberals actually really spent when times were good, and when times were bad, they really spent a lot. In 2015 the federal debt was about \$600 billion, and in seven short years we are at the point that we have doubled that debt to \$1.2 trillion. We have not doubled it; the Liberal government has doubled it to \$1.2 trillion so that the amount that each and every Canadian owes has doubled. It is unfortunate.

I understand the times. Yes, there was some money that went to helping Canadians tremendously. We obviously know that, but nevertheless, the numbers are the numbers.

There are a couple of things I want to point out. One thing is inflation. We hear this on the news. Ten years ago, we did not really hear about inflation. Even five years ago we did not hear about it. Now there are different excuses for inflation. In September, it was transitory. In October, it was transitory. In November, it was greedy corporations; it was their fault. In December, it was the supply chain. In January, it was the supply chain. Now, in February, it is Russia. Can members believe this? In a matter of six months, we have had at least four or five different reasons to blame for the inflation. That is an impossibility.

We know that when there is a limited or decreasing supply of goods and an increasing monetary supply, we are going to have inflation. Some have estimated a 40% increase in the monetary supply in this country in the last two years. The only people to blame for such increased spending are the people sitting across the hall here in the House of Commons. They are the only reason. They cannot blame Ukraine and they cannot blame it on being transitory. They have gotten rid of that term now because it was debunked.

The other thing I hear, more than time to time, is GDP growth. The finance minister has talked a number of times about GDP growth. However, to my mind and to many other people's minds, when inflation is close to 6%, the highest in 30 years, and when some economists say that if we calculate inflation as it was calculated 40 years ago or 30 years ago, inflation is over 10%, how can they claim to have GDP growth of 4.2% in 2021? It is all new monetary supply and it is all inflation.

The Liberals even have, in their fall economic statement, a term called "GDP inflation". That should put to bed all of the finance minister's claims about robust GDP growth. In fact, there are so many warning points and warning signs in the fall economic update about headwinds and what if this happens and what if that happens that this fall economic statement is what I would call priced to perfection. Anything less than perfection is going to produce a catastrophic result.

Let us look at what is going on right now. Brent crude this morning is \$113 U.S. That was not in any projections. It is doubtful that GDP growth will be as high as it was in 2021. That will reduce

government revenues. There are a lot of issues with this fall economic update.

● (1035)

The Bank of Canada claims to have stopped quantitative easing. That is great, but it has not started on quantitative tightening. What the bank calls it now is "quantitative reinvestment". We are creating all these new terms for things, and really it is just fooling around with the money supply.

If we go back in time and really look at money and the Bretton Woods agreement, which came about during the Second World War and remained in place until the gold standard was abandoned in 1971, money was actually backed by something. Money is just debt. That is all money is today, and it is unfortunate that the government of the day does not respect money. It does not respect the taxes that people pay.

I saw an article just the other night, maybe last night. It was in the Toronto Star, so we know it must be true if they are reporting it on the Liberals. It said what the government was spending on Harrington Lake, and I could not believe it. It was something like \$14 million that has been spent on the old property at Harrington Lake, and we know the Prime Minister built a new place at Harrington Lake for \$9 million. The government has also spent \$3.6 million on the Rideau Hall property, the Governor General's property.

I am not going to go into all that, because in the big scheme of things we are talking about trillions and billions of dollars, but this just goes to show the lack of respect for the taxpayer dollar and for the small business owners who have been grinding it out and grinding it out. They see that and have a lot of unique words that they use when they describe how much they dislike the spending.

As for gold, in the sixties the government owned 1,000 tonnes of gold. By 2003 there were only 3.4 tonnes of gold left, and we know who was mainly in government during that time. The Government of Canada sold the last of its gold in 2016, as far as I know, and it sold it at \$1,245 an ounce. If we look today at the price of gold, we see it is almost \$2,000 U.S. an ounce.

There are a lot of talented Liberal members of Parliament. I would not dispute that, and we hear of the Prime Minister's golden touch or Midas touch, but I would argue that pretty much everything the Prime Minister touches is the opposite of the Midas touch or the gold touch. Pretty much everything he touches is a disaster. We can even look at selling the gold. He sold low in a good time, so I do not know about that.

### *Government Orders*

Another one is the green bond. That is in the economic update. In my riding I have the largest nuclear facility in the world, Bruce Power. It is a huge job creator. It generates baseload power for the Ontario grid, and unbelievably, to the shame of the environment minister, nuclear power was left out. There are so many jobs in Liberal-held ridings in Toronto and around the GTA that I cannot believe the members in that caucus would go for that. I would be furious.

The idea of a green bond is to reduce emissions. In the province of Ontario, there were smog days 20 years ago. Anybody who lives around southwestern Ontario remembers those days. Those are gone, and it is because of nuclear energy. To put nuclear power in with tobacco and all the other things they put it in with is really an insult, and I have heard from a lot of nuclear power employees who are quite outraged by that.

Another issue is around COVID tests and vaccinations. I would like the government to table how many vaccines have been thrown out in the last six months. I estimate the value in the tens of millions of dollars and maybe the hundreds of millions of dollars.

The other thing is COVID tests. This is another disaster. Maybe it will come up in questions.

• (1040)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on the one hand the member says that he is really concerned about the deficit and about how badly we are doing on the deficit front, yet the Conservative Party understood, at least at the time, that we needed to spend those billions of dollars to support businesses and the people of Canada. Even in his speech, he somewhat recognizes that. He cannot have it both ways. He cannot say that we are spending all this money to support Canadians and at the same time criticize that we had to borrow some money in order to be able to spend that money.

The member was taking his cheap shots at some of the government expenditures. I wonder if he endorses his interim leader's purchase of a bed and some bed sheets for \$8,000. Was that a wise expenditure from the leader of the opposition party?

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, I thank the always cheerful member from across the way for the question.

I would say that times have changed. Obviously, the economic realities of 2020, two years ago, to today are different. The Liberals are still stuck in 2020 time.

I hear the health minister every day get up and talk, but that is not what the reality is. The reality today is that small businesses want to be open, restaurants want to be open and the tourism industry wants to be open. We see this even at the airport and crossing at the border with ArriveCAN. How many members of Parliament have constituents who have issues with ArriveCAN? It is time to realize that it is 2022, and we have to get the economy open and support small business.

• (1045)

[Translation]

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I listened to the speech by my colleague from Huron—Bruce. He estimated that Canada had thrown out tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of vaccines. Many large biopharmaceutical companies and research labs used to be located in Canada, particularly in Quebec and in the greater Montreal area. Canada is the only G7 country that did not manufacture any vaccines, in large part due to the budget cuts under the Harper and Martin governments. The big pharmaceutical companies left Canada because subsidies had been cut.

What does my colleague think about the fact that cuts made by the Harper government led to the loss of tens or hundreds of millions of dollars?

[English]

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, I think that there is a bit of wishful thinking in there, but I would ask the member this: What about ICU beds? That is one tangible thing that would have made a difference for people who live in Quebec and in my area. The Liberal government did not work with any of the provinces to really do anything on ICU beds, respiratory therapy or anything that would have helped someone in the early days who had COVID or even someone who gets COVID today. The government has nothing to show for that, and I think that is really unfortunate. It could have transformed some of the health care delivery in this country during the last two years, but it did not.

There is the comment about vaccines, which is fair, but there was a lot of vaccine that had been thrown out, and I think that money could have been better used for ICU beds or rapid tests. I mean, some cities in the U.S. have rapid tests and PCR tests on every street corner. Do we have that? We do not have that here, and that is a real shame.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciated the speech from the member for Huron—Bruce. He talked a lot about inflation, but what I do not hear from Conservatives too often is talk about the inflationary pressures of climate change.

The war in Ukraine right now has sent oil and gas prices skyrocketing. However, we know that in future decades, the effects of climate change, water scarcity, the hits on agricultural lands and the conflicts that are going to arise from those pressures will continue to send oil prices high. It is a very volatile energy source and always has been.

Does the member not realize the logical fallacy of the Conservatives chasing policies that are going to lead to more fossil fuel infrastructure being developed, which will contribute to climate change, contribute to more inflation in the future and put Canadians' livelihoods at risk?

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, I am going to be careful with what I say here, because I am counting on that member's support for my private member's bill this afternoon, so I am not going to burn any bridges here this morning.

However, let us look at the price of West Texas and at the price of Brent Crude. I mean, pretty much the same amount of oil was produced in December as is being produced today. This is speculation in a lot of cases, and I think that is an issue.

We are just a small bit at 2%, but look at the rest of the world. We can be leaders, but we need the rest of the world to come along with us.

**Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in the House and to have the opportunity to speak.

I want to start this morning by talking a bit about my family. My wife, Irene, and I have three amazing kids, a son and two daughters, and 10 grandchildren. We have more than tripled our investment, if one does the math, and that is what good Conservative policies can do.

I love those kids. One of the reasons I got into politics is because I love those kids and I care about the future. Like every parliamentarian who is sitting in the House today, I know we want to leave the next generation off better than we are ourselves, so we agree on that. We disagree on a lot of things, and we disagree passionately about things.

One of the things we disagree on is how we want to see Canada become a better place and how best to get there. That is why we have these debates. They matter for the future of our children. That is democracy. Like my colleagues, I am proud to say that this bill, Bill C-8, is the wrong approach for Canada, for our children and for our grandchildren.

There is a story of a kid who went and bought a used football at a second-hand store. He brought it up to the counter, and the man told him it was \$5. The man then asked him he would also like him to pump it up for him. The kid agreed. The man got out a small hand pump and in a few seconds the ball was inflated. Then the man said the football would now cost \$10. The boy asked the man why it was now \$10 when it was originally \$5. The man shrugged and said he was sorry, but that is the cost of inflation.

Inflation, that is what Bill C-8 would do. It is going to fuel the already out-of-control inflation in this country because it is going to add more than \$70 billion of new inflationary fuel to the existing fire. It is a fire. It is a raging fire of \$1.2 trillion, and we need to address that. This bill would exacerbate that, and that fuel will further increase the deficit. It is going to increase our debt, and Canadians cannot afford more inflation.

Rebekah Young, the director of fiscal and provincial economics at Scotiabank, said, "With the Canadian economy already at capacity and price pressures mounting, incremental spending - even if merited - could complicate efforts to keep inflation expectations moored."

Inflation is already hurting Canadians. I am getting letters from across my riding to this effect. One person wrote that they went to the store today and spent \$200 on groceries, none of it even for them. They said that the butter was over five bucks, and the price of gas is outrageous.

### *Government Orders*

Another wrote that they have to ask themselves if they should pay for groceries or for their hydro bill. They wonder how long this can continue, and say that folks should not have to be making these types of decisions.

Yet another wrote that she has young adult children and grandchildren. She is very concerned for them, with the price of groceries and the price of living is so high. She worries for this younger generation and said she was reaching out to me in all this craziness to ask for advice. She went on to say that she and her husband live in my riding, and that they make a good living, or least they used to. They used to think of themselves as middle class. Apparently, that is not good enough anymore because her husband just got a second job and they have three grown kids that live in their home because they cannot afford to move out.

Let us talk about why people cannot afford to move out. One reason is food prices, the most basic necessity of life. In a country as blessed and wealthy as Canada, nobody should ever go hungry. There is no reason why any man, woman or child should go to bed, school or work hungry, yet for more and more, this is the reality Canadians are facing every day, and the reason is because of inflated food prices.

I could stand up here and talk about percentages, but all members need to do is go to their grocery store and look at the bill. They know that prices just keep going up. Even if the price stays the same, and my wife has told me this recently, the package and the portions are smaller and the quantities are fewer. The price has not changed, it is the same old price, but we are not getting the same bang for our buck we got just a year ago.

The average Canadian family will pay an additional \$1,000 a year for groceries this coming year. As if that is not bad enough, in my riding, which is largely rural, it gets even more complicated. A constituent told me the other day that if they had not made significant changes and cuts to their weekly grocery bill, they would be paying \$1,000 more every two months. We are not talking luxury vehicles or vacation homes. We are talking about something as basic as making sure that Canadians can put food on the table, and for too many Canadian families and seniors, that is getting harder to do.

We also know that when the price of food goes up, the more expensive items, the really healthy foods like fruits and vegetables, tend to be the first things to go up in price and the first things that get cut from the budget because they are just too expensive.

*Government Orders*

• (1050)

By the way, when grocery prices go up, who gets the money? The government sure takes its share. I do not have time this morning, but I could talk a long while about how the carbon tax has actually fuelled inflation and damaged the average Canadian's affordability index. We know who does not get the money, and that is the average hard-working Canadian who is finding it harder and harder to get by, let alone get ahead.

Liberals claim that inflation is a worldwide phenomenon, the result of international markets reacting to COVID, the global supply chain issues and the war in Ukraine. I am sure all of those things do play a role and that makes a very convenient smokescreen for the government, but let us look at the facts.

Canada has the ability to feed itself. Canada has abundant resources, which should have resulted in affordable gas prices, but because of the Liberal government, it has not. There is no reason we cannot produce enough quality food for Canadians so that the prices are reasonable. There is also no reason we cannot ship it across at a reasonable price. The only reason that neither of those things is happening right now is because of the government's policies.

Let us also look at housing. Let us talk housing for a minute. When the Prime Minister took office, the average home price in Canada was \$435,000. Today, a mere six and a half years later, the average home price is \$810,000, a whopping 85% increase. That is what The Canadian Real Estate Association's chief economist called the biggest gain of all time. That is "Justinflation".

Bloomberg reports that Canada has the second most inflated housing bubble in the world. Toronto and Vancouver are the world's fifth and second most expensive housing markets. Families are now spending two-thirds of their gross income on monthly mortgage payments for the average home. No wonder 53% of Canadian families are on the verge of not being able to pay their bills and service their debt. It is not just in our major cities either.

I recently heard from two of my constituents, Joe and Skyler. They just had a baby and, like many Canadians, are trying to save up money for a house. This makes sense because renting where they live costs as much, if not more, than a mortgage payment. The issue is a down payment. When prices are inflated like this, that becomes an issue.

In the town where they live, the average home price is about \$400,000. If they could get a minimum 5% down payment, they would need to save up \$20,000. That would be tough enough, but Joe is a self-employed contractor who recently started his own construction company. Because he is self-employed, the bank says he needs a 30% down payment. How is Joe, a single income earner, supposed to save up \$120,000? That is in rural Manitoba. Imagine if they lived in Toronto or Vancouver, where the average home price is \$1.5 million, which requires a \$450,000 down payment for self-employed individuals.

A home for their family is fast becoming the impossible dream, just like it is for so many Canadians. Why is this? It is because of "Justinflation". Justinflation is hitting our homes. It is hitting homes right across Canada. Instead of infusing another \$70 billion

into our existing \$1.2 trillion of debt, we need a viable plan forward. As Robert Asselin, senior vice-president of policy at the Business Council of Canada, said, "The right path is to grow the economy to pay for new spending measures – not the other way around."

Canadians are finding it harder to make ends meet. To fill up one's car costs more, groceries cost more, household items cost more. Simply put, inflation is causing everything to cost more. Policies are crippling to families, farmers and truckers. I look at this bill and, to be honest, I do not think this is going to help. I do not think more spending is the answer. I do not think more regulation is the answer.

It is not the cost of food, gas or housing that is the real problem. It is the cost of the government, a government whose policies ensure that more dollars are chasing fewer goods. It is the fact that we have a government that says it wants to help families, when it really needs to just get out of the way. It should stop flooding the market with inflationary currency, get the deficit under control, reduce the debt and stop trying to control everything. The government needs to let Canadians live their lives and get out of the way.

• (1055)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, a number of Conservatives have talked about inflation and what they fail to say is that, when we compare Canada to the United States, Canada's inflation rate is below the United States. When we compare Canada's inflation rate to G20 countries, on average we will find that Canada's inflation rate is below the average G20 country. Canada's economic policies have been progressive, ensuring that Canadians' backs would be protected while going through very difficult times.

I am wondering if the member could provide his thoughts on what supports he believes should have been cut to address the concerns that he raised in his comments.

**Mr. Ted Falk:** Madam Speaker, I anticipated the member for Winnipeg North would be here with a question. I would be really eager to provide him with an answer, but there is \$600 billion that the Liberal government has spent in the last two years that is unaccounted for. I cannot tell him where he should have spent less money because he will not tell us where he spent the money in the first place.

It is time for the government to be honest and transparent with Canadians.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

### JEWISH STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

**Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the use of the term “apartheid” to depict the state of Israel is offensive and absurd. Israel is Canada’s close friend and ally. It is a vibrant democracy with members of its minority communities serving in Parliament, the judiciary and in all professions. However, on Canadian college campuses, Jewish students have to deal with manifestations of intolerance raging from pro-BDS motions to the banning of kosher food affiliated with Israel.

Recently, Irwin Cotler spoke at the University of Toronto and he referred to the internationally developed IHRA definition of anti-Semitism. Forty-five faculty members wrote a letter claiming Cotler was promoting racism by using the IHRA definition. Imagine that. Our special envoy on anti-Semitism is accused of promoting racism by using a definition of anti-Semitism adopted by the Canadian and Ontario governments, as well as the U.S., the U.K., France and Germany.

Special envoy Cotler has a thick skin and can handle absurd claims, but our students should not have to deal with such abuse. They should feel safe and comfortable on campus.

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### FIRST NATIONS DRINKING WATER

**Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC):** Madam Speaker, this month marks one year since all long-term boil water advisories on reserves were supposed to have ended. Unfortunately, as we know, despite some positive steps taken by the government, it has failed to meet this promise.

Of the 20 communities in Ontario currently affected, over half are in the Kenora riding. The residents of Northwest Angle 33, Bearskin Lake, Deer Lake, Fort Hope, Mishkeegogamang, Muskrat Dam, Nibinamik, Neskantaga, Wawakapewin, Weagamow Lake, North Spirit Lake, Sandy Lake, Sachigo Lake and many more across the country are simply asking for a basic human right that is afforded to everyone else in this country.

It is time that the government keeps its promise, and it is time that all of us work in this chamber to end all long-term drinking water advisories on reserves.

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### MEET AND GREET SENIOR CLUB MISSISSAUGA

**Mrs. Rechie Valdez (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, last week I was honoured to join the Meet And Greet Senior Club Mississauga to celebrate the launch of their book, titled “Our Experiences of COVID-19”. Their book comprises the seniors’ stories, sharing how they coped with the isolation and challenges of the pandemic.

## Statements by Members

[Translation]

This achievement would not have been possible had the seniors not taken the time to courageously describe the difficulties they have endured over the past two years. Despite many challenges, they persevered and created something positive by writing this book.

[English]

The Meet And Greet Senior Club Mississauga is a tight-knit and active group. I am fortunate to see first-hand their vibrant energy and the joy they spread amongst one another.

I want to acknowledge Dr. Sabharwal, Chanda Patodia, Subhash Madan and Urmila Bedi, as well as all of the directors, volunteers and participants who have made the senior club what it is today.

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### SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, we are seeing a disturbing rise in hate in all of its toxic forms in Canada, an alarming increase in racism, misogyny, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, homophobia and transphobia.

“Stop Hate For Profit” is an ongoing campaign to hold social media companies accountable for hate on their platforms. Social media must prioritize people over profit and they must do it now. Meta and other social media companies must be responsible for the hate they have profited from. They must take down groups focused on white supremacy, hate, violent conspiracies and disinformation. They must monitor groups for hate speech and violence. They must put forward substantial funding to support initiatives and organizations to fight racism, hate and division.

The convoy takeover of Ottawa shows how extremism, hate and disinformation thrive in this toxic environment. It is time to stop hate for profit. The future of our democracy depends on it.

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### GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today, March 25, is a very important day for Greece, across Canada and around the world. On this day, 201 years ago, Greece won back its independence from the Ottoman Empire during the revolutionary war of 1821. Brave men and women, heroes, fought, many to their death, for the freedom of future generations of Greeks.

Today we honour and remember heroes such as Theodoros Kolokotronis, Laskarina Bouboulina and Rigas Feraios, whose famous words were as follows.

*Statements by Members*

[Member spoke in Greek and provided the following translation:]

"It's finer to live one hour as a free man than 40 years as a slave and prisoner."

[English]

We celebrate their victory, for we would not be where we are today if it were not for them.

[Member spoke in Greek]

[English]

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● (1105)

### BRAVERY

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Madam Speaker, on Sunday, April 11, 2021, fireman Lance Thistle of the Gander Bay Fire Department was driving on the Trans Canada Highway near Lewisporte Junction when he came upon a truck that had overturned in the ditch and landed in a body of water. He proceeded to enter the cold, waist-deep water to render assistance. He broke the window with his hand and a pocketknife and, with the eventual help of others, managed to help the victims keep their heads above water.

After cutting the seat belts, they were able to extract them from the vehicle and the Lewisporte Fire Rescue rendered assistance when they arrived on the scene. By the time Lance returned to his vehicle, he could hardly feel his feet, so he proceeded to his destination in Northwest Arm to get warm, dry clothes.

I salute Mr. Thistle and all first responders for their bravery in serving our communities.

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### HOLI CELEBRATION

**Mrs. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Kanata Carleton Indo-Canadians Association on their first Holi celebration event and extend my sincere thanks to Nagmani Sharma for the kind invitation.

Last weekend, Indo-Canadians from across Kanata—Carleton gathered at their local community centre, danced, sang and celebrated the start of the highly anticipated spring season. This year's festival of colours was one of the first times in over two years that our community has been able to gather and celebrate a special occasion together with friends.

The festival of Holi serves as a timely reminder of the ultimate triumph of light over darkness. It invites us to remain optimistic in our daily lives and remember that better days always lie ahead. As we emerge from the pandemic, we can all look forward to the year ahead, a year of more celebration and more togetherness, with optimism and joy.

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### UKRAINE

**Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, four weeks after Vladimir Putin's latest illegal invasion of Ukraine, two

facts are crystal clear. Putin's capacity for impunity knows no bounds, and the resolve and fortitude of Ukrainians is unparalleled.

While in Poland last week, I witnessed first-hand the mass displacement Putin's military has unleashed. While heart-wrenching, the trip confirmed for me that Putin's atrocities have galvanized the international community like never before. At every town along the Polish-Ukrainian border, I was inspired to witness numerous humanitarian agencies and NGOs and to catch glimpses of countless individuals from around the world arriving to aid Ukrainians.

At times like this, we must all resolve to ensure that our country continues to prove steadfast in supporting the Government of Ukraine and that we do all we can to assist individual Ukrainians in their hour of need. Let it never be said that our country shirked from its responsibilities.

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### UKRAINE

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the bombing of innocent civilians has touched the hearts of Canadians across the country. In my riding of Sarnia—Lambton, the outpouring of generosity has been overwhelming.

As we speak, I am working with Pastor Tim from Bethel Church, a sponsor organization; Ed Dickson from Loads of Love, who has people helping on the ground in Ukraine; and Ludmila Kolesnichenko, who is the executive director for the Canadian Ukrainian Immigrant Aid Society; to facilitate 25 families to be hosted in our riding.

More than \$30,000 has been raised for aid and the support keeps pouring in. We must stand with Ukraine in their time of need, to stand for democracy, to stand for freedom in the world and to help those who need the compassion of Canadians.

I encourage the government to charter flights immediately to rescue those who have fled to neighbouring nations. Together, we can be a force of good in dark times.

*Slava Ukraini.*

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● (1110)

### LAURIE CRANTON

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise in the House today to share with my colleagues and constituents the news of the passing of Laurie Cranton, who was a long-time councillor and warden for the County of Inverness. Laurie was passionate about serving his community. He dedicated himself to each project he took on and will be remembered fondly by all who were fortunate to work with him.

On top of that, Laurie was a tireless advocate for accessibility. As a young man, Laurie was struck by a falling tree and left a quadriplegic from the accident. He did not pity himself or seek pity from anyone else. What Laurie wanted was a more accessible and inclusive community for all.

I am very proud to have become friends with Laurie over the years as an MP, and I believe that we are in a better place because of the impact Laurie had on his community. My thoughts are with his loved ones at this difficult time.

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#### WORLD WAR II VETERAN

**Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a 100-year-old World War II veteran: James Francis Edwards, also known as “Stocky” Edwards. A Saskatchewan native, Mr. Edwards joined the Royal Canadian Air Force out of college in 1942. Over the next three years, he became Canada's highest-scoring ace in the Western Desert campaign, attributed with 19 confirmed kills and many more unconfirmed.

He served in North Africa, Italy and on the Western Front, and piloted historic planes such as the P-40 Kittyhawk, the Supermarine Spitfire and the Hawker Tempest.

He flew from the day he joined until VE Day, and was never shot down. After the war, he continued to serve Canada for over 20 years, staying in the Air Force until 1972 to train and mentor the next generation. The country owes him an irredeemable debt of gratitude. May his legend never be forgotten.

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[Translation]

#### 5TH LIGHT ARTILLERY REGIMENT OF CANADA

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, nearly 120 members of the 5e régiment d'artillerie légère du Canada are now deployed in Latvia for Operation Reassurance.

The regiment is stationed on the Valcartier military base in my riding, Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, and has participated in numerous missions since it originated in May 1968, including combat operations in Kandahar, peacekeeping missions in Cyprus, Haiti and Bosnia, and domestic security missions, such as the Oka crisis.

This deployment to Latvia is for a period of approximately three months, during which the Canadian Armed Forces will be conducting training, exercises and some NATO-specific tasks. This significant support helps make central and eastern Europe more secure and stable.

We are proud that these soldiers will be joining other members already serving in the region. I am grateful to our brave men and women who are always ready to serve. Given the invasion of Ukraine, their presence is all the more important. I wish them well on their mission.

#### Statements by Members

##### PURPLE DAY

**Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, on March 26, we will be celebrating Purple Day to raise awareness for epilepsy.

I invite all Canadians to wear purple to raise awareness of this disorder, which affects more than 250,000 people in Canada. It is an opportunity to better understand how we can make a difference in the lives of people with epilepsy.

[English]

I would like this statement to honour the memory of Ryan Anthony Perrotti, a 7-year-old boy from my riding who passed away as a victim of epilepsy. There are stories such as this all across the country, but we never want it to happen again. Raising awareness of ways to deal with an epileptic attack, and the actions to take when faced with a seizure, can be life-saving.

On this Purple Day, let us wear purple and educate ourselves on the realities of epilepsy.

\* \* \*

##### RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, 10,028 children were casualties of a brutal and protracted war. It was a genocide waged over generations against the first nations of these lands. These kidnapped children, laid to rest in the unmarked graves uncovered at just the first 11 out of 128 institutions, were only recently repatriated to their families and first nations after decades of pain and generations of trauma.

May these children and their families and communities finally find peace in their final return home, and may those still searching find their own peace in the same. May the survivors, their families and communities find justice: First nations leaders are preparing to meet with Pope Francis next week to seek a formal apology for the Catholic Church's role in residential schools, as well as immediate actions including returning land properties to first nations and investing in healing initiatives to ensure support for survivors and their descendants.

Finally, may we in the House take our own responsibilities, given the legacies of these atrocities, and fully consider the same.

\* \* \*

● (1115)

[Translation]

##### UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À RIMOUSKI

**Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am thrilled to rise today in the House to share my pride in my region.

For the third time in 10 years, the Université du Québec à Rimouski has ranked number one among the top Canadian research universities in its class.

*Oral Questions*

UQAR was founded just 50 years ago, but it quickly set itself apart by concentrating on three areas of research excellence that reflect issues of local importance: ocean sciences, regional development, and nordicity. The university also conducts research in natural sciences, human and social sciences, as well as health sciences.

UQAR's triumph demonstrates once again that it is possible to conduct world-class research in the regions. Congratulations to all the students, researchers and staff who made it happen. Long live this small university with the big reputation.

\* \* \*

[English]

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, contrary to what the Minister of Health is saying, the federal government's insistence on the absolute necessity of vaccine mandates is not founded in science.

Some Canadians choose to remain unvaccinated and always will. That is simply a fact. It was not an easy choice for them, but because of real anxiety about COVID vaccines, they have sacrificed their jobs and their ability to travel to see loved ones.

Our Prime Minister shamefully labelled these Canadians as racists and misogynists. He refused to apologize or even show a hint of decency or dignity, and that has been noticed all around the world. Regardless of how the Prime Minister feels about someone's personal choices, it is time to accept them. It is time to treat people with dignity and respect.

The provinces are following the science, the mandates are lifting and we are all learning to live with COVID. On behalf of my constituents in Lambton—Kent—Middlesex and all Canadians, I call upon the government to have compassion and immediately drop these punitive mandates.

\* \* \*

**DONATIONS FOR UKRAINE**

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canadians across the country are helping Ukrainians in crisis. Our community in Ottawa is no different. Recently, I visited the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral in Ottawa, where I saw dozens of volunteers collecting and sorting donations for the people of Ukraine. The energy was palpable.

In the weeks since the illegal Russian aggression, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress's Ottawa branch has been organizing around the clock, collecting donations of clothes, hygiene products, medical supplies and supplies for shelter. In Ottawa, over 300 volunteers helped to collect and sort a total of 85,000 pounds of donations that were shipped to Poland and then to a Meest warehouse in Lviv in western Ukraine.

I want to say a massive thanks to the organizers of this effort: Olenka Bastian, Vanessa Reshityk and the entire planning committee. While the impacts of this completely unjustifiable invasion have been global, so are the responses to it. The people of Ottawa will continue to support Ukraine and the Ukrainian-Canadian community.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

[Translation]

**HEALTH**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Health apologized to the House after being bombarded with questions from the official opposition about the date when federal vaccine mandates would be lifted. I appreciate the gesture.

However, he never once answered our question about when he would lift the federal health measures.

The minister said that I was entitled to have access to all of the information if I were to continue doing my job properly.

I want that information, and I will take him at his word.

Will the minister present today to all members of the House the scientific research and opinions backing up the NDP-Liberal government's decision to impose a vaccine mandate?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will repeat what I said yesterday.

I have a great deal of respect for my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable and the work that he does. He does great work, not only within his Conservative caucus, but also in the House of Commons. I will always be there to help him do his job.

As I said, if he wants to see other studies and work, he can contact me, and I will be pleased to continue working with him and the official opposition health critic.

\* \* \*

● (1120)

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I expected him to table the documents in the House so that all members of Parliament would have access to the same information at the same time, in particular the scientific studies showing that it was recommended that the government impose a vaccine mandate.

Also, Canadians learned this week that there was a new NDP-Liberal government, and that an agreement had been signed behind closed doors. Some details were made public, but the two government parties involved refuse to release the full agreement.

Yesterday, the Minister of Natural Resources promised to increase our oil exports to Europe by 300,000 barrels.

Can the NDP-Liberal government tell us whether it now recognizes that Canada has an important role to play as an oil-producing country?



**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the situation in Ukraine right now highlights how important energy security is for our allies in Europe and around the world.

Our country does not need to worry about energy security, but Europe is facing geopolitical and socio-economic challenges caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

We are exploring all measures required to protect energy supply chains in Canada and the rest of the world.

\* \* \*

#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to see that the NDP part of the NDP-Liberal government approves.

Speaking of natural resources, Canada has been and remains a key player with respect to agriculture. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is impacting international markets. Prices are going up. There is a fertilizer shortage, and prices are exorbitant.

Canadian farmers can help families around the world if the federal government supports them by eliminating barriers to production and export.

Will the NDP-Liberal government finally show some leadership and give farmers the support they need?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague. I am fortunate to have worked with him at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Inputs are obviously very important to farmers. We are very aware of the situation in Ukraine caused by President Putin. We are working with our partners to ensure we can supply inputs for fair value and at reasonable prices.

We will have more information to share soon.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### NATURAL RESOURCES

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the NDP-Liberal government has spent the past seven years destroying the natural resources sector.

Suddenly, after a world fuel crisis, it recognizes the necessity of ethically produced oil and gas, and has promised an extra 300,000 barrels per day. There is bad news for the government: Due to its destruction of the sector and denying pipelines from being built, Canada will struggle to fill this demand.

When will the NDP-Liberal government apologize to Ukrainians, apologize to Europeans and apologize to Canadians for being so short-sighted?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and**

#### Oral Questions

**Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the current situation in Ukraine underscores the importance of energy security for our allies in Europe and around the world, and our country is in a secure position in terms of energy supply.

As Europe needs to address the geopolitical and socio-economic challenges presented by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we are considering all measures to preserve energy supply chains in Canada and around the world.

As the situation in Europe changes, we are working to ensure reliable energy supply to our allies in Europe and around the world, and it is recognized that we are doing the work necessary.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Madam Speaker, not only did the government not build any pipelines but it eliminated hundreds of thousands of jobs in this sector. To add insult to injury, it called it a just transition.

Now, as Ukrainians suffer and Europe suffers from a fuel shortage, the government has suddenly decided it can turn on the taps again and increase production. This is after thousands of Canadians lost their jobs, lost their homes, went bankrupt and were also displaced.

I have a question for the minister. What is so just about that?

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to clarify for the member opposite the role of oil here in Canada. Under our government, imported oil has consistently decreased to the lowest levels in 10 years. The majority of oil that is imported into Canada comes from the United States. Four out of every five imported barrels—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Can we have order to listen to the answer to the question?

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Madam Speaker, some of the refineries in Ontario and Quebec import exclusively from the United States. We are working with Canadian energy workers to ensure the sector is supported today and in years to come.

\* \* \*

● (1125)

[Translation]

#### HEALTH

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, we have been asking the government to increase health transfers for years now.

*Oral Questions*

The Conservatives cut the escalator and the Liberals have always refused to correct the situation, which means that the federal government's share is decreasing every year. While Quebec is being forced to make tough choices, the federal government keeps lecturing us while cutting health care. That is cynical, and people are suffering the consequences.

Will the minister listen to Quebec and increase health transfers to 35% with no strings attached?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right.

Not only are we listening, but we have been working together for several months now. My colleague, the former health minister, did just that for several months, from the beginning of the pandemic. We talk almost every week. We are working together. That is why we now have a Canada health transfer that is going to increase from \$43 billion to \$45 billion and why we have also allocated an additional \$70 billion during the pandemic, on top of the \$3 billion for long-term care, the \$3 billion for mental health care and another \$3 billion to support people who want to stay in their homes and receive the appropriate care.

Unfortunately, I see the Chair is rising a little sooner than I would have liked.

**Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the National Assembly is unanimous: Health transfers must be increased unconditionally.

Quebec knows what it needs. All elected members and the public understand that in Quebec, except for the federal Liberals and the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. They are the ones who know best what the Government of Quebec must do. They know about health care.

How many federal family doctors or nurses are there?

The government must increase health transfers to 35% with no conditions, the escalator—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. I give the floor to the hon. Minister of Health.

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this allows me to highlight the role, importance and benefits of a federation that has been working together for more than two years.

The reason why Canada was able to emerge from the pandemic earlier and in better shape than many other countries is that we had the benefit of a federation where governments worked together to deliver 81 million doses of vaccines, 400 million rapid tests and several billion pieces of PPE. We were able to provide assistance to those who needed it. Fully \$8 out of every \$10 was provided for people to buy groceries, even if they were unemployed because of the pandemic.

All of that was possible because of the strength of our federation.

[English]

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the horrific images of the war in Ukraine have been brutal to watch, yet at the same time, the war in Yemen has raged for seven years. Over 10,000 children have been killed, the country's economy has collapsed and millions are facing hunger.

Canada continues to export weapons to Saudi Arabia despite those weapons being used in Yemen. In fact, the United Nations Human Rights Council has twice named Canada as one of the states fuelling this war.

Canada must stop exporting weapons to Saudi Arabia. Will the minister commit to doing this?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canada remains deeply concerned about the situation in Yemen. It supports a political solution as the only way to end the ongoing conflict and horrendous humanitarian crisis. The Government of Canada is committed to a stronger and more rigorous arms export system. This is why we have acceded to the Arms Trade Treaty. Human rights considerations are now at the centre of our export regime. I, as minister, will deny any permit application where there is a substantial risk of human rights violations.

\* \* \*

**RAIL TRANSPORTATION**

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, on Monday, the minister said that he will not privatize Via Rail, but I am confused because he just put out a call for a private operator to operate rail on the Quebec—Windsor corridor. To maximize profits, the private operator will get to “set train schedules, fare strategies and service standards”. This is going to cost Canadians.

If it sounds like privatization and it looks like privatization, it is probably privatization. Why will the minister not admit it?

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. The high-frequency train is Canada's largest infrastructure project in decades. It has to be carried out according to a plan.

By issuing a request for expressions of interest, we are seeking the expertise of an industry that has experience with complex infrastructure so as to maximize the best service for Canadians. Naturally Via Rail is at the heart of this project's success, and we will work collaboratively and in partnership with the private sector. Throughout the process, we will ensure that workers and their benefits are protected.

• (1130)

[English]

#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a global food crisis is emerging. Canadian farmers want to help, but Liberal policies, like a farm-killing carbon tax and trucking mandates, are handcuffing Canadian farmers, who are already facing skyrocketing input costs on things like fertilizer. A 35% tariff on purchases of fertilizer from Russia is going to hurt.

As we get ready for the spring planting season, farmers need certainty. Will fertilizer purchased from Russia before March 2 be exempt from this tariff, yes or no?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question. We have heard from stakeholders that this is an important issue. We are analyzing the impacts on our local farmers to ensure that they do have access to fertilizer, and we will work with our partners to come to a reasonable solution.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, when asked about the farm-killing carbon tax, the agriculture minister suggested practices that farmers have adopted for decades, like crop rotation. Is she serious? Clearly, the NDP-Liberal government does not understand Canada's role in food security and sustainability. Farmers do not need the agriculture minister robbing their bank accounts to be sustainable. They have been proudly protecting the environment for generations.

Again, how much is the NDP-Liberal carbon tax coalition going to cost Canadian farmers?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's question. There is one issue where the hon. member could support us, and that is passing Bill C-8. In Bill C-8, there is a rebate program for farmers to get a rebate on the price on pollution, and that is an action his party could do right away.

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#### CARBON PRICING

**Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, rural Canadians cannot afford the carbon tax. Fertilizer and fuel costs have doubled in two years. The Bank of Canada said that the carbon tax hikes inflation. Farm businesses already paid \$14,000 a year in carbon taxes when it was at \$20 a tonne, but in less than a week it will go up 150% more than that and only increases from there.

The Liberals claim that rebates cover the cost, but the PBO said that the carbon tax is a "net loss" for Canadians. Will the NDP and Liberals at least stop their April 1 increase, or do what they really should do and just axe the carbon tax?

**Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer for his work, which confirms that the price on pollution has a progressive impact and gives

#### Oral Questions

eight out of 10 families more back through the climate action incentive rebates than they pay.

Putting a price on carbon pollution is recognized as one of the most efficient ways to drive down emissions and fight climate change. I would point out that the Conservative member for New Brunswick Southwest is on the record as saying that his province should go back to using the federal carbon price. We agree with him.

\* \* \*

#### AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

**Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Saskatchewan is the breadbasket of the world and leads the country in the production of wheat, canola and many other crops. That takes fertilizer, lots of fertilizer.

According to Fertilizer Canada, the government's announcement to ration fertilizer by 30% will cost Canadian farmers \$48 billion in lost income. Why did the government refuse to consult with Saskatchewan before announcing its plan to ration fertilizer?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, obviously we are all concerned with the situation that is happening in Ukraine. Putin's illegal war is causing consequences on everyone around the world, and it is causing consequences for farmers here locally.

We are working with the sector to ensure that we can come up with a reasonable solution. We are analyzing the impacts on our farmers, and I am sure that we will have something to say very shortly, but we are working with the sector to ensure that we have fertilizer in Canada.

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, in preparation for spring planting of corn, soybeans, canola and wheat, farmers need an immense amount of fertilizer, a product facing severe supply chain issues and high tariffs. Mr. Luke Barron, a farmer in Schomberg, Ontario, is struggling to afford the increased cost of fertilizer and worries about being able to plant.

What is the government doing today to ensure fairness for farmers so they can plant their crops and let Canadians enjoy the benefits of homegrown farm-to-table harvest?

*Oral Questions*

● (1135)

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I have said before, the illegal war of Putin in Ukraine is having definite consequences around the world, including here in Canada. We are working with the sector with regard to the impacts this is having on fertilizer, and we will continue to work with the sector to come up with a solution that works for our local farmers here in Canada.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Ukraine is the breadbasket of Europe, and Putin's war is fuelling global food insecurity. Canadian farmers want to maximize crop production to keep feeding the world, but the NDP-Liberal government is threatening our potential by pushing forth new fertilizer restrictions. Now more than ever, Canada should be encouraging crop growth, not restricting it.

Why is the NDP-Liberal government reducing our potential to feed the world by adding more taxes and regulations onto Canadian farmers?

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to have many questions on the importance of fertilizer and the role it plays in Canada, and especially on the importance of food security in Canada.

Again, this is caused by Putin's illegal war, and we are working with the sector, as I have said before, to come up with a solution. We will continue to work with Fertilizer Canada and its members to come up with solutions that work for our local farmers.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Ottawa says that it wants to protect the French language, but it is dragging to court francophones from British Columbia who require employment support programs in French. These francophones won a court decision forcing the province to serve them in French, but the federal government is planning to appeal.

The crux of the dispute is that Ottawa was slapped on the wrist by the court for concluding an agreement with the province without once thinking about requiring that services in French be maintained.

Does the Minister of Official Languages agree that the future of French relies on more services in French, not less, and that going to court against francophones will be particularly unhelpful?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we made the difficult decision to seek leave to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court of Canada in this case. We do not take this decision lightly. Our government promised to strengthen the Official Languages Act, which we have done with Bill C-13.

Unfortunately, we do not agree with some of the aspects of the Federal Court of Appeal ruling, which may jeopardize the training and employment support that more than 80,000 British Columbians receive every year.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, let us continue to talk about francophones outside Quebec.

In the last budget, the government promised \$40 million for French-language post-secondary institutions. One year later, these schools have still not seen a penny of that money, and there are only six days left in the fiscal year. Rather than releasing the money, the minister is blaming the provinces and saying that she cannot do anything because of jurisdictional issues.

I have no words to describe the two examples I just mentioned. The Liberals recognize jurisdictions only when it suits them, so that they can avoid serving francophones.

When will the minister release the money? We want a date.

**Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, once again, as Minister of Official Languages, I was very pleased to have the opportunity on March 1 to reintroduce our bill to modernize the Official Languages Act. We drew up a bill with more teeth.

As for the matter of money for post-secondary institutions in the 2021 budget, we promised \$121 million over three years. The announcements will be made soon.

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[English]

**INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC):** Madam Speaker, the failure of the government to secure a deal on softwood lumber for seven years is having a domino effect on people's lives. A representative from the B.C. Council of Forest Industries testified at the trade committee that a lack of a deal is helping to increase inflation. This is leaving Canadian lumber costs soaring and the prices of housing construction skyrocketing.

Is the NDP-Liberal minister actually interested in securing a softwood lumber agreement? Trees are growing faster in British Columbia than the minister's speed at securing an agreement.

● (1140)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the member raises an issue that has been of great importance to the government for the last number of years, and I can assure the member that we will continue to monitor the situation and do the very best we can to protect the industry.

## HOUSING

**Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC):** Madam Speaker, housing costs are out of control. Toronto is up 36%, Montreal 20%, Vancouver 21%, and it is clear that the Liberals' plan to help good wage earners get out of their parents' basements is not working. Conservatives want to ban foreign ownership, dedicate federal properties for housing and create density around federal transit projects. The NDP-Liberals rejected all that.

Since the NDP-Liberals believe that Canadians are only good at convening, will they at least take the advice of Canadian realtors to convene all levels of government and the private sector to get a real plan for housing?

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

We, on this side of the House, are the first government to launch a national housing strategy. Last week, I was very surprised to hear an opposition member talking about opting out of the national housing strategy. We, on this side of the House, believe that we have a solid plan to ensure affordable housing.

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[English]

## THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC):** Madam Speaker, business people in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove and indeed right across Canada are deeply concerned that inflation is not transitory, as the government likes to say, but is becoming deeply embedded in our economy. A farmer told me recently that the cost of getting their specialty products from Langley to Calgary, Alberta, has doubled from \$3,200 per truckload to \$6,000. This is completely unsustainable.

When will the government get serious and start looking at tackling the root causes of inflation in our economy?

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we understand that while inflation in Canada is concerning at 5.7%, we are taking actions to increase affordability. We know that we are under the U.S. average of 7.9% and the OECD average of 7.2%, but we are also doing what it takes to be there for businesses. I am proud that Canadians, through their resilience during the pandemic, have actually created more businesses today than there were before the pandemic, but I will keep working with members like the member for Langley—Aldergrove to find solutions for businesses, for farmers and for all Canadians.

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## TAXATION

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Justinflation is making life more expensive, yet instead of working to give Canadians a break, the NDP-Liberal government did the opposite, defeating a Conservative motion to give Canadians a gas tax holiday.

## Oral Questions

With gas prices soaring by a third and with a 25% carbon tax hike, why does the NDP-Liberal government insist on punishing Canadians at the pump?

**Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, while we understand that rising energy costs are impacting Canadians, I think we all need to recognize that the carbon price itself accounts for about 8.8¢ per litre and is revenue-neutral, which means eight out of 10 families in Canada actually get more money back than what that costs them.

With regard to the opposition motion, I gave a 15-minute speech about all of the affordability measures that our government has taken and I would note that all parties voted against that idea.

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## THE ENVIRONMENT

**Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP):** Madam Speaker, toxic dumps, tainted drinking water and the climate crisis disproportionately hurt racialized, indigenous and marginalized communities. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed to act. They have failed to honour indigenous rights, failed on climate and failed to support communities left with a toxic mess. The U.S. has had an Office of Environmental Justice since the 1990s. This is one of Canada's Green Budget Coalition's top priorities.

Will the government create an office of environmental justice to protect Canadians and their communities?

● (1145)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am so grateful for the question, because the member raises something that is critically important. It should be important to all Canadians, but it certainly is important to our government: the connection between the environmental destruction that we have seen in Canada and around the world and the disproportionate impact it has on indigenous people.

I was, for example, in Wabaseemoong, a community neighbouring Grassy Narrows. They told me about the mercury poisoning that has affected their community members.

Our government is committed to working with communities to protect them from ongoing environmental racism and to protect them as they recover from these experiences.

*Oral Questions***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, since the release of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2019, the Liberals still have not released a national action plan with targets, timelines and funding to address this ongoing genocide. Rates of violence have dramatically increased during the pandemic, and the Liberal government keeps stalling.

Our lives are valuable. We are not disposable. When will the government implement a national action plan with timelines and resources to address this crisis and save lives?

**Mr. Jaime Battiste (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, reconciliation is a journey, not a destination. We all must walk on this journey. I thank the member for her intervention.

Our government has put forward \$2.2 billion over the past five years. Over the next four years, we will have a chance to pass four budgets to make sure that tangible benefits and tangible results are in place for grassroots indigenous women at the community level. I look forward to working with the member opposite on what we can do to make lives better for indigenous women all across Canada.

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this House stood unanimously in condemnation of Vladimir Putin's illegal and unjustifiable further invasion of Ukraine.

Canada has been a leader in the global response, as we saw yesterday when the Prime Minister announced sanctions on an additional 160 Russian officials for their complicity in these heinous acts.

Could the Minister of Foreign Affairs tell this House how our aggressive sanctions are putting pressure on the Putin regime?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to—

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

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Could we have order to listen to the answer?

The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs.

**Hon. Mélanie Joly:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important question. This is obviously a matter that is important for all members in this House. President Putin's war on Ukraine is a war on freedom and democracy and on the rights of Ukrainians and all people to determine their own future.

Yesterday we announced sanctions against 160 members of the Russian Federation Council. When we impose sanctions, we are making assets useless and we are depriving them of any value. Going against these sanctions is a criminal offence. We will continue to suffocate the Putin regime.

**COVID-19 PROTESTS**

**Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC):** Madam Speaker, yesterday at the public safety committee, Ottawa chief of police Steve Bell confirmed that no firearms were found during the clearing of the Ottawa protest. We also learned that an arrest was made concerning a disturbing arson attempt and that the accused had no connection to the protest.

The NDP-Liberal government has told Canadians that the protesters were responsible for this heinous crime and that protesters were armed. The evidence says otherwise. Will the Minister of Justice take responsibility on behalf of his government and acknowledge that it was spreading misinformation?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first I would like to thank all law enforcement officers who were involved in clearing the blockades.

In actual fact, the Ottawa interim chief stated yesterday that information and intelligence was received around the existence of firearms within the precinct. Investigations relating to weapons continue, and no charges have been laid to date.

\* \* \*

● (1150)

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Madam Speaker, according to the Pollara report on racism at IRCC, some immigration officers consider immigrants from racialized countries to be corrupt, untrustworthy or just wanting to come to Canada to collect social insurance.

The caregivers program has been plagued with backlogs and ignored by the immigration minister. Applicants' work permits have expired while their applications are lost in the Liberal-made backlog.

Why are caregivers being stranded in the backlog? Is it because the minister also thinks they are just corrupt and untrustworthy?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I sat at the same committee and I certainly appreciate the member's advocacy in all the questions he has raised.

I want to be very clear: There is zero tolerance for racism and discrimination in all aspects and in all programs we want to deliver. The member knows there have been tangible actions that are happening right now within our ministry, and I will be happy to follow up on his question.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Madam Speaker, actually no action has been taken on racism. Systemic racism is rampant in IRCC under the NDP-Liberal government, and it is playing a role in the historic Liberal-made backlog. Neither the backlog nor the racism is being addressed, and we know this because not a single person has been reprimanded or fired for racist behaviour as the backlog continues to rise. Yesterday we found out IRCC managers got bonuses, the same managers who are accused of racism, but this is the Liberal government's legacy of rewarding bad behaviour.

Why should any newcomer or their family trust this minister to do his job?

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me be very clear to this chamber: We have zero tolerance for racism and discrimination of any kind, and that is why IRCC has already worked hard to address racism and create real, lasting change. We have already made significant progress with our anti-racism task force and new training to address unconscious bias. There are still many more things to do, and we will continue working hard to eradicate all forms of discrimination and build an open, fair and inclusive immigration system.

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### HEALTH

**Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is no surprise that it is bloody cold in Edmonton in the winter, except to Service Canada, which is making seniors and the vulnerable wait outside the office for up to an hour before being let inside because the government says it is unsafe for them to be inside because of COVID. We have mask mandates in federal buildings and we have high rates of vaccination, yet the government is making the vulnerable wait outside in the freezing cold.

When will the Liberal government end its COVID theatrics, follow the science and get back to serving Canadians?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this is a question about Service Canada, which I like very much. I used to be the minister responsible for Service Canada and I still remember how hard the workers at Service Canada work every day. It has been very difficult for them over the last two years because of family stress and professional stress. I think we all want to thank and congratulate them for their work and for continuing to do so.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### VETERANS

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, Ottawa says it wants to protect French, but the way it treats francophone veterans is a joke. In 2018, it took 19 weeks to process a disability benefits claim submitted in English, but it took 52 weeks to process the same claim in French.

It is now 2022, and where are we at? This week, the Library of Parliament's independent analysts revealed that wait times are the

same for anglophones, while for francophones, they are now, believe it or not, 76 weeks—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[English]

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we recognize that more needs to be done to ensure that francophone veterans receive decisions on their applications in a timely manner. That is why we established a dedicated francophone unit to improve processing. We have hired more francophone and bilingual staff to further reduce wait times for francophone veterans. With our nearly \$200-million investment, we have reduced the backlog by 40%, and I can assure my hon. colleague that we will continue to work to make sure we reduce it even further.

• (1155)

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the minister supplied the Standing Committee on Veterans Affairs with numbers suggesting that processing times for applications in French were down by 10%.

The independent analysts, however, say it is worse than ever and that francophones are now waiting 76 weeks. Witnesses have even told us that government officials advise veterans to submit their applications in English because the situation is so bad. That is how the federal government treats francophones.

Will the minister explain why his numbers are being challenged and why francophones are being treated so poorly?

[English]

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I indicated to my hon. colleague, we have hired more francophone and bilingual employees to make sure we reduce the backlog. That is why we invested \$200 million, and just previously another \$140 million, to make sure we continued to reduce the backlog. With more francophone and bilingual employees, we will make sure that francophone applications are reviewed in an appropriate manner. We are making sure this is done appropriately because veterans truly deserve—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like my Bloc Québécois colleague to be called to order. It is not the federal government, but rather the Liberals who are against francophones.

*Oral Questions*

A Le Droit headline reads, “The federal government is dragging francophones to the Supreme Court of Canada”.

How can the Minister of Official Languages accept and endorse the fact that her government is attacking francophones and blocking their access to French-language services in British Columbia?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I explained earlier, we support francophone communities across Canada, as well as the anglophone community in Quebec. Bill C-13 will really anchor our protection of and support for official languages across the country.

The precedent set by this decision could affect the Government of Canada's ability to enter into agreements with the provinces and territories in all areas.

We should keep the record straight. Our commitment to official languages remains firm, and we look forward to seeing the provisions of Bill C-13—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Official Languages.

This government is talking out of both sides of its mouth. First, the Minister of Official Languages claims to want to protect the French language, but then, her colleague, the Minister of Justice, rejects the ruling from the Federal Court of Appeal and wants to take francophones to court. Talk about hypocrisy.

Will the Minister of Official Languages show some respect for francophones and put a stop to this legal action?

**Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we made the difficult decision to seek leave to appeal the ruling to the Supreme Court of Canada. We do not take this decision lightly.

Our government has committed to strengthening the Official Languages Act, which we have done with Bill C-13.

Unfortunately, we do not agree with some aspects of the Federal Court of Appeal's ruling that could jeopardize the training and employment support received by 80,000 British Columbians.

\* \* \*

[English]

**FISHERIES AND OCEANS**

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Madam Speaker, last year, a week into the Atlantic mackerel season, a confused DFO closed it. A few days later, it opened it and fishermen landed their quota within about two days in locations where mackerel are not traditionally found. DFO has not assessed the stock off the Scotian shelf in more than a decade, yet it continues to cut the quota. The NDP-Liberal government just closed the healthy Pacific herring stocks against the science. Holy mackerel.

Will the current government start listening to fishermen, or is it just incompetent?

**Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I have taken

many opportunities to be on the wharfs to listen to fishers, boat owners and processors. My goal is to build a healthy, sustainable and growing fish and seafood sector, and for that we need sustainable stocks. There is no decision at this point on mackerel stocks, but I can assure the member that while conservation is the baseline for future growth of the stock—

• (1200)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Pontiac.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**AEROSPACE INDUSTRY**

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, speaking of incompetence, after the Harper Conservative government neglected the Canadian space industry for a decade, our government reinvested in that sector.

In fact, the national capital region is a booming hub for this sector of innovation that helps Canada gain a unique perspective on our world, support science and implement revolutionary services.

Can—

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

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I sense the enthusiasm of my colleagues across the way, but I would like to begin by thanking my hon. colleague for her question and her work.

Earlier, I announced—

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

**Hon. François-Philippe Champagne:** Madam Speaker, my colleagues are right to applaud. She clearly works hard.

At the beginning of the year, I announced Canada's strategy for satellite Earth observation. It is an historic program that will create jobs, stimulate economic growth and help us gain a better understanding of our planet and our universe. The strategy is designed to provide information—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Order. I give the floor to the hon. member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington.



[English]

### TAXATION

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Madam Speaker, tax season is a very stressful time for many Canadians, especially seniors who rely on paper packages to file because they do not have access to digital options. This year, on top of having their GIS clawed back, many working seniors are now facing the prospect of filing late because the government is incapable of sending out timely or accurate T4s, which affects seniors such as Rosemary in Calgary.

When can Canadian seniors expect to receive their accurate tax information, and will this government extend the filing date for financially at-risk seniors?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the CRA understands that this has been a stressful time for seniors. While paper T4A forms were initially misprinted, the digital copies given to the CRA have been accurate since the start of tax season. Impacted seniors can file online at any time using these digital documents. There is therefore no plan to extend the tax filing deadline at this time.

\* \* \*

### TOURISM INDUSTRY

**Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my riding of Niagara is the number one leisure tourism destination in the country, yet since April 2020 there has been zero representation from Niagara on Destination Canada's board of directors. This means that, through the whole pandemic, which has hit our national tourism sector the hardest, Niagara has been without a voice at the table, despite there being two vacancies right now in need of appointment.

Does no one in this NDP-Liberal government understand the significance of Niagara to Canada's tourism economy? When will they reappoint someone from Niagara to Destination—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Niagara is a beautiful part of this country and we are absolutely looking forward to welcoming tourists to Niagara and to tourism destinations right across Canada.

In fact, just recently, Destination Canada was thrilled by our announcement to change our border measures. We are opening up to the world. Tourists are coming back and Destination Canada is going to play a key role in that. I and the minister will work with Destination Canada to complete the board of directors appointments.

\* \* \*

### ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

**Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC):** Madam Speaker, a lack of federal consultation with the province of Saskatchewan resulted in a massive cost increase over RCMP

### Oral Questions

retroactive pay. Provinces fund 70% of RCMP policing costs, yet the federal Liberals refused input from the provincial government on the issue, despite an agreement requiring collaboration. Rural communities, villages, towns and cities across the province cannot afford this.

When will the government stop ignoring Saskatchewan, fulfill its commitments and give these communities a much-needed break?

• (1205)

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the administration of justice, including policing, is the responsibility of provinces and territories. They are the ones that are best placed to choose the policing services that meet the needs of their communities. The current policing services agreement between the RCMP, provinces and territories and municipalities, at the time it was negotiated, included consultation with parties such as the Province of Saskatchewan.

We support Saskatchewan, and we are continuing to work with provinces such as Saskatchewan to deal with the new contract that was signed by the RCMP.

\* \* \*

### INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, while COVID-19 remains a significant issue in the global south, my question has to do with tuberculosis. Last year, more than 4 million people globally were diagnosed with tuberculosis. There were diagnoses where it was missed by health services, fuelling preventable deaths.

I would like to mention Dr. Paul Farmer when I am speaking of tuberculosis, as he died last month. He was a distinguished doctor and researcher who devoted his life to ending this scourge.

My question is for our Minister of International Development.

Could the minister please tell us what Canada is doing to help countries in the south address the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The Minister of International Development has the floor.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill for her advocacy on this very important issue.

**An hon. member:** And her hard work.

**Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan:** Yes, I thank her for her hard work as well. Thank you very much. I am glad you acknowledged that.

### *Routine Proceedings*

The member is right. Tuberculosis is second only to COVID-19 as the world's leading infectious disease killer. That is why yesterday, during World Tuberculosis Day, I had the pleasure of announcing an \$11-million investment to TB REACH before a group of volunteers from Results Canada and other advocacy groups.

TB REACH initiatives increase the ability to detect and treat tuberculosis in vulnerable populations, including a dedicated focus on vulnerable women and girls, people living with HIV/AIDS, socially and economically disadvantaged groups and migrant workers.

\* \* \*

### MARINE TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, Canada's federal ports are not being maximized to their full potential, which is adding to costs and limiting opportunity in communities such as mine. Port Alberni has the only deep-sea port on the west coast of Vancouver Island and has been advocating for federal support to develop a floating dry dock, yet Canada does not have a program to build floating dry docks in federally regulated ports or in rural communities.

Will the government finally develop a national floating dry dock fund to support local economies and workers in communities such as mine?

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As we know, since being appointed, the minister has worked on several transport files, including air and marine transportation and also ports.

I would be pleased to follow up with my dear colleague on his riding's specific issue.

[English]

**Mr. Kelly McCauley:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising out of question period. We heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance repeat the myth of the neutral carbon tax. I would like to table page 18 of volume I of the most recent public accounts, which shows a quarter of a billion dollars that was raised through the GST on the carbon tax was not given back, and also that proceeds from the carbon tax were used for federal programming.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent to table this?

**Some hon. members:** No.

\* \* \*

### POINTS OF ORDER

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

**Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, the other day, during debate, the member for Battle River—Crowfoot was heckling me while I was trying to speak. Today, the same member heckled the member for Oakville in the House. I would

like to try to assist the member. I ask him to refrain from exercising his misogyny and remind him that it is not appropriate to heckle women in the House. I would like him to apologize to the member for Oakville.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I thank the hon. member for raising the point of order. Actually, it is not appropriate to heckle, period, but definitely and certainly not women colleagues. I do not see the hon. member rising, but I do advise members to refrain from heckling at all times.

● (1210)

[Translation]

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this is my first time rising in the House on a point of order, and it is on the same issue as my opposition colleague.

The opposition members boast about wanting to defend official languages. However, when they shout in the House like that, they are showing a lack of respect for the interpreters, who are trying to do their job.

My first language is French. When I cannot hear what is being said because opposition members are shouting at the top of their lungs, they are showing a lack of respect for the interpreters who are trying to tell us what is happening in the House.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I thank the hon. member for her point of order.

As I said before, interruptions in the House are never welcome, particularly when they affect our interpreters. Such interruptions cause considerable discomfort.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 17 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

\* \* \*

### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT

**Hon. Anita Anand (for the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance)** moved for leave to introduce Bill C-17, An Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and to authorize certain payments to be made out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

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

\* \* \*

## PETITIONS

### QUEEN JULIANA PARK

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to present a petition from more desperately concerned residents of Ottawa who are appalled to find that a local decision will result in cutting down hundreds of mature trees in Queen Juliana Park within the city limits of Ottawa in order to build 17 acres of parking. It is a public-private development plan for a four-storey parking structure on parts of what are now Queen Juliana Park.

The petitioners are seeking the federal government's help. They ask that I relate to the House that the undersigned citizens of Canada call on the government to restore the National Capital Commission's recommendation of a different location, Tunney's Pasture, as the ideal site for the new hospital, to preserve Queen Juliana Park and the entire Central Experimental Farm as green spaces and to support the request of an independent expert panel in order to have a public inquiry into why the National Capital Commission's original recommendation was quickly and summarily reversed.

### VOLUNTEER FIRST RESPONDERS

**Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition today on behalf of volunteer firefighters from Parksville, Qualicum, Bowser, Cumberland, Courtenay, Port Alberni, Sproat Lake and Cherry Creek.

The petitioners cite that volunteer firefighters account for 83% of Canada's total firefighting essential first responders. In addition, approximately 8,000 essential search and rescue volunteers respond to thousands of incidents every year. Currently, the tax code of Canada allows volunteer firefighters and search and rescue volunteers to claim a \$3,000 tax credit if 200 hours of volunteer services were completed in a calendar year. That works out to a mere \$450 a year, and we know they work and volunteer more than 200 hours. This is timely, given that there could be a budget announced in the next couple of weeks.

The petitioners support Bill C-201 and call on the government to increase the tax exemption from \$3,000 to \$10,000 to help our essential volunteer firefighters and volunteer search and rescue people across the country, including in Ucluelet and Tofino, which I forgot to mention. We are all grateful for these first responders.

● (1215)

### DIFFUSE INTRINSIC PONTINE GLIOMA

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am presenting a petition today on behalf of constituents and Canadians right across the country with respect to diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, or DIPG, an aggressive brain tumour found in the brain stem that slowly takes away all vital functions while cognitive functions remain intact, which makes a child a prisoner in their own body. It is inoperable and incurable, with a 0% survival rate. It is the second most common malignant brain tumour in children and the leading cause of brain tumour deaths in children.

## Routine Proceedings

The petitioners call upon the House of Commons and the government to declare May 17 of every year national DIPG day of awareness here in Canada. They are hoping that this declaration will educate the public about the disease, encourage funding to support ongoing research, increase dialogue in the professional medical community and further publicize and promote Canada's involvement in the fight against DIPG.

## CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Madam Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise in this place to present a petition about an issue that is incredibly important.

I have heard from many constituents who are concerned about the possibility of the weaponization of things like someone's values when it comes to accessing government services. A whole host of Canadians from across the country, specifically from the Thunder Bay area, have shared with me a petition that calls upon the Parliament of Canada to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without the imposition of another values test, and to affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression. These Canadians are incredibly concerned about the precedents that have been set by the Liberal government, and it is an hour to stand on their behalf and present this petition today.

## UKRAINE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to table a petition that is really important to the thousands of people who have shown up this month at the Manitoba legislature on three separate occasions to act as one in solidarity with Ukraine over what is taking place there. What the petitioners are asking for in signing this petition is for the government to encourage ongoing support for things like lethal aid and humanitarian aid, for Canada to continue to open its arms to Ukrainian refugees who are being displaced because of the horrors of what is taking place in Ukraine and for us to consider if it is possible to look into the issue of no-fly zones.

\* \* \*

## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 314 to 316.

*Routine Proceedings*

[Text]

Question No. 314—**Ms. Raquel Dancho:**

With regard to statistics held by the RCMP in relation to firearms: (a) what definition does the RCMP use to determine if a firearm is domestically sourced or foreign sourced; (b) is the definition in (a) universally used by other police jurisdictions in Canada that trace the origins of firearms; (c) does the designation of a firearm as domestically sourced (i) include firearms that entered Canada illegally, (ii) have unknown sources, due to not having a serial number or other identifying markers removed; (d) which police forces in Canada (i) use the RCMP lab services to trace firearms, (ii) do their own tracing of firearms; (e) what is the RCMP's definition of a "crime gun"; (f) are firearms seized in the course of another investigation for a non-violent crime, a mental health intervention, or turned over to the RCMP as part of an amnesty or other voluntary surrender of a firearm for disposal to the RCMP included in the definition of a "crime gun"; and (g) are the firearms seized by Canada Border Services Agency included in the RCMP reports related to the percentage of firearms sourced domestically or from foreign countries?

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a) of the question, the RCMP's Canadian National Firearms Tracing Centre, or CNFTC, uses the following definitions. A domestically sourced firearm means a firearm with a legal history and lawful ownership in Canada, which is then acquired by a criminal entity through illegal means, e.g., theft or illicit sale. A foreign-sourced firearm is determined or suspected to have been unlawfully imported into Canada, i.e., smuggled.

With regard to part (b) of the question, the RCMP and Ontario's firearms analysis and tracing enforcement program, or FATE program, use the previous definitions.

The answer to part (c)(i) of the question is no.

The answer to part (c)(ii) is no. A firearm with an unknown source is categorized as "unknown".

With regard to part (d)(i) of the question, the RCMP's national forensic laboratory services provide serial number restoration services to law enforcement but does not process firearm tracing requests. The CNFTC assists frontline policing, except in Ontario, by providing an extensive firearms tracing service for domestic and international law enforcement agencies, including from the United States.

With regard to part (d)(ii), Ontario's FATE program processes firearms trace requests for all Ontario police services. All other law enforcement agencies in Canada use the CNFTC.

With regard to part (e), the RCMP uses the following definition of a "crime gun" that was developed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. A crime gun is any of the following: a firearm, as defined under the Criminal Code, used or suspected to be used in the commission of a criminal offence, regardless of whether or not it was possessed legally; or a firearm that has an obliterated, altered or removed serial number.

With regard to part (f), law enforcement determines whether a firearm meets the definition of a "crime gun" through the investigative process, including the RCMP where it serves as the police of jurisdiction.

The answer to part (g) is yes. However, firearms seized by law enforcement are not automatically traced by the CNFTC. The CNFTC can only process firearms when they are voluntarily submitted by law enforcement.

Question No. 315—**Mr. Brad Redekopp:**

With regard to the Chinook software program operated by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), broken down by fiscal year and country of origin: (a) what is the acceptance rate of immigrants by (i) immigration class, (ii) official language of Canada spoken, (iii) ethnicity, (iv) acceptance rate, (v) rejection rate; (b) what are the criteria, keywords or phrases used by IRCC for making decisions related to (a)(iv) and (a)(v); (c) what is the process by which IRCC managers accept or reject decisions made through the software; (d) what is the rate at which managers intervene and overrule decisions made through the software (i) in favour of the applicant immigrating to Canada, (ii) in opposition of the applicant immigrant to Canada; and (e) what are the criteria, keywords or phrases used to make those decision in (d)(i) and (d)(ii)?

**Ms. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is concerned, with regard to part (a) of the question, IRCC officers may use the Chinook spreadsheet tool for assessing temporary resident visa, study permit and work permit applications. Chinook is not used to assess permanent resident, or immigrant, applications. Therefore, we cannot provide a breakdown identifying the acceptance rate of immigrants, immigration class, which official language of Canada they speak, their ethnicity or refusal rates. IRCC does not collect or record any information pertaining to any applicant's ethnicity.

With regard to part (b), Chinook is not used to assess permanent resident, or immigrant, applications. For all application streams, officers make decisions in accordance with the Immigration Refugee Protection Act, or IRPA and the immigration refugee protection regulations, or IRPR. Decisions are based on the officer review of the application and are made by the officers themselves. Chinook does not recommend nor make decisions. It is a complementary tool to assist the decision-maker that streamlines administrative steps that would otherwise be required in the processing of temporary resident applications. Chinook does not alter the way decisions are made. Officers always make the decision on a temporary resident application and provide the rationale for that decision, not the Chinook spreadsheet.

In response to part (c), Chinook is a tool designed to simplify the visual representation of a client's information. It is a spreadsheet tool that supports IRCC offices. Decisions are not taken by or through the Chinook tool, nor does it recommend decisions. The IRPA and IRPR are the basis for the decisions rendered by officers. Decisions are made by officers based on their review of the application and submissions made by the applicant. IRCC officers make decisions and IRCC managers do not fetter the decision-making process of officers by accepting or rejecting their decisions.

In response to part (d), IRCC managers do not fetter the decision-making process of officers by accepting or rejecting their decisions. Officers make decisions in accordance with the IRPA and IRPR. These decisions are made by the officer and based on their review of the application. Chinook does not recommend or make decisions, nor do Chinook or IRCC managers alter the way decisions are made by IRCC officers.

With regard to part (e), IRCC managers do not fetter the decision-making process of officers by accepting or rejecting their decisions. Officers make decisions in accordance with the IRPA and IRPR. These decisions are made by the officer and based on their review of the application. Chinook does not recommend or make decisions, nor do Chinook or IRCC managers alter the way decisions are made by IRCC officers.

Question No. 316—**Mr. Brad Redekopp:**

With regard to the Chinook software program operated by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), broken down by fiscal year and country of origin: (a) what keywords and phrases are used by IRCC officials to sort visa applications; (b) what is the occurrence of keywords and phrases that are used by IRCC officials to sort visa applications; and (c) based upon the use of these keywords and phrases, what is the rejection rate of visa applicants by class by IRCC officials?

**Ms. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, insofar as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is concerned, for indicator management within the Chinook Excel tool, keywords are used to notify officers of trends that IRCC has detected or highlight a particular factor of concern, not to sort visa applications. Keywords are also used to identify positive considerations such as applications that may require expedited processing, e.g., conferences, funerals and weddings. Indicators and keywords are identified and submitted for entry into Chinook by IRCC officers. Indicators and keywords are not generated by the Chinook tool.

Statistics on the use of indicators and word flags are not tracked globally, though the information if present on individual applications would appear in notes in the global case management system, or GCMS.

With respect to file management within the Chinook tool, the sorting of applications is based on the status of the application in the GCMS. It is not based on keywords or phrases.

Statistics on the occurrence of keywords and phrases to sort visa applications are not tracked and are therefore unavailable.

Statistics on the occurrence of keywords and phrases for the rejection rate of visa applicants by class are not tracked and are therefore unavailable.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, if the government's response to Question No. 313 could be made an order for return, this return would be tabled immediately.

#### Government Orders

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 313—**Mrs. Kelly Block:**

With regard to the 34,000 unprocessed applications at Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC): (a) will the 560 temporary staff hired to deal with the backlog have their contracts renewed, and, if so, until when; and (b) does VAC have projections on how large the backlog will be in the future if the contracts are (i) renewed, (ii) not renewed, and, if so, what are the projections, broken down by quarter for the next two years?

(Return tabled)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I ask that all remaining questions be allowed to stand.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

• (1220)

[Translation]

#### ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise again today.

[English]

I want to begin by acknowledging that we are all on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Nation and express our deep appreciation for their patience as we remain on unceded territory. *Meegwetch*. We need to re-establish in every speech, at every opportunity, the ongoing demands of reconciliation, and it has to be more than a land acknowledgement.

Today, I stand to speak at report stage on Bill C-8, a bill I support and which I have spoken to at previous stages in this place. Report stage gives us an opportunity to look at where we are on the verge of the bill passing and going forth to the other place. Some concerns have arisen, and I want to address those because I would like to know from the government that there is a plan to address issues that surfaced from the hard work and diligence of the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

### *Government Orders*

I also want to reflect, as we have this opportunity at report stage, when we are more than two years into a pandemic, to perhaps look at some of the elements that are at a higher level of abstraction in the bill before us, but which are related. Nothing will be off topic, but I do want to reflect on where we are now two years into the pandemic.

First, let me address what Bill C-8 is, just as a quick refresher. This is a bill in seven parts exclusively in response to COVID-19 at various aspects: its health impacts; the essential equipment that we need, such as rapid testing; and impacts on different sectors, including schools, businesses, individuals and workers. It is one more of the many, many bills we have seen since we started down this road March 13, 2020, when this place adjourned because we realized we were in a global pandemic and we could not continue meeting as we had. Since that moment on March 13, 2020, we have in this place, generally by unanimous consent, approved tens of billions of dollars of relief similar to what is in the package before us today in Bill C-8, which I support.

We have things like rapid tests, ventilation for schools, delays for small business for when they have to start repaying loans. It is a package with which I think all of us in this place are now very familiar. One thing was surprising, and I want to dive into it a bit because the citizens of Canada need to know that we are paying attention to the billions of dollars we pass in this place, and that was a certain redundancy, which the sharp-eyed people at the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer noticed. It is in relation to spending for rapid tests, which again, I support.

There is \$1.7 billion for rapid tests found in Bill C-8. There was \$2.5 billion for rapid tests found in Bill C-10, and then there was the \$4 billion in the supplementary estimates that we have also passed. The question is this: Are we paying more than once for rapid tests? The answer is yes. The money is allocated, at least \$4 billion, twice. I see an alarmed parliamentary secretary looking my way, yet Yves Giroux, our Parliamentary Budget Officer, has confirmed that there is in fact more money allotted than is needed.

I will quote the Parliamentary Budget Officer speaking in the other place:

When we asked questions about the intended use of this funding, it was to procure rapid tests for COVID-19 and to distribute them to provinces and then to Canadians. When we [the Parliamentary Budget Office] asked why try to have it go these two different routes to get to the same end, the government responded that it wants to get the funding as soon as possible, so they're trying this through Bill C-10 and Bill C-8, as well as Supplementary Estimates (C). They will use whichever authorities come first to procure these tests. However, they have already started procuring these tests, so they are doing some risk management should the spending not be approved. That seems to be the reason why they are pursuing the two different approaches.

The discussion in the Senate then went on to discuss if we would spend \$4 billion twice, or would there be some way of stopping the additional approvals once the tests are purchased? I do not really feel I have an answer to that question in this place.

• (1225)

I am still voting for Bill C-8. I want to make sure we get the rapid tests. I want to make sure we know what we are spending the money on, but I would also like to register now in this place, especially to government members, that we want to make sure there is

some mechanism in place to avoid spending \$4 billion twice. It appears from the Parliamentary Budget Officer's questioning of the government that this was not by accident, but I would like to flag that I have never seen it before, and I think it is quite unusual to approve spending \$4 billion twice to make sure we get it once.

With that, I want to turn to a key area I think is, at a higher level of distraction, a problem with our federation. I am not proposing ways to fix it, but I want to flag it. It has been the reason we failed to meet our climate targets. I do not mean just recently; I mean over the last three decades. It is a reason why, I think, we have been less effective as a country, and I am not speaking of a particular government or political party, than we could have been in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. My thread on this is that, spoiler alert, I do not think the provinces and the federal government work particularly well together. They should, and we must.

I note that on COVID-19, eight dollars out of every \$10 spent on COVID relief came from the federal government. We passed that in this place. Collectively, we did that. However, there was the speed with which we acted. The federal government might have been ready to act on numerous occasions, but the provinces were not, and if the action was in an area of provincial jurisdiction, we were delayed.

I definitely know this is the case on the climate emergency. Ironically, the European Union, which is made up of more than two dozen independent separate sovereign nation states, has done a better job than our federal government, our 10 provincial and three territorial governments, all together in one country, in being able to coordinate, negotiate and come up with a shared solution.

Leaving the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, the European Union went back to home base and within weeks had negotiated a global agreement, global meaning all the EU countries in a bubble, on who would do more cutting of greenhouse gases and who would do less, so they could achieve the target they collectively negotiated. They are now collectively about 40% below their 1990 levels of emissions. Canada is about 20% above our 1990 levels of emissions, and I think a lot of this is because of federal-provincial tensions and a failure of collaborative leadership. I do not know how else to put it.

In the case of the ventilation for schools, which is my thread here, I worked all summer of 2020 on an idea I got for how to get kids back to school safely. I thought about it, and I thought of all of these tourism facilities, as I am very committed to the tourism sector, such as convention centres and hotels, that were vacant because of COVID-19. They would like to be able to put people to work. We had schools that would have overcrowding if kids went back to school. I wondered why we could not take the places that were empty because of COVID and allow schools to take place there. Then they would have had a lot more air and a lot more ventilation. It might have worked. I started talking to people, like the brilliant Paul Nurse, who heads Destination Greater Victoria. I started talking to people who run convention centres. They said they loved the idea and that it could work.

I will fast-forward to how many people and groups I got involved: People for Education in Toronto; the Tourism Industry Association of Canada; the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the union that was negotiating and talking to other levels of government; and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities gave me the time of day too. We started thinking we could put this together, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of this nation and her staff were interested in the idea. The one place I could not get any pick-up at all, where I could not get anyone to pick up the phone and call me back, was the provincial ministry of education, and no one was going to go anywhere with this idea unless the provincial minister of education signed on.

Now we have here in Bill C-8 one of the things I was trying to address in my completely ad hoc volunteer way to try to get something to happen, and we are now approving ventilation for schools. That is provincial jurisdiction. We should have acted on that a year or more ago, and in my opinion, the reason we are approving it now in the federal Parliament, as opposed to much sooner, is that we could not get the provinces on board.

• (1230)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate the effort and the work that the member, the former leader of the Green Party, puts into her speeches. They are substantial in their content.

I want to address the issue of the billions of dollars that were allocated to the government to acquire rapid tests. That is probably the most important aspect. Getting the rapid tests in a timely fashion was absolutely critical. We saw that in the uptake of the tests in late December going into January. I do not necessarily know the details as well as the member does, but my understanding, in regard to this bill, was to ensure we had them for the months of November to December, and maybe into January. That was my understanding of this specific bill.

Would she not agree the most important thing is that Canada be in a position to acquire the rapid tests for circulation among our provinces and territories?

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his kind words. I am certain, as I am not like other opposition MPs looking for a chance to say, "Gotcha", that this was done with the

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best of intentions to make sure we would have access to rapid tests and were able to acquire them.

Our job in this place is to scrutinize spending and make sure that we flag it when we see something a little funny. It is Parliament that controls the public purse, or at least that is the fiction and that is our principle. I am not suggesting the intentions were not the best, and I agree with the hon. member that it is most important to have rapid tests and to be able to buy them when we can. However, I do not think we need to authorize spending for them twice.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech. She talked about Kyoto and the fact that different levels of government collaborated.

A significant portion of Bill C-8 has to do with COVID-19 measures, and since that is basically a health issue, would it not be easier for the federal government to work with the provinces if the government agreed to their request to increase health transfers?

That would be one less bone of contention, anyway.

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. It is not surprising to hear a Bloc Québécois member express serious concerns about transfers for our public health system.

However, this brings a question to mind. We have recognized that Quebec forms a nation. Why is it so difficult for the Quebec nation, which is part of Canada, to work collaboratively with the federal government, whereas France, for example, is able to work collaboratively with the European Union on common concerns and goals?

It is disappointing, but this is our reality in Canada.

[English]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I want to come back to the point of jurisdiction and remark that, coming out of 2004, Canada had a model for health funding predicated upon health accords where the federal government played not only an important funding role, but also a convening role. We had provinces that were not told what to do by Ottawa, but they came together with Ottawa to determine common priorities and then a funding structure. We moved away from that under the Harper government and this current government, despite having committed to it, has chosen to not renew that model. That means that we do not have those tables for collaboration on something as important as health funding.

Could the member speak to that model and the role that engaging in that model on an ongoing basis can play when we face emergencies such as the pandemic?

**Ms. Elizabeth May:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to my hon. colleague from Elmwood—Transcona that I cannot remember a single time when he has said something with which I disagree. Once again, we are in violent agreement.

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We need to restart our health accord process. We need to get people to the table. On environmental issues, it may be a little different. However, when engaging with the provinces most successfully in the 1980s, we actually won the battle to stop acid rain with agreements that were negotiated bilaterally. We did one province at a time until we got a deal. We started with the easy ones and worked our way up to the hardest one.

We need viable, collaborative federalism. On health, we need that national health accord. On other issues, we need to just get together and make sense.

• (1235)

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I must steal a few seconds from my colleague. I simply want to point out something that the House cannot ignore today, and that is the Acting Speaker's birthday.

[Members sang a song]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** Order. I thank the hon. member, but I must remind the House that, unfortunately, singing is prohibited in the House.

I want to assure the member for Calgary Midnapore that no time will be taken away from her speaking time.

[English]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I cannot resist noting it is not always prohibited to sing in the chamber. We can, of course, sing *O Canada* on Wednesdays.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** Resuming debate.

I hope we can finally hear from the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore. The hon. member.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, I cannot sing, but it was still nice to hear my colleagues from the Bloc Québécois, with whom we form the opposition in the House.

[English]

We are here today to talk about Bill C-8, of course. This is not long before we are actually going to be presented with the next budget, so I think it is very important that Canadians evaluate the past performance of the NDP-Liberal coalition before deciding to even consider approving the next budget.

I want to start by saying that my colleagues and I, here in the official opposition, have been very positive in our spirit of collaboration in the last couple of years as we have gone through the difficult time of the pandemic, but we also certainly have our limits, as individuals and groups must have their limits, in terms of what they are willing to accept.

I look at the beginning of the pandemic, when we passed, in November of 2021, Bill C-2, the first COVID relief package,

worth \$37 billion. There was certainly a lot of funding there. We went on to pass other legislation in the House with significant price tags, including Bill C-3, which went through the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. That was a \$7-billion price tag.

In December 2021, we also had Bill C-8, which we are debating here today, with additional spending of \$71.2 billion. These are not small amounts.

I will say that we certainly have done what was necessary throughout the pandemic. Everyone in the House, certainly on this side of the House, supports Canadians and wants to see Canadians get the help they need, but it has certainly become incredibly excessive and even growing, perhaps, with this new NDP coalition. We have to be wary about the items that we are seeing in the new NDP-Liberal coalition, which will cost billions upon billions of extra dollars, potentially.

At the same time that we saw the House helping Canadians, eventually leading to overspending even beyond what was necessary, we can go further back than that to something that I brought up today in question period: the destruction of the natural resources sector. This is something that did not start two years ago. This started seven years ago, when we saw the initial election of the NDP-Liberal coalition government, which continues to play out today.

To start, we saw it in November of 2016, when the northern gateway pipeline was rejected by this coalition. We look to October 2017, when TransCanada cancelled the energy east pipeline project as a result of pressure from this coalition.

This is something that this NDP-Liberal coalition likes to do. They create impossible environments for industry, whereby industry has no other choice but to abandon these projects. Then the NDP-Liberal coalition says that it is not their fault because it was abandoned by industry, when they have made conditions impossible to complete these projects.

We cannot forget January 2017, when the Prime Minister said he wanted to phase out the oil sands. He said, "You can't make a choice between what's good for the environment and what is good for the economy.... We can't shut down the oilsands tomorrow. We need to phase them out. We need to manage the transition off of our dependence on fossil fuels."

Right there, we see the Prime Minister had committed to his continued path of destroying the natural resource sector, with the help of the NDP-Liberal coalition. This, of course, led to April 2018, when Kinder Morgan halted the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion because of "continued actions in opposition to the project", which was not surprising.



• (1240)

In May of 2018, we saw the NDP-Liberal coalition buy the Trans Mountain pipeline for \$4.5 billion, but it again created impossible conditions for the project to be completed, whereby Kinder Morgan eventually abandoned the project. Once again, the government created impossible conditions for this industry.

Of course, I cannot help but mention Bill C-48, the oil tanker moratorium, and of course Bill C-69, which were both passed in June 2019 and completely destroyed that sector. We often refer to C-69 as the “no more pipelines” bill.

Therefore, I find it very rich that I hold in my hand here a Canadian Press article from March 20, 2022, which indicates that Liberals may find extra spending room in the budget created by rising oil prices. It is reported that it is a position similar to the one the Liberals found themselves in last December when a rosier economic picture gave the government \$38.5 billion in extra spending room. Guess what. The NDP-Liberal government quickly ate up \$28.4 billion with new expenditures. This extra funding, as a result of the natural resources sector, could be up to \$5 billion, but we know that the NDP-Liberal government will eat that up in a moment before spending even more than that.

In fact, the former parliamentary budget officer Kevin Page said, “It would be a policy mistake for the government to assume that higher-than-anticipated inflation will create extra fiscal room which could be used to deficit finance longer-term programs,” many of which we are seeing in the NDP-Liberal coalition. That is very interesting.

We see that the government has a habit of spending any money we give it. It will not pay down the record debt or the record deficit. Instead, it will spend it, so why should we trust it and give it more money? Why should we not look at this upcoming budget with scrupulosity and hesitancy?

More insulting than the government's spending what it does not have, and spending it on the back of the industry that it has destroyed entirely, is that it announced yesterday that now it plans to boost oil exports 5% in an effort to ease the energy supply crisis. This was an announcement that the Minister of Natural Resources made yesterday, following the second day of meetings at the International Energy Agency's annual ministerial gathering in Paris.

He said that Canadian industry has the pipeline and production capacity to incrementally increase oil and gas exports this year by 300,000 barrels per day, comprising 200,000 barrels of oil and 100,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day in natural gas. The Alberta natural resources minister had a response to that. She said:

We can increase production if we can get more infrastructure built and I think that's what was missing in the conversation.... It's really not ambitious to talk about a short term potential of 200,000 barrels when we sit on top of the third largest [oil] reserves in the world.

In addition to that, we have seen a labour shortage. The NDP-Liberal government fired hundreds of thousands of workers when it set out to destroy the natural resources sector, so this sector has been struggling with a lack of workers since last year, according to a Canadian Press story, when rebounding oil prices first spurred an uptake in drilling activity in the Canadian oil patch.

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In conclusion, on this side of the House, we have tried to work with the NDP-Liberal coalition. It has shown it cannot handle funds responsibly, time and time again. Now it is turning to the industry it destroyed. Now it has decided it is time to step up given that Ukrainians and Europe are suffering, while Canadians have suffered for a long time under this coalition.

• (1245)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I wish you a happy birthday.

I listened to the Conservatives speak on Bill C-8. I am wondering if they have in fact read the bill or have a sense of what it is about. What we do know is that the Conservatives are voting against the bill. It is not the first time they do not support legislation to support Canadians. For example, the bill ensures proper school ventilation. It ensures the acquisition of rapid tests. It puts in place the 1% annual tax on foreign ownership of properties, which hopefully will help drive down some of the speculation in the cost of housing in Canada.

Can the member explain why she opposes those three policy initiatives, given that this is what we are supposed to be debating today?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Mr. Speaker, I think we have demonstrated, as I indicated in my speech, that we have supported legislation in moments of crisis when it was absolutely necessary for Canadians. What we will not do is give the NDP-Liberal coalition a blank cheque. We will not do that. We are responsible to Canadians to watch the spending of the NDP-Liberal coalition.

If this member is so passionate about legislation that helps Canadians, then why did his government put forward Bill C-69 and Bill C-48, which hurt so many Canadians?

**Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the speech by my colleague for Calgary Midnapore dealt with the issue of how we finance these expenditures. One of those ways, obviously, is the preferred way of the NDP-Liberal coalition, which is to borrow money and burden future taxpayers. The other, as the member pointed out fascinatingly in her speech, was the increased revenue that is coming in to the federal government as a result of higher oil and gas prices.

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I live in a part of the world where we have to burn oil from Saudi Arabia because the coalition decided that it did not want a pipeline called energy east. We also have to burn electricity from Colombian coal in Nova Scotia. That is where we get our energy: from Saudi Arabian oil and Colombian coal, because of the policies of the government.

I would like the member for Calgary Midnapore to please comment on what she thinks about the preference for us to burn energy and oil from places, such as Saudi Arabia, with repressive regimes compared with clean, ethical Canadian oil.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Mr. Speaker, frankly, I think it shows how little the government thinks of Canadians that it would turn to nations with dictatorships, that it would turn to nations without regard for human rights, and that it would turn to nations without regard for the rule of law before turning to its own citizens and its own resources to fill these needs. It just shows what little respect it has for Canadians, our resources and, frankly, our livelihoods as well.

It is incredibly disappointing to see this historic action from the NDP-Liberal government. I think we are going to see a lot more of it, given the additional information about the NDP-Liberal coalition that was made public this week.

• (1250)

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I guess my shortest question to the member for Calgary Midnapore is this. Is she familiar with the course of the Kinder Morgan pipeline before the National Energy Board? The National Energy Board refused to hear evidence that it would cost jobs and hurt the economy. The National Energy Board rejected the evidence of Unifor, and said that the NEB was not going to look at the economy or jobs. The proponent from Texas decided it could not make money with the project and eventually laughed all the way to the bank in Texas.

I will cut it short there and ask her this. Is she familiar with the actual history of the Kinder Morgan pipeline?

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Mr. Speaker, I think it has a very interesting history. At the time, I was consul to Dallas, Texas. We actually had an inverse relationship, whereby Mr. Harper was ready to pass any energy project necessary, while President Obama, who was a known ally of the NDP-Liberal coalition, was there to stop every interest for Canada at every step of the way.

Those are my comments.

**Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to speak on Bill C-8, which is another massive Liberal spending bill. It is legislation that seeks to spend \$71 billion. This is \$71 billion in new spending, and \$71 billion that the government does not have. That is on top of some \$600 billion that the government has spent over the past two years, one-third of which had nothing to do with COVID. This is at a time when the national debt has soared to a historic \$1.2 trillion, nearly double what it was in the last two years alone, and here we are with another massive Liberal spending bill.

With billions here and trillions there, one begins to wonder and try to understand exactly what \$71 billion is. How much is that? To

put it in some context, it equals roughly the amount that the federal government collects in GST revenue annually, combined with the amount that the federal government spends in terms of health care. GST revenue collected and health care spending on an annual basis combined is what \$71 billion means.

From the time that the government took office, there has not been a price tag that was too high. There has been no such thing as spending too much. The Prime Minister has spent more than any prime minister in Canadian history. The Prime Minister has added more to the national debt than any prime minister in Canadian history. Indeed, the Prime Minister has added so much debt that we can take all of the prime ministers who preceded him, from 1867 to 2015, and the total accumulated national debt over 150 years does not match the amount of debt that the current Prime Minister has added in six and a half short years.

The government has a spending problem. It has a deficit and a debt problem and, to pay for it all, the government has done something that no previous government has ever done in terms of monetary policy. That is quantitative easing: in other words, the printing of money. What that has led to is the largest increase in the supply of money in half a century. We have not seen such an increase since the early 1970s. What that has meant is more money chasing fewer goods. We know what that results in: It results in inflation. Inflation hit 5.7% in February. It was the highest level of inflation since April of 1991 or August of 1991, but who is counting? In more than 30 years, we have the highest level of inflation. All projections are that inflation is only going to get worse, and rising inflation means higher interest rates. On March 1, the Bank of Canada increased interest rates. By all accounts, there will be further interest rate increases.

• (1255)

What does 5.7% inflation mean? It is significantly above the Bank of Canada's target of 2%. That target was established during the recession of the early 1990s, and for basically 30 years the Bank of Canada held to that target. That target was held until the Liberal government showed up, and we now see inflation at nearly triple that upper target.

It is one thing to talk about inflation in an abstract way, but there is a very real cost for all of this inflation and it is being borne by our constituents: everyday Canadians who are struggling to get by. It is called an inflation tax. That inflation tax has famously become known as "Justinflation".

Thanks to "Justinflation", food costs have gone up by 7.4%. That means the average family is going to pay \$1,000 more for groceries this year than they did last year. When one recognizes that some 40% of Canadians are \$250 away from insolvency, \$1,000 puts a real squeeze on millions of Canadians who are going to have to make difficult choices about what to do in order to simply put food on the table.

Gas has skyrocketed 33% in the past year alone. What is the government's solution to this cost of living crisis? It is to double down and pour gasoline on an inflationary fire with \$71 billion in new spending. What is that going to mean? It is going to mean more debt, more money printing and even more inflation. Guess what that means for everyday Canadians? It means higher costs for essentials, for everything, and diminished earnings.

Canadians need relief and they need relief now. Instead, the government's approach, on top of taxing them with "Justinflation", has been to increase payroll taxes. It has increased—

• (1300)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** There is a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary to the leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, members cannot do indirectly what they cannot do directly. The member knows full well, when he is referencing inflation and using the Prime Minister's first name, that we are not allowed to use a minister's or any member's name in the chamber.

As much as it might be cute to say, it does go against our parliamentary rules. Members need to address ministers and members by their riding or by their portfolio.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** I would remind members that they cannot refer to a colleague in the House by name, only by their government title or riding.

The hon. member for Brandon—Souris on a point of order.

[English]

**Mr. Larry Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, it sounds to me like the member for Winnipeg North just wants the word "just" struck from the Canadian language.

[Translation]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie):** I invite the hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton to resume his speech. He has one minute and 34 seconds remaining.

[English]

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, the government has made life less affordable for everyday Canadians, from the Liberal inflation tax to payroll tax increases that came into effect on January 1 to a 25% hike in the carbon tax, which is only going to increase the cost of essentials even more, and then voting down a practical proposal put forward by those on this side of the House to give Canadians some desperately needed relief by giving Canadians a gas tax holiday. The NDP-Liberal coalition voted against it because they want to punish Canadians at the pump.

In closing, let me just say that the government's solution to getting out of an affordability crisis is to spend more. That is the problem. That is what got us into this affordability crisis. In order to get out of it, we need to rein in spending, and as a starting point towards achieving that, Bill C-8 must be defeated.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member says Bill C-8 has to be defeated, and I gen-

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uinely believe that the member is a part of that extreme right within his caucus that does want to see government not support Canadians. That is the reality.

When we talk about supports through the purchasing of rapid tests or additional monies being spent for school ventilation or the supports that were there for our seniors in regard to the CERB overpayments, there has been a vast expenditure by the government to support Canadians through these very difficult times of the pandemic.

Could the member indicate to the House if his entire caucus shares the same opinion he has, the opinion that the programs that were provided, the billions and billions of dollars to support small businesses and individual Canadians, was money poorly spent, or is it just he himself who has that belief?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, I would remind the far-left member for Winnipeg North that much of the government's spending has been poorly targeted.

My friend the parliamentary secretary spoke about supports for small businesses. Well, when it came to the wage subsidy, Statistics Canada analysis determined that big businesses were twice as likely to get the wage subsidy as small businesses. A lot of money was spent; unfortunately, much of that money was directed to the wrong places.

• (1305)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member, I do think the arguments the Conservatives are putting forward with regard to inflation are a bit simplistic. At the agriculture committee right now, we are doing a study on supply chain issues. Witness after witness is talking about the pressures from labour and the lack of reliability in our networks.

Of course there is a war going on in Ukraine, but I would like to ask the member about the inflationary pressures associated with climate change. We know that this is going to give rise to increased conflict around the world. There will be water scarcity. There will be fighting over limited agricultural resources. Oil and gas have always been volatile energy sources.

I would like to ask the member about those inflationary pressures of climate change and the Conservatives' logical fallacy of continuing to pursue fossil fuel development when that in fact is going to lead to climate change, which in turn will increase inflationary pressures on everyday goods and services.

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to inflation, when the Parliamentary Budget Officer appeared before the finance committee, he said that all of the stimulus spending provided in Bill C-8 was unhelpful and was no longer necessary. He also acknowledged that the government's deficits and debt were fuelling the fire of inflation.

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With respect to the carbon tax, we have now learned, confirmed from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, that it is contributing to inflation. It is making life less affordable. It is increasing the cost of goods. That is why we on this side of the House are focused on providing relief to Canadians who need help now by reducing their overall tax burden and allowing them to keep more of what they earn.

**Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague just began to answer the question I was going to ask. I have heard the questions talking about the far right and the far left in response to his discourse.

In the member's opinion, where does the Parliamentary Budget Officer stand in that spectrum between the far left and far right, and what were the PBO's comments on \$71 billion of additional spending and its relation to inflation?

**Mr. Michael Cooper:** Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer provides objective analysis. The analysis that he has provided is that the current government gets an F when it comes to inflation.

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to debate Bill C-8, the economic and fiscal update implementation act, 2021. I will say that many of my constituents and Canadians across this nation are concerned with the fiscal policies of the government, and rightly so. Government spending is totally out of control, and Canadians are paying the price. The cost of everything is rising at record rates, inflation is reaching new highs, and the value of one's hard-earned dollar is becoming less and less.

If Canadians thought the last six years of government spending were bad, they are in for a rude awakening until 2025. We found out that Canada has a new government this week, a Liberal-NDP government that Canadians did not want. If the NDP is now in charge of our nation's finances, government spending is guaranteed to reach unprecedented highs.

Financial experts are already sounding the alarm about the consequences of more spending. The director of fiscal and provincial economics at Scotiabank stated, "The finance minister risks further undermining Ottawa's credibility in its commitment to tackling inflation." I would be interested to know if part of the backroom deal with the NDP was to remove the fiscal guardrails that the finance minister talked about so much.

Canadians expect their government to be fiscally responsible. Bill C-8 has \$300 million dedicated toward proof-of-vaccination policy. At a time when provinces are lifting mandates, removing restrictions and giving Canadians control of their lives again, the government wants to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on more vaccine mandates.

Canada has one of the highest vaccination rates in the world. Every provincial government has been giving control of their lives back to Canadians, but the federal government has no plan to end these mandates. It had an opportunity to do so yesterday. Canada's Conservatives introduced an opposition day motion calling on the federal government to lift all federal vaccine mandates immediately. We wanted to protect the jobs of federally regulated employees. We wanted to enable Canadians to travel freely. We wanted to kick-

start our nation's tourism industry. We wanted to enable our goods to move across our national border. Guess what? The Liberal-NDP government did not want to see Canadians regain control of their lives. It voted our motion down.

I think of all the local guides and outfitters in my constituency who rely on American clientele to make a living. Their businesses were completely shut down because of government restrictions. I met with people at North Mountain Outfitters in my constituency, whose business came to a complete stop because of the government. Guides, outfitters and lodge owners contribute immensely to the local economies of rural and remote Canada, but there is no plan to help them or the thousands of outfitters across our nation to reopen.

Bill C-8 also refers to the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act. Most Canadians know it as the Liberal carbon tax, newly named the Liberal-NDP carbon tax. I should remind this House that the Liberal carbon tax is going up again on April 1, increasing the cost of gas when the cost of fuel is already reaching record highs, but every time Canadians raise their concerns with the Liberal carbon tax, the government tells them off, basically. The Liberals claim that Canadians are in better shape financially from this pricey tax. They say that more money is going back into the pockets of Canadians than into the government coffers.

Every time the government says that Canadians benefit from the Liberal carbon tax, Canadians call it out. They do not buy it for a second. Guess what? Yesterday we learned that Canadians were right. The Liberal carbon tax will leave Canadians worse off. Canada's independent Parliamentary Budget Officer released a report stating that the Liberal carbon tax is a financial burden on Canadian families. The report stated that the majority of households in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario will see a net loss from the Liberal carbon tax. There we have it. The Liberals can no longer hide behind their talking points. Canadians will be worse off financially.

● (1310)

We also know that this financial burden impacts rural Canadians more. Rural Canadians, in particular, know that the Liberal carbon tax unfairly impacts them for simply living in rural Canada, within Canada's vast and beautiful geography.

The government tries to make rural Canadians feel better by giving them an extra 10% back. People are probably wondering how the government determined this number. Does 10% account for the increased heating costs in rural Canada? Does 10% account for the driving that rural Canadians have to do? Does 10% account for the increased cost of transported goods to rural Canada?

That is why I asked the government at committee yesterday what scientific assessment was done to decide that a 10% additional carbon tax rebate accounted for the added expenses of rural Canadians. Guess what? Canadians will never know, because the government admitted that no scientific assessment was completed to ensure that rural Canadians were getting back an adequate amount of their money. Can we imagine that? Once again, rural Canadians were neglected by the government.

Municipalities are also concerned with the financial accountability of the Liberal carbon tax. Canadians may not know this, but the Liberal government applies this tax to municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals. I do not know how taxing a hospital reduces greenhouse gas emissions, but I digress. The fact is that the government promised to return the taxes to municipalities and hospitals, but it has not. To date, municipalities and hospitals in my home province of Manitoba have received no money through the MUSH retrofit stream.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities raised concerns, but its concerns have clearly fallen on deaf ears. On March 4, the AMM wrote to the government and stated the following: “our members continue to raise questions regarding the lack of communication about CAIF rebates for 2020-21 and 2021-22 for the MUSH sector”.

This is of course concerning, given that the Government of Canada is legally obligated to return these funds to the province of origin. As well, it previously committed to sharing these revenues with municipalities to assist with advancing climate change-related projects. I see why rural Canadians have lost their trust in the government.

Canadians pay attention when any government spending bill is pushed through Parliament. Bill C-8 is no exception. Canadians feel let behind. The cost of living is rising at record rates, and the new NDP-Liberal government will only accelerate this. The Liberal carbon tax is fuelling Canada's inflation crisis and is leaving the majority of households worse off financially.

The federal government has yet to introduce a plan to end mandates and give Canadians back control of their lives, and hospitals and municipalities are paying tens of thousands of dollars in taxes without receiving a promised penny back. God help us all.

• (1315)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, one of the interesting things that comes to my mind in listening to my colleague's speech is the fact that there was a time when the Conservative Party actually opposed the price on pollution. The member makes reference to a carbon tax. The party's most recent former leader, who took us through the last federal election, was actually a supporter of a carbon tax or a price on pollution. However, given the nature of a number of the speeches, can Canadians anticipate that the Conservative Party of Canada is going to be changing again? Instead of supporting the price on pollution, they are now lining themselves up behind, possibly, the member for Carleton, who does not support a price on pollution.

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, our party has always stood up for rural Canada. The fact is that rural Canada is paying a dis-

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proportionate part of the carbon tax that has been imposed by the Liberals, and they are not even giving it back. The 10% does not even come close to the inflationary pressures they are putting on rural Canadians and small communities, and I will defend that to the end of this day.

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, since this morning, the Conservatives have been talking a lot about inflation.

Inflation may be caused by one of two things: supply or demand. We are more used to seeing inflation due to demand, but many experts agree that the current inflation is caused by supply issues.

The Conservatives have talked a lot about house prices. In the context of a supply-related inflationary crisis, would it be a good idea to bring in measures to create more housing? Could my colleague at least tell us whether he believes that this inflationary crisis is tied to supply or to demand?

[English]

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, no matter what kind of thing we are trying to build in Canada or what we are trying to move, it all depends on energy. We need energy and there is a massive shortage of energy to get anywhere, not only in Canada but in the world.

For example, anyone trying to grow food right now in Canada needs fertilizer. Fertilizer is made from natural gas. Natural gas has tripled and doubled, and we cannot get natural gas in certain parts of Canada, so we cannot even make the fertilizer in the first place. What is increasing the price of everything is the price of our energy, and it is throwing everything out of whack.

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to come back to a remark the member made about lifting public health restrictions. He will know, of course, that when the Conservatives originally had a motion for the government to table a plan, there was an illegal occupation going on in the nation's capital. That is why the New Democrats felt it was appropriate to go against that motion at the time, because we did not think it was appropriate to capitulate to the occupation of the nation's capital.

Subsequently, this week, when the Conservatives brought forward a new motion, it was to lift all public health restrictions. We proposed an amendment to call on the chief public health officer to conduct a review of public health measures, which she said was warranted, and to announce the results of that review and the evidence and arguments behind whatever continuation or lifting of public health restrictions she felt was appropriate. However, we were not able to vote on that amendment because the Conservatives would not accept debate and a vote on it. I am just wondering why that is.

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• (1320)

**Mr. Dan Mazier:** Madam Speaker, the bottom line is that the provinces have lifted the mandates. We have no restrictions. We can go out this door, and as soon as we exit this building, we can take our masks off. If I were to go to a restaurant, I do not even have to wear a mask anymore. That is the reality of what is going on in Canada, except in this Ottawa bubble and anything that touches federal jurisdiction. That is ridiculous. How do we move forward as a country? That is what we are asking for, or even just a suggestion that we are going toward a goal. That is all Canadians are looking for.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague for Huron—Bruce will be up shortly to talk to his private member's bill, which is an important private member's bill, and I intend to highlight it through my speech.

It is always an honour to rise in the House and address the concerns of my constituents of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

When I first spoke to Bill C-8 at second reading, I talked about the cost of living and inflation, which is a concern that I am hearing about every day from my constituents. They are worried about these record highs in inflation. It has been over 30 years since we have had inflation this high. It is at almost 6%. They are worried about their ability to live with that affordability question, and it does impact rural Canada much more than the rest of Canada, especially our farmers.

I will focus part of my interjection on part 1 of the bill, which talks about the amendments to income tax and income tax regulations, but I will speak specifically to the paragraphs that talk about the new refundable tax credit for eligible businesses and qualifying ventilation expenses made to improve air quality, as well as the second bit on the new refundable tax credit to return fuel charge proceeds to farming businesses in backstop jurisdictions.

Before I do that, I want to again highlight the cost of servicing the incredible amount of spending and debt that we now have as a country. The national debt has doubled in the last six years from about \$600 billion to \$1.2 trillion. To service that debt is over \$24 billion, and that is before interest rates go up. As I mentioned in previous speeches, that is more than the budget for our Canadian Armed Forces. Hopefully, we will, as the government has indicated, see some changes in that budget based on the unfortunate circumstance in Ukraine.

However, the problem with servicing such incredible debt is that it actually puts those social programs that so many Canadians depend upon at risk. As the PBO has outlined, much of the stimulus spending that is included in Bill C-8, approximately \$71 billion, is not necessary. We are in a cost-of-living crisis, and we need to make decisions to change that. As has been spoken about before, groceries alone are going up over \$1,000. Seniors in this country cannot afford that, and low-income Canadians cannot afford that. All of these products and produce are available here in Canada.

I want to go back to the legislation, specifically to the new refundable tax credit for eligible and qualifying businesses for ventilation expenses made to improve air quality. I brought this up before the bill went to committee and talked about the importance of trying to understand why the government chose the date of Septem-

ber 1, 2021, for businesses to qualify for that credit. As I highlighted before, I have businesses in my area that helped deal with, fight and combat the COVID pandemic by turning their facilities into field hospitals, but while they showed that initiative, and they put out thousands of dollars to make those changes to get ahead of the curve at the time, they do not qualify.

However, considering we are here debating the bill, I do not see the government making those changes, because the Liberals did not make those changes at committee. I would ask why the government is penalizing those small businesses and companies across Canada that did step up to fight COVID-19 and made the necessary changes to make Canadians safer. Why is the government rationalizing and not supporting that? My cynical response is that, if we look at September 1, 2021, I wonder what it was tied to, considering when we had the election this past fall.

The next piece I want to get to is around the Liberal carbon tax, but before I get to that, I want to talk about the green bond framework and the clean jobs training centre, with the caveat that the second one is not clarified yet as I brought it up at committee yesterday. However, my question is this: Why has nuclear energy been excluded from the green bond framework? It is key, and all Canadians should know that nuclear is an essential and important part of getting to a carbon-neutral economy and dealing with climate change.

• (1325)

It is the same thing with the clean jobs training centre. Right now it is not included in supports for getting workers skills training so they can transition to the nuclear industry and we can help get people into jobs that will help reduce our carbon footprint.

I am going to have difficulty getting through my full 10 minutes before I am cut off, but I want to talk about the refundable tax credit and what it would mean to farming businesses. I am actually optimistic that this aspect could provide some support to our agriculture industry and our farmers, especially those who are actively engaged in the management of the day-to-day activities of earning farming income or incurring farming expenses of \$25,000 or more. This is a policy that I think would help the farmers in Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

I will never stop underlining the importance of our farmers and the essential food they put on the table for not only Canadians, but people around the world. This has been further exacerbated in the last couple months with the war in Ukraine and Russia's terrible actions. Ukraine is the essential breadbasket for Europe, and without food coming out of Ukraine, it is that much more important that we are supporting our Canadian farmers and not making life more expensive for them, because all people around the globe are going to depend upon Canadian agriculture and food. The issue is that, although I am somewhat optimistic and happy to see this refundable tax credit included in Bill C-8, it is only a partial step in the direction we need to go.

In the last Parliament, the Conservatives introduced a private member's bill, which was passed before the House rose, to remove the Liberal carbon tax from our farmers. Unfortunately, because of the unnecessary election last summer called by the Prime Minister, that bill died in the Senate before it could be passed. We need to get that bill passed, along with the new bill of my hon. colleague from Huron—Bruce, which I know will be discussed shortly, because we need to cut the carbon tax on natural gas and propane for our grain dryers and livestock barns. Our farmers are price-takers, not price-makers, and nothing included in Bill C-8 would actually take us to the necessary level. The Liberal plan does not recognize the important role our farmers play in reducing the carbon footprint through carbon sequestration and more in this country.

I will sum up by saying that although there are some aspects in Bill C-8 that I can support, in large part it is not good enough and would actually increase spending for Canadians. I am looking forward to hearing the forthcoming debate on Bill C-234 from the hon. member for Huron—Bruce.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member will have five minutes of questions and comments when we next debate the bill.

It being 1:30 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1330)

[English]

### GREENHOUSE GAS POLLUTION PRICING ACT

**Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC)** moved that Bill C-234, An Act to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise today on this bill. Through the years I have had the honour and privilege of presenting private member's bills and motions. I had one pass many years ago, and I had one or two that did not pass.

First of all, I would like to thank the member of Parliament for Foothills and the member of Parliament for Northumberland—Peterborough South who presented Bill C-206 in the last Parliament. I would also thank the member for Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and all of the other members of Parliament in my party and caucus who have a deep love and admiration for agriculture and the farm families that do the work each and every day.

The issue that I am trying to fix with this private member's bill is the application of the carbon tax on natural gas and propane. It is for on-farm agriculture uses to dry grain and heat livestock barns where there may be a variety of livestock, but mainly poultry and pork in these cases. The problem is with the current carbon tax on these areas. I will give one example of a pork farmer in my riding who sent me his December usage of natural gas. The natural gas bill for his hog barn was \$11,391 in total. The carbon tax was \$2,918, which is 25% of the base bill. When we throw the HST

on, which is almost \$1,500, 34% of the bill is in carbon tax and HST. That is really the problem.

There are tight margins in agriculture and, when we get into the drying of grains in the fall, these are foods that we eat. Farmers are price-takers; they are not price-makers. They do not set the price; they take the price. Anybody in the House or those listening today well understand the issue with that. On the flip side, when it is time to pay for inputs, machinery, etc., we obviously know the price. There are a lot of improvements we could make.

One of my other issues with the carbon tax specifically on farmers, which I have said in the House of Commons before, is that farm producers and farmers do not get credit for any of the environmental good that they do on their farms up and down the country roads. If we look at what farmers are able to do on their farms, first of all, they get no credit for any of the carbon sequestration of their crops. They get no credit for their grasslands or woodlots. There is no credit for that.

We are trying to right an environmental wrong and a taxation wrong to make it fair for farmers. It is very difficult to recognize all of the different ways in which farmers do good. Putting a carbon tax on their efforts does not really recognize the environmental benefit they have. Many members of Parliament in the House today have had the opportunity to tour many farms, conservation areas and livestock barns, and they see the good work that they do.

Another issue that is recognized in this bill is that farmers are always asked to be the government's line of credit. People may ask what that means. What I mean by this is that, if we look at the business risk management programs available to farmers, AgriStability being one of them, if they were able to trigger a payment with AgriStability, their expenses are incurred so much earlier. Farmers carry the cost and at the end they receive. It is the same with HST. There have been issues through the years with certain producers where their HST was hung up, so that they are the line of credit in some cases. It was three months, four months, six months, maybe even a year before they would get their HST rebate.

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● (1335)

Now we have another program that is going to create a level of bureaucracy. We have a program that is once again going to ask the farmer to be the line of credit. To give an example, farmers could pay a propane or natural gas bill on their poultry or hog barn in January and February of 2022 and that almost \$3,000 in carbon tax they paid on their bill could be carried all the way through the year. They could dry their grains in September, October or November, depending on how the harvest went, and then carry all of those costs all through the entire year and file their taxes, depending on when their fiscal year end is, in June of 2023. When do members think those farmers would receive their rebate?

That is a long time to be once again asking farm producers or farm families to carry these expenses. Then we also calculate the increasing costs of all the inputs, whether feed for livestock or fertilizer. We have seen the crazy prices. Their lines of credit are continually edging up and now they are faced with doing this.

According to Bill C-8, in the fall update on page 83, the rebate is \$1.73. When I read that I thought it was per hundred dollars of eligible expenses, but it is actually per thousand dollars of eligible expenses. Therefore, if farmers have a million dollars in eligible expenses on their farms, they would not even receive a \$1,800 rebate.

For the farm I spoke about a second ago, one bill was almost \$3,000, so it is not neutral. It will not be neutral. If there are statistics to show otherwise, I would like to see them, but based on page 83 of this statement, it does not look like it. A month or two ago, the member for Foothills showed me a bill for a farmer in his province, and it might have been in his riding, I cannot remember, that was twice that amount. Can members imagine \$5,500 being paid in carbon tax for one month? Therefore, \$1,700 is not going to cut it.

We have talked about carbon sequestration through their crops, grasslands and woodlots. Farmers plant trees on their farms. They have windrows. In Ontario, and I am sure in many other provinces, we have nutrient management plans for how and when manure is spread across their fields. With technology we have precision spraying of herbicides and pesticides, and even precision fertilizing. This is not our great-grandfather's farms. These are very progressive farms across this country today with a high degree of professionalism and a love for agriculture and the environment.

If we take a woodlot in Huron County or Bruce County, we will see some of the best-managed woodlots in all the land. That is over the last 10 years when we have been dealing with the emerald ash borer on our ash trees. Most of those have been cleared out of woodlots and maple and other trees have come up in their place, but these are well-maintained woodlots that sequester carbon.

The other thing I would like to mention is crop rotation. I know the member for Foothills brought it up in question period today and the agriculture minister made a comment the other day in question period about it, as if it was some sort of new idea. I am sure she misspoke in question period, but we can go back to textbooks from probably the twenties and thirties talking about crop rotation and crop cover. Most of the farmers in my area plant late summer and early fall crops as well for cover crops. There is quite a bit that goes on.

The other thing I would like to recognize is all the conservation authorities and environmental groups in our communities. One that is not too far from where I live is the Pine River Watershed Initiative Network, which plants trees and manages water on farms. There are also crop and soil groups in Huron County, Bruce County and Grey County, all the way through the area, doing some amazing research on drainage and being able to hold some of those spring rains and thaws, hold some of that water, back in the drain itself. It is a very exciting technology.

● (1340)

Another thing I would like to talk about is our food sovereignty. We have seen a lot of this in the last number of years, maybe perhaps most recently in the past little while. In Ontario, we ship hogs, for example, to Burlington and other places like Conestoga. We also ship hogs to Quebec. We actually ship hogs to Manitoba as well, to Brandon. Although it is good for them to have those hogs in the production line, it makes no sense at all for farmers in southwestern Ontario to ship hogs in transport trucks across the provinces to their destination. We should be able to process them in our own regions. For that, I would say that I do think the government needs to take a real long look at food sovereignty in each province and, of course, in our country, as well as identifying strategic mines or opportunities.

Phosphates are a great example, with the latest embargo and tariffs from Russia, of where there are opportunities in our own country to speed up environmental assessments. Do it right but make sure they are streamlined so that we can mine our own goods and raw materials in our own country to support the entire cycle of agriculture in our country. Today we do not have that and I do think that should be a priority.

How much money does it take to make one dollar on a farm? It takes millions, and the margins are tight. People may drive up and down the road if they are going to their cottage or wherever else they are going on a weekend and they might look at how nice the farm looks from the truck they are driving. The reality is that it took multiple generations working seven days a week, 365 days a year, for margins that would put fear into most people. If they knew how much capital investment, debt and line of credit was at risk each and every day to earn a few dollars on \$100, they would be so impressed.



The reason I am saying this is that the carbon tax is punitive even for the existence of a farm operation. I have numerous calls in a week from different farmers commenting on the cost of doing business in 2022. Yes, if one were to look at the spot prices or futures prices for soybeans, corn, wheat or any of those, it does look pretty amazing. Unfortunately, for farmers, costs have gone in lockstep. In some cases, they have actually increased at a higher rate.

Where can we help them? We can help them with the carbon tax. We can help them by cutting the carbon tax and eliminating the carbon tax on farms. It does not get recycled. The carbon tax that they collect on farmers does not all go back to farmers. It does not go back into some environmental farm plan. It does not. They may say that it goes in dollar for dollar, but it does not.

The quickest and most efficient way to help agriculture and to recognize the environmental benefit the industry provides the country, without creating a bureaucracy and without hiring consultants to walk the farm, go through the woodlot and come up with an idea of how much was actually sequestered, is to cut it off right at the source. Do not make the farmer be the line of credit for the government on one more program. Do not tell them it is going to be neutral when we know it is \$1.73 per thousand dollars. Let us not do that.

There are certain industries, I am sure, in Canada that do not provide a whole lot of environmental benefit to the country. Farming is not one of them. It is an organization with the most grassroots, environmental preservation organizations someone will ever see. If one were to go to a Ducks Unlimited auction or a conservation authority fundraiser, who would be there? It is the townspeople, for sure, but it is also the farmers. The farmers come out. In some cases, it is the conservation authority that gives them a hard time, but they are still out there to support the cause because they understand the relationship between productive land and the environment.

• (1345)

I really enjoyed the debate today. It is an honour to do this. I look forward to having discussions, hearing what the other parties have to say and what their thoughts are, and hopefully, with their good will, seeing it in committee.

I am thankful for the opportunity today and I look forward to the questions.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, the price on pollution, or the carbon tax, depending on what one prefers to call it, is not implemented by the federal government across the country. There is a national expectation that every jurisdiction would put in place something to deal with climate change.

I am wondering if my colleague could provide his thoughts on whether he believes the provinces that do not have something in place, and therefore the federal government has something in place, should be more proactive in putting something in place to be able to deal with some of the issues he has made reference to.

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, these are obviously the back-stop provinces of my home province of Ontario, his province of Manitoba and all the way to Alberta. I respect the provincial juris-

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dictions. They should be thought of at the highest level and given the highest regard for what they would like to do.

Let us look at what we are doing. Let us respect the environmental benefits that agriculture produces. Let us not create a bureaucracy. Let us not create red tape. Let us do it at the source and recognize the impact and the efforts for the environment that agriculture presents.

[Translation]

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

We have a question. It is likely that applying a fuel charge to farming businesses may not be so effective. It does not push farmers to reduce their carbon footprint.

How could this issue be studied when we reach the next stage of his Bill C-234?

[English]

**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, I do not know that we need to help them. I think we need to learn from them. If one looks in my area, there is no-till drilling. Huron County was one of the forefathers of no-till drilling. A lot of industries would be well advised to learn from agriculture. I would think it would be great for the Liberal government to recognize all the sequestration that takes place.

I know the U.S. did a study, and I think it is billions of tonnes of carbon that gets sequestered each and every year on farms. In Canada, it would likely be larger. I think that in Canada it is high time that we do not beat up on farmers and that we recognize them and put them up on a pedestal and say thanks for what they are doing.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as the NDP's agriculture critic, I look forward to supporting this bill so that we can have a closer look at it in the agriculture committee, just as I did with Bill C-206 in the previous Parliament.

We often are talking about the punitive aspects of policy, but the member did talk a bit about the work that farmers are doing. I was wondering if he could expand on the amazing potential that exists on farms for renewable energy sources. If we look at the area that is on barns, we could help farmers with solar panel installations. There are also some tremendous possibilities to use natural gas that is naturally derived from the decomposition of materials on farms. Could the member expand on how Ottawa can maybe partner with those farms, instead of having an Ottawa-knows-best approach, and really try to put those farmers on a pedestal, show good examples and maybe increase the knowledge transfer so that all regions across Canada are benefiting from that knowledge?

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**Mr. Ben Lobb:** Madam Speaker, there are all sorts of examples. There is an anaerobic digester in Brockton in my riding. It takes the methane from manure from a large livestock operation, a beef farm operation, and uses the methane to power two modified Cat diesel engines with turbines on them that create electricity. They also use food waste mixed in there to create the methane. Those are the types of things.

There is an operation that could be taking place right in my riding. It collects bale wrap all over the province of Ontario and it has a method to be able to shred it, heat it and actually create fuel we can put in our gas tanks. These are things we could be doing right on farm in addition to many, many other things we could do.

The sky is the limit. That is why I say I think we are in the same mindset. Let us not look at agriculture negatively. Let us put farmers up on a pedestal and thank them not only for the food they produce and the work they do but also for the environmental benefit they have given to our country since the beginning of time.

● (1350)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, right up front, I acknowledge what our farming and rural communities have done over generations in elevating Canada as a nation to where we are today. I have had many different experiences and will provide some comments on that, but I will start off by thanking our farmers and those who contribute to our farming communities.

It is important for us to recognize that the most effective and efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is in fact by putting a price on pollution. This is not only believed by the Government of Canada. Governments around the world, provincial governments and individuals in virtually all political parties in Canada, at least elected political parties, have recognized the true value of a price on pollution.

Earlier today, I posed a question to some of my Conservative friends, when they were talking about the price on pollution, on where the Conservative Party might stand. I did not hear the member indicate that he was in opposition to the need for a price on pollution. I do believe there are a number of Conservative members who understand and value it. In fact, in the last federal election, as we saw in the Conservative Party campaign, part of its platform was to incorporate a price on pollution. It will be very interesting to see how the Conservatives move forward on that particular policy.

I can look at this in terms of the communities in Manitoba, an area that I am very passionate about. I have seen the valuable contributions that its agricultural communities and the whole sector have made to our province, Canada and the world. I would like to provide some personal examples of that.

Driving along Highway 2 in the evening, we can see a number of combines harvesting food to feed the world. It looks pretty impressive at night seeing the assembly of these combines and the trucks lined up to receive the grain. When we look at the way Manitoba has led the world with regard to the development of canola and the impact that has had, we see the technology there and the sensitivity to our environment, which has always been there, by our farming

community. We have seen that in the ways that farming has changed over the years. I can remember as a 14-year-old, which is a number of years back, running a four-wheel John Deere tractor, pulling a cultivator and going through a field. More recently, last summer, I was on a farmer's field where they are raising cattle, in between visiting dairy farms and getting a better understanding of an industry that I often talk about.

If we do a history of some of the speeches I have given in the House, I often talk about Manitoba's hog industry and the role it plays in the province of Manitoba. We have an industry that is very much alive and doing exceptionally well, and it is growing.

● (1355)

We have stakeholders such as Peak of the Market. It collects vegetables and other things, promotes Manitoba-grown products and markets them not only to the province of Manitoba, but to the world.

We have seen the benefits of it. When someone thinks of a hog farm, we do not necessarily believe the first room we will go into will be a room in which we get ourselves cleaned up and put on a smock and then walk into a computer room, where, through technology, we get a better appreciation of how hogs are raised on the local farm nowadays and on some of those large hog plants.

It is very impressive, and it is the farmer who tells us what he is doing to ensure he has a positive attitude toward the manure generated by the hogs and how it is being used, as much as possible, in a responsible fashion.

If we go north of Winnipeg to the Gimli area, we will see the cattle farmers. Again regarding the issue of the environment, just last summer we were talking about the issue of drought and realizing that climate change is real.

When I took a tour of that particular farm, one could be very sympathetic to the needs of our farmers.

In fact, a week or maybe 10 days later, the Minister of Agriculture went to visit the very same farm because, when we think of Peak of the Market, there are many different stakeholders that are out there.

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association provided me with the opportunity to take a tour of that particular facility, and I indicated to Robyn that I would like to be able to get an even more comprehensive understanding of that industry, as I have of the chicken processing industry, from the way in which eggs are hatched to the filling of a barn to the processing at a plant.

I am absolutely fascinated by the way in which Manitoba farmers, in particular, have taken on the responsibility of society to be there to feed the world.

Within the Liberal government caucus, we have a rural caucus. We have individuals who talk about farms and agriculture daily. It is not only an issue of being sympathetic to farmers. It also means being there for farmers in real and tangible ways, as I have been, with ministers of agriculture on a couple of occasions in the province. We have taken tours or participated in gaining more knowledge about this industry that is so critically important to all of us.

I am very proud of the fact that the University of Manitoba has a department of agriculture. It is not the only post-secondary facility to do so, but I highlight this one because I know the fine work it does.

When we talk about canola and the development of canola, there is so much we can all move forward to. We can say that, as a government, we are sensitive to it and we will continue to look at ways in which our policies will not harm farmers but rather will support them.

• (1400)

[Translation]

**Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as the member for a riding where agriculture plays a key role in the economy, I am pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill C-234.

I want to begin by saying that the Bloc Qu  b  cois supports the principle of this bill. Even though we do not really agree with the idea of undermining the carbon tax, there is no question that farmers play an important social role and that we all depend on their work. I can confirm that, given how important agri-food, agri-tourism and buying local are to Quebec's economy and more specifically that of the riding of Shefford.

That being said, I want to talk about three things in my speech. First, I will provide some background about this bill. Then, I will talk about the situation in Quebec, and finally, I will close by talking about the important role farmers play in the fight against greenhouse gas emissions.

To begin with, I will give a little bit of background. Bill C-234 seeks to amend the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act, which is commonly known as the "federal carbon tax" or the "carbon tax". It is true that exempting some farming fuels that are essential for crop and livestock production from the carbon tax seems fair to us, given that the alternatives are still very expensive. Take grain dryers, for example.

Members should know that the carbon tax act provides for the general application of a fuel charge, which is paid to the government by the distributor upon delivery. There are already certain criteria for cases where the charge is not payable, including when the fuel is being sold to a farmer and is a qualifying farming fuel, which is defined under section 3 of the act as gasoline, light fuel oil or a prescribed type of fuel.

The bill essentially proposes three things. First, it expands the definition of eligible farming machinery to include heating equipment, in particular for buildings used for housing livestock.

### *Private Members' Business*

Second, it clarifies that the definition of eligible farming machinery includes grain dryers. Most grain dryers run on propane, which represents a huge cost.

Third, it extends the carbon tax exemption for qualifying farming fuel to marketable natural gas and propane. The qualifying types of fuel are therefore gasoline, light fuel oil, marketable natural gas, propane or a prescribed type of fuel.

We cannot forget that the carbon tax is Canada's chosen method to fight climate change. The preamble of the Greenhouse Gas Pollution Pricing Act explains that one of the justifications for the act is the fact that some provinces have not developed and implemented greenhouse gas emissions pricing systems. In 2016, the provinces were given a choice between maintaining or creating a pollution pricing system that would have to meet the federal standard.

Quebec's carbon market does not include the agriculture sector. Quebec also has a fuel tax, but this tax is refunded to fishers and farmers.

Quebec implemented its own carbon tax system in 2013, the Quebec carbon market, which is a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gas emission allowances. I will sum it up quickly by saying that Quebec's carbon market meets the federal standard and is primarily designed for industry, electricity producers and importers, and distributors of fossil fuels. It does not apply to the agriculture sector, and businesses can voluntarily register to participate in the carbon market.

Outside of the carbon market and the carbon tax, Quebec and Canada have various fuel taxes, including the federal excise tax on gasoline, the Quebec fuel tax, and the greater Montreal area gas tax. Furthermore, the GST and QST are applied to the subtotal after the calculation of other taxes. In those provinces where it is applied, the federal fuel charge is added to other taxes on fuel. In Quebec, farmers are entitled to a refund of fuel taxes, which applies to the Quebec tax.

I have provided the context for this bill. I would now like to talk about the fair transition and the importance of agriculture in making this green shift.

The Bloc Qu  b  cois supports the principle of a just transition. This means that we recognize that it would be unfair to expect workers and their families, as well as farmers, to make this transition happen overnight, especially since they are the first victims of the crisis in the energy sector and of the challenges associated with climate change.

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Furthermore, even though farm fuels contribute to greenhouse gas emissions, emissions from the agricultural sector are caused primarily by livestock herds and the use of fertilizer. This does not in any way—on the contrary—prevent us from continuing to search for solutions that would reduce the energy used by grain dryers. In the short and medium term, significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in Canada must come from the oil and gas production sector, the production of coal-fired electricity and motor vehicle transportation.

● (1405)

The western provinces are largely responsible for Canada's increasing greenhouse gas emissions. We have known since 1990 that they need to make drastic changes to their economy and their energy infrastructure. The post-pandemic economic recovery, which is necessary, is a perfect opportunity to do that. If they head in that direction, which they must, the Bloc Québécois will be happy to show solidarity and support measures that provide relief to those for whom the transition is a real economic challenge: workers in polluting sectors, farmers and families.

This method releases greenhouse gases, but that needs to be put in context along with other Canadian greenhouse gas sources, the type of climate and available alternatives. Weather and climate affect agricultural costs of production. The fact that the charge applies to farm fuels significantly compounds that phenomenon. If alternative solutions are available, the charge must be applied so that farmers improve their methods and opt for cleaner technology. This is an issue, a dynamic, that deserves our attention as parliamentarians.

The goal of climate policy should be to adapt to the effects of climate change, since the consequences of extreme weather events affect us all. A tool like the carbon tax is meant to act as an incentive to change behaviour, in other words to encourage the transition to clean technologies and renewable energy in order to reduce emissions.

As I pointed out earlier in a question, it is quite likely that applying the fuel charge to farming businesses may not be so effective if it does not push farmers to reduce their carbon footprint. This issue also warrants closer study.

Under the Paris Agreement, Canada committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 30% from 2005 levels by 2030, to a total of 513 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. The Government of Canada has since revised its 2030 target upwards to a range of between 40% and 45% below 2005 levels.

Canada's emissions have increased by over 20% since 1990. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with Canada's agriculture sector increased 28% between 1990 and 2017, but have stabilized since 2005. Canada's agricultural economic sector emitted a total of 72 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in 2005.

In 2018, emissions from Canada's agriculture industry accounted for 59 megatonnes of greenhouse gases, or 8.1% of Canada's total GHG emissions. That is the figure and it is not that big. However, GHG emissions from on-farm fuel combustion were included in the total for the energy sector, while emissions related to farming fuels

were grouped with emissions from the forestry and fishing industries in the "other sectors" subcategory.

The calculations are complicated, but to summarize, stationary combustion sources in the agriculture and forestry industries for all of Canada accounted for 3.8 megatonnes in 2018. That is a large number, and efforts will have to be made to reduce the impact of agriculture and farming fuels on total GHG emissions.

However, there is more near-term potential for reducing GHG emissions in the oil and gas, electricity generation and transportation sectors. The sector-based GHG emission structure varies significantly from province to province, particularly depending on the method of electricity generation.

Historically, the provinces of Alberta and Ontario have been the biggest GHG emitters. In Quebec, agriculture accounts for 9.8% of emissions. By way of comparison, Quebec's transportation sector represents 43.3% of Quebec's emissions, while the electricity generation sector accounts for 0.3%.

Quebec's main climate challenge is road transportation, whereas the 18% increase in Alberta's GHG emissions between 2005 and 2017 was primarily due to oil and gas operations, which account for 50% of the province's total emissions.

In short, if we decide to spare farmers the burden of environmental taxes, the western provinces will have to engage in the energy transition, diversify their economies to gradually phase out oil and gas production, and stop producing coal-fired electricity.

All economic sectors must play a part in combatting climate change, but we must also assess how effective government GHG reduction policies are in relation to the effort they require from citizens, workers and businesses.

A just transition means taking environmental, social and economic objectives into account. The energy transition is not meant to come at the expense of workers or the most vulnerable. The challenge is to develop public policy approaches that allow us to move beyond seeing economy and ecology as mutually exclusive.

I know that Quebec farmers agree with this and would like to develop better practices. They have a key role to play in the solution.

In conclusion, I want to talk about the 2019 propane crisis, which was a big issue when I was first elected. My cellphone was quickly flooded with calls from farmers. As all members know, we must never allow such a situation to happen again. It presents far too many risks for our businesses, and we need to be acting on their behalf. We know that businesses are still too reliant on propane and natural gas for running various other types of machinery, such as grain dryers.

• (1410)

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to rise to speak to Bill C-234. I would like to acknowledge the member for Huron—Bruce, who is bringing forward this bill, which is a revival of what was called Bill C-206 in the 43rd Parliament. I would like to indicate that, as the New Democratic Party agriculture critic, I will be giving my support to the bill, demonstrating that we review every private member's bill that comes before us based on its merits and the principle behind it. I feel the principle behind this bill is sound.

I have been our party's agriculture critic for four years now. I have spent four years on the Standing Committee on Agriculture, and I am very familiar with the predecessor to this bill. I was present on the agriculture committee when we did a deep dive into the provisions of Bill C-206. As I will reflect later in my speech, this is something that the agricultural community is most definitely calling for.

Before I get into that, it is important to set the table with regard to the difficulties that are being posed by climate change. The fact that human-caused climate change is occurring is no longer in dispute. It is very much a verifiable scientific fact, and many parts of the world are starting to face a climate emergency. It is one that will manifest itself in increasingly costly ways, not only to our natural environment, but also to our economy. We will see more extreme weather events, and it is our farmers who will suffer because, as I have heard time and time again at the agriculture committee, farmers are on the front lines of this fight.

This climate emergency is leading to changing precipitation patterns. We are seeing increased occurrences of catastrophic flooding and catastrophic droughts. These are going to have real economic costs. We saw that in my home province of British Columbia last year when, in the space of a few months, we went from a heat dome and massive wildfires to flooding that essentially cut the port of Vancouver off from the rest of the country. That led to major disruptions for our agricultural producers in the prairie provinces.

We as a country need to acknowledge this fact, and we need to put in place policy that is going to treat it like the serious matter that it is. It is the fight of the 21st century. Unfortunately, the continuing political fight that we have seen in this place over the carbon tax has ignored many of these realities and it has sidelined the leadership that we as a country need to take against climate change. However, what has been missing in this conversation is the important role that farmers and our agriculture sector do and can play in this conversation. That centres on the theme of carbon sequestration.

It is time for us to start placing our farmers up on a pedestal and acknowledging the important work they do. The only way we are going to meaningfully solve this climate change problem is if we significantly reduce the amount of carbon in our atmosphere and find ways to put it in the soil where it can play a stable role.

I have been inspired by so many in Canada's agriculture sector who are adopting regenerative farming practices. They are going beyond sustainability as a principle and are observing the patterns and principles in ecosystems to reduce their input and help purify

### *Private Members' Business*

the air, the water, rebuild the soil and increase diversity. In this way, our agricultural leaders are building resilience against climate change by tackling and overcoming challenges without being completely overwhelmed by them, and we must find ways as parliamentarians in this place to be strong and firm partners with those leaders.

In 2020, I took a trip to the interior of southern British Columbia where I talked with ranchers who had won sustainability awards. I do want to acknowledge the work of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, which are showing the way by trying to replicate the natural ecosystem that used to exist on Canada's Prairies and that requires a symbiotic relationship between plants and animals through rotational grazing techniques, which actually leads to healthier grasslands, which in their own way are putting carbon back into the soil where we need to put it.

Despite the advances that we have made in good agricultural practices in the fight against climate change, it is still an inescapable fact that farmers today do depend on fossil fuels. This is especially true when it comes to the drying of grain.

• (1415)

Many of my colleagues here will remember the wet autumn of 2019, which was called the harvest from hell. That was extensive and prolonged rainfall that happened right before and during the harvest in many parts of Canada. Of course, the early snowfalls and frosts also ruined many crops. Farmers in those situations were forced to use propane and natural gas heaters to dry their grain. Without the use of those dryers, their cash crops would have become worthless because rot would have set in, and it would have been a massive economic hit.

As it stands, there are currently no viable commercial alternatives to the use of propane and natural gas for the operation of these dryers. This was explained very clearly to the agriculture committee in the previous Parliament. During that time, when we were examining Bill C-206, we received eight briefs and had 29 witnesses over six meetings. In particular, I will highlight some of the testimony that we received from the Agri-Food Innovation Council.

The council acknowledged that we want to move to alternative and renewable energy sources. It also pointed out the fact that we are not yet at a point where farmers have those alternative options available. Many of the renewable or clean energy options are still in an experimental stage and they have nowhere near the scaling-up capability that farmers need to employ them on a mass scale. With that being said, there was also an acknowledgement that Ottawa can play a key role in helping develop further research into alternative, renewable and clean energy sources.

*Private Members' Business*

I also want to acknowledge that we had several witnesses come before the committee who expressed concern with Bill C-206. However, again, when I pressed them on the fact that there were no viable alternatives, I did not, in my own opinion, hear a convincing argument to lead me to go the other way. There is a very real interest in trying to repeat the work that we did at the agriculture committee. Let us bring Bill C-234 there, so that we can again do a deep dive into it and find ways, hopefully, of making some slight improvements.

It does not need to be said in this place that the value of our agricultural crops out of the Prairies, especially with grains and canola, numbers in the billions of dollars and is an incredible economic driver in those regions. Those sectors need to have our support, especially when they are facing challenges and especially when no viable alternatives exist. It is a significant part of our economy as many of my colleagues will attest.

In the final couple of minutes with respect to Bill C-234, I will say that the main thing it would do is make definitions as to what a qualifying farm fuel is and what eligible farming machinery is. With respect to a qualifying farm fuel, the bill would be making sure that natural gas and propane are provided in the list of fuels. With respect to eligible farming machinery, I think this is an improvement on the previous Bill C-206. The bill is specifically making reference to grain drying but also making room for providing heating or cooling in a building. I will just highlight that this particular section might be too broad a definition, and it is something that I am interested in taking a closer look at in committee. That being said, there is some room for improvement and some room for negotiation on hopefully improving this bill and reporting it back to the House.

In conclusion, I hope that, in our conversation on Bill C-234, we also take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredible costs that farmers are bearing. This has been detailed quite considerably by the National Farmers Union, which has recognized that Canadian farm debt is now listed at over \$100 billion and has nearly doubled since the year 2000. Since 1990, the corporations that supply fertilizers, chemicals, machinery, fuels, technology services and credit have captured nearly all of farm revenues, leaving farmers with just 5% of the total revenue.

While I think that the measures in Bill C-234 are going to have a measurable impact, we also need to use this opportunity to have a broader conversation on how we support farmers and make sure that, in most of the work that they are doing, the financial rewards are in fact staying in their pockets.

• (1420)

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am certainly thankful for this opportunity to speak up for Canadian farmers. I want to thank my colleague, the member for Huron—Bruce, for carrying this private member's bill, Bill C-234, which I am hoping we all will support today and moving forward. I want to build on what my colleague was speaking about in his presentation, but I want to change it a bit and focus my intervention on what the agriculture sector is already doing, what it has accomplished and how this bill can help.

It is simply a fact that our farmers and ranchers have demonstrated a proud history of environmental stewardship as innovators. This has all been done on the farm of their own volition without government intervention or someone telling them what to do. Canadian farmers have adopted practices, including conservation tillage, that have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by more than half a million tonnes per year. They have done that because it is the right thing to do. They have done that because it is more efficient.

Other sectors, such as the laying hen industry, have also reduced their energy usage by more than 40%, their water consumption by 70% and their land footprint by 80%. Our country was one of the first in the world to have an outcome-based, certified sustainable beef program. Again, it is not because the government instructed this to be done or because of government oversight and regulation. Canadian cattlemen did this because it was the right thing to do.

In the service of our land and environment, as a result of this program, our cattle ranchers now provide more than 68% of the wildlife habitat in Canada. This represents the protection of a key part of Canada's biodiversity. In fact, our Canadian grasslands are the most endangered ecosystem on the planet. I know that very few Canadians would really understand that or think it is the case, but our ranch families across the country are the ones protecting this very delicate ecosystem.

If members have not seen it, I would encourage everyone in the House to see the documentary *Guardians of the Grasslands*, which is a partnership between the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Nature Conservancy of Canada. It highlights how endangered our grasslands are when it comes to protecting biodiversity. I am very proud of the fact that the documentary was filmed in my riding of Foothills on the world-renowned Waldron ranching co-op in southern Alberta.

What does this all mean? What this means is that Canadian farmers have long understood that sustainability and sound science are good for farming. They are good for their families, but they are also good for their bottom line. However, we need to have their backs as well. We need to be there to support them, especially when there are no other alternatives available.

By moving forward with Bill C-234, we can enable our farmers to remain competitive in a global marketplace. It would provide them with the tools they need to further their investments in sustainability and new innovation. It would also exempt natural gas and propane from the carbon tax, which would allow them to heat their barns and dry their grain at an affordable price to remain competitive.

This bill is supported by all aspects of the agriculture sector, and I believe we need to recognize just how important that is. For example, the Agriculture Carbon Alliance, a coalition of 14 national farm organizations that represents more than 190,000 farm businesses and \$70 billion in farm cash receipts, is telling us this makes sense, and we should listen.

I want to provide a few quotes from some of the stakeholders who are supporting Bill C-234.

Dave Carey, co-chair of the Agriculture Carbon Alliance, said:

As a national coalition of industry-wide farm organizations, we are focused on prioritising practical solutions to ensure our farmers and ranchers can remain competitive and utilize the tools available to them where no alternative fuel sources exist. [Bill C-234] will provide economic relief for our members, freeing up the working capital they need to implement environmental innovations on farm.

Bob Lowe, president of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, said:

Beef farmers and ranchers are continuously looking at ways to environmentally improve operations and further contribute positively to Canada's climate change objectives. Bill C-234 will provide the much needed exemptions for critical farming practices including heating and cooling of livestock barns and steam flaking.

● (1425)

There are very real consequences to the Liberals' carbon tax. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business verified ran the numbers, and they are troubling. On average, in the first year of the Liberals' carbon tax, the average Canadian farmer was paying \$14,000 a year in carbon tax. Last year that went to \$45,000 for the average Canadian farmer. On April 1, this tax will go up yet again by another 25%. As a result of that, Canadian farmers will be paying, on average, \$70,000 per operation. As many of my colleagues have said this afternoon, the margins are very tight in this industry. These taxes, as they go up, are taxing Canadian farmers out of business, which is nonsensical when we understand what a critical role they play in not only feeding Canadians but in carrying the burden of helping to feed the world.

I want to give members a couple of examples from my riding. I put the word out and asked some of my farmers and producers to provide me with their carbon tax bills if they were willing to do so. From Hilltop Dairy in Fort MacLeod, the Van Hierden family shared its carbon tax bills with me, and in 2021 the bills were more than \$7,000 for one farm. By comparison, Mountain View Poultry near Okotoks, the Kielstra farm, paid more than \$12,000 in carbon taxes in January alone. That is one month.

My colleague and the Liberal Party have talked about supporting Bill C-8, which would have a carbon tax rebate program in it for agriculture. That rebate would be \$1.70 per \$1,000 of expenditures. That is a fraction of what Canadian farmers are now paying for the carbon tax, so it would be nowhere near carbon neutral. In contrast, Bill C-234 would ensure that farmers do not have to pay that carbon tax in the first place, which would be more efficient when it comes to the bureaucracy and the cost of administering a carbon tax rebate, which does not at all do what it is intended to do. Bill C-234 would certainly allow Canadian farmers to be able to do what they do best and be able to continue on with their operations.

### *Private Members' Business*

To dig down a little deeper and show how unsustainable this program would be, the cost of production per acre in Alberta is about \$400. The carbon tax will add more than \$3 in costs next year, but in 2030 that will increase to \$11, to \$18 per acre in Saskatchewan and to \$13 per acre in Manitoba. That would eat up whatever profits were there for the farmers to be able to continue on with their livelihoods.

As well, the cost of food will continue to increase. The farmers have nowhere to pass on these expenses, so as a result we are already seeing the cost of living skyrocket. As Canadians across this country are concerned about their ability to put food on the table for their families, this increasing carbon tax will even exacerbate the cost of living crisis we are now facing.

What we have talked about in the House many times is the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It is going to further cause global food crises. Canadian farmers want to be there to help, but they will not be able to do that, because a farm-killing carbon tax that is being brought in by the Liberal government will make it impossible for our Canadian farmers to do what they do best, which is provide high-quality and sustainable food to feed not only Canadians but the world.

I know that is what Canadian farmers want to do. They are more than willing to carry that burden and that responsibility. They want to do it, but if they are going to do it, we have to give them everything they need to be able to compete on global markets and also to be able to compete here at home.

Now more than ever we need to ensure that Canadian farmers have the support and the structure in place for them to be successful, and by exempting farm fuels like natural gas and propane from the carbon tax, we would ensure that they are able to stay in business. I am asking all of my colleagues in the House to support my colleague from Huron—Bruce and Bill C-234 to help Canadian farmers across this country.

● (1430)

**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.

[*Translation*]

It being 2:30 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:30 p.m.)





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