



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

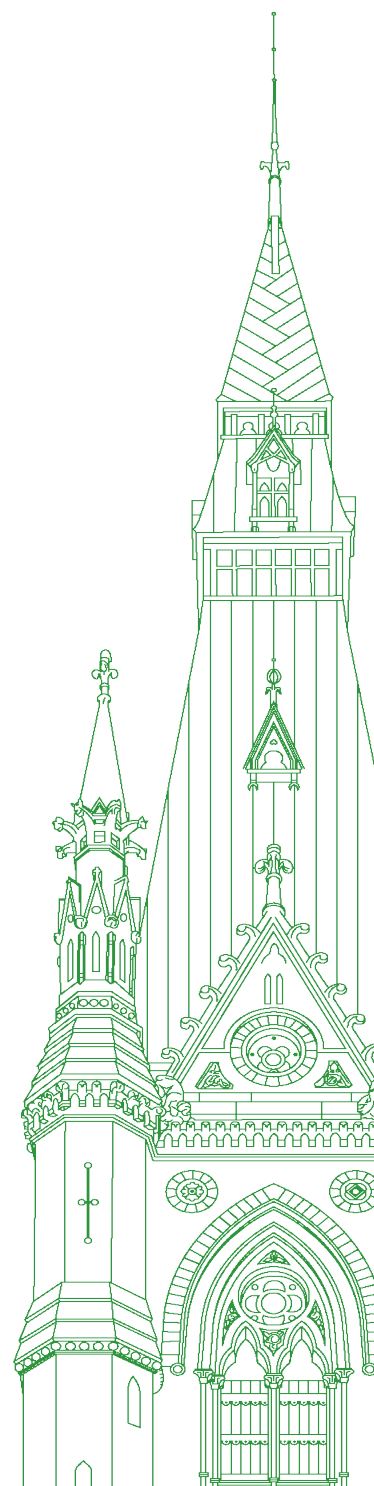
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 054
Wednesday, April 6, 2022

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

The House met at 2 p.m.

Prayer

● (1400)

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: It being Wednesday, I will call on the hon. member for Sarnia—Lambton to lead us in the singing of the national anthem.

[Members sang the national anthem]

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

CHABAD

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, wherever we travel in the world today, we are likely to see a Chabad house. Chabad is one of the largest Jewish Hasidic movements. Chabad institutions seek to satisfy religious, social, cultural, educational and humanitarian needs throughout the world. Right now, Chabad is playing a leading role in Ukraine, providing humanitarian support and assistance.

The good works and outreach of Chabad was a vision of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, known as the Rebbe. People would travel across the world to his home in Crown Heights to seek his wisdom and advice. The Rebbe was born in April 1902, and this week would have been his 120th birthday.

In Judaism, 120 is a very special age, and I want to use this special occasion to congratulate the Rebbe for all his good works and to congratulate all of the Chabad envoys in Canada, including but not limited to, Rabbi Mendel and Sarah Raskin in Côte Saint-Luc, Rabbi Moishe and Nechama New in Hampstead, and Rabbi Moshe and Dina Krasnanski in TMR, who do such incredible work in my riding.

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BANKING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, not too long ago, the federal government considered allowing new financial providers to enter Canada's protected banking sector. Canada's big banks argued that additional competition

would limit their ability to deliver in-person services and that they would act in the interest of our communities. However, these promises have been forgotten by at least one Toronto head office.

Over 2,000 of my constituents on Grand Manan were recently notified that the island's only bank would be shutting down. The bank says it is a business decision, even though Grand Manan is a very prosperous fishing community. Scotiabank wants islanders to take a 90-minute ferry trip to the mainland, which costs \$40, plus drive another 30 minutes for in-person banking services.

If this closure happens, it would signal to the entire industry that charging for in-person services is acceptable. Other G7 nations have taken steps to ensure rural communities are not being gouged by an uncaring banking sector. The Liberal government must do something to stand up for communities like Grand Manan.

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● (1405)

TARTAN DAY

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is Tartan Day in Canada and the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320. We celebrate the contributions of Scots and their descendants to the fabric of Canadian society. Among early settler communities, Scots helped map Canada, build railways, create national parks and found universities.

While we know the stories of Scottish Canadians such as Alexander Graham Bell, Agnes Macphail, Nellie McClung and many prime ministers, almost five million of us claim Scottish descent and have our own stories. We proudly share our Scottish culture, from Gaelic singing to Highland dancing to piping and Scottish country dancing, which has been carefully passed on through generations.

Today, and always, we celebrate the friendship between Canada and Scotland and the modern-day opportunities, including Gaelic Nova Scotia Month in May.

Canada is Alba ri ghaillibh a chèile.

Statements by Members

[Translation]

DOMINIC JEAN

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on March 24, what started out as a terrible fire turned into something truly tragic for all of Lac-Saint-Jean.

I wish to commend the exemplary bravery of Dominic Jean, a father from Normandin who tragically died in the line of duty.

Mr. Jean was a courageous and passionate man who did not hesitate to fill in for a sick colleague that night. While fighting a blaze at a dairy farm in Saint-Edmond-les-Plaines, Mr. Jean found himself stuck when the roof caved in. He was pulled from the rubble by his equally brave colleagues, but sadly, he succumbed to his injuries.

Mr. Jean had worked as a firefighter with the Régie intermunicipale de sécurité incendie GÉANT for the past 18 years. This man, who was known to have a heart of gold, gave his life to protect our community.

On behalf of everyone from Lac-Saint-Jean, I want to extend my sincere condolences to his family, Marie-Pier, Marc-Antoine and Isabelle, as well as firefighters from the Régie intermunicipale, who lost a brother and a friend.

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[English]

TORONTO RAPTORS SUPERFAN

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Nav Bhatia arrived humbly in Canada in 1984 coming from anti-Sikh riots in India. He struggled to find work as a mechanical engineer and decided to work as a car salesman. With dedication and hard work, Nav became a success in the automotive industry. He also eventually became a Canadian icon and the Toronto Raptors superfan.

During Sikh Heritage Month we celebrate the many contributions Canadians of Sikh heritage have made to our country and communities. We also must recognize the systemic racism many Sikhs have faced in Canada. In honour of Sikh Heritage Month, I will be hosting a free screening of CBC's *Superfan: The Nav Bhatia Story* on Monday, April 11 at 7 p.m. at Film.ca Cinemas in Oakville. Nav Bhatia will be in attendance to join me for a Q and A session following the screening. Though tickets are limited, I invite everyone in my riding of Oakville North—Burlington to register for this free event through my social media and attend.

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RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, Pope Francis met an indigenous delegation and offered a clear, public apology for the role played by certain Catholic entities in the implementation of the federal government's residential school policy. The Pope also expressed his desire to come to Canada soon.

This critical step happened because of sincere engagement between indigenous peoples and the church. Many indigenous peo-

ples are active members of the Catholic Church. Indigenous Catholics, such as Saint Kateri, lived out church teachings on love, forgiveness, universal human dignity and subsidiarity. These ideas provide the clear basis for rejecting any project of cultural assimilation or state domination of the family.

Christianity is about following the teachings of Jesus regardless of the spirit of the age or the consequences. History is full of examples of Christians who failed to fully live out these teachings, and I am one of them.

The call of Jesus to sacrificial love and to the affirmation of human dignity is always radical, and in an age when colonialism was widely accepted, many church organizations were simply not radical enough. Some here wish to use these failures to attack the church and further subvert it to state power, but that is the wrong direction and would enable other abuses. The failures of the residential school era should point to the need for the church to be an authentic moral witness for Christian teachings on truth and justice, regardless of government policy or the spirit of the age.

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LOCAL JOURNALISM

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, local journalism is a public good that we need to defend, and on behalf of my community, I want to recognize the 50th anniversary of our local Beach Metro Community News. Its first edition was four pages with an editorial that said, "[Our] success as a newspaper will depend on the quality of the news we write and the community's response to the idea of a paper that will reflect and comment on their interests and concerns."

Both the quality of its work and our community's response and support has kept the paper going these 50 years. As a non-profit committed to free distribution, the Beach Metro relies on a small but mighty staff. It would not exist without its huge network of volunteers. I thank everyone who has helped make the paper what it is.

Fifty years is worth celebrating, but we also need to recognize the reality that relying solely on declining advertising revenue puts local journalism in jeopardy. I therefore send my congratulations to Beach Metro for reaching such an important milestone.

To its readers, let us directly support our community paper in its new fundraising drive and see it through another 50 years. It is a local public good that we need to defend.

● (1410)

RECOGNITION OF DAVENPORT RESIDENTS

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is my absolute pleasure to rise in the House today to recognize two residents in my downtown Toronto riding of Davenport who were listed in MacLean's power list of 50 Canadians.

The first is Cameron Bailey, who served as the CEO of the Toronto International Film Festival where he leads a team that annually delivers an exceptional program of international and Canadian cinema. He is a champion for the arts, a champion for Canadian and international talent, and his work has attracted worldwide recognition of TIFF.

Our second resident is Nick Saul who is the co-founder and CEO of Community Food Centres Canada, an organization that tackles food insecurity by building health, belonging and social justice through the power of good food. With 14 centres across the country serving almost 180 communities, Nick has successfully started a good food movement that is improving the lives of millions of Canadians.

Both Cameron and Nick are doing incredible work that is changing how we think and live. I have always said that Davenport is filled with amazing leaders, and I am proud to have MacLean's recognize two of them on The Power List.

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OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is budget day, and this Liberal government will be reaping significant additional revenues paid for by hard-working oil and gas workers in Alberta and corporate taxes from oil and gas companies.

Despite what the lefties will tell us, there are no subsidies for oil and gas companies. The government should be saying, "thank you". However, it is the Liberals and the other fringe parties that want to phase out oil and gas.

Backed by the NDP, the Bloc and the Greens, the Prime Minister is determined to kill the goose that is laying the golden egg. Anywhere else in the world on budget day, governments would be saying "thank you" to the thousands of workers in the energy industry for driving this economic recovery, but not in Ottawa. All Albertans can expect here from the speNDP-Liberal government is the middle finger made so famous by the Prime Minister's father.

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HIGH-SPEED INTERNET

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for rural communities, including many in Labrador, the pandemic has magnified how essential access to reliable Internet really is. Our government understands that, which is why, in 2020, we launched the universal broadband fund, a \$2.75-billion investment that will help connect every Canadian to high-speed Internet by 2030.

Statements by Members

Today, I want to share the great news that the Government of Canada will invest over \$23 million to connect more than 1,500 households in rural areas across Labrador to high-speed Internet. Funding will be allocated to the Nunatsiavut Government for a project benefiting the Inuit communities of Rigolet, Postville, Makkovik, Nain, Hopedale and the first nation community of Natuashish. There is also a separate contract of big-land networks to connect the residents of North West River and the Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation.

These investments ensure that rural communities here are no longer limited in opportunity or service because of a lack of broadband connectivity. We are listening and we are responding to the needs of Canadians.

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NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Corey Tochor (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government likes to talk a big game when it comes to green energy and following science, yet when the opportunity to follow through presents itself, the Liberals let themselves be blinded by ideology, ignoring the science of the consensus by excluding nuclear energy from Canadian green bonds, and lumping nuclear energy in with alcohol, tobacco and gambling. Others, such as the EU and the IPCC, recognize that nuclear energy is key to a sustainable future.

I join over 10,000 people who have already signed my petition asking for the government to accept the science, end partisan opposition to nuclear and support clean energy in Canada for the next century.

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● (1415)

HUMBOLDT BRONCOS

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone in the House and in this country remembers where they were four years ago today when the Humboldt Broncos hockey team was involved in a horrific crash. It became a sad day in Saskatchewan, across our nation and around the world. Fifteen young lives were tragically taken away from us far too soon. The outpouring of support was immediate. Who can forget the images from across our great country of people leaving hockey sticks outside their doors? During times like this, it is hard to find the silver lining and to answer the question of why something so tragic would happen, but the crash brought out the best of our country and inspired people to register as organ donors.

This tragedy showed us the true spirit of Saskatchewan and all Canadians. Through horrific circumstances, the best of what we are comes through. May God bless those who experienced loss.

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***JIMMY BEAURIVAGE VIGNEUX**

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about Jimmy Beaurivage Vigneux's extraordinary work.

Jimmy spent over 10 years promoting the economic development and vitality of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve. Thanks to his leadership, the Société de développement commercial, our business development corporation, made a truly remarkable contribution during the pandemic, modelling resilience, being present in our neighbourhoods and organizing creative events ranging from epic scooter races to the Grande Fabrique, the largest outdoor gathering of Quebec artisans.

Jimmy is a father of three and a committed environmentalist. He pushed for businesses to engage in a green transition and founded Mission 1000 tonnes. Mr. Vigneux will keep working with the organization to mobilize people who want to build a more sustainable and environmentally responsible society. As a volunteer, he rallied over 20,000 people to help clean up 240 tonnes of trash from our rivers over the past four years.

Imagine what he can accomplish when he is doing it full time.

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*[English]***WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY**

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday was invisible work day. Invisible work is mostly done by women. Family care, elder care, family business supports and volunteering are integral parts of the economy, yet this unpaid work is not respected. This lack of recognition is not by accident: It is rooted in gender discrimination. Invisible work is gendered. It is women and girls who carry the load.

[Translation]

Worldwide, people put in 12 billion hours of unpaid caregiving and domestic work every day.

[English]

It is time to acknowledge the size of this invisible workforce and its value. In Canada, invisible work equates to \$350 billion per year. That is 16% of the country's GDP. The women and girls that take on invisible work are valuable. As a government, we must recognize it in our words, measure it in our economy and adopt policies to finally achieve gender equality.

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*[Translation]***DISTRICT 31**

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on April 21, I will be one of the nearly two million Quebecers who will be left feeling empty. There is a whole slew of us who will be facing a huge void every Monday through Thursday at 7 p.m., because *District 31* is going off the air.

We have lost Nadine and Poupou, but losing Chiasson, Gagné, Bissonnette and the rest of the team is a major blow. It is unimaginable to think that we are going to lose the thrill of playing stage manager, dictating what Luc Dionne should have written before Annie tore it apart, and having the entire production team deliver a gem that unfolds at a breakneck pace and keeps us on the edge of our seats.

I thank Luc, not only for his monumental television series, but also for having given Quebecers a nightly ritual, a chance for families to be together, a topic to discuss around the water cooler. We will chat about it again soon, in front of the fire.

I would also like to thank Fabienne Larouche and Michel Trudeau, from AETIOS Productions, and Radio-Canada.

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● (1420)

*[English]***HUMBOLDT BRNCOS**

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, God looked down on his frozen tundra and said, "I need a skater," so God made a hockey player.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to tussle with the enemy, yet sportsman enough to shake his hand when it is over, somebody not afraid to lose, but with enough heart to despise not winning," so God made a hockey player.

God said, "I need somebody to stand in front of a rush of sticks and skates, ice the bruises that show, rub the ones that do not, suit back up and do it all over again because their teammates are counting on them," so God made a hockey player.

God said, "I need somebody with enough desire to never quit, enough passion to never be good enough and enough grit to take a piece of frozen rubber to the cheek occasionally," so God made a hockey player.

God said, "I need someone who is an athlete, a warrior, unselfish, hard-working, strong-willed, sharp-eyed and quick-witted, yet human enough to look around, pause and proudly call his teammates his family," so God made a hockey player.

On the fourth anniversary, we remember our Humboldt Broncos, and I ask everyone to leave some sticks on the porch tonight just in case they need a spare one upstairs.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION REPORT

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, 600 years ago, when the Europeans claimed the Americas as their land, part of the justification they used came from the doctrine of discovery, which was a statement from the Pope at the time. It advocated for the superiority of people on the basis of national origin or racial, religious, ethnic or cultural difference. Why should that matter now? This seems like ancient history, yet it was addressed in both the UNDRIP and in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report. Surely, we are well past the time to throw these types of racist, illegal, immoral and false ideologies where they belong.

We need to continue to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report recommendations 45 to 47, to develop the royal proclamation of reconciliation, and to ensure that these concepts are not reflected in any Canadian law or policy. Hopefully, in addition to the apology from the Pope, there will be movement on eradicating this doctrine from the church as well.

Mahsi.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe there has been agreement among the parties for a moment of silence on the loss of the players in the Humboldt crash.

[A moment of silence observed]

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

HOUSING

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, David is a 28-year-old husband and father, and is the owner of a small business that employs three people. He and his wife both work more than full-time, but he has told me that they can never afford a home. David says he feels like a failure and like he is letting his family down. Like most Canadians, David does not come from money or a rich family. Apart from winning the lottery, there is literally no chance that he will ever be able to afford a home.

My question for the Prime Minister is this. What would he like to say to David?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have heard from Canadians across the country, like David and others, who are facing challenges with the rising cost of living and with the crushing pressures of the housing market. That is why we are focused on supporting them.

We made a promise to David, and to Canadians like him across the country, that we would have their backs through the difficult two years of the pandemic and beyond, and that is exactly what we continue to do.

In tomorrow's budget, we will see significant investments in housing and in supports for families, in a way that continues to grow our economy for families from coast to coast to coast for years to come.

• (1425)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that the Liberals' housing programs are helping no one. Young people like David are not interested in programs such as sharing the equity of their home with the government. In fact, it would appear that not many people across the country are interested. There have only been nine applications to the shared equity housing program. It is a bit of an embarrassment. In fact, the Liberals do not seem to have a solution to the housing crisis.

Can the Prime Minister admit that, actually, he does not have a clue as to what to do with the housing crisis, and as long as he is Prime Minister, young people in Canada are just out of luck?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2017, we moved forward with the first national housing strategy that brought forward significant investments in programs to support families. At the same time, we recognize that there is no one solution to the housing challenge.

We need to keep moving forward with a broader array of supports that will help different families who are facing different challenges across the country. That is exactly what we have continually done. We have innovated, put forward supports and made sure that with investments that support families and ease their way into the housing market, we are going to be able to respond to this challenge.

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THE ECONOMY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the more money the government spends, the more the cost of everything goes up. There is no doubt that tomorrow we will see an irresponsible, high-tax, high-spend budget from the NDP-Liberal coalition: one that promises to drive up inflation.

The more money these guys spend, the more everything becomes more expensive. Canadians are worse off today than they were six years ago.

The Prime Minister is ignoring calls for a responsible budget. He is ignoring calls for tax relief for Canadians. The only people he seems to be listening to are the NDP, and the only reason he is doing that is so he can hold power. Is that not the truth?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative opposition spent the first two questions telling us we needed to do more to support Canadians and then spent this question saying we are doing far too much for Canadians.

We have made a commitment to have Canadians' backs while remaining fiscally responsible. That is exactly what we have done over these past six years. That is what we are going to continue to do with tomorrow's budget and with our investments in Canadians over the coming years.

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to public finances, the Prime Minister has even less credibility than Pinocchio.

Just talk to young Canadian families who, since 2015, have literally seen their dreams of home ownership evaporate. The inflation created by this Prime Minister has made it impossible to buy a home. Houses cost twice as much and interest rates are only going to go up.

Will the Prime Minister admit that his promises are empty and will he do something to give Canadians of all ages a break?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for years we have been making investments to support Canadian families, to support young people who want to buy their first home, and to help families who are less fortunate pay their rent.

We will continue to be there to support Canadians while remaining fiscally responsible. That is the choice we have made as a government. The Conservatives may say that we are doing too much for Canadians, but we know that we must continue to be there to support them. That is exactly what we will do for them, but also for the sake of economic growth.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what approach will the Prime Minister take tomorrow? The Liberal member for Pontiac, who calls herself fiscally responsible, let slip what is really being said on the Liberal backbenches. She said, “what I am sensing from my colleagues...is that we must spend money more wisely. We have to make a dollar stretch further.”

That is a harsh criticism of NDP-Liberal management. Tomorrow, will the Prime Minister be wise and responsible, or will he turn his back on his own caucus and carry on with the NDP election platform?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, two years ago, we heard the same thing from the Conservatives, who criticized us for spending too much to support families, small businesses and workers during this pandemic. That is what we did, and it helped our economy come back stronger than before and regain all the jobs that were quickly shed. We will continue to be there to support families. The Conservatives want us to do less for families, but we will continue to support Canadians and be fiscally responsible.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Environment and Climate Change served up a contradiction, first saying that he is waiting for environmental assessments on Bay du Nord and then talking about provincial jurisdiction. A Liberal talking about provincial jurisdiction is interesting, to say the least.

For the sake of consistency and clarity, and to give a smidgen of credibility to the plan for reducing greenhouse gases, should the Prime Minister not immediately announce that he will not be approving the Bay du Nord project?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, nearly seven years ago, we were elected to show that economic growth and environmental protection, the fight against climate change, go hand in hand. That is exactly what we have done for several years now. This is the most ambitious and concrete plan that Canada has ever seen to reduce greenhouse gases, and it is coupled with meaningful investments to help families, help workers, make it through this period of energy transformation.

We will continue to be there, proving that we understand that the economy and the environment always go together.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are finding out that the Bay du Nord project is going to be or is in the process of being approved. This comes as no surprise to anyone. We are talking about one billion barrels.

The IPCC harshly criticized those countries that are shirking their responsibilities. It did not name names, but we understood that it was talking about Canada. There is a major inconsistency between the government's proposed reduction plan and the increase in emissions that will result from this project.

Does the Prime Minister think that the IPCC is wrong and that it made a mistake?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for several years now, we have been following the science and the best recommendations of experts here in Canada and around the world to implement the most ambitious and concrete plans we have ever had as a country, in order to protect the environment, fight climate change, create economic growth and prepare for the economy of the future.

We are completely transforming our economy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It will take time to get there, but we will be there with as much determination as Canadians expect of us all.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the IPCC report makes it absolutely clear that we are failing in doing enough to stop the climate crisis. Instead of presenting a real plan to fight the climate crisis, the government is doubling down on more fossil fuel subsidies with a carbon capture tax credit.

Why does the government continue to insist on subsidizing wealthy oil and gas companies, instead of investing in clean energy and workers?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians know what is at stake in the fight against climate change. It is why we are stepping up our climate mission by committing more than \$100 billion to climate action. We are ensuring that we reduce methane emissions by 75% by 2030 and transition to a net-zero electricity grid by 2035. We are also doubling our commitment, to \$5.3 billion, to help developing countries fight climate change and protect biodiversity. We will continue delivering ambitious and achievable climate action that protects our communities and builds a healthy future for everyone.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the IPCC report was clear. We have not taken sufficient action to combat the climate crisis. The government continues to increase oil subsidies with a carbon capture tax credit instead of presenting a real plan.

Why does the government keep increasing wage subsidies instead of investing in workers and clean energy?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have one of the most comprehensive emissions reduction plans in the world. It will deliver clean air and a strong economy for all Canadians.

We have credibly outlined the contributions that each sector must make to achieve our climate targets, and I am not the only one to say so. The Canadian Climate Institute, Equiterre, Clean Prosperity and other leading scientists have all approved our plan.

We promised an ambitious and achievable plan that will help reduce pollution and create opportunities for Canadians, and that is exactly what our emissions reduction plan will do.

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• (1435)

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will witness the Liberal government's very first NDP budget. The picture will not be pretty. Canadians should expect a tax-and-spend budget that will make inflation even worse than it is today, with gobs and gobs of unfocused spending, deficits as far as the eye can see and of course higher taxes.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether his budget will deliver a plan to fight the skyrocketing cost of living in Canada?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as with every Liberal budget, our focus is on supporting Canadians and growing the economy for years to come. That is exactly what we are doing by making responsible investments in a fiscally responsible framework. That is what Canadians expect and that is what we will be delivering through investments in housing, investments to fight climate change and prepare for the clean economy, investments in indigenous communities and making sure we are growing the economy in ways that help the middle class and everyone working hard to join it. That is our focus.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every Liberal budget is a tax-and-spend budget. More Liberal tax-and-spend poli-

cies mean even worse inflation. Wages have not kept up with the cost of living, while the cost of groceries, gas, housing and pretty well everything else has become unaffordable. Millions of middle-class families have fallen behind.

Remember when the Prime Minister promised to stand up for the middle class and those wanting to join it? What happened to that promise?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, global inflation caused first by this pandemic and now by Vladimir Putin's illegal war on Ukraine is putting pressure on families, from food prices to gas. Just as we did through the pandemic, we will continue to have Canadians' backs and make life more affordable for families, seniors, the middle class and those working hard to join it.

We increased the Canada child benefit to match the cost of living. The Conservatives voted against that. We moved forward with \$10-a-day child care for families within the next five years. The Conservatives voted against it.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: On GIS for vulnerable seniors, more support for students and more affordable housing, the Conservatives continue to oppose.

The Deputy Speaker: Just because we made it through 11 questions without a whole lot of heckling does not mean we have to start.

The hon. member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have had enough. The cost of living and inflation are at a 30-year high, and Canadians overburdened. Everything is more expensive and wages are not going up.

The government does not realize how stressful this is for thousands of Canadians. The media and our constituents are telling us about untenable situations and about the difficult choices that have to be made, such as deciding between buying food or paying rent.

Will the Prime Minister commit to presenting a budget that tackles inflation or will he let Canadians continue to suffer as a result of his policies?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for years now, one of our top priorities has been making life more affordable for Canadians.

Extreme weather events, supply chain issues, war in Ukraine and the end of the pandemic have all driven food prices up worldwide. We are taking important steps, such as launching the local food infrastructure fund, which will support community-based, not-for-profit organizations with a mission to reduce food insecurity.

We will continue to be there to make responsible investments in families and growth, to be there for Canadians, in contrast to the Conservatives' proposed austerity.

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[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the last election, the Prime Minister cut and pasted from the Conservative housing plan and promised Canadians, "Houses shouldn't sit empty when so many Canadians are trying to buy a home. So, we are going to ban foreign ownership in Canada for the next two years." However, he has done nothing of the sort.

Why does the Prime Minister habitually promise things he has no intention of delivering on?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will point out that the Conservative Party's marquee promise around housing was to give tax breaks to wealthy landlords to help them sell their buildings, things that would not have helped anything or any ordinary Canadians working hard to afford their homes.

That is why we moved forward with the 2017 national housing strategy, and that is why in tomorrow's budget we will be making significant investments in housing and in supporting Canadians with the range of solutions that are necessary. There is no one solution. There are only meaningful efforts across the board by the government to make sure that things get better for Canadians.

• (1440)

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, real estate costs have risen sharply.

Under the Liberals, the average cost of a house doubled from \$434,000 to \$868,000. That is just insane. Young people cannot even dream of buying their first home. In the rental market, even shacks are out of reach.

The government created this real estate chaos, so will it now give a little hope to our young people, who are once again victims of its mismanagement?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, housing costs are a real concern for middle-class Canadians, especially young people.

That is why we helped over two million families get the housing they need. We invested \$72 million in the national housing strategy.

We supported the construction and renovation of over 440,000 housing units. We invested to create over 71,000 additional rental units.

There is still a lot of work to do, and we will keep doing it by making the necessary investments in families, communities and the economy.

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister promises, he spends, he fails, he spins and then he repeats. The Prime Minister cannot help himself, let alone help millennials who are stuck in their parents' basements. Even last week, he was in my home province of British Columbia promising more action on housing affordability. When millennials see that housing prices have doubled since 2015, when he was elected Prime Minister, they see through his empty words. Millennials are jaded. They are cynical about him, about his promises.

When is the Prime Minister going to admit his housing failures, or is he just going to blame others for his failures?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we recognize the pressures faced by Canadians in the housing market, particularly young Canadians, which is why, contrary to what the Conservatives are recommending, we are going to continue to invest in them and support them.

Over the past years, with our investments, we have helped over two million families get the housing they need. We have committed \$72 billion for the national housing strategy. We supported the creation and repair of over 440,000 homes. We have invested to increase rental units by over 71,000.

We recognize there is much more to do. With tomorrow's budget, that is what we are going to do.

* * *

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, is the highest authority on the issue.

I am not sure what the Prime Minister found that would call the IPCC's expertise into question, but if we take a good look at the announcement made at four o'clock this afternoon, the approval of the Bay du Nord project is a global disaster waiting to happen.

In this context, does anyone really think that Canada will meet its reduction targets in this twelfth plan? Is anyone really prepared to say that? Environment ministries should not have to do the dirty work of oil-loving governments.

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past few years, we have brought forward concrete and ambitious plans to tackle climate change. We are making the necessary transformations and emissions reductions. We will continue to get the job done and lead Canadians to a net-zero future.

Through investment and partnership and, above all, a commitment to follow the science, we will succeed in protecting Canada and the planet, while also creating good jobs for the middle class and for generations to come.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last year, the International Energy Agency warned that there should be a ban on any new oil and gas development projects in order to limit climate warming.

The science that the Prime Minister spoke about this week was from the IPCC. The IPCC says that there is no more room for fossil fuel expansion, period. We have three years to cap emissions. That means that Bay du Nord, and its one billion barrels of oil to be extracted over a 30-year period, should not have been approved.

How can the Prime Minister say he is listening to the science when he approved Bay du Nord?

• (1445)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have one of the most comprehensive emissions reduction plans in the world. It is designed to provide Canadians with clean air and a strong economy.

We have credibly outlined the contributions that each sector must make to achieve our climate targets. We will meet those targets with every decision and choice we make in the coming years.

I am not the only one to say that our plan is credible and concrete: The Canadian Climate Institute, Equiterre, Clean Prosperity and other leading scientists have all approved our plan.

We will always be there for Canadians in the fight against climate change.

* * *

FINANCE

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, every family in Canada is affected by the rising cost of food, gas and housing, among other things. That is called inflation.

The Liberal Prime Minister's policies have caused inflation to go up in Canada. Why? The reason is that, for the past seven years, this government has done nothing to keep spending under control. Worse, it invented new taxes that it increased last Friday.

We are 25 hours away from the tabling of the budget. For the first time in history, it will be an NDP-Liberal budget.

Could the leader of the NDP-Liberal government rise and tell the House that he will do the responsible thing by keeping spending under control and not raising taxes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, inflation is a global phenomenon caused by the end of the pandemic and Vladimir Putin's illegal war in Ukraine. This phe-

nomenon is putting pressure on families from one end of our country to the other.

We see the price of food and gas going up. That is why we continue to be there for Canadians. We will continue to make life more affordable for families, seniors and the middle class by building on what we have already, namely, increasing the Canada child benefit to reflect the cost of living, creating \$10-a-day child care services for families across the country, and increasing the guaranteed income supplement for the most vulnerable seniors, among other things.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I hope, what I believe and what my colleagues also believe is that we must spend money more wisely. We have to make a dollar stretch further.

I, a Conservative member, did not say that. It was my Liberal colleague from Pontiac, and she says she is speaking on behalf of her colleagues.

Once again, tomorrow, we will have a new budget, a new government, an NDP-Liberal government. Will the Prime Minister agree with his Liberal colleague and finally be responsible and recognize that he must not continue doing things the same way he has been for the past seven years, and instead keep spending under control and not increase taxes? That is what the Liberals are calling for.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every year at the same time, we hear the same old thing from the Conservatives, who support austerity. They say we should cut services and investments for Canadians. Fortunately for Canadians, we do not listen to the Conservative politicians, who want to cut spending for Canadians.

Instead, we are investing responsibly and wisely to create economic growth, bounce back from this pandemic, and help seniors, students and families. That is exactly what we have been doing for seven years. We are going to continue being responsible and investing in families.

[English]

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Canada's first-ever NDP-Liberal government budget, and the stakes have never been higher for my generation. Many of us cannot afford a house. We cannot afford groceries. We cannot afford to fill our tanks with gas. We know dental care is not going to solve it. Pharmacare is not going to solve it. Child care is not going to solve it. Spending more money is not going to solve it.

Educated, fully employed young people cannot get ahead in this country. What is going to be in the budget tomorrow to give us some hope for the future?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, to hear the Conservatives say that child care is not part of the solution for families is to see once again that the Conservatives just do not get it.

The fact of the matter is that the thousands of dollars that families are going to be saving with the cutting in half of child care costs as of this very year will make a huge difference in their ability to buy groceries and gas as prices continue to rise. Our choice to invest in families, to invest in students, to invest in support for Canadians as opposed to cutting services for them, as the Conservatives want to do, is the right one for all of Canada.

• (1450)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, most parents want to leave a legacy for their children. I know so many parents who save and go without luxuries so they can pass something on to their kids. However, under the current government runaway inflation is making saving nearly impossible, and out-of-control spending is saddling our children, like my seven-month-old son Eoghan, with debt they will never be able to pay off.

Will the Prime Minister stop mortgaging our children's future to fund his promises to the NDP?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 2015 we have been investing in families with a Canada child benefit, which Conservatives voted against, that gives hundreds of dollars a month, tax-free, to families who need it. We moved forward with a child care agreement right across the country that not only will cut child care costs in half this year but will reduce them to \$10 a day within five years right across the country. These are initiatives that not only support families now but also create economic growth that will leave our kids and our kids' kids better off for generations to come.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the IPCC report gave us a clear warning: If we do not act now, the hope of a livable future is burning up. However, the Liberals keep throwing fuel on the fire. Instead of focusing on investments in green energy and good jobs, they continue to hand out billions of dollars to big oil. Instead of capping oil and gas emissions, they plan on increasing oil and gas production. How does the Prime Minister expect Canada to meet its climate targets when he is paying big oil to pollute?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, we are committed to phasing out fossil fuel subsidies in the next two years. We have already phased out eight tax breaks for the sector.

This week we presented our emissions reduction plan. It goes line by line to cut emissions and will inform our approach to cap and cut emissions from oil and gas, which need to be part of the solution as we reach net zero by 2050. We are taking real action to fight climate change by committing over \$100 billion to climate action and making sure that polluting is no longer free anywhere across the country, despite the objections of Conservative politicians. We will continue our work.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last week the Prime Minister gave a huge thumbs-up to increased oil production, and this week the IPCC said the planet is now at the tipping point of irreversible climate catastrophe. The UN Secretary-General has called out government leaders—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, do I get to start over?

Last week the Prime Minister gave a thumbs-up to a massive increase in oil production. This week, the IPCC tells us the planet is now at the tipping point of irreversible climate catastrophe. The UN Secretary-General called out government leaders who are “saying one thing [on the environment], but doing another.” He says, “Simply put, they are lying. And the results will be catastrophic.”

We are talking about the future of our children here. This Prime Minister has clearly been carbon-captured. Why does he continue to rubber-stamp big-oil projects while the planet is on fire?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all Canadians know what is at stake in the fight against climate change, which is why we are stepping up our climate ambition by committing more than \$100 billion to climate action, by ensuring that we reduce methane emissions by 70% between now and 2030, and by transitioning to a net-zero-emitting electricity grid by 2035. We are also doubling our commitment to \$5.3 billion to help developing countries fight climate change and protect biodiversity. We will continue delivering ambitious and achievable climate action that protects our communities and builds healthy futures for everyone.

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians have been clear. They want good jobs, a healthy environment and a strong economy.

Last week the Minister of Environment and Climate Change unveiled the emissions reduction plan, outlining the next steps toward achieving these priorities for all. Can the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell us the objectives of this plan?

• (1455)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam for his incredibly strong hard work on the file. We know what is at stake in the fight against climate change, and the emissions reduction plan we tabled last week is one of the most comprehensive in the world. The emissions reduction plan invests \$9.2 billion into a credible climate solution and lays out sector by sector how we meet our goals. Our plan is about delivering clean air and a strong economy for Canadians.

I would like to thank leaders from the environment, business, public and private sectors for their support.

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FINANCE

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, rural Canadians cannot afford this speNDP-Liberal government. It has killed rural jobs in oil and gas, forestry, mining and agriculture. It has caused record inflation and piled on red tape that crushes small businesses. Western rural municipalities want the government to stop the carbon tax hike on fuel that makes everything more expensive. The NDP-Liberals say no. Conservatives asked the NDP-Liberals to scrap new taxes and rein in spending. They say no.

Will the NDP-Liberals get out of the way and stop making things worse for rural Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our investments in rural Canada continue as we move forward on broadband investments, on cell coverage investments and investments to support our farmers, our energy industries, and our fisheries and forestry industries. We know that rural Canadians work incredibly hard at a very important time for our economy and our future. We will be there to continue to support them every step of the way.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a really long “no”.

The NDP-Liberals, just like the Prime Minister just did, always talk about big spending and top-down government programs, but the results are record prices for fertilizer, for fuel and food, for heating and for housing. Rural Canadians pay a rural tax of over \$1,500 just to travel for medical care. None of those are luxuries. Farmers cannot change the distance to their fields or to the store. Rural jobs are not in office towers that are walking distance from home.

Why do the NDP-Liberals always either ignore or hurt rural Canadians with their tax, spend and fail agenda?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the past number of years we have continued to be there for rural Canadians, whether it is through investments in agriculture, whether it is support for small communities; whether it is reaching out to resource communities to prepare for the future. We will continue to stand by Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We will not simply fall back on slogans and easy solutions like the Conservatives do. We will work hand in hand with rural Canadians and indeed people from coast to coast to coast to build the kind of future we know everyone deserves to offer their kids and their grandkids.

Oral Questions

HOUSING

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, housing in the GTA is scarce and expensive, and it is getting worse. Home prices have doubled under this government, and Canada still has the fewest homes per capita of any G7 country. The government will muse about their so-called plans to fund affordable housing just to have their new NDP dance partners at every level of government oppose actual development of this housing.

When will the Prime Minister tell Canadians why he thinks only those with a trust fund deserve the dream of home ownership?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over 10 years the previous Conservative government withdrew the federal government's engagement in housing, and therefore we had to pick up an awful lot of slack since 2015. With the national housing strategy in 2017—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Let us hear the answers, please.

The hon. Prime Minister can start again.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, after 10 years of Conservatives choosing to underinvest in housing, for the past seven years we have been making up the slack by investing in communities, by investing in a national housing strategy worth around \$72 billion now and by continuing to move forward to support people in the GTA and across the country to be able to afford their homes, afford their rents and move forward in a responsible way.

That is what we have been focused on. That is what we will continue to do.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, more spending does not equal results. It equals more inflation, and Canadians cannot afford a home. Canada's fiscal house is on fire, and the NDP is pushing the Liberals to throw \$1.68 gasoline on it. Canadians know one thing about the upcoming budget: It is going to be expensive.

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister have the courage to tell Canadians that he could not get the trust of the majority of voters, so he decided to spend taxpayers' money and buy his majority here?

• (1500)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite wants to talk about results. Our investments in housing across this country have helped over two million families get the housing they need, have supported the creation and repair of over 440,000 homes and have invested to increase rental units by over 71,000, but we know there is more to do, which is why we will not be listening to Conservative politicians when they tell us to cut supports to Canadians. Instead we are going to continue to invest responsibly in families to help them build a better future for themselves and future generations.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois and the Prime Minister may disagree on health transfers, but we need to listen to what health care workers are telling us.

On Monday, all health care professionals, including doctors, nurses, psychologists, physios and support staff, called for a sustainable, unconditional increase in health transfers. They all denounced the federal government's underfunding and said that the government's one-time, conditional payments do not work. More than anything, they want to be heard.

Will the Prime Minister host a public summit on health care funding for health care personnel?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have worked with the provinces and territories throughout the pandemic to protect Canadians against COVID-19.

We have invested more than \$63 billion extra in the health care system because of the pandemic, because we knew that we had to be there for Canadians and we knew it was important to support health care personnel.

We will continue to be there to invest, to work with the provinces and territories, and, most importantly, to deliver on what Canadians expect from our health care systems across the country.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot dismiss out of hand the expertise of those responsible for health care. They are the backbone of the health care system.

Today, these men and women are calling for a substantial, recurrent, no-strings-attached increase in federal funding. They want to plan the future of health care. They want predictability.

Why will the Prime Minister not immediately commit to participating in a summit with them?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for two years, we have celebrated our health care heroes who have done an outstanding job of supporting Canadians during the pandemic.

We also listened to them. We heard that more investments are required and, more importantly, that our health care workers need better results and more support.

That is why we are going to be there. We promised to be there to increase health transfers, but we are going to do it in partnership with the provinces and territories to ensure that we get those results for workers and Canadians.

* * *

[English]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Russian dictator, Vladimir Putin, has the blood of Ukrainians on his hands as his soldiers have raped, tortured and slaughtered innocent civilians. These atrocities are war crimes and crimes against humanity. Putin must be stopped and Canada must do more to help. It is reported that President Zelenskyy directly asked Canada for Harpoon anti-ship missiles, but the Prime Minister said no.

Will the Prime Minister commit to sending Harpoon missiles to Ukraine today, not weeks from now but today, and help save Odessa?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the news of the senseless murders and systemic sexual violence toward innocent civilians in Bucha and elsewhere across Ukraine is egregious and appalling. We have seen throughout this conflict the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure by Russia across Ukraine.

We do believe that these crimes are war crimes and crimes against humanity. We are pursuing multiple international legal avenues in support of Ukraine, including at the International Criminal Court, and yes, we will continue to offer military aid to the Ukrainian forces.

* * *

• (1505)

HEALTH

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Prime Minister has not met his commitment to Canadians for 7,500 doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners. Oddly enough, at the health committee, we heard from the College of Family Physicians of Canada that we need at least 3,000 to 4,000 family doctors alone. Also, the Canadian Nurses Association states we are short about 60,000 nurses.

In this budget, will the speNDP-Liberal Prime Minister admit he is failing Canadians from Springhill to Tidnish, to Stewiacke, all of Nova Scotia and all Canadians, and commit to sustainable and predictable health care funding?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again we see the Conservatives are asking us to invest more in supporting Canadians while at the same decrying that we are investing anything to support Canadians.

Over the past two years, we invested an extra \$63 billion in health care supports for Canadians, and we have committed to working in partnership with provinces and territories to deliver both more investments and more results for Canadians when it comes to health care. We look forward to working with provinces and territories as partners as we deliver the support for Canadians that they very much need and deserve.

* * *

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have failed on trade compensation for dairy, wine, spirits and beer producers and P.E.I. potato farmers. They continue to fail Canadian agriculture with a punishing carbon tax. Let us review. The Liberals said the carbon tax would reduce emissions. That is false as emissions have gone up. The Liberals said that the carbon tax would be revenue-neutral. It is shocking, but that is false. We know that farmers will get pennies on the dollar for what they pay in a carbon tax. In a time of a global food crisis, we should be unleashing Canadian agriculture, not sabotaging it.

In tomorrow's budget, will the Liberals admit this is a failure on the carbon tax? Will they do the right thing and will they exempt Canadian agriculture from the farm-killing carbon tax, yes or no?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us be clear about the facts. The price on pollution means more money in Canadians' pockets and less pollution in our air. Even the member for New Brunswick Southwest acknowledged that our plan helps lower-income households the most, and we know that eight out of 10 Canadians get more money back than what they spend.

I spent significant time speaking with our agricultural workers and farmers and they have said that they know the world is changing. They need support to fight climate change and the price on pollution is part of moving forward hand in hand with farmers to build a better future for their kids, for their grandkids and all of Canada.

* * *

[Translation]

NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are living in an information age. With the Internet, news from around the world is available at the blink of an eye.

That being said, we must admit that there is an imbalance of power. For years now, hundreds of local news outlets have had to close their doors for lack of revenue, while the web giants literally have a monopoly on advertising revenue.

What is our government doing to provide a counterbalance?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel for her question and her hard work.

Oral Questions

The bill we have introduced will strengthen independent journalism across Canada. Web giants will compensate journalists when they use their content, while ensuring a transparent approach that protects the freedom of the press. This is essential for journalism, it is essential for all communities that rely on their local media, and most importantly, it is essential for our democracy.

* * *

[English]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “Trying to get trendy and virtue signal and involve yourself in political demagoguery doesn't achieve anything”. Who said that? It was former Liberal MP Dan McTeague at the environment committee yesterday, talking about attacks on the oil and gas sector. That statement applies nicely to the Prime Minister's emissions reduction plan. Energy costs are up. Greenhouse gas emissions are up. Canadian pocketbooks are empty. Virtue signalling does not work.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit that all he has given Canadians is economic pain with no environmental gain?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Once again, Mr. Speaker, we see the Conservatives take no seriousness in regard to the climate change challenges. We have again and again seen from these Conservatives that they want to make pollution free again. They want to continue to ignore the impacts today of climate change and ignore impacts on future generations, whereas we know that investing in reducing emissions and investing in transforming our economy to be more innovative and clean is the best way to ensure a strong future for all Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1510)

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister and I have a different definition of what investing is. This is what the Liberals' investments have done. They spent \$60 billion since 2016 to reduce carbon emissions and, guess what. They have gone up. Now he is talking about a \$100-billion investment. If it went up 27 megatonnes with a \$60-billion spend, how much will emissions go up with this alleged \$100-billion spend?

Why does the Prime Minister not just admit that it is not working, it is not fixing the environment and it is costing Canadians billions?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again the Conservative politicians prove that math and science are simply not their strong suits. We will continue to follow the science. We will continue to prepare Canadians, communities and workers for the transformation of our economy, for the reduction—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Are we ready to continue?

The right hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that when it comes to following the science around climate change and when it comes to doing the difficult and responsible things to prepare for the future, Conservatives choose to bury their heads in the sand still, today, in 2022. Canadians from coast to coast know we need to step up in our fight against climate change and we need to make investments to prepare the future. That is exactly what we are doing.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government excluded other levels of government during the collective bargaining process with the National Police Federation. The agreement reached is much higher than anticipated, and despite their exclusion, rural communities have been left to foot the majority of the bill. Rural municipalities that face greater financial constraints have been desperately asking the government for assistance with the one-time back-pay costs.

Will rural communities find relief in tomorrow's budget, or will the Prime Minister continue to stick it to rural Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this collective agreement allowed RCMP members to receive their first pay increase since 2016 and ensured their salaries were in line with other police services across Canada. Municipalities and provinces were at the table since the very beginning of these negotiations, and I can assure the member that increased costs are shared by the contract jurisdictions and the federal government, just like all policing costs in regions served by the RCMP.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank, once again, the members of the RCMP for their continued service to communities right across the country.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Mr. Speaker, the unspeakable and senseless acts of violence perpetrated by the Putin regime, including those recently uncovered in Bucha, demand accountability. This is why the RCMP will be deploying a specialized unit of investigators to the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Would the Prime Minister please elaborate on the RCMP's intentions to assist the investigation of war crimes committed in Ukraine?

The Deputy Speaker: The parliamentary secretary should not be asking questions.

There is no question. Therefore, there is no answer, so we are going to move on to the next one.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been almost three years since the final report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was released. The families that have lost loved ones are still waiting for all the calls to justice to be implemented. Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people are invaluable parts of their communities, but they continue to face higher rates of violence. They deserve so much better. There is no time to lose to immediately implement all the calls to justice, to help stop the violence and to save lives.

What is the minister waiting for?

• (1515)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has been committed to reconciliation with indigenous peoples, to healing for the families and to justice for the victims of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls' assassinations. These are things we will continue to work on together. In tomorrow's budget, I can assure the member opposite that our investments continue to be there for indigenous communities to move forward on the path to reconciliation, to promote healing and justice, and to ensure that Canada continues to share in the right path of reconciliation.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's answers so far suggest that no one has briefed him on Monday's report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. We have a chance to not be criminally irresponsible in this place and do what is required. The IPCC says it is now or never. Emissions must drop in half by 2030 and that our use of fossil fuels must peak and begin to go down rapidly starting in three years in 2025.

Does the Prime Minister understand IPCC science?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what we put forward last week was the most ambitious and concrete emissions reduction plan that Canada has ever seen. We know that for many, many years, politicians of all different stripes have put forward aspirational targets for massively reducing our emissions, but no government, until last week, was able to put forward a concrete plan that actually demonstrates how we are going to reduce our emissions by 40% from 2005 levels in the next eight years.

This is something we have committed to. We have demonstrated it is doable and concrete. We will deliver on the expectation of Canadians that they see a positive future for kids and grandkids, while protecting the planet and creating good careers.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: That the House recognize that inclusion and diversity must be encouraged within our institutions; that exclusion is not a method of inclusion; and that this House call on the government to revise the federal criteria for research chairs to prevent exclusion in job postings.

The Deputy Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—SPENDING ON NATIONAL DEFENCE

The House resumed from April 5 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 3:18 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion of the member for Wellington—Halton Hills relating to the business of supply.

Call in the members.

• (1530)

[English]

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

(Division No. 55)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Aldag
Alghabra	Ali
Allison	Anand
Anandasangaree	Arnold
Arseneault	Arya
Atwin	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Baldinelli	Barlow
Barrett	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Benzen
Bergen	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Blois	Boissonnault

Bradford	Bragdon
Brassard	Brière
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carr	Carrie
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Chambers
Champagne	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Chong
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cooper
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Dalton
Damoff	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Doherty	Dong
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Ellis
Epp	Erskine-Smith
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Fergus
Ferreri	Fillmore
Findlay	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Garneau	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gerretsen
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gould	Gourde
Gray	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hallan
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Hoback
Holland	Housefather
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Ien
Jaczek	Jeneroux
Jones	Jowhari
Kayabaga	Kelloway
Kelly	Khalid
Khera	Kitchen
Kmiec	Koutrakis
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Kusmierczyk	Lake
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lantsman	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauson	Lawrence
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lightbound
Lloyd	Lobb
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacKenzie
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maguire
Maloney	Martel
Martinez Ferrada	May (Cambridge)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)

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McKay
McLean
Melillo
Mendicino
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Moore
Morrison
Motz
Muys
Nater
Noormohamed
O'Connell
O'Regan
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Plamondon
Powlowski
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Robillard
Rogers
Rood
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Schmale
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Shanahan
Shields
Sidhu (Brampton East)
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Soroka
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Stewart
Strahl
Sudds
Taylor Roy
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McGuinty
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Morrisey
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Ng
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Oliphant
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Petitpas Taylor
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Qualtrough
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Rodriguez
Romanado
Ruff
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Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Scheer
Seeback
Sgro
Sheehan
Shipley
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sinclair-Desgagné
Sorbara
Spengemann
Ste-Marie
St-Onge
Stubbs
Tassi
Thériault
Thomas
Tochor
Trudeau
Turnbull
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Virani
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williams
Yip
Zimmer

NAYS

Members

Angus
Bachrach
Blaikie
Boulterice
Collins (Victoria)
Desjarlais
Gazan
Hughes
Johns

Ashton
Barron
Blaney
Cannings
Davies
Garrison
Green
Idlout
Julian

Kwan
Masse
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
Morrice
Zarrillo— 27

MacGregor
Mathysen
McPherson
Singh

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 13 minutes.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*English*]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, entitled “Review of Statutory Instruments”.

[*Translation*]

If the House gives its consent, I intend to move concurrence in the first report later this day.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: the 10th report, entitled “Special Examination Report—Public Sector Pension Investment Board”, and the 11th report, entitled “Securing Personal Protective Equipment and Medical Devices”.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to each of these two reports.

[*English*]

SCRUTINY OF REGULATIONS

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the House gives its consent, I move that the first report of the Standing Joint Committee for the Scrutiny of Regulations, entitled “Review of Statutory Instruments”, presented to the House earlier this day, be concurred in.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

● (1535)

WITNESS TESTIMONY AT COMMITTEES

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any order adopted by the House, as of April 25, 2022, at their discretion, witnesses appearing before any standing, standing joint, special, special joint or legislative committees may either do so in person, or by videoconference.

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

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

PETITIONS

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present two petitions.

The first petition I will present asks us to make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without the consent of the person giving the organ.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my second petition looks at human rights abuses and environmental damage. The petitioners ask us to require companies to prevent adverse human rights impacts and environmental damages, to require companies to do their due diligence to prevent human rights abuses and damage abroad and to require meaningful consequences for a failure to do so, including criminal justice redress in Canadian courts.

WON ALEXANDER CUMYOW

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition regarding the upcoming redesign of the five-dollar bill.

The petitioners are calling for the Minister of Finance to select Mr. Won Alexander Cumyow as the face of the new five-dollar bill. While Mr. Won Alexander Cumyow may not be a household name for many Canadians, his story represents the struggle, opportunity and hope that have shaped Canada's identity.

In 1861, Mr. Won was the first Chinese Canadian to be born in present-day Canada, and he faced a lot of discrimination. He was trained as a lawyer but was never able to write the bar exam because he was not on the voters list. Despite all of this adversity, Mr. Won, in the end, led the fight against the head tax and the Chinese exclusion act, and in 1949, at the age of 88, he voted for the first time in the federal election.

This is a good opportunity for us to showcase the rich history of Canada's immigrant heritage. I am proud to sponsor this petition and will sign it.

Routine Proceedings

OPIOIDS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to table a petition today related to the toxic drug supply and the 27,000 deaths that are mounting in this country because of the lack of action.

The petitioners specifically call upon the Government of Canada to declare the overdose crisis a national public health emergency. They call on the government to take steps to end the overdose deaths due to a poisoned drug supply, and they want the government to immediately collaborate with the provinces and territories to develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan to address this crisis. They want that plan to ensure there is regulation of drugs and ensure we have a safe supply. They also want decriminalization for personal use and changes to flawed drug policy and policing. They say this emergency should be taken seriously with adequately funded programs and supports.

This is the eve of a budget. I am honoured to table this petition today.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to introduce two petitions to the House today.

The first is in support of Bill S-223, which seeks to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking. It would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without the consent of the person giving the organ.

● (1540)

UKRAINE

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is in defence and support of the people of Ukraine, given that the Russian Federation has launched an unprovoked war against the people of Ukraine. The Russia Federation has committed multiple war crimes against the people of Ukraine and the Russian invasion has triggered a human rights and humanitarian displacement crisis, the worst such catastrophe in recent European history.

The undersigned citizens and residents of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to immediately waive all visa requirements and grant visa-free travel to Ukrainians.

Routine Proceedings

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canada and Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon are home to a vibrant community of more than one million Punjabi Canadians. Each year, many travel to the Punjab region to visit family, friends and religious landmarks like the Golden Temple, but right now they must fly into Delhi and make the long journey by train, bus or other means. Canadians are asking for direct flight service from Vancouver or Toronto to Amritsar, Punjab, which will cut travel times drastically. This is good for our economy and it makes economic sense.

I am pleased to table a petition on behalf of British Columbians calling for direct flight service. The petitioners understand that the war in Ukraine has impacted international travel, but they are calling on the Government of Canada to amend the air transport agreement with India to allow for direct flights. Air Canada is open to improving services to destinations like Amritsar with the amendment of the air transport agreement.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this petition is in support of Bill S-223. Bill S-223 seeks to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking. It would make it an offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without the consent of the person giving the organ. Bill S-223 has passed in the Senate unanimously three times, and MPs from multiple parties have been putting forward a form of this bill for over 13 years.

This bill passed unanimously in the House of Commons in 2019 in exactly the same form. The petitioners hope that this Parliament is the one that finally gets it done.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I also have a petition today, which I am pleased to present, in support of Bill S-223. This bill is about organ harvesting and trafficking, making it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without the consent of the person. I note that this has been passed in the Senate unanimously three times, and for 13 years it has been in the House and the Senate. In 2019, the bill passed in the exact same form, so the petitioners are hoping that we will get it passed this time.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this petition is also in support of Bill S-223, the bill on organ harvesting. It seeks to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking. It would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ without proper consent from the person giving the organ.

Bill S-223 has passed in the Senate unanimously three times, and MPs from multiple parties have been putting forward a form of this bill for the past 13 years. This bill passed unanimously in the House of Commons in 2019 in exactly the same form. The petitioners would like to see this Parliament finally get this done.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also presenting a petition in support of Bill S-223, which seeks to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking. It would also make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without the consent of the person giving the organ. It is my honour to present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to also stand in this place today and present a petition in support of Bill S-223, which seeks to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking. It would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad to receive an organ taken without the consent of the person giving the organ.

This bill has passed the Senate unanimously three times, and MPs from multiple parties have put forward a form of this bill over the past 13 years. The petitioners are hoping that it can be this Parliament that gets it done.

• (1545)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to table today.

The first petition is in support of Bill S-223, a bill that would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without consent. I want to assure members that there will be no more petitions tabled on the bill as soon as it is passed. Maybe that will help light a fire under some members to support the speedy passage of this important piece of human rights legislation.

OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition that I am tabling is in support of the energy sector, which is very important in my constituency. Petitioners note that there is a great need for oil and gas from Canada, that Alberta and western Canada produce the most environmental oil and gas with high labour standards compared with other countries, and that Canada should only be using oil and gas from Canada rather than importing it from other countries. The issue of energy security is so important now, given the Putin regime's reliance on gas exports to fund its war machine. The petitioners are calling on the government and the House of Commons to work to eliminate all importation of foreign oil and gas into Canada within the next five years.

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition highlights the ongoing human rights and humanitarian challenges in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The petitioners note various credible reports that war crimes have occurred including extrajudicial killings, large-scale massacres, looting and sexual violence. The petitioners want to see increased engagement from the House and the government with respect to the situation in Tigray and challenges in Ethiopia overall. They call for that engagement from the government.

CONSULAR AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is seeking to bring more attention to the situation of Mr. Huseyin Celil. He is a Canadian citizen who has been detained in China for well over a decade now. The petitioners note, and are pleased by, the release of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor. They want to see the government really confront the Huseyin Celil case at the same level, and with the same level of energy and intensity, as was brought to the discussion around the detention of the two Michaels.

The petitioners demand that the Chinese government recognize Huseyin Celil's Canadian citizenship and provide him with consular and legal services, in accordance with international law; they want the government to formally state that the release of Huseyin Celil from Chinese detention, and his return to Canada, is a priority for the Government of Canada that is of equal concern as the unjust detention of the two Michaels; and they want the government to appoint a special envoy to work on securing Mr. Celil's release, as well as to seek the assistance of international partners, such as the Biden administration. The government had been active on the case of the two Michaels and seeking the support of international partners on that, and the petitioners want to see the government do the same with respect to the case of Mr. Celil.

COVID-19

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is about the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically drawing the attention of the House to the various evidence and scientific literature about the connection between low vitamin D levels and higher risk of COVID-19. The petitioners cite various medical analyses that have been done and note further that people get vitamin D from sunlight exposure. Increased awareness about the way they get vitamin D, and the benefits of it, are important, especially in a cold climate where people spend relatively less time outside. The petitioners want the government to recognize the emerging scientific evidence that low levels of vitamin D are associated with poor outcomes from COVID-19, and work to increase public awareness of the importance of maintaining recommended vitamin D levels.

HAZARAS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition specifically highlights the situation of the Hazara ethnic minority in Afghanistan. Hazaras are a minority community, specifically a religious minority as well as an ethnic minority. They come from the Shia Muslim community, as opposed to Sunni, and they faced various challenges and various violations of human rights even prior to the Taliban takeover. Of course, the situation has gotten substantially worse. The petitioners want to see the government actively speak out in order to defend the Hazara community in particular, to recognize that the Hazara community have been victims of various genocides, and also to designate September 25 as Hazara genocide memorial day.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition is about a Liberal Party election platform commitment. In the 2021 election platform, the Liberals committed to politicizing charitable status and removing chari-

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table status from organizations that do not share the government's views with respect to abortion.

• (1550)

This politicization of charitable status could jeopardize the status and the good work being done by hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other charitable organizations. This is another values test reminiscent of the Liberals' attack on conscience that we saw as part of the Canada summer jobs program.

Petitioners want to see the government and the House work 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 also to affirm the right of Canadians to free expression.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is with respect to the continuing detention of Armenian prisoners of war in Azeri custody following the end of hostilities. The petitioners note that this continuing detention is a violation of international law, and petitioners are concerned by recent events. Petitioners would like to see the Azeri government abide by the 2020 ceasefire commitment and also ensure that supplies of gas are not disrupted to critical areas.

Petitioners want to see the government do all it can to advance peace in the region and also call for the release of these prisoners of war.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all questions be allowed to stand at this time.

* * *

MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

Mr. John Brassard (House leader of the official opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to call Motion No. P-1.

That an order of the House do issue for a copy of all documents, signed or unsigned, related to the negotiation of the coalition agreement between the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party, or what the Prime Minister refers to as a "supply and confidence agreement", including any documents which record or demonstrate an understanding between the parties as to how the coalition commitments will be interpreted.

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that this notice of motion for the production of papers be transferred for debate.

The Deputy Speaker: The motion is transferred for debate pursuant to Standing Order 97(1).

*Government Orders***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[Translation]***AN ACT FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY OF CANADA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGES**

The House resumed from April 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-13, An Act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other Acts, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always proud and honoured to rise in the House as the representative of the people of Gatineau, who once again did me the honour of electing me to this chamber. I am deeply touched.

When we talk about Gatineau, we are talking about a city in the Outaouais region that is proud to be part of Canada's national capital; proud of having contributed to the building of our great and beautiful country, the best country in the world; and proud to participate daily in the work that brings us together and that is important to us, the work of all Canadians.

[English]

It is such a pleasure to be here on behalf of the people of Gatineau and to speak about official languages. It is a topic that is so important to everyone in my region.

[Translation]

Therefore, I am pleased to rise today to continue the debate on Bill C-13 to strengthen the Official Languages Act and to modernize our linguistic framework.

What exactly are the official languages?

All Canadians expect and deserve to receive federal government services in the official language of their choice. That is a basic principle, one that the Liberals have defended for decades. The federal government must also be a leader in promoting official bilingualism and the representation of Canada's linguistic duality.

As part of our modernization of the Official Languages Act, we are working across government to ensure that we improve our communications and services in both official languages, both in the event of an emergency and in our daily activities. I want to take this opportunity to salute the work of the Translation Bureau. This institution has existed for 87 years. I also salute the interpreters, who are simultaneously interpreting our comments today, and all the people in Canada's language sector who contribute to our official languages regime.

The reform means more than that, however. This highly anticipated reform is intended to modernize an act that is 50 years old. Modernization was needed, but this was also a political and electoral commitment from our party. I salute the Minister of Official Languages for moving so quickly to introduce Bill C-13 to modernize our regime and the Official Languages Act.

What do the people of Gatineau want?

They want respect for our language of course. It is an official language, one of our country's founding languages that goes back to

Radisson and La Vérendrye, who discovered Canada. It is the language of the log drivers who founded our wonderful Outaouais region, and it is a language we are protecting and promoting by reframing this regime, which enables us to do this great work, affirm our francophone presence and make French one of Canada's signature languages.

In Gatineau, ensuring that francophone Quebecers are well represented within our federal institutions is essential. Departments, Parliament, courts, tribunals and every one of the federal government's administrative organizations must have a daily francophone presence to ensure the vitality of the French language and promote its use within the federal government. For Gatineau, that is of crucial importance too.

I am therefore pleased to support Bill C-13 for all these reasons. This bill will strengthen and provide a framework for Canada's new official languages regime.

• (1555)

When we talk about protecting official languages, we often think of official language minority communities. We need only look across the Ottawa River to our neighbours, our Franco-Ontarian cousins. These communities are extremely important and deserve our attention.

Then there is Acadia. My wife is Acadian, and I have proudly served the Acadian people. I will continue to ensure that Acadia and francophones in the Atlantic region continue to flourish, just like francophones in minority situations across Canada.

Today, however, I would like to highlight how Bill C-13 will support the French language in Quebec. The bill contains measures that will benefit French-speaking Quebecers, and francophones everywhere, of course.

One of the guiding principles in the development of the bill was to ensure that the French language is protected and promoted throughout Canada, including Quebec. This commitment is written in black and white in the proposed preamble to the Official Languages Act, as well as in the proposed new legislation that will guide private businesses.

I therefore welcome the new use of French in federally regulated private businesses act, which is specifically focused on Quebec. This act is designed to protect and promote French as a language of work and a language of service in relation to federally regulated private businesses in Quebec and, of course, in other francophone regions outside of Quebec later on.

Quebeckers will benefit directly from this new legislation, especially when they are doing business with banks, postal and courier services, telecommunications companies, and companies in the air, rail and marine transportation industries, to name just a few.

Francophone workers at these companies in Quebec will have the right to be hired in French, to work in French and to communicate with their employers in French.

Bill C-13 would also protect and promote French in each province and territory, including Quebec. This bill contains meaningful positive measures to protect French in Quebec and all across Canada.

What might a positive measure look like for the francophone majority in Quebec?

Federal institutions could, for example, consider providing support for the creation and dissemination of scientific knowledge in French. We are proposing this strengthened measure as a way to support the development and promotion of French culture across Canada, including in Quebec.

Also, let us not forget that the bill strengthens the Treasury Board's powers and imposes new obligations on it that will lead to improvements to the Government of Canada's compliance regarding the use of French as the language of communication and service in Quebec, in the national capital region, and across Canada.

As a central institution, the Treasury Board will have a central role to play. That was one of the requests from stakeholders. The Treasury Board will coordinate between the federal government and federal institutions to ensure compliance and the necessary planning to achieve the great dream of modernizing Canada's official languages policy.

These are major steps forward for the French language in Canada. They are making the people in my riding proud, and I know people throughout Quebec and across Canada feel the same way. We are proud of this fantastic modernization bill, this implementation of our vision for Canada's official languages.

These measures will provide tangible benefits for the people of my riding of Gatineau. These measures will help promote the French language across Canada and help promote Canada as a francophone country around the world.

• (1600)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his speech.

[English]

He talked about the Treasury Board and how the Treasury Board is going to have the responsibility over all the departments to make sure they are complying with the official languages and that they will be the ones with the plans. How do we make sure that the Treasury Board, which has a lot of different priorities, keeps this as a priority?

Also, what will the Minister of Official Languages be doing then?

[Translation]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, the bill explicitly mentions a coordinating role.

With respect to the question about how to make sure that the Treasury Board does its job, I will answer that that job will be enshrined in an act, that there will also be regulations, and that the Treasury Board will obviously have the resources it needs to carry

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out the legal mandate that Parliament is, I hope, preparing to bestow upon it.

The Minister of Official Languages, who is an extremely important and influential minister in the government, will carry out the necessary coordination, because Canadian Heritage, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the Treasury Board will each have a role to play.

A coordinating role is needed to make sure the job gets done.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I found the speech made by the hon. member across the aisle incredibly difficult to listen to. I would even go so far as to say that I was insulted by the cheery tone he used when speaking about the bill.

If I understand the bill properly, it is business as usual, comparing francophones in Quebec to minority francophones in the rest of Canada. We get peanuts, and then we are told that we should be as happy as they are. In reality, the bill contains a poison pill that allows the government to evade a large portion of Quebec's Bill 96.

I really do not understand how the hon. member across the aisle can take such a cheery, carefree, happy-go-lucky tone when his bill is actually harmful, at least to Quebeckers.

Will the hon. member across the aisle admit that his government is treating Quebeckers like dummies?

• (1605)

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I am confused by the question.

For the first time in the history of official languages, we are including concrete measures to promote and protect the French language in Quebec. I do not need a lesson from the Bloc Québécois on how to protect linguistic minorities in Canada. These are communities that the Bloc does not even know and that it is ignoring.

The Bloc thinks that these communities are on their last legs, but we in government have been taking measures for decades to ensure the vitality of the French language from one end of our big, bilingual country to the other.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague will know that in Edmonton Strathcona we have a large francophone population, and we are home to the only francophone campus in western Canada, Campus Saint-Jean. I know that the government has failed in its obligations, as found by the Federal Court of Appeal twice, by not meeting its obligations to French speakers outside of Quebec and not protecting minority language rights.

We have seen our Alberta government not support Campus Saint-Jean. We have seen the federal government step up to provide that support. However, what else can the federal government do to make sure that provinces like Alberta provide those French-language teachers that are required?

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[Translation]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question. I was involved in French education and in education in minority communities for almost all of my career, and I am truly thrilled that the Government of Canada is taking responsibility in this area and providing considerable funding for post-secondary education in French across Canada.

I myself went to one of those institutions, the University of Moncton, and I am very proud of it. I know that the college she mentioned and colleges across Canada will continue to get support from the Government of Canada.

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton.

I am pleased to be standing here in the House today to share my concerns about Bill C-13, an act to amend the Official Languages Act, with my colleagues. I have heard a lot of discussion about it, and I have reached certain conclusions.

The French language has been in constant decline in Canada for many years now. The enforcement of the act is weak. It is therefore important to improve the act, but does this bill go far enough? It merely makes amendments to the act, when it seems like a full overhaul is needed.

I recently had the honour of being appointed to the Standing Committee on Official Languages. It is great to work with my colleagues and to hear what witnesses have to say about various topics concerning our two official languages.

There appears to be a consensus. What I keep hearing is that there is a lack of accountability on the part of the government when it comes to protecting the French language in federal institutions. There should be a mechanism for assessing its effectiveness, and there should be an obligation to compile results.

One thing struck me when the committee heard from the Minister of Official Languages about a week ago. We were talking about how to attract more francophone immigrants to our country, and our party asked numerous questions.

The department's way of doing things always seems very complicated. Like many departments, this one has numerous relationships with other departments, but there does not seem to be a clear direction. The questions were often referred to the Department of Canadian Heritage, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat or the Department of Justice. It was never easy to figure out who was driving the bus.

It took the Liberals six years to table an official languages bill. The bill does not contain all of the reforms that many of us would have liked to see, and it seems to be almost symbolic, since very little will be done on the ground. In my opinion, we need to go farther. The French language is still on the decline in this country, and I believe that we can give this bill more teeth.

I hope that the government is prepared to work with the official opposition to improve the bill. We already know that it is prepared to work with the NDP, but will it also consider amendments proposed by the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois?

The Conservatives acknowledge the decline of French in Quebec, as well as in the rest of Canada. We will always fight for Canadian language rights in both languages, because we understand how important they are.

Let me share a few personal experiences. I come from the riding of Beauce. I was born there and lived there all my life. I must admit that, growing up, I did not speak English very often. I often wished I could speak more English but, because of my environment, it was not always easy.

In various business dealings and on frequent trips across the border to Maine, New Hampshire or Vermont, it was always clear to me that I needed to improve my English. My colleagues will be pleased to learn that I am taking English classes three times a week. I am still improving my English. That does not mean that I am always confident when I use it in everyday life, but I work hard at it.

When I come to Ottawa, our national capital, I find that, away from Parliament Hill, it is extremely difficult to get any service at all in French. When I go to Montreal, I note that a lot of people are speaking English and that French seems to be disappearing at a rapid rate.

• (1610)

My daughter has lived in three Canadian provinces, but she and her family recently moved from Alberta to New Brunswick, which is fully bilingual. I was very surprised to hear that it is just as hard to receive services in French in New Brunswick, a province that everyone knows is bilingual, as it is in Alberta. We can really see that the French language is in decline.

I would like to congratulate and thank all of the organizations that are working hard to maintain various services in French, starting with French-language schools in different Canadian provinces, and the parents who fight daily to make sure that these services continue to be available. It is thanks to them that my grandchildren were able to continue learning French for the 14 years they lived in Alberta.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta, the ACFA, for its hard work. Thanks to them, parents who want their children to learn French have a chance to do so, and they have access to French-language activities in their community. These activities are extremely important if we want to socialize in French and prevent assimilation. That is what is going on in several provinces.

For example, I would like to talk about my assistant, a proud Franco-Ontarian born and raised here in Ottawa. He was able to go to elementary and high school entirely in French and he always used his French a lot. However, when we met for his interview, his French was a little rusty. He said he had hardly used it since getting his diploma because he does not have French-speaking friends or access to services in French. Nowadays, he often tells me how lucky he feels to be working in both official languages. He rediscovered his love for the French language.

All this is to say that the French language is very fragile, and we must protect it. One sure sign of the times emerged in recent weeks when the ministers of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and Environment and Climate Change participated in press conferences and technical briefings in English only. That is unacceptable; I know both of them are bilingual. I think it is extremely important that these ministers speak to all Canadians, including journalists, in both official languages.

Now I would like to talk about the federal public service, whose departments are responsible for hiring staff. The Commissioner of Official Languages condemned the federal public service's lack of leadership. Everything is fine on Parliament Hill, but if we take a closer look at certain departments, French is barely used in many offices across the country.

I could explain the challenges my staff face when they try to get answers from Service Canada or IRCC in French. Wait times are always longer because of the lack of bilingual workers. Does the government think it is appropriate that my staff members sometimes have to choose English when they call so that they can close a file in a timely manner?

We need to do more. That is why we hope to give this bill more teeth.

As a final point, I would like to comment on the study currently being done by the Standing Committee on Official Languages on how to attract and, more importantly, retain more francophone immigrants to Canada.

I will spare the House and not give too many numbers. The government has never managed to reach its infamous target of 4.5% francophone immigration. The fact that less than 2% of francophone immigrants are settling in francophone minority communities speaks volumes.

In conclusion, we still have a lot of work to do. I look forward to hearing all the suggestions from my colleagues on this matter. This is not a partisan issue, and we need to work together to bring in the best possible legislation in order to improve the lives of all Canadians and future Canadians.

I am a proud francophone, and I am ready to work quickly on this bill in committee with my colleagues. I hope we can come up with some excellent amendments.

• (1615)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Beauce for his speech.

I certainly agree that the Beauce region is very beautiful. I have been there a few times. It is well known for its trade schools. I would like to commend them for their work.

I must tell my colleague that the modernization of the Official Languages Act contains some extremely important elements that stakeholders and organizations across Canada have asked for, in particular an immigration policy that will restore the numbers to their previous levels and increase growth.

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I know that my colleague was not here at the time, but during the nine years that the Conservatives were in power, investments declined under their road map. Even today, I do not think his party is in favour of appointing bilingual Supreme Court justices.

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for the question and for his kind words about Beauce. I invite him to visit when he has the chance. I would be happy to have him.

Yes, this bill does contain some important measures. I look forward to studying it thoroughly in committee.

In the two weeks I have been on the committee, I have also heard from a number of organizations who tell me that the bill is not enough and that it lacks teeth, so I think it can be improved. The bill does propose some worthwhile measures but it also needs to include specific points of measurement.

• (1620)

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his nice speech.

We also recognize the progress made with respect to the promotion and protection of the French language in francophone communities outside Quebec. However, we still believe that, even in these communities, we can do better. Despite its recognition of the minority status of French, the federal vision has not changed. Within the meaning of the act, they are two minorities: one in Canada and one outside Quebec.

Is it that francophones are in a minority situation and require special protection, except for the francophones in Quebec?

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

The whole issue around the protection of the French language in Quebec is important. However, what I wanted to talk about today is the importance of supporting francophone communities across Canada.

I have had several opportunities to meet with various members of the Franco-Albertan association, among others. The difficulties these people face every day are really a major problem. The whole issue that I briefly raised, but that I hope to have time to address in committee, concerns assimilation. Right now, francophone immigrants are arriving in other Canadian provinces, but they are being assimilated much faster. This is a significant worry.

In Quebec, we should definitely have the same concerns, but perhaps in a different way.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

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[English]

I hope one day to be able to debate functionally in this important language.

The last revision of the Official Languages Act was in 1988, and the member noted in his speech that it has taken the Liberals six years in power to bring forward official languages legislation. His party was in power for 10 years prior to 2015. I am wondering if he could help us understand why the Conservative Party did not bring forward similar legislation earlier.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question, especially since it paves the way for part of the answer.

The last change to the Official Languages Act was made by a Conservative government. I think we need to put things in perspective. Yes, changes are necessary. We have been talking about it more and more for the past six years. I hope that we will end up with a bill that meets the expectations of all Canadians.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-13 to modernize the Official Languages Act.

Let me be very clear at the outset. French is very important to Canada. When I was young, from my first year of school through to high school, I took French. It was mandatory. I think that is probably why I can speak French today.

I also worked in Quebec for 15 years. It was a great experience for learning the language. When I arrived here on Parliament Hill, I took French classes again, twice a week. It helped me improve my French and taught me parliamentary terms like “bill”, “second reading”, “clerk” and so on. That is exactly the kind of training we need across the country if we really want to be bilingual from coast to coast.

However, that is not currently the case. In most provinces and territories, there are populations of francophones and francophiles, but the language of business is that of the majority, in other words, English. The francophone population is declining even in Quebec, and we need francophone immigration. That is the current reality.

How can we increase the proportion of francophones in Quebec and in the rest of Canada? How can we protect the culture? Now Bill C-13 has been introduced, a bill that attempts to improve the situation in the federal domain.

Sarnia-Lambton was given the designation of francophone riding in Ontario. We have 8,000 francophones and francophiles. I am very proud to provide services in both official languages at my office. However, there is a lack of services in French in other sectors.

When I was a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, a study was conducted on the situation of the francophonie in Canada. I heard witnesses say that there is a lack of legal services and virtually no access to university programs in French. These testimonies are similar to those I received at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women during various studies. For example, the only midwifery program in French outside Quebec was cancelled. There is also a lack of legal services in French for mili-

tary women who experience sexual harassment. That is unacceptable.

To correct the situation, training needs to be provided in French and English everywhere. This bill, however, does not address that need. I hope that the government will work with the provinces and territories to put enough training in place, starting with training for young people.

We also need legislation. Bill C-13 will clarify the demand for French in every federally regulated office and business. That is a good thing. However, if people do not obey the law, then what? That is the problem.

The Commissioner of Official Languages does not have the power to penalize anyone who violates the act. In committee, he told us that there are several cases of non-compliance. He has the resources to investigate, but the consequences are not very severe. Thus, the problem persists.

Today, we see government ministers making announcements solely in English. That is not right. However, there is no penalty. This bill would have the commissioner work for Treasury Board and not the Minister of Official Languages.

There would finally be consequences for violating the act. These actions fall to the Commissioner of Official Languages, but I believe that this is not clearly defined.

● (1625)

The Treasury Board Secretariat has many challenges, and I believe that official languages violations will go to the bottom of the pile. I understand that the secretariat controls all departments, but it has many other priorities.

How will the Minister of Official Languages know where the problems are? What is actually her role?

I would like to make a few recommendations. First, I believe that this bill will improve the situation at the federal level, but that is not enough. The minister must work with the provinces and territories to create a plan to establish training in both official languages everywhere.

Second, the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada will work with the Minister of Official Languages with the same powers set out in this bill. Perhaps we could look at the possibility of penalizing individuals and not just businesses and departments. The penalties could be more severe. I am thinking of a \$25,000 fine, which is a small penalty for Air Canada, for example.

Third, we must continue to welcome francophone immigrants to ensure that we protect the French language in Quebec. We need training in both official languages for all immigrants. Everyone knows that, historically, we have not reached our immigration targets.

In the last Parliament, the House studied Bill C-32. When the Liberals decided to call an election, that was the end of that. The minister says that she has improved the bill, but I am not convinced that it is much different. The Liberals promised to introduce this bill within 100 days of the last election, but it has been more than 200 days. I am not sure why.

There are still many things in this bill that are vague. For example, the onus is still on the institutions to determine appropriate and positive measures. It is not clear when all these measures will come into effect. It is not clear whether a “strong francophone presence” applies only to places where there is an official designation, or perhaps it applies to areas where many francophones live. I think there need to be some amendments in committee to clarify these aspects.

I have spoken a lot about the French language, and now I want to take a few moments to advocate for the rights of anglophones. There are one million anglophones in Quebec. This is not about forcing everyone to learn French. I hope to see the day when all Canadians can speak both languages, but I think some reasonable accommodations are needed. For example, our interim leader does not speak French, but she is making an effort every day, and our messaging is always in both languages. She has help from a deputy leader who ensures that announcements are always made in both official languages. That is a reasonable accommodation.

I have heard that the president of Air Canada is learning French, but in the meantime, he needs some help to ensure that all messaging is in both languages. In Canadian cities where there is a francophone or anglophone minority, we should be trying to find solutions to meet the service needs that are not being met.

In conclusion, I think that we can do more to establish our two languages all across the country, but Bill C-13 is a step in the right direction.

• (1630)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her speech and her very impressive French. I have to say that since coming here to Ottawa, I find that a lot of anglophones are making the effort to speak French. It is much appreciated to be sure.

I simply want to say to my colleague that the commissioner has indeed received the power to issue fines. That will certainly improve the situation. The Treasury Board Secretariat is the central machine of the entire Government of Canada.

I also want to mention that this also takes political will. Our government is in the process of improving this situation. I would like to see the Conservatives support the appointment of bilingual judges to the Supreme Court, as the bill proposes.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I think that it is very important to have people who can speak both of Canada's official languages.

When I was a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, we heard from women who were victims of sexual harassment. There was no justice for the cases presented and services

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in French did not exist. I will therefore support any effort to obtain far more services in both official languages.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague for her fine speech in French, and for the answers she was able to give in French. It is great to see people from other places who have this sensitivity for our language. I am delighted to see that.

I would like to move to another matter. I see that this is an issue that is dear to her. That is the impression that I get. I would like to know if she is sad to see that Bill C-13 gives Quebec, especially the Government of Quebec and also the Bloc Québécois, the impression that some effort is being made in the rest of Canada, but that French in Quebec is being undermined.

Does she agree with me at all? Is she not sad to come to the same conclusion, that the bill does not really solve the problem, at least not in Quebec?

• (1635)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. That is a good question.

I think that people living in Quebec are well aware of the situation and of the solutions they need. The government must work with the provinces and territories, not against them. The goal is to have services, to add training and to help immigration, which is really a problem in Quebec.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton for her speech.

[English]

The NDP believes that the Commissioner of Official Languages must have more powers to ensure that the Official Languages Act is respected and that there are consequences if it is not.

I would ask the Conservatives if they will support changes at committee so that the commissioner has these necessary powers.

[Translation]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, absolutely, the commissioner must have more powers.

There must not be just one fine. If someone violates the act twice, the fine should be increased. I will work with my colleagues to find solutions to ensure that people comply with the act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie): Order.

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore, The Economy; the hon. member for Courtenay—Alberni, Transport; and the hon. member for Victoria, Climate Change.

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Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to debate this bill, which is very important for our country and for official language communities across Canada.

Canada's Constitution was tailor-made for a modern federation like ours with a non-homogenous population. Some might even call our federation postmodern. Ours is a federation that brings together different cultural groups, peoples and nations who all live together in mutual respect, who adapt and who work together to build a society founded on the principles that we all adhere to.

I am, of course, talking about the indigenous peoples, the French from New France and the British settlers, who, over the years, were joined by people from other cultures who all worked together to build the new Canadian reality. Our Constitution was designed for the modern world, for a world that is becoming increasingly complex, in which the historic boundaries of cultural groups have become more flexible, and different groups share the same country.

• (1640)

[English]

One of the pillars of our constitutional democracy is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, one of the world's wisest and most progressive bills of rights. Our diverse country calls for moderation and a sense of compromise. The charter contains the distinctive section 1, whereby rights are not considered absolute but rather are tempered where it is reasonable to do so.

Another defining pillar of our democracy, in addition to the constitutional recognition of indigenous rights, is the entrenchment in the Charter of Rights of official language minority rights. It is very important to be clear that, and this is a message that I want to get across to the many who might be watching today who are from minority language communities, language rights in our Constitution are beyond the reach of the notwithstanding clause, a clause that has attracted a great deal of attention and, I would say, begun to be used in a perfunctory manner by different governments.

I am speaking of minority language education rights under section 23 of the charter, as well as the right by virtue of section 133 of the British North America Act to use English or French in the federal courts and in Quebec courts, a right that also extends to Manitoba courts by virtue of section 23 of the Manitoba Act of 1870, and to New Brunswick courts owing to the province's 1993 amendment to the charter. These rights are beyond the reach of the notwithstanding clause. This is important for minority language communities.

The Official Languages Act adds a layer of protection and promotion to these constitutional language guarantees by protecting and promoting the use of official languages in the federal context, namely, in the federal public service and in Crown corporations, such as Canada Post, Air Canada, Via Rail, CN and Nav Canada.

In our constitutional democracy, independent courts adjudicate constitutional rights through the prism of our most fundamental values, and perhaps no program has been more valuable in protecting official language minorities in this country than the federal court challenges program. The program offers funding to those

launching legal challenges to protect their rights, including linguistic rights, from laws and policies that threaten those rights.

The court challenges program was recently used by Quebec's English-language school boards to protect them from the Legault government's Bill 40. The bill aims to eliminate school boards, which are central community institutions for Quebec's English-speaking minority.

As we know, there was a court decision that said the Quebec government could eliminate school boards, but not English-speaking school boards, because the community has protection under the Constitution regarding minority language rights, and this case continues through the courts. Earlier, the program was vital to protecting Ottawa's Montfort hospital against callous attempts by the Harris government to close this institution, which is so vital to eastern Ontario's francophone population.

As promised, Bill C-13 would strengthen the court challenges program by de facto referencing it in the legislation, namely section 43(1)(c) of the act. I admit the reference could be more explicit and more definitive, and we will see what happens in committee. We will see if someone proposes an amendment to make that clause a little more affirmative. However, like any government program, whether it is in law or not, its effectiveness is ultimately directly related to its budget.

Challenging a bill like Bill 40 through the long process of court appeals can be costly. I have heard it could cost up to \$1 million for the English-speaking school boards in Quebec to fight Bill 40 all the way to the Supreme Court. I think this is beyond the capacity of the court challenges program, so I call on the government to increase the program's budget. It would be money well spent in support of the fundamental principles to which we, as Canadians, adhere. Not to mention that the 2021 Liberal election platform includes such a commitment.

I represent a riding in Quebec with a large anglophone population. It is, however, very much a bilingual riding with an English-speaking school board that offers bilingual and French immersion primary and secondary education. The community is rightfully attached to its schools and to the education rights of their children.

The new section 41(4) of the modernized Official Languages Act would help maintain those rights by requiring the government to proactively, through the census, help estimate:

...the number of children whose parents have, under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the right to have their children receive their instruction in the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of a province or territory, including the right to have them receive that instruction in minority language educational facilities.

I would like to pay homage to my colleague from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, who worked very hard on having the census be used to estimate the number of people in minority language communities across this country who have rights under the Constitution.

Whether their roots stretch back generations, or they have more recently arrived, Quebec's anglophones are deeply rooted and embedded, by choice, in Quebec society. They are profoundly attached to living in the only place in North America where French is broadly spoken every day, and they wish to remain in Quebec and contribute to its development, but they require employment opportunities to be able to do so.

The representation of anglophones in the federal public service in Quebec is, as I understand it, below the community's share of the population. Bill C-13 will hopefully help eliminate this gap in two ways. Section 41(5) of a modernized Official Languages Act would place a duty on the federal government to take concrete positive measures to enhance the vitality of English-speaking and French-speaking linguistic minority communities in Canada and assisting their development, including, presumably, by ensuring anglophones have their rightful place in the federal administration in Quebec.

Moreover, the role of the Treasury Board would be expanded as a result of Bill C-13. The Treasury Board would have a duty to establish directives and policies to give effect to the requirement to institute positive measures, as well as responsibility for “general direction and coordination” of these positive measures across departments. This is a very important addition to the Official Languages Act.

• (1645)

It is worth noting that in Bill C-32, Bill C-13's predecessor, this obligation was discretionary. In Bill C-13, it is mandatory. Also, Bill C-13 will require the Treasury Board to “monitor and audit federal institutions in respect of which it has responsibility for their compliance” with the aforementioned directives and policies.

As in Bill C-32, the Commissioner of Official Languages' role and enforcement powers have been enhanced, including the power to make compliance agreements. Namely, section 64.1(1) of the new modernized Official Languages Act will, after Bill C-13 is passed, state the following:

If, at any time during the course of or after carrying out an investigation, the Commissioner has reasonable grounds to believe that a federal institution has contravened this Act, the Commissioner may enter into a compliance agreement with that federal institution aimed at ensuring compliance with this Act.

As has been mentioned, the government, in parallel to introducing amendments to the Official Languages Act, has also introduced a new act, the use of French in federally regulated private businesses act. This second act reasserts Ottawa's role in regulating businesses operating in federal jurisdictions in Quebec. I know this is something not all parties in this House agree with. If I recall, all opposition parties would relinquish that jurisdiction to the province.

As I see it, this second act will reinforce bilingualism in federally regulated businesses. It will give consumers in Quebec:

...the right to communicate in French with and obtain available services in French from federally regulated private businesses that carry on business in Quebec...

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This is already the case, practically speaking.

In any event, Quebec anglophones would not object to this principle. The Quebec anglophone community displays a very high degree of bilingualism. I cannot recall ever seeing a francophone consumer in Quebec being unable to obtain service in their language from an anglophone. As a matter of fact, sometimes what happens is a rather curious kind of dance where an anglophone goes into a store. The person behind the counter asks them in French if they can serve them and the anglophone asking for service is not really sure if the server is an anglophone or a francophone, ending up with two anglophones speaking to each other in French. This happens quite a lot and it is a moment of levity for all concerned.

Moreover, Bill C-13 does not prevent consumers from transacting in English. Section 7(3) states:

For greater certainty, the rights set out in subsection (1) do not preclude consumers from communicating with or obtaining services from the federally regulated private business in English or a language other than French if they wish to do so and the federally regulated private business is able to communicate or provide services in that language.

As regards language of work, section 9(1) states that employees of a federally regulated private business have a right to carry out work and be supervised in French. Again, I do not believe that anglophones in Quebec, at least not in my community, have a problem with this statement in principle. Of course, there will be regulations to determine how this right will be applied, and we will see what the regulations say.

Employees will have a right to use work instruments and computer systems in French. Again, this does not take anything away from those who speak English. Computer software interfaces provide for this flexibility. I trust the regulations will recognize this software flexibility.

This right to workplace bilingualism is reinforced in section 9(3), which reads:

The right set out in paragraph (1)(b) does not preclude communications and documents from being in both official languages...

• (1650)

Therefore, we see that this bill is reinforcing the core values that underlie the Official Languages Act, which of course is bilingualism.

Further, proposed subsection 10(2) states, “In developing the measures referred to in subsection (1)”, that is, measures to foster the use of French in workplaces, “the federally regulated private business must consider the needs of employees who are close to retirement, have many years of service or have conditions that could impede the learning of French.”

I believe this clause may require amendment. It seems to refer to medical conditions that could impede learning French, but there are many reasons why some individuals remain unilingual that have nothing to do with a medical condition. I think that needs to be taken into account.

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Further, proposed subsection 11(2) states that a federally regulated private business “must not treat adversely an employee who occupies or is assigned to a position on or before the day on which this subsection comes into force for the sole reason that the employee does not have a sufficient knowledge of French.”

The vast majority of anglophones in Quebec are bilingual and growing more so every day. They should not be negatively impacted by this particular clause. The regulations will be key to ensuring an appropriate flexibility that protects everyone.

Many if not most federally regulated businesses deal with entities outside the province. One thinks of logistics and freight-forwarding companies, of which many are located in my community. This further reinforces the practical value of bilingualism in the federally regulated private sector, which brings me to section 11(3), which states:

Requiring an employee to have a knowledge of a language other than French does not constitute adverse treatment for the purposes of subsection (1) if the federally regulated private business is able to demonstrate that a knowledge of that language is objectively required by reason of the nature of the work to be performed

Federally regulated businesses tend to deal internationally, so there is a role for bilingual individuals in these businesses.

All that said, I feel strongly that no one, anglophone or francophone, should be prevented from working in a federally regulated business because they do not have knowledge of the other language, just as they would not be prevented from working in the federal public service because they only have knowledge of one of the official languages unless the position requires a level of bilingualism. I hope the regulations will respect this fundamental principle of the Official Languages Act.

I would like to see the regulations that will follow under Bill C-13 guarantee in some way this right to work. Perhaps this could be done through amendments to the bill. On a practical level, given today's acute labour shortage, it would be in the best interests of employers and the provincial economy to ensure that the law does not hamstring federally regulated businesses and their ability to recruit and hire qualified personnel.

• (1655)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his well-thought-out and politely delivered speech. I have a simple question for him. It is not really a partisan one. It is about following the rules, which he mentioned throughout his speech, especially with respect to the Treasury Board.

When the Treasury Board requirements on Treasury Board submissions affect people in Canada of both languages, obviously English Canada and Quebec, an Official Languages Act analysis has to be completed as part of the Treasury Board submission. We heard from the former Treasury Board president that during the WE scandal the money was not actually put through the Treasury Board or the official languages analysis. The government skipped over a required regulation. We put in an Order Paper question and found numerous times where the government, the Treasury Board, refused to perform the official languages analysis.

I would like to know if the member will stand and confirm he will work with us, all parties, to ensure the Treasury Board will follow the rules as laid out in the Financial Administration Act and perform the Official Languages Act analysis on all required submissions.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, indeed those are the rules. That is why we have MPs in the House, whether on the government or the opposition side, who are there to remind the government of these requirements. Of course I would be happy to work with the member, and any other member in this House, to ensure that the spirit and letter of the Official Languages Act, and the rules and regulations of public administration that flow from that act, are respected.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give my colleague the opportunity to correct the remarks he made earlier when he said that people have never had a problem getting services in French in Montreal.

Perhaps that is his personal experience, but it is far from a fact. Our ridings are only a few kilometres apart. I get the impression that the member opposite is on a different planet, at least linguistically speaking.

I would like to know if he has experienced this personally or if it is because he has never tried to get service in French in Montreal.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I could never categorically say that it would never happen.

I live in a bilingual, predominantly English-speaking community, and one would think that if anyone could not get service in French, it would be in my area. Honestly, in my personal experience, everyone makes an effort and everyone gets along. I cannot recall an incident where someone complained about not getting service in French. It may not always be perfect French, but my community shows goodwill and people get along and want to continue to get along.

• (1700)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to ask my hon. colleague about immigration because, of course, for a place like Edmonton, Alberta, immigration is a key component for ensuring that the vitality of the French language is able to be maintained.

In 2003, the government set an objective to maintain the demographic weight of francophones outside of Quebec and that was meant to ensure that 4.4% of immigration settled outside of Quebec in the rest of Canada and that they could speak French. We have never made the target. The government, in 20 years, has never reached that 4.4%. This bill has no catch-up clause.

What would the member say about the potential for adding in something to catch up for all of those years that we missed our target of 4.4% immigration?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, the bill does focus on increasing francophone immigration to areas outside of Quebec. With immigration, it is tricky. Once someone is in the country, we cannot necessarily control where they are going to stay and live for a long period of life. However, I think this is a very important part of this bill, because if we want vibrant francophone communities, we need to get francophone teachers to those communities. It is all through education that cultural groups survive.

I know my own wife did French immersion in Calgary. Her whole family did French immersion in Calgary. That was not possible before the 1970s or 1980s and many of her teachers were not from Calgary. They were from other areas. I think that is a very important component of this bill. Exactly how many individuals we need to get to different parts of the country through immigration, that is a technical question that I am open to hearing about.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really and truly believe that French is such a beautiful language. It is something that pleases me a great deal when we go to schools, bilingual schools, in the north end of Winnipeg, such as Stanley Knowles or Garden Grove, and we see individuals of, let us say, Filipino heritage being able to speak French, English and Tagalog, or of Indo-Canadian heritage speaking French, English and Punjabi.

I am wondering if my colleague can talk about the benefits of how Canada has been evolving, where more and more young people and children, through bilingual programs, have recognized the true value of and just how beautiful the French language is and why we need to continue to support our schools.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, Canadians from all across the country are proud to be able to speak French.

I think if you looked at this House of Commons 50 years ago, the only people who would speak French in the House of Commons would be MPs from Quebec and maybe some from minority-language communities outside of Quebec. Today, we see MPs from all provinces stand up, as we saw the member for Sarnia—Lambton do. The member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake speaks excellent French and there are some other Alberta MPs who speak excellent French. That is because there is a love of the language in this country. It is because it is part of our fabric. If members in the House from outside of Quebec can speak so well and so eloquently in French, it is obviously because of the school system and programs such as French immersion and so on.

This is the outcome of the Official Languages Act of 1968. This is the heritage of Pierre Trudeau.

[Translation]

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the fact is, we have francophones outside Quebec who have been francophones for centuries. The first European language spoken in Alberta was French. It is not only people like me who choose to speak French; our francophone heritage is very strong.

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My colleague emphasized that education and immersion schools are important. That being the case, why does Bill C-13 not include support for either francophone or French immersion schools?

• (1705)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, I will reread Bill C-13, but I think this principle is pretty firmly entrenched in the act. The federal government is obligated to ensure that official language communities can develop and thrive. That of course includes support for education. I believe that is part of Bill C-13.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval: Mr. Speaker, in light of what my colleague opposite said in his speech, I would like to know if he thinks there is a problem with French declining in Quebec and if there is anything we can do to avoid that. I get the sense the answer is no. I would like to know if my colleague thinks this bill will help.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Mr. Speaker, French in North America is under pressure on all sides and especially online, which is why we introduced Bill C-11.

However, Bill C-13 gives francophones the right to work in French.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

It is an honour for me to speak to Bill C-13, an act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other acts.

From the outset, I would like to point out to the hon. minister that I was parliamentary secretary for official languages during the 41st Parliament from May 2011 to September 2013. Not to upset or offend her, but I would remind her that her government is not the first to give Canada's two official languages the importance they deserve. The fact is that French has never ceased to be under threat, and there is no doubt that threat looms larger than ever since 2015, both in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

I worked on the road map for Canada's linguistic duality, which ended in 2013. We made an unprecedented investment of \$1.1 billion to support linguistic duality that brought together 15 departments and agencies.

I will excuse the minister, since she was not yet elected and so many of the previous Conservative government's accomplishments were literally deleted from the Internet with the arrival of the Liberals in 2015.

We have been keeping a close eye on the act for quite some time to make sure it strives to achieve substantive equality between Canada's two official languages.

As a unilingual francophone, I am very familiar with the challenges of being from a small, practically unilingual francophone community, but I am very proud of my roots and my mother tongue.

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Our two official languages are an integral part of our identity, and I am privileged to see my children function in both languages more comfortably than I ever did at their age. It is extremely important to be able to grow up, work and live in one's mother tongue. I understand the fragility of our official language minority communities and the many challenges they face.

Ensuring that francophones can access federal government services in their language and that federal public servants can work in the official language of their choice is still a very real challenge in 2022, and there is no denying it. This government has been in power since 2015, and things have not really improved on its watch. I will not even talk about balancing the budget or deficits or the possibility of losing our AAA credit rating, nor will I talk about our justice system or the legacy the Liberals have left our young people by legalizing both soft and hard drugs.

All that is scandalous, but let me get back to today's topic, Bill C-13.

We have wasted precious time since 2015, and the Liberal government appears to have just recently realized that the Official Languages Act needs to be amended and modernized. I can guarantee that as a member of Parliament and a member of the Standing Committee on Official Languages, I will personally work with my colleagues to ensure that Bill C-13 finally reflects the current linguistic realities and that it promotes substantive equality between French and English, while contributing to the vitality of official language minority communities, which greatly need us.

This bill could have passed in the previous Parliament as Bill C-32, but let me remind members that the Prime Minister felt the need to plunge us into a costly and unnecessary election. We are finally getting around to it now. Still, as the saying goes, better late than never.

Contrary to what the minister claimed last week, we have been working for quite some time already with community stakeholders, the provinces, the territories, the Commissioner of Official Languages, the Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages and the House of Commons Standing Committee on Official Languages, which is very important to me.

The common goal is noble and reflects our commitment to ensure that the modernized bill reflects the reality of francophones living in Quebec, anglophones across the country, francophones living in minority situations, Acadians and anglophone Quebecers.

• (1710)

The hardest work is yet to come, but we need to ensure that the Liberal government does not start playing dirty tricks, passing the buck or dragging the process out.

The situation of French is very worrisome, not to mention critically at risk. With eight million francophones in Canada in a sea of more than 360 million anglophones in North America, the protection of French is an issue that deserves close and immediate attention. We will push this federal government to play its role with respect to protecting official language minority communities.

We will ensure that Bill C-13 responds to the challenges that the French language is facing in North America and the challenges that

official language minority communities are facing. First, we will ensure that the bill recognizes the linguistic realities of each province and territory.

The federal government collaborates with provincial and territorial governments that provide services in the minority language and promote the vitality of the official language minority communities. However, the federal government must also make it a priority to work together with indigenous communities across the country to ensure that indigenous languages are preserved and protected. The modernized legislation would therefore explicitly state that it does not affect the strengthening and revitalization of indigenous languages.

As everyone knows, I do not like scandals. We will continue to speak out against the fact that French is in significant decline in this country in 2022, and it is scandalous that this is still happening. The Liberal government needs to take concerted action to reverse this trend.

More must be done to protect and promote French across Canada, including, of course, here in Quebec. We will ensure that francophones can live in French. We must establish new rights to enable francophones to work in French and to be served in French in federally regulated private businesses.

In this respect, the minister said on April 1 that these new rights will be enshrined in a new act, namely, the use of French in federally regulated private businesses act, and that these rights will apply in Quebec as well as regions with a strong francophone presence.

We will, of course, ensure that the Liberal government does not forget that the private sector also has a role to play in promoting our official languages and enhancing the vitality of official language minority communities.

I look forward to seeing how the government might ensure better access to justice in both official languages by introducing a new bilingualism requirement for the Supreme Court of Canada. That is a major challenge and, unfortunately, such challenges are not this government's strong suit.

That being said, we will ensure that Bill C-13 fulfills the promise of strengthening the Treasury Board's role as a central agency to coordinate and enforce the Official Languages Act. The discretionary aspect of its monitoring, auditing and evaluating powers will now become mandatory. We will also ensure that the powers of the Commissioner of Official Languages are strengthened. It is imperative that he be given more tools to do his job so that he is able to impose administrative and monetary penalties on certain privatized entities and Crown corporations operating in the area of transportation serving the travelling public.

Air Canada's recent appearance at committee gave us a good example of how francophone Canadians are basically being neglected because employees are not really encouraged to learn or improve their French-language skills.

The bill also includes important clarifications regarding part VII on federal institutions taking positive measures that will benefit official language minority communities. It will be mandatory to take into account potentially negative impacts that decisions could have on the vitality of the communities and on the promotion of both official languages. It must also strengthen Canada's francophone immigration policy, which must include objectives, targets and indicators with the aim of increasing francophone immigration outside Quebec.

We will ensure that Bill C-13 will increase supports for official language minority communities to protect the institutions they have built, both for francophones outside Quebec and for the development of the English-speaking minority in Quebec.

The bill must ensure that the Official Languages Act reflects the challenges of the 21st century. We are embarking on a legislative process that the Liberals have finally initiated to significantly advance Canada's linguistic framework, and not before time.

• (1715)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I definitely want to thank my colleague for his speech. I was not aware that he was the parliamentary secretary for official languages from 2011 to 2013.

I may have to remind him of a few things. At that time, I was the superintendent of all French schools in Nova Scotia. We did not receive any increase in funding under the road map in the five years that he mentioned. He stated that they invested \$1.1 billion. I do not doubt it, but there was no increase. In 2018, it was our government that actually added \$300 billion to try to make up for lost time. We provided increases of 20% to help organizations across Canada.

I just wanted to remind him of that and of the fact that there was really no francophone immigration policy. There was an enormous decline across Canada, including Quebec.

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I remind my colleague that our former government implemented two road maps. We were the first to invest more than \$1.1 billion. This had never been done before.

Furthermore, we made education a priority in these road maps and allocated as much money as possible to this priority. We believed that education was the way to ensure that all Canadians who were interested had the opportunity to learn in French, and that this would improve our relations with francophone minority communities.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, despite this government legislation, history has shown that French has been declining in Canada since 1867. History has unfortunately taught us that we cannot trust the Liberals or the Conservatives when it comes to the French language.

Even the Government of Quebec has criticized some parts of the bill. This shows that Canada is incapable of meeting the existential aspirations of Quebec. To me, this is evidence of how federalism has failed. That is what Wilfrid Laurier said at the time. Although he was one of the founding fathers of this country, he said in a mo-

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ment of clarity that Confederation would be the death of French in Canada.

Would my Conservative colleague also recognize, in a moment of clarity, that federalism is a failure because it is driving Quebec and French into an irreversible decline?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, we are witnessing a historic event, the modernization of the Official Languages Act. As parliamentarians, we should all take our time, even though the government seems to be rushing us and asking us to cut corners. Nevertheless, we truly intend to work with the government and work in committee stage by stage and line by line on this bill.

Very little has happened in the past 50 years to modernize the act, and we are not expecting to see much in the next 50 years. That is why we have to act now, this year, with this bill, to make sure that, for the next 50 years, the decline of French will be slowed, stopped and even reversed. That is why it is so important to do all the necessary work.

• (1720)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. When I was in school in Edmonton, it was very hard to learn in French, so I hope the House will pardon my French skills.

However, like the member, I am proud that my children speak English and French. It worries me that the Government of Alberta does not seem supportive of the French language. How can the federal government do more to help the provinces?

Mr. Jacques Gourde: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that very interesting question.

One thing the government can do is prioritize francophone economic class immigration, especially in provinces like Alberta. There is currently a shortage of francophone teachers in Alberta, which means that not all Canadians who want to learn French can do so.

Making it easier for francophone teachers from around the world to become economic class immigrants would certainly help address the problem in Alberta and would have a positive impact.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to continue the tradition, it is with great pleasure that I address the House in French today to speak to Bill C-13, which seeks to modernize the Official Languages Act. I think it is important to explain how an anglophone like me is now able to deliver her speech in French in the House of Commons.

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I was really lucky. When I was young, my parents, who do not speak a word of French, decided to enrol me in French immersion schools. From kindergarten to university, I was educated in French. I was even able to complete my high school education in French immersion at Father Mercredi School in Fort McMurray. This gave me the opportunity to enrol at Campus Saint-Jean, which is the francophone campus of the University of Alberta and is affectionately called “la fac”. That is where I earned my political science degree.

I really had the opportunity to immerse myself in the Franco-Albertan culture and heritage. Because of this background, I consider myself a francophone, a francophone by choice, not by chance, but a francophone nonetheless. I am part of the growing francophone population in Alberta.

It is an interesting fact that French was the first European language spoken in Alberta. The *coureurs des bois* were the first people to speak French in Alberta in the 17th century. There are francophone communities all over Alberta. Several places in the province have French names, including Miette, Plamondon, Grande Cache and Lac La Biche.

According to Statistics Canada, Alberta's francophone population is growing: 25% of Franco-Albertans were born in Alberta, 24% were born abroad and 50% come from the rest of Canada. Francophones are coming in from Canada and abroad, and that gives our francophonie immense vitality and vibrancy.

It is worth noting that Alberta also welcomes more francophone immigrants than the national average, namely 10.3% of the immigrant population, according to Statistics Canada. I am sharing these facts to demonstrate how vibrant and strong the francophonie is in Alberta.

The federal government must rise to the challenge of collaborating with its provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure adequate basic funding that is permanent, predictable and indexed to the cost of living. Since the francophone population is growing, it is very important to provide services in French. We need meaningful action to support francophones outside Quebec, such as Franco-Albertans.

Those who were counting on legislation with teeth that would result in substantial gains with respect to protecting and promoting French in this country are certainly disappointed by the half measures proposed in this bill.

Sheila Risbud, the president of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and spokesperson for the francophonie, said:

• (1725)

However, there is still work to be done because our communities want the bill to include the designation of the Treasury Board as the sole central agency responsible for coordinating and implementing the act, an obligation to negotiate binding language clauses in agreements with and transfers to the provinces and territories, and clarification concerning the objective of a francophone immigration policy.

It is clear that the Minister of Official Languages still has work to do before she can say, “Mission accomplished”. I note that Bill C-13 takes a big step backwards compared to the reform document tabled by the former minister of official languages, which died on the Order Paper as a result of the 2021 election.

Bill C-32, introduced by the former minister, recognized an asymmetry between the status of French and the status of English in Canada, but this concept is not included in the new bill. In order for the reform of the Official Languages Act to ensure the future of the French language in Canada, it is vital that it reflect the current linguistic situation and that it not pretend that the two official languages are on an equal footing.

Fifty years after the implementation of the Official Languages Act, our world has changed a lot. Francophones are immigrating from Africa and many other countries. The francophonie is thriving.

We know that bilingualism has some real, tangible benefits, including economic benefits. The Conference Board of Canada released a report that clearly showed that bilingualism is deeply rooted in the Canadian identity and is an effective economic tool. Bilingualism allows for more diverse trade relationships and increased imports and exports.

It is important to note that meaningful measures are needed. We should start by asking why there is no central agency responsible for overseeing and providing horizontal coordination for the act. Instead, there are four bodies responsible for this under the act: Canadian Heritage, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, and the Minister of Official Languages.

The Conservatives believe that the Treasury Board should definitely be the central repository of all powers for enforcing and issuing directives under the Official Languages Act as a whole. As it stands, the powers are split and several departments are being forced to share the tool box. Some departments wind up taking the blame for another department's failure to fulfill its obligations.

In addition, the reform of the Official Languages Act does not do enough to meet the needs of minority francophones, including Franco-Albertans. If the government truly wants to support minority francophones, it needs to support French schools.

As a proud francophone who served as parliamentary secretary for the Francophonie when I was a member of the Alberta legislature, I witnessed the vitality and viability of the French language first-hand.

I am worried about francophones in minority settings who lack support, and I urge the Minister of Official Languages to adopt a fresh, collaborative approach based on feedback from national and provincial organizations to help francophone communities from coast to coast to coast thrive.

• (1730)

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly want to thank my colleague for her speech and her French. She even named francophone schools, communities and regions. That is very impressive. I thank her for sharing all that information.

If we take a close look at Bill C-13, I do think we can see that it is a big improvement over Bill C-32 in many ways, especially when it comes to the positive measures we need to see. These are concrete actions on the ground.

I also think that Treasury Board, despite being very busy, is the machine responsible for enforcing laws. That will really strengthen this act.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I did not really hear a question, so I will take this opportunity to share some facts about Alberta's francophonie.

Alberta has over 268,000 French-speaking Albertans. Since 1996, enrolment in French schools has risen by more than 270%. That is a significant increase and significant growth.

We need a modernized act that will support francophones in minority settings, but this bill does not go far enough.

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated the quality of my Conservative colleague's French and her cheerfulness.

I found her speech to be interesting. However, the figures speak for themselves. What the figures show us is that French in Canada is declining every year and with every census. They also show us that if there is an increase in bilingualism in Canada, it is because bilingualism is increasing in Quebec but decreasing in the rest of Canada. This further demonstrates the extent of this decline.

In light of this information, does my colleague not see that Quebec is justified in wanting more power with respect to the French language? Should we not do more?

• (1735)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, frankly, without bilingualism, I would not be here addressing the House in French.

I believe that it is truly an asset for Alberta's francophonie to have francophones who are bilingual. It is an asset to have people like me who are anglophones who learned French at school.

I believe that the Official Languages Act needs to recognize the fact that people who chose to learn French, do their studies in French and live in French are an asset to this country.

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on her excellent French. It is a testament to what is possible right across Canada.

Could my colleague say a few words about the Liberal government's failure with respect to francophone immigration?

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Since 2015, 2.5 million immigrants have entered Canada. Of that number, only a small fraction, in the tens of thousands, are francophones.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Madam Speaker, I mentioned in my speech how Alberta attracts immigrants.

I believe it is very important that we do more to encourage francophone immigration. It could be a solution to the French teacher shortage in our country.

I do not believe that the federal government is doing enough to support francophone immigration and to encourage francophone immigrants to move to Canada.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my speaking time.

I am so very pleased to speak in favour of Bill C-13 today.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is always looking for innovative ways to let people know what is so great about living in Canada and to attract newcomers. Our mission includes ongoing dedicated outreach to francophone immigrants.

As founding members of our nation, we francophones have made a fundamental contribution to building our country. The importance of the French language to Canada's culture and history is undeniable. In Quebec and in francophone communities in the rest of Canada, the strength, richness and vitality of the French language are a tremendous source of pride. Because of Canada's unique bilingual nature, we want to do everything we can to attract people who can integrate into our francophone communities in large numbers, not only in Quebec, but across the country.

The Government of Canada recognizes that immigration helps us meet labour market needs in critical areas such as health care, education, entrepreneurship and agriculture. However, immigration also plays an important role in building and maintaining the diversity of Canadian communities. Because of this reality, francophone immigration remains a top priority for the Canadian immigration system.

Our government continues to support Quebec in its innovative ways of using immigration to address the province's labour shortages, while supporting the French language and Quebec's distinctive francophone identity. The same is true for the many vibrant francophone communities across Canada. The French language has deep roots in many Canadian communities, whether it be the community of Maillardville in Coquitlam, British Columbia; the many French communities in Ontario, including the one I represent, Orléans; the Port au Port Peninsula in Newfoundland; the Franco-Yukoners in Whitehorse; or the many Acadian communities in Nova Scotia.

Private Members' Business

The government recognizes that immigration plays an important role in supporting francophone minority communities across the country. In 2019, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announced a francophone immigration strategy, which includes a target of 4.4% francophone immigration admissions outside Quebec by 2023.

Our government has brought in many initiatives to reach that target, including awarding more points to French-speaking and bilingual candidates under the express entry program. In 2021, the department introduced a temporary resident to permanent resident pathway for essential workers and recent international graduates from Canadian institutions who were already in Canada. We included unlimited dedicated temporary streams for French-speaking and bilingual applicants.

The francophone immigration strategy is already showing promise. In 2020, French-speaking admissions represented 3.6% of all immigrants admitted to Canada outside Quebec, an increase over the 2.8% from the previous year. What is more, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is working to support the government's commitment to the modernized Official Languages Act. We see this legislation as a step forward, because we clearly recognize the importance of immigration in enhancing the vitality of Canada's francophone communities.

One of the primary measures is the requirement to adopt a francophone immigration policy with objectives, targets and indicators. The legislation will also include a recognition that immigration is one of the factors that can contribute to maintaining or increasing the demographic weight of francophone communities.

Naturally, once newcomers arrive in Canada, there is still a lot of work to do to get them settled. In 2019 and 2020, we launched the francophone integration pathway, which was designed to support French-speaking newcomers from pre-arrival to citizenship. More specifically, the pathway ensures that all newcomers, regardless of their linguistic background, are made aware of the services on offer throughout the settlement and integration process. Almost 80 francophone service providers outside Quebec receive funding from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada.

• (1740)

The government will continue its efforts to develop the francophone integration pathway so that French-speaking newcomers are informed of opportunities to settle in French in Canada and are able to receive high-quality settlement services from francophone organizations.

Bill C-13 seeks in part to enhance the vitality of francophone minority communities in Canada. In that regard, I want to point out that language training is an important and integral part of the francophone integration pathway, which was developed jointly with francophone communities across the country. Our objective is to give all newcomers the opportunity to settle and thrive in French and to make a positive contribution to Canadian society.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The time provided for debate on this bill today has expired. The hon. member will have four minutes remaining when this matter returns before the House.

It being 5:43 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA INFRASTRUCTURE BANK ACT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP) moved that Bill C-245, An Act to amend the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House to speak to my private member's bill, Bill C-245. It is a bill that would amend the act of the Infrastructure Bank of Canada, a bill that would use public ownership in the fight against climate change, and a bill that would give hope to communities like the one I come from, the ones I represent and the ones across our country that are already paying the price for climate change.

[Translation]

This bill would provide a new avenue for indigenous communities, northern communities and all Canadians to develop the infrastructure they need right now.

The climate crisis is on our doorstep, and what we are hearing back home in the north is alarming. The permafrost is melting and jeopardizing our municipal infrastructure. Thousands of people rely on temporary winter roads to receive deliveries of heavy equipment, but the season for using them is getting shorter and shorter. These communities need help dealing with climate change before it is too late.

Meanwhile, the Canada Infrastructure Bank has failed. Not a single project has been completed, and billions of dollars are sitting unspent.

As the UN Secretary-General said this week, time is running out. We must use all of the tools at our disposal to tackle the climate crisis. The bill I am proposing today is part of the solution.

• (1745)

[English]

This past September, I sat with the chief and council of Pauingassi First Nation at the hotel in Winnipeg where they had been evacuated. They were into the third month of their forced evacuation from wildfires raging in eastern Manitoba and northwestern Ontario. This was their third evacuation in four years. This time it lasted four months.

We sat in one of the hotel meeting spaces that had been converted into a makeshift school. The leaders and principal of the school shared their concerns. “These fires are only getting worse,” they shared. “We need support to keep our communities safe,” they said. Pauingassi is one of two first nations in Manitoba that, despite years of advocacy, does not even have an airport. They have no all-weather road and no airport. “We felt trapped,” they said.

Pauingassi lost community members during the time of the evacuation. Many community members were desperate to go home, and when they got home, they found hectares of their traditional lands devastated. Traplines were gone and cabins had burned to the ground. A way of life was under threat.

Last summer saw a series of devastating climate events. Perhaps the one that received the most attention was the burning to the ground of Lytton, in British Columbia. The excruciatingly high temperatures of the heat dome created the conditions of a fire that engulfed a village, a community, lives and livelihoods. As Edith Loring-Kuhanga, school administrator for Stein Valley Nlakapamux School in Lytton, said, “The extreme temperatures of 49°C-plus leading up to June 30 contributed to the Lytton Creek fire that destroyed the Village of Lytton in 25 minutes and burned many homes and businesses on IR 17, 18 and 22 of Lytton First Nation and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District. Our lives were forever changed on June 30. Nine months later, those who lost their homes continue to be homeless and struggle with high anxiety and PTSD as they continue to reconnect with their families, culture, way of life and the land.” To this day, Lytton is still waiting to be cleaned up and rebuilt.

Pauingassi, Lytton, Little Grand Rapids, St. Theresa Point, Shamattawa, Thompson, Iqaluit, Old Crow, The Pas, Fort Chipewyan, Prince George, Pinaymootang First Nation, Peguis, Inuvik, Uashat-Malotenam and Happy Valley-Goose Bay: this bill is for all of our communities. These communities have been sounding the alarm on climate change for some time. They have been clear on what they need and what we need to mitigate and adapt, and they are communities that have been ignored. This must change. Time is running out.

Just this week, the IPCC came out with a damning report highlighting the absolute urgency needed to fight climate change. The report outlined the need to ditch fossil fuels. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the report, but just as easily could have been talking about the Liberal government record on climate change, as a “litany of broken promises” and “a file of shame, cataloguing the empty pledges that put us firmly on track towards an unlivable world”. He said, “The jury has reached a verdict. And it is damning. We are on a fast track to climate disaster.”

There have been many reports and many words, but not enough action. The Liberals continue to maintain the anti-science fallacy that fossil fuel investments will pay for a clean-energy transition. The government has given more to oil companies than even the previous Conservative government could have dreamed of. We are, shamefully, the worst G7 country when it comes to GHG emissions, and at a time when we should be supporting the transition to green energy, dozens of northern communities in our country are running on dirty diesel.

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Time is running out. We must act now. It is time that we commit to investing in indigenous and northern communities and all our communities in supporting their efforts for a just transition by supporting this legislation, because it is that important. The infrastructure needs are that important.

A recent report claimed that the infrastructure gap for first nations is conservatively estimated at \$25 billion to \$30 billion, yet many of the infrastructure needs we see are for projects between \$1 million and \$25 million. Bluntly speaking, slapping a profit requirement on Infrastructure Bank projects locks communities like the ones I represent out of these dollars. Do their infrastructure needs not matter?

Chief Owens of Pauingassi First Nation said, “We have already seen the effects of climate change over the last few decades. It’s real. I was surprised in conversations with Niki to even hear of Canada’s Infrastructure Bank. We’ve never heard of it. We’ve never been able to use it. Investments to connect us with the rest of the country or help us deal with fires we would like to see, and this bill would help with that.”

Chief Redhead is from Shamattawa First Nation, a community that has been failed by Canada time and time again. It deals with massive infrastructure gaps, a housing crisis, tuberculosis outbreaks as a result of the housing crisis and a recent COVID outbreak that was so bad that the military had to be sent in. In regard to this bill, he said, “One of the benefits of seeing this bill pass would be the ability to connect Shamattawa to the main hydro line. Right now we’re dependent on burning dirty diesel for the entire community. It’s 2022 and it’s time to bring communities like Shamattawa into 2022. I’d really like to see this bill pass and for all parties to support it so we can make real change in the fight against climate change.”

Chief Flett of St. Theresa Point has talked about the need for an all-weather road system to the Island Lake Region, given the melting ice roads and the chance to cut down on the carbon footprint that comes from an absolute reliance on air travel.

We have heard from leaders about water pipes breaking down in their communities because of melting permafrost, radio towers snapping because of the weight of record snowfalls, historic droughts and unpredictable flooding.

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In discussions with indigenous, territorial and northern leaders, we repeatedly heard about how they want to move forward with mitigation and adaptation. We also heard how hard it was for them to access any federal dollars. Overwhelmingly, there was a sense that the federal government existed to serve the needs of the southern part of the country, if that.

In conversations with some of my Liberal colleagues in advance of today, I heard concerns that there are other federal institutions that can do this work, that can fund these type of projects, but the reality is that they are not. That is why so many of these communities are in such dire straits.

If we acknowledge that the need is great, if we acknowledge that current institutions are not getting the job done, why do we not use Canada's Infrastructure Bank to do the job we originally wanted it to do? We cannot afford to wait in terms of climate, and we certainly cannot afford to wait when it comes to people. If not now, when?

It is clear that the Canada Infrastructure Bank is not living up to its promise. We are talking about a Crown corporation with a budget of \$35 billion dollars that has yet to complete a single project in almost five years of existence. A recent PBO report said it would not even spend half its money. In the infrastructure committee study called for by my colleague, the MP for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, witness after witness made it clear that the bank in its current form does not and cannot work, yet when the bank was first established, many folks were excited. Robert Ramsay, senior research officer at CUPE, described the excitement when they thought that they were hearing about the creation of a public infrastructure bank that could invest in desperately needed infrastructure across the country. This has not been the case. The reality is that the bank is refusing to do the work that it promised to do.

• (1750)

At committee, the PBO reported that the Canada Infrastructure Bank had only approved 18% of the projects it considered, with one of the most common reasons given for rejection being that the projects themselves were not considered big enough. This bill would fix that. It would prioritize the infrastructure needs of the communities the bank claims to be working for.

The bank's privatization agenda has been a key part of the problem. There was a consistent feature of testimony at committee from witnesses, including Canadians for Tax Fairness, the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Council of Canadians, that public-private partnerships, particularly ones that include private operators collecting revenues through user fees, inherently raised questions about which projects are selected. They questioned whether Canadians can be satisfied that an infrastructure project is being funded because it serves the greatest public interest and not because it offers the highest rate of return for private equity providers.

Mr. Sanger testified:

The only purpose that P3s fill is to engage in some off-book financing and provide private finance with lucrative low-risk investment opportunities that taxpayers will cover for decades to come. If these projects are really privatized, we will undoubtedly end up with some really inadequate infrastructure....

In Mapleton, Ontario, it took public outrage to stop the Infrastructure Bank from privatizing water services.

As Angella MacEwen, a senior economist at CUPE, said, "The most critical infrastructure needs in Canada aren't ones that work with a profit attached to them. It's basic infrastructure that is needed for communities to go about their daily lives. It should be publicly financed and publicly owned so it benefits the most people. I'm really excited to see this bill. This is what we've been asking for at CUPE and the broader labour movement: for the bank to move in this direction.

Along with its privatization agenda, there is a lack of transparency from the bank. At committee, Parliamentary Budget Officer Yves Giroux discussed the bank's refusal to share information, saying that the bank was probably less transparent than the Department of Infrastructure. He also pointed out that parliamentarians had yet to receive a full status update on the bank because the government has not kept track of information on all funded projects. This is obviously unacceptable.

Through this bill we are also calling on the bank to include first nations, Inuit and Métis voices in its governance. If we acknowledge that the greatest infrastructure gap in the country is within these communities, it is frankly inconceivable in 2022 and in an age of reconciliation that these communities do not have a say in what is happening on their land.

It is clear that the foundations of the Canada Infrastructure Bank must be rebuilt. We can do this work. We know that the fight against climate change requires bold collective action. It requires the leveraging of public investment in historic ways. Crown corporations are key tools in this fight. Our Crown corporations belong to us, the Canadian people, and they ought to be leading players in the fight against climate change. Today we can start with the Infrastructure Bank. The Infrastructure Bank can be the solution and not a tepid part of the problem. I urge my Liberal colleagues and indeed all members of the house to be part of that solution. The bank should be issuing green bonds, as many have called for. Let us let the CIB be a driving force in the fight against climate change, in the fight against the infrastructure gaps our communities face.

• (1755)

[Translation]

Rather than allocating public funds to be used by the private sector, which will prioritize profits, let us direct that money to the communities that are struggling to survive in the midst of a climate emergency. Let us use all levers of government and put them to work for the people. Let us create green jobs. Let us join forces with indigenous peoples who are experiencing the climate crisis first-hand. Let us identify all of the government's underperformers, like the Canada Infrastructure Bank. We need to do this for the survival of our planet.

[English]

My message to the Liberals is clear: If they want the Infrastructure Bank to live up to its promise, make these changes.

My message to all MPs in the House is clear: If they believe communities across our country deserve federal investment as they take on the climate crisis, vote for this bill. If they believe we need bold action to take on the climate emergency, vote for this bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, over the years one of the things that I have learned is that the demand for infrastructure dollars far outweighs what the federal government and provincial governments could actually put together in any given fiscal year. I can recall years ago talking about the billions and billions of dollars for the city of Winnipeg alone for street reconstruction, and it was not all of the streets, just those that were in very high demand.

Does the member believe that even the combined public purses of federal, provincial, municipal and indigenous governments have enough in their budgets today to cover the costs of the infrastructure that needs to be built?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, I think we can all agree that, no, communities certainly do not have what it takes, but what we do know is that the federal government has incredible resources to do the work that needs to be done.

We saw during the COVID pandemic the extent to which Canada's federal government stand up and made historic investments, and certainly part of this was the work that we did in the NDP, to keep people in our communities safe in the face of this devastating pandemic, which is ongoing.

Climate change is the greatest threat we are all facing, so let us see that same kind of bold investment. Let us use our Crown corporations. Let us do everything we can to invest boldly and take the action necessary to fight the climate crisis. That starts with supporting our communities and with seeing federal leadership on that front.

• (1800)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my read of the bill is that it advances a form of stakeholder capitalism. It is the idea that government should seek to promote the idea of corporations advancing green or other sorts of non-economic objectives through the marketplace.

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I wonder, as a matter of description, if the member agrees that the bill is advancing a form of stakeholder capitalism and if she believes that we should be advancing stakeholder capitalism as a model.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, I want to be clear that this bill would reform one of our Crown corporations, which has a stated objective of addressing the infrastructure crisis in our country, an objective it clearly is not fulfilling. It is sitting on \$35 billion, but has not produced any final results to show for it.

What we are saying is this: Let us leverage public investment, along with other levels of government and public institutions, to meet the urgent infrastructure needs, particularly in the face of climate change. Other countries do this kind of work. Canada is way behind, and it is time that we show leadership, including through the effective use of the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will have the opportunity to comment further on my colleague's bill later on, but when I listened to her speech and when we look at what the CIB really is and what my colleague wants to do with it, I have to wonder whether it is even possible. It is hard to believe that it is, and I wonder if this bill is not somewhat naive.

We will see where the adventure takes us, but it seems to me that a monster has been created, only it is not working and it is not going anywhere, and now there is a suggestion that we can make it palatable.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, let me be clear. This monster was created by the Liberal government. It is clear that the bank's very foundations need to be changed.

I believe this is not only possible, but necessary in order to tackle the climate crisis.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, infrastructure is such an important topic. When we formed government, there was a significant commitment by the Prime Minister and the Liberal government, for the first time in a long time, to truly invest in infrastructure. I can recall standing in the House talking about historic amounts of money being invested in Canada's infrastructure, and I explained then why that was so important.

One of the features that were over and above the types of investments we were talking about was the idea of the Canada Infrastructure Bank. I believe the Canada Infrastructure Bank will be permanent and will continue on well into the future. Where I am a little disappointed, although not necessarily, and where I ask that additional consideration be given to the idea of this Crown corporation, is with respect to the issue of timing.

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The member says, for example, that no projects are under way that have actually been finalized. However, when we do a quick Google search, there is a very quick find right away. We get the City of Brampton, for example. It looks like it will be able to conclude a deal for well over \$400 million, which will see 450 zero-emission buses going to that community. I suspect that the Canada Infrastructure Bank is playing a critical role in that.

I think the government has demonstrated its willingness to look at ways in which we can build our infrastructure. Even when we passed the legislation, it was agreed back then that there would be a review of the process and what has taken place. That is supposed to be coming up in 2022, later this year. When we talked about this in its creation, a great deal of time was spent talking about trade and transportation and that infrastructure. Canada is a trading nation.

We talked about public transit, and Brampton is a good example of public transit. We talked about green infrastructure too. This government has talked more about green infrastructure in the last couple of years than the previous prime minister did in 10 years. We can take a look at some of the initiatives using the example of Brampton once again. Broadband connectivity is something on which we have put a great deal of emphasis and would anticipate.

My friend is from northern Manitoba, and I would like to think there are opportunities there. On the idea of clean power, Manitoba can be a great benefactor of clean power, whether it is our hydro developments that use our water or the wind power that is there, all of which take massive amounts of money to build upon. There is also an enormous number of indigenous projects, many of which, if they were acted on and could get financing commitments with infrastructure dollars, would provide more opportunities, whether in building or assisting with community development or even in economic trading opportunities.

I think all of us recognize the importance of infrastructure. That is why, if we go back to late 2015 when we took government, we will find that we had put into place a multi-billion dollar long-term commitment toward building Canada's infrastructure.

• (1805)

The question that I had posed to my friend opposite was with regard to just how severe the need for infrastructure dollars is today. The number of projects is, quite frankly, unbelievable. We have a serious infrastructure deficit. That is something that has not been created over the last few years. It is because of many years of what many would ultimately argue was neglect.

It also speaks to the number of projects, when we look at expanding Canada's economy and our communities and providing a better quality of life, whether in urban centres or rural centres. In other words, it is those new projects. When one thinks of infrastructure, not only is it redoing or rebuilding, it is also the new projects that are there.

There is no shortage of either. That is one of the reasons why, under this administration, we have seen historic amounts of money allocated in every budget this government has provided in the past six years. We have seen record numbers of projects in every region of our country. We have seen allocations going from Ottawa direct-

ly through to our municipalities, in the form of gas tax-type transfers.

Driving on some roads in Winnipeg North, I think about this. We see the pits that are dug in order to replace a road. I think of a street like McGregor, for example, or Salter or Selkirk. Those are huge cost factors. Much of the money provided comes from Ottawa to make those projects possible.

When I think of the city of Winnipeg, I think of the Chief Peguis Extension and how critically important that is to the city of Winnipeg, to the province and ultimately, I would argue, to our country. When we think of our international airport and CentrePort, and the hundreds of millions of dollars being invested and the future of thousands of jobs in that area alone, one gets a sense of just how important Chief Peguis Extension is.

That same principle, I am sure, could be argued in every one of my colleagues' constituencies. There is no shortage of ideas out there, or shortage of needs for infrastructure dollars. That is why, as a national government, not only are we providing those badly needed financial resources in historic amounts, but we are also working with municipalities and provinces and, in many ways, allowing them to establish the priorities. They are much more into the community, and they are establishing where those priority needs really are. We would like to be able to contribute wherever we can, whether directly or indirectly.

That is not enough. That is one of the reasons why we brought forward the Canada Infrastructure Bank as a Crown corporation: As a Crown corporation, there is no doubt that many projects would be able to attract additional financial resources, which will hopefully see more projects approved.

Recognizing that there is so much need out there, this government is committed to doing what it can to find financial resources so that we can start building our communities and our economy.

By doing that, we are supporting Canadians in a very real and tangible way, whether as a society in our growth or in our economic development. We are improving the quality of life for all Canadians in all regions.

• (1810)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity this debate provides to discuss the important issue of stakeholder capitalism.

Fundamental to our current economic system has been the idea of shareholder capitalism, the idea that corporations exist for the specific and narrow purpose of maximizing value for their shareholders. I think it is important to acknowledge that there are legitimate criticisms of this shareholder capitalism model.

When companies only consider the interests of their shareholders, they may end up doing harm to non-shareholders. Questions of morality and long-term sustainability are part of the equation in shareholder capitalism insofar as they impact a company's reputation and bottom line, but insofar as they do not impact the bottom line, they are excluded from consideration. Maybe that presents a problem.

Historically, we have tried to address these harms associated with shareholder capitalism through law, regulation and tax policy, which force companies to internalize social costs. Needless to say, those efforts are never perfect. One increasingly popular response to the potential problems with shareholder capitalism is the proposed alternative model of stakeholder capitalism. I will argue today that stakeholder capitalism is dangerous. It exacerbates the problems of shareholder capitalism and creates new problems of its own.

Stakeholder capitalism is the idea that we should pursue an economic system in which companies seek to maximize value for all stakeholders instead of just their own shareholders. On the face of it, the idea that companies should concern themselves with the social good instead of their own bottom line is obviously intuitively appealing to many people, but we need to go beyond the superficial, nice-sounding platitudes that usually shape the defence of stakeholder capitalism to understand the substantive implications of this radical shift in thinking.

To start with, it is important to understand the history of the idea. Stakeholder capitalism is a new name, but not a new model. In fact, the process of early European colonization was generally effected through large monopolistic companies that were granted charters to trade exclusively in certain areas, partially in exchange for commitments to undertake certain other non-economic actions that were perceived to be in the interests of the home state.

The Hudson's Bay Company and the East India Company were early examples of stakeholder capitalism at work. These companies acted like governments when they were in the field, and they were protected in their undemocratic exercise of political authority by the fact that they took into consideration the interests of their chosen or assigned stakeholders. Of course, they did not take into consideration the interests of all stakeholders, but neither do their modern equivalents.

Today one of the most prominent proponents of stakeholder capitalism is the World Economic Forum founder Klaus Schwab. *Stakeholder Capitalism* is his most recent book, and it is explicitly endorsed in the Davos Manifesto. Here in Canada, Mark Carney is a leading advocate and his book *Values* makes similar arguments to those made by Schwab. Schwab, Carney and the NDP member proposing this bill today have every right to advance a particular set of proposals about how they believe our economy should change, but we should talk about the fact that these ideas have significant unseen consequences.

Generally speaking, though not always, the proponents of stakeholder capitalism come from the political left. The political left has a long track record of critiquing shareholder capitalism, but has generally done so in the context of a broader critique of corporate power. That critique has been that corporations should not be too

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powerful because they can use their position of power to exploit workers and to push agendas that may be contrary to the democratic will of the people. This is actually a potentially good critique, and many modern conservatives would embrace it, adding as well that too powerful corporations can often use their power to subvert and undermine the market itself.

Conservatives and past versions of left-wing parties have both critiqued powerful monopolistic corporations, but have disagreed about solutions. Left-wing parties have critiqued capitalism itself and pushed for greater state ownership, while conservatives have sought pro-competition and other forms of regulation to ensure that private enterprise can do its job without any single private company having enough power to distort the market or undermine the common good.

Today the parameters of the economic debate have dramatically changed. Today many on the left no longer critique corporate power itself, but simply argue that corporations should be asked to champion progressive or woke causes. The political left now seems fine with large and powerful corporations as long as those corporations are talking about climate change, racial inequality, and trans rights. The left is no longer talking about the problems of corporate power, but about how to use corporate power.

It is very telling that Bill C-245, the bill we are debating tonight and a bill proposed by someone who is arguably one of the most left-wing members of this chamber, is about using corporate power instead of limiting corporate power. She is demonstrating that shift in the thinking of left-wing parties. In particular, Bill C-245 proposes to use the Canada Infrastructure Bank, a Crown corporation, as an ideological tool to shape the kinds of investments that are made in the private sector and to do so with non-economic objectives in mind. This is what stakeholder capitalism has been all about since the colonial era, the use of corporate power to advance ideological objectives that are distinct from shareholder interests.

I believe that modern conservatism must strongly make the case against the kind of stakeholder capitalism championed by this bill and others.

● (1815)

Modern conservatism must take up the arguments against corporate power and recognize that centralized corporate power can be just as dangerous when wielded on behalf of stakeholders as it can be when wielded on behalf of shareholders. We have to defend workers and defend one person, one vote democracy against the idea that corporate power brokers should be the ones defining collective values. This is not an unquestioning defence of shareholder capitalism, which requires appropriate control. It is simply a recognition that the prevailing concept of stakeholder capitalism is worse.

Broadly speaking, I would make three arguments against stakeholder capitalism.

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First, an emphasis on stakeholder values is often done insincerely as a branding exercise to mask a lack of real and substantive action on genuinely important issues. It could be used as a basis for claiming that public interest or anti-monopoly regulation is not necessary, even while not moving substantially on the values that are claimed. On this point, I would like to challenge all corporations that have said Black lives matter to say the same about Uighur lives. The NBA, among many others, has figured out that campaigning for racial justice in America is good for their bottom line and campaigning for racial justice in China is bad for their bottom line. However, those who only campaign for racial justice when it is good for their bottom line are not really for racial justice.

Mark Carney, whom I referred to earlier, got himself into hot water for making and then walking back the dubious claim that the half-trillion dollar asset management firm where he works is net zero. I think some members of the House would call that greenwashing. The prevalence of hypocrisy and its potential to distract from real action is one important critique of stakeholder capitalism.

The second critique is that, even when corporations are sincere about championing certain values, encouraging them to identify and then act in the best interests of stakeholders gives companies too much power to make decisions about the common good that they do not have the mandate to make and that are outside of their expertise.

The House decided at one point to ban corporate and union donations to political parties. Why? It was because we determined that corporations should not have a privileged ability to shape public conversations about the common good by funding certain candidates over others. It was recognized that corporations' being able to throw their weight around in politics has a distorting effect on decision-making. However, what is the point of banning corporate and union donations to political parties if we then allow and even encourage those same corporations to use their unique privileges to advance political positions in other ways, by requiring their employees to take courses on progressive ideology, pushing investments toward certain kinds of enterprises or enjoying the privilege of limited liability while participating in explicitly political activity?

I believe that decisions about the goods that a society pursues should be made through democratic competition and debate, not through corporate-directed stakeholder consultations that perpetuate corporate interests and power, even when well intended. The goods that a society prioritizes should be selected on a one person, one vote basis, not on a one share, one vote basis. Even the most generous-hearted corporations necessarily reflect the power of shareholders and management to aggregate feedback from their chosen stakeholders as they make decisions.

A society in which large corporations identify stakeholder values and then push those values is functionally much less democratic than a society in which collective social priorities are identified through open and transparent democratic debate. Again, the corporatized nature of European colonialism should point us to the risks of excessive and unconstrained corporate power, even when corporations are supposed to be responding to certain non-economic, stakeholder-driven imperatives.

My final concern with the stakeholder capitalism model is about the way that it enables government to use corporate action to advance its objective, which is very clear in this bill. Those with regulatory power over corporations can achieve a great deal through the power of suggestion. Corporations understand that they are less likely to face hostile regulation if they are on the same page as governments when it comes to non-economic matters.

If the government tells social media companies to regulate speech or tells banks to deny banking services to certain kinds of people, then it is very much in the interest of those corporations to be helpful. Governments are doing this sort of thing more and more. Stakeholder capitalism provides the intellectual tool kit for governments to ask corporations to use their corporate power in a particular preferred way. In the process, by using corporate power to their advantage, governments can exercise far more power over people's lives than they would otherwise. When the government acts directly, it is subject to scrutiny and accountability mechanisms that do not apply to private corporations. By acting through corporations and using the power of suggestion, governments can achieve preferred outcomes with less scrutiny and accountability.

In general, a world in which political and corporate leaders establish common values and use corporate power alongside state power to push them is less democratic than one in which business sticks to business and common values are identified through democratic debate and advanced by regulators through transparent regulation. In the process, we must preserve a healthy skepticism of corporate power and recognize that a functioning capital system is one in which no single player dominates the field.

• (1820)

Instead of using the Canada Infrastructure Bank to push so-called stakeholder values, Conservatives believe that we should eliminate the Canada Infrastructure Bank, which has been a failure by any standard. This so-called bank already represents a perverse structure for combining government and corporate interests because it involves the taxpayer assuming the risk associated with private investments.

The genius of a market system is that private actors must bear risk in proportion to their potential gains. The only thing worse than socialism is a policy that privatizes gains while still socializing losses—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I did try to give the hon. member a signal and I did allow for a little bit more time, but I was not sure when the hon. member was going to end.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-245, introduced by my NDP colleague. To begin with, this bill deserves to be debated at the very least.

Bill C-245 amends the Canada Infrastructure Bank Act. Before explaining why we might want to amend that piece of legislation, we should perhaps start by understanding what the Canada Infrastructure Bank is and where it came from.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank was created in 2016 through legislation introduced by former finance minister Bill Morneau. The idea was to get money from the private sector to finance infrastructure that would normally be public infrastructure.

Former finance minister Morneau came from the high finance world of Bay Street. It is no coincidence that the head office of the Canada Infrastructure Bank is in Toronto, as is the head office of the family-owned and highly profitable Morneau Shepell.

The government had some interesting discussions with all kinds of groups, superwealthy people and global figures in high finance, telling them that it could put lots of public money at their disposal, so they could complete more infrastructure projects and earn more profits. They found that interesting.

When the government saw how happy they were, it thought it had done a great job and could earn plenty of money by making lots of investments. It had some delusions of grandeur. The government thought the whole world was going to come and invest here, that all of our beautiful infrastructure would be privatized with public money, thereby filling its coffers. It was ready to brag about all the investments this would generate. That was basically the idea.

The government then handed out \$35 billion for these folks to invest in all kinds of projects. It hoped to get four to five times the amount invested from the private sector, so a \$35-billion investment would have generated \$175 billion in private investment.

It was a dismal failure. Here we are in 2022, still waiting for that influx of cash from the private sector. Meanwhile, federal infrastructure continues to disintegrate. In the regions, there are ports where boats can no longer be moored, reservoirs that no longer hold water, military bases with dilapidated buildings and crooked, rusty fences. That is the state of federal infrastructure in this country.

Instead of investing where money was needed, the government decided to give money to the private sector, which would then go find great projects. That whole idea, giving the private sector money to go find great projects, never really materialized.

What actually happened was that public organizations took the money from the Canada Infrastructure Bank to invest in projects. In Quebec, we saw things like the Caisse de dépôt et placement investing in the REM light rail project and other projects at the Montreal airport or the Port of Montreal.

There were also projects with cities and public transit agencies to fund buses. Some regions got funding for Internet access, and even

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irrigation networks in Alberta got money. All those projects seem to make sense.

Why create the Canada Infrastructure Bank to fund projects that essentially could have been carried out and funded in other ways? It is because, originally, the Canada Infrastructure Bank was supposed to fund the private sector. There is something a bit schizophrenic there. What is actually happening is not what was supposed to happen.

At the end of the day, I would say I am a bit pleased about this, but not too much. I think that the Conservatives, on the other side of the House, are very frustrated and disappointed because they would have preferred the former PPP Canada Crown corporation that was kind of the predecessor to the Canada Infrastructure Bank. PPP Canada did not have the fancy title, but it had the same objectives, namely to privatize the country's infrastructure. The Canada Infrastructure Bank goes even further: instead of privatizing only federal infrastructure, it aims to privatize all infrastructure.

● (1825)

The Canada Infrastructure Bank targets all infrastructure, municipal and provincial, no matter where it is. We cannot forget that. What it means is that instead of funding projects that are in the public interest, the bank funds projects that have the potential to make money for the private sector. The public interest is no longer the priority. The idea of an infrastructure project that should serve the public good is being distorted.

This bank seriously lacks transparency. It is a nice Crown corporation, and when it starts a project, poof, all is settled. It is as though it becomes a federal project, bypassing all provincial, municipal or environmental laws. It does what it wants, how it wants, and when it wants. The private sector loves that too.

There is clearly a lack of transparency. What is worse, this organization is not subject to the Access to Information Act. We have no idea what goes on there. Information about executive compensation is secret. No one knows who gets paid how much. Basically, we only know that people are well paid.

Not that long ago, the Parliamentary Budget Officer spoke about this at committee. He stated that even his enquiries went unanswered. It is not just MPs or the public that do not get any answers from the bank. Even the Parliamentary Budget Officer cannot get an answer. He should have access to any information he needs, but that is not the case.

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The excuse the bank gave him for not providing any information was that it was confidential commercial information. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer is authorized to receive confidential information. The bank is refusing to disclose confidential information to an organization that is authorized to receive it. That is quite something. Given that the PBO has this authorization, if he were to receive the information, he would go through it and not publish anything that should not be disclosed. He would use his judgment to avoid compromising the security of this information. He would maintain its confidentiality, but it seems that the bank sees things differently. Clearly, the government agrees with the bank, because it has never forced the bank in any way to provide the requested information.

That brings me to the NDP's bill. I hope I have enough time to unpack that. The goal of the NDP's bill is to eliminate the private sector from the Canada Infrastructure Bank's mission. That could work. The bill would also have the bank receive unsolicited proposals. That means it could get slightly out-of-the-box proposals from people who think their project is a good idea, which the bank would then have to assess the merits of. That could work too. The bill states that priority should be given to northern projects, projects put forward by indigenous nations, infrastructure projects aimed at mitigating or adapting to climate change, and projects that are not harmful to the environment. Those are all good things. We see no problem there. The bill states that the membership of the board must include three people representing the interests of the Inuit, first nations and the Métis, respectively.

Another interesting aspect is the requirement to annually submit a report to the minister on the bank's activities and investments to give an account of what is happening there. At the moment, we do not know. It is a state secret, apparently. We do not know what goes on at the bank at all, except when it makes a public announcement. The report would also be tabled in Parliament once a year.

We do not see much in the bill that really concerns us, that really makes us want to tear our hair out. On the contrary, it could make this monster a little less awful. That is part of the problem, though. That is what the NDP does not understand. The Canada Infrastructure Bank is basically a huge federal intrusion into provincial jurisdictions. Some 98% of public infrastructure is provincial or municipal infrastructure, and the bank is sticking its nose into that, instead of just transferring money or cutting taxes. No, the federal government just has to stick its nose into everything. That is the fundamental problem with this bank.

This is a centralizing government that is always trying to impose its vision, to wade in where it is not wanted and mix things up even further, add stakeholders and complicate matters.

● (1830)

Every dollar in that bank is one dollar too many, and we will continue to fight against it.

[*English*]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, last fall, devastating rain and floods in British Columbia exposed how dependent we are on public infrastructure for the free movement of goods and people. Stable and robust public infrastructure ensures access to employment, food, medicines and the essen-

tials that keep us and the economy running. The inability to easily move in and out of the Lower Mainland of B.C. for just a few weeks had a harrowing impact on people, businesses and industry. As livestock and crops were lost, so too was infrastructure. Sections of major connector roads were washed away, bridges destroyed and dikes failed, due to a lack of adequate maintenance and upgrades. This was the reality of just one extreme weather event.

Last year, B.C. was just another canary in the coal mine for Canada and the world with floods, droughts, heat domes and wildfires all happening in the same year within kilometres of each other. These incidents of communities losing so much is because of climate change. Black swan events are no longer a rarity, and they highlight the urgency of addressing climate change now.

Monday's report from the IPCC on climate mitigation was clear that limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels is all but out of reach without massive and immediate emissions cuts. While the federal government focuses on targets 10 and 20 years out, it is missing the other side of the equation: our local communities. People are suffering now on the front lines of climate change.

Across Canada, the past generation of public infrastructure is failing and is in urgent need of upgrading. New infrastructure must be built to specifications that will withstand today's and tomorrow's climate realities. However, local governments are struggling to fund these competing priorities with their limited tax base. They rely on other levels of government to assist through unpredictable grants, but what they really need is long-term, stable and predictable investment from the federal government to build the next generation of resilient infrastructure.

This reality is magnified in northern and indigenous communities. These are some of the hardest hit by the effects of climate change, and they have been left to fend for themselves after decades of inadequate federal investment and even the most basic of infrastructure. This long-standing inequity in infrastructure investment has led to a chronic lack of housing, inadequate water and waste-water treatment plants and a dependence on diesel with no access to other energy resources.

● (1835)

[*Translation*]

These communities have been abandoned for far too long.

[English]

As my NDP colleague, the member for Nunavut, said yesterday, in her riding there is a need for 3,000 homes, but the government has only committed to building 100. That is 100 homes in a territory that needs 3,000.

The current infrastructure funding model is obviously not working for indigenous and northern communities. The way the federal government allocates limited infrastructure funds to indigenous and northern communities, often on a year-by-year basis, has never been appropriate. This leaves them at a disadvantage and unable to do critical, long-term planning.

Indigenous and northern communities have waited too long for safe housing, clean water, broadband, public transportation and reliable roads. In places like St. Theresa Point in northern Manitoba, for example, the community is isolated and inaccessible by land 80% of the year. As Chief Flett tells us, their community needs more public infrastructure to enhance community services and to ensure all-weather access. Without public roads and publicly funded infrastructure to move goods in and out all year round, we can imagine what the price of food and other essential goods is in that community.

It is time for federal infrastructure to live up to the times, and the NDP have solutions. One of them is to reinvent the Canada Infrastructure Bank to make it work for people living on the front lines of the climate crisis.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank was set up to build infrastructure, yet in five years it has built none. Zero projects have been completed. The Parliamentary Budget Officer has noted that the CIB is not meeting its own goals. Other critics have said that privatizing infrastructure projects through private-public partnerships does not work for workers or communities because these projects are focused on investor profits.

The Infrastructure Bank adds no value to communities today. It is broken. Based on a failed P3 model, the bank cannot attract the investments it promised. This Crown corporation is currently being run under a model that has been proven to cost governments and people more.

Bill C-245 would use the Infrastructure Bank for good. By removing the for-profit corporate cronyism and instead investing in public infrastructure, this is an opportunity to make immediate and critical infrastructure investments across Canada, with a focus on indigenous and northern communities. We need investments in housing, roads, clean energy and water and waste water plants, all while fighting against climate change. This bill would ensure that decision-makers from first nation, Métis and Inuit communities are on the board so that infrastructure projects meet the needs of their communities. This bill would also increase transparency, with regular reporting so that the \$35 billion in the CIB goes to projects that support communities facing the climate crisis instead of padding the pockets of wealthy Liberal insiders.

The House has the opportunity right now to commit to indigenous and northern communities that it will harness a public ownership model for the next generation of infrastructure. When this bill

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is enacted, it will finally put the Canada Infrastructure Bank to work, something that has not happened since its inception.

The power of a reinvented Canada Infrastructure Bank will explicitly support climate change adaptation and mitigation in the most underfunded communities, the communities most at risk of climate change. With this bill, the Infrastructure Bank would be more equitable and transparent and would ensure that indigenous and northern communities can plan for the long term with stable, reliable infrastructure funding. It would ensure the \$35-billion Canada Infrastructure Bank lives up to the times.

● (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I come to you today from the beautiful riding of Calgary Midnapore.

Further back, I asked the finance minister to stop pretending to convince Canadians that all was well with the economy. What she does not seem to understand still is that the majority of Canadians simply do not see it that way.

What Canadians do see is that their families cannot afford the same groceries that they used to, and that they will have to squeak in just one more trip back and forth to pick up the kids from school before having to buy another tank of gas. Canadians are looking to the government to provide solutions.

Sixty-eight per cent of Canadians are concerned that they may not be able to afford gasoline, and 60% of Canadians are concerned they might not have enough money to feed their families. Cooking oils are up 26.5%. Electricity is up 8.2%. Oranges are up 9.4%. Cooking appliances are up 9.4%. Meat is up 11.7%. Bakery products are up 5.7%.

Only 16.3% of Canadians share a positive outlook on future finances six months from now. The statistics do not lie, and despite what the government says in the House, Canadians are not stupid.

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The Prime Minister tried to defend this today, saying that he thinks the Conservatives believe that the government is doing too much. That is just not the case. The government is doing the wrong things. It is not doing the right things. It is making its decisions based on ideology and vote-grabbing, as we saw with the recent Liberal-NDP coalition.

The government tried to say it was providing day care, when this exact system has been absolutely trouble-fraught in Quebec. I have had many people tell me that it does not address the needs of single people, seniors and those who have already had their children go through the system. Canadians are not stupid.

The government will try to blame the pandemic on supply chains, when it sent our own PPE across the ocean. It will try to blame it, and we will hear it in the response, on Ukraine, when the government has done nothing but support undemocratic regimes and dictators around the world. It could have done so much more in an effort to prevent all of this. Canadians are not stupid.

In fact, we hear arrogance every day from the government and we hear ignorance every day from the government. The government is entirely out of touch. It is all that we hear in the House. Despite what it says, Canadians are not stupid.

Now, we have an NDP-Liberal coalition. In HUMA last week, they could not tell me how much a dental program would cost. They could not tell me how much a pharmacare program would cost. They could not tell me what the housing initiatives would cost. We can do nothing but prepare for that in the budget tomorrow. Canadians will see nothing but spending, which achieves so little to help them with their cost of living.

Let us hear what the response is. Regardless of what it is, Canadians are not stupid.

• (1845)

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I must admit that it was quite interesting.

[English]

I would have to agree with my colleague from Calgary Midnapore. Canadians are not stupid, absolutely not. That is why Canadians understand that the inflation we are seeing here at home, while concerning, is not a made-in-Canada problem. It just is not. Anybody who reads the newspaper or knows the facts knows that.

Our inflation here in Canada is lower than the G7 average and lower than the OECD average. It is even lower than the G20 average. It does not mean that it is not an issue that needs to be tackled, absolutely not. However, when the member claims that this is something that was somehow created by our government and she seems to equate that with our support of dictators, despite the fact that we are supporting the Ukrainian people and the fact that we have been sending arms in order to support the tremendous effort of Ukrainian civilians fighting for their lives and for democracy, I must admit her argument is entirely disjointed. Canadians who are not stupid see that.

I would also like to get to the heart of the matter and that is the general view of Conservative colleagues that somehow the extraordinary spending that was required during the pandemic was the wrong thing to do. I would remind the member opposite that we went into the pandemic with the best fiscal balance sheet in the G7 and that today, after that spending, we still have here in Canada the best fiscal balance sheet in the G7. That is because it was the right thing to do.

Tomorrow we are expecting the budget and I do look forward to all of the members commenting on what is in that budget, but I am very comfortable saying that it is about affordability because the Minister of Finance, me and our entire government are concerned about affordability.

We always have been, which is why the Canada child benefit is indexed to inflation. It is why so many of our programs to support seniors, to support vulnerable Canadians, are indexed to inflation. What does that mean? It means that Canadians actually receive a more generous amount of support from the federal government when inflation increases. That helps them put food on the table. It helps them put a roof over their heads. I will not apologize for that.

We also know that we need to be fiscally responsible, and I think the budget will speak for itself on that matter.

• (1850)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie: Madam Speaker, I will turn to an article from David Akin. It says:

"Canadians are in many parts of this country, really, really feeling the pressure, especially people with more precarious employment, women, people with kids at home—people who are under real pressure as a result of what they see as an unplanned, rising cost of living that they're now having to manage,"... "And they're looking to this budget for a signal from the government that they got it and that they've got some ideas about how to deal with it."

...A majority—53 per cent—listed "help with the soaring cost of every day needs due to inflation" as one of their three top priorities. That was followed with 45 per cent listing "lowering taxes" as a top priority and 40 per cent telling the pollster that "greater investments in healthcare" ought to be a priority.

It concludes that the previous idealistic issues "now have a lower priority according to...polling."

Polling is one good thing that the government is good at following, but tomorrow I hope they remember that Canadians are not stupid.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, as a woman from Quebec, I have to say that, frankly, my colleague's comment about child care was very surprising and disappointing. Our government made it a priority to bring in a Canada-wide child care program so that women can decide whether they want to have a career, which is the decision that I, my colleague and all women with both a family and a career have made.

I would also like to say that my colleague was completely off base when she said that it did not work in Quebec. It did work. The facts are there to prove it. I unfortunately do not have time to get into the details, but my colleague should have done her homework before speaking in the House.

[English]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, there is a situation in Union Bay on Vancouver Island in my riding. Baynes Sound, which is located on the east coast of Vancouver Island, is a 40-kilometre-long channel and is responsible for half of B.C.'s shellfish production. It is part of a 14-hectare provincial shellfish reserve. It is also the last major herring spawning ground in the province and is recognized by DFO as an ecologically and biologically significant area. It is also under immense pressure.

In December 2020, a ship-breaking operation moved into Union Bay, where rusty vessels, ferries, barges and old U.S. survey boats are cut up and recycled for scrap metal. Ship-breaking is an important industry. As we can imagine, we want to get rid of derelict and abandoned vessels and we want to make sure that we do the right thing and recycle huge amounts of steel, but it is also one of the most hazardous industries in the world.

Astonishingly, Canada does not have any ship-breaking regulations, and as a result, companies can quickly set up operations and begin dismantling vessels before regulators are even aware of their activity. Transport Canada says regulations are being considered and should be ready in the next three to five years. As we can imagine, that is not good enough. Canada could adopt the most stringent international regulations now if it wanted to.

Much of the world's ship-breaking happens in countries with poor environmental and labour laws. About 70% of international ship-breaking happens on the shores of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, making up about 90% of the industry's gross tonnage. Around 12% of Bangladesh's ship-breaking workforce are minors aged 14 to 17 years old. In the ship-breaking yards, minors often work at night because they have school during the day, earning three dollars a day. We need to be more responsible for all our waste, including vessels at end of life and ensure that human rights violations are not taking place.

We have a robust shipbuilding industry emerging here in Canada that we need to invest in, and we could take on a lot of ship-breaking here too. It could be a huge opportunity, in fact.

The risks of ship-breaking are huge. These old ships can contain asbestos, heavy metals like mercury and lead, polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs, carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, contaminated bilge water and ballast water containing sediment and bio-organisms. These toxins affect both employees and their families because things like asbestos can be carried home on clothing, and we know what these toxins can do to the environment.

The industry often suffers fatalities as a result of falls, fires, explosions and falling debris. An NGO website, Shipbreaking Platform, lists 429 deaths and 344 injuries just since 2009, but that number is likely much higher due to the under-reporting by these companies.

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There are three international conventions regulating ship-breaking: the Basel convention, the Hong Kong Convention and the EU Ship Recycling Regulation. The Basel convention was ratified by Canada in 1992 and is intended to stop developed countries from shipping hazardous waste, including old ships, to developing countries. It provides recommendations on procedures, processes and practices to ensure safe and environmentally sound practices, as well as advice on monitoring and verification of environmental performance.

It has been difficult to apply the Basel convention to ships going for breaking, and shipping companies often falsely deny that ships are intended to be scrapped and instead claim they are going to repair yards. Canada feeds into this toxic trade economy by allowing commercial fleets, like BC Ferries, to sell vessels internationally. These shipping companies need to be more responsible.

● (1855)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to stand on behalf of the Minister of Transport.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of safe and environmentally sound practices for the dismantling and recycling of ships. We are aware of concerns raised about ship recycling activities being conducted in Union Bay on provincial land.

In Canada, responsibility for regulating waste management, including ship-breaking, is shared amongst various levels of government. Canada has a strong safety and environmental record for ship recycling. To ensure its continued leadership, Transport Canada is exploring, in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, whether there may be ways to enhance Canada's ship recycling rules. This includes examining requirements under the European Union's ship recycling regulation and the 2009 Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

Ship-breaking is recognized as the most environmentally sound method to dispose of ships at end of life, as most of the ship's materials can be reused and repurposed. Of course, this assumes that ships will be recycled in a safe way, ensuring workers are well protected and that no hazardous materials escape into the environment.

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In Canada, there are rules at all levels of government that ensure ship recycling activities are done in a safe and environmentally sound way.

At the federal level, there are existing laws and regulations that prohibit the release of pollutants into the marine environment, which apply to vessels that are located at recycling facilities. The passage of the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act in 2019 also strengthened responsibilities and liabilities for owners to properly manage their vessels at end of life. Further, it prohibits vessel abandonment. This complements investments the government is making to enhance vessel recycling options, particularly with respect to vessels constructed in fibreglass.

Provinces and territories, for their part, are responsible for the protection of workers and occupational health and safety at ship recycling facilities. They also regulate the handling, storage, transportation and disposal of hazardous waste produced when recycling a ship. Provinces and territories also regulate and authorize waste management operations such as landfills and recycling activities.

Local governments also have a role to play. They establish collection, recycling, composting and disposal programs within their jurisdictions. They are also responsible for land use and zoning within their jurisdictions.

With respect to the ship recycling facility in Union Bay, the approvals to conduct ship recycling fall under provincial and local powers since the facility is located on provincial land.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, around the world, they have taken leadership. I hope the government decides to do the same.

Canada needs to do that. Canada needs to prepare a list of certified ship-breaking yards. It needs to do extensive background checks of ownership, including by FINTRAC. Comprehensive and meaningful pollution insurance coverage needs to be in place, and all new sites need to meet rigorous multijurisdictional rules, led by Canada.

Canada must adopt and enforce the EU ship recycling regulation, and help those long-term reputable ship-breakers with grants and loans to transition to this new standard. Even Bangladesh has EU-compliant ship-breaking facilities. Each vessel must prove that it is a lifelong Canadian vessel, not imported to Canada under some obscure clause. All non-Canadian vessels need prior, written consent from the minister for importation.

We hope there will be some action from the government.

• (1900)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, Canada is a leader when it comes to protecting our coasts and waterways.

Recent investments in coastal protection through Canada's oceans protection plan, the strengthening of the Canada Navigable Waters Act and the implementation of the Wrecked, Abandoned and Hazardous Vessels Act show our government's resolve towards protecting our waterways.

One way we continue to show this commitment is through ongoing work with our provincial and territorial partners to explore opportunities for further enhancements to the ship recycling rules

across various jurisdictions. This includes examining requirements under the European Union's ship recycling regulation and the 2009 Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

We are also exploring solutions to increase the recyclability of ships in Canada, including through innovative research into the recycling or reuse of fibreglass vessels. There is more work to be done, and we will continue to do so.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week, the world's top scientists gave us a clear warning. Without immediate and bold action, the world is headed toward climate disaster. The UN Secretary-General had harsh words for countries such as Canada. In announcing the new IPCC report, he said, "The truly dangerous radicals are the countries that are increasing the production of fossil fuels. Investing in new fossil fuel infrastructure is moral and economic madness."

Just this afternoon, the Liberal government did just that: It approved Bay du Nord. It is a new oil project that will lock in carbon emissions for decades. The Liberals are rubber-stamping oil projects as Canadians are dealing with the effects of devastating flooding, climate fires and extreme heat.

Canadians know that the climate emergency is here. They are scared. They are angry, and they have every reason to be. I am scared and angry, too. I am worried about the future for my daughter. I am worried about the world we are leaving for future generations.

There is still hope for a livable future, but it is now or never. The status quo is not working. If we continue this way, even with all of the policies announced, the world is on track to warm by 3.2°C this century.

The impacts would be catastrophic. Our best hope for a livable planet is to keep warming below 1.5°C. All pathways to 1.5°C involve rapid and deep greenhouse gas emissions reductions in all sectors. The IPCC is clear. Without immediate action, hitting that target will be impossible. The government is failing to act.

The most infuriating part is that we have the solutions. We know what needs to be done. We have the tools. Clean energy technology is available, and the costs have gone down dramatically. Renewable energy is now cheaper than even coal.

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Not only are the Liberals failing to act, but they are throwing fuel on the flames of the climate emergency. The government spends 14 times more on subsidies to fossil fuels than on renewables.

For seven years, the Liberals have been heading in the wrong direction. When it comes to emissions reductions, Canada has the worst record of any G7 country, and instead of phasing out fossil fuel subsidies the Liberals increased them, handing out billions more to profitable oil and gas companies.

Instead of helping communities and workers meet the challenges created by the climate crisis, they spent billions on a pipeline. Instead of capping oil and gas emissions, the Liberals announced a few days ago that they would increase production by 300,000 barrels a day.

Their new emissions plan is also heavily dependent on big oil and implementing carbon capture technology: a fairy tale told by profitable oil and gas companies to justify more production and more subsidies. As these companies rake in record profits, the Liberal government plans on giving them \$50 billion as a tax credit.

That \$50 billion could support workers and create jobs in the low-carbon economy. As it turns out, Canada even lobbied the IPCC to increase the importance of carbon capture in the text. Who are the Liberals working for: big oil or Canadians?

There is no time left to delay. How can they justify approving Bay Du Nord? How can they justify adding fuel to the flames when our planet is on fire?

• (1905)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agree with the hon. member for Victoria that the recent IPCC report is a stark reminder of the impact of climate change. As climate impacts intensify, it is only becoming more obvious that moving to a clean, net-zero economy is critical to protecting the well-being of Canadians and communities and securing Canada's economic prosperity. That is why Canada has set an ambitious and achievable emissions reduction target of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and net-zero emissions by 2050.

The scientific and economic imperative to reduce emissions is clear. As countries and businesses around the world race to transform their operations to net-zero emissions, it is critical that Canada be a leader and not be left behind. To create good jobs, grow a strong economy and build a brighter, healthier future for everyone, enhanced climate action in our country is needed today. From transportation to the oil and gas sector to heavy industry, agriculture, buildings and waste, every sector in all regions has a role to play in meeting Canada's 2030 climate target.

The 2030 emissions reduction plan, or the ERP, is the Government of Canada's next major step in taking action to address climate change and create good, sustainable jobs in Canada. The ERP is more than just about achieving incremental GHG emissions reduction to reach Canada's 2030 target. It is also about putting in place foundational measures to ensure that Canada's future is not only carbon-neutral, but also makes energy alternatives more affordable and creates new sustainable job opportunities for workers.

The ERP is a road map that goes sector by sector to highlight measures needed for Canada to reach its ambitious and achievable emissions reduction target of 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030, and net-zero emissions by 2050, in a fair and affordable way. The ERP includes \$9.1 billion of new federal investments in climate action, which will be advanced tomorrow in budget 2022. For example, the plan makes it easier for Canadians to switch to electric vehicles by committing \$1.7 billion to expand the iZEV purchase incentive program for light-duty vehicles and make zero-emission vehicles more affordable.

We all agree there is no time to waste. The work before us requires strong collaboration and partnership with all levels of government, indigenous partners, industry, civil society and all Canadians to implement the concrete climate action under the ERP. The government recently released a discussion paper on achieving a net-zero electricity grid by 2035, and another on reducing methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by at least 75% by 2030. Soon there will be another on capping emissions from the oil and gas sector at a pace and scale needed to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Of course, we will be following this up with action.

I look forward to working with the hon. member and her colleagues to address the climate crisis and build a more prosperous and clean economy for all Canadians.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his answer, but he failed to even mention Bay du Nord. He also failed to address a key point, which is that we need to reduce our emissions, not increase them. We need to decrease production, not increase it.

Under the Liberals, we have the worst record of any G7 country when it comes to emissions reduction. How can the Liberals claim that approving a project that will increase production, resulting in emissions equivalent to 100 coal-fired power plants running for an entire year, fits into their climate plan and is consistent with their climate commitments?

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People in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada need the government to address the climate crisis and its impact on people and their communities. They need reliable family-sustaining jobs. How can Canadians trust that the government is serious about tackling the climate crisis when it is increasing oil production?

● (1910)

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, the emissions reduction plan builds on the strong foundation set out by the pan-Canadian framework on clean growth and climate change and the strengthened climate plan that was released in 2021. Since 2015, the government has delivered \$100 billion in investments for climate action.

These efforts are working. Thanks to the actions of millions of Canadians, we have been able to halt our once upward-trending emissions curve and bend it downward. This road map will build on this progress and chart the course to lowering emissions by 40% below 2005 levels.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:11 p.m.)

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