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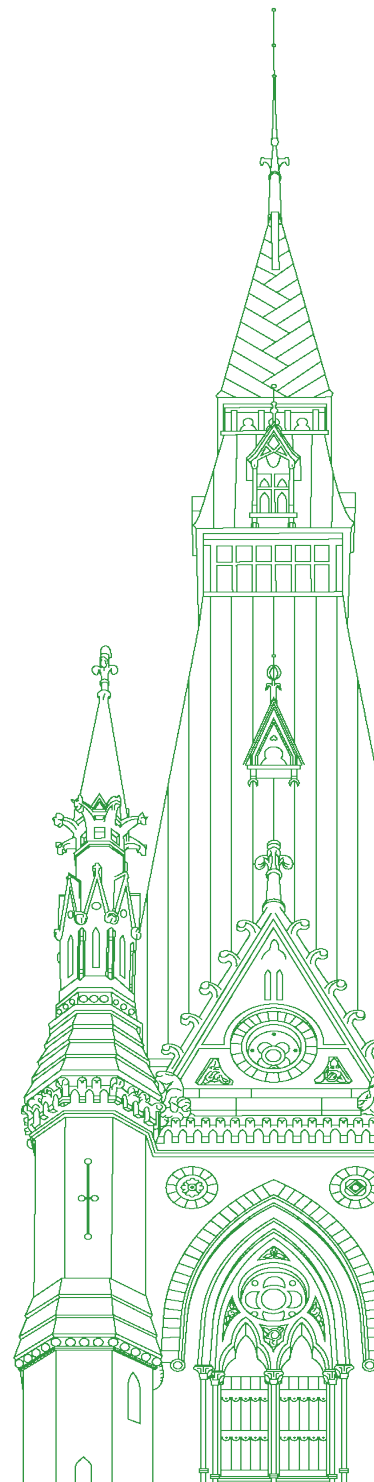
House of Commons Debates

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 29, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1000)

[*Translation*]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing this House that the Senate has passed Bill S-211, An Act to enact the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act and to amend the Customs Tariff.

This bill is deemed to have been read the first time and ordered for a second reading at the next sitting of the House.

counts, the \$1.4 trillion of debt that Canadian taxpayers are now on the hook for. Let us think about that: \$70 billion more, on top of the \$1.4 trillion that has already been added until now.

It is said that one should know history so one does not repeat it. I guess the current government does not know history, because if it did, it would see that the son is repeating the mistakes of the father. To understand the context of what this bill and this spending's impact on the economy will be, let us take a look at what the father did. It tells us what the country will face in the coming years because of the fiscal mismanagement of the son and the father.

In the federal election of 1968, Pierre Trudeau reassured Canadians that a Liberal government would not raise taxes or increase spending. The government, he said during the election of 1968, is not Santa Claus. How did that work out?

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021

The House resumed from April 28 consideration of Bill C-8, An Act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, as reported (with amendment) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always such an honour to rise in this place and speak on behalf of my community of South Shore—St. Margarets.

Today, we are debating the report stage of Bill C-8, an act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021 and other measures, in other words, more government spending on COVID-19. Let us look at the NDP and Liberal COVID spending to date in this bill. The fall fiscal update added another \$70 billion in new spending, and this spending is on top of that. The \$70 billion I mentioned does not even include the Liberal campaign promises, which would be tens of billions more if, and that is a big if, the NDP-Liberal government lives up to their campaign promises and their coalition. The bill is going to add \$70 billion on top of what we saw in the public ac-

When Pierre Trudeau became prime minister, real government spending increased from 17% of GDP to 24.3%. In other words, the federal government's share of the economy rose 42% under Trudeau senior. Every single area of the federal government's spending increased under Trudeau senior, except defence spending, where he cut spending in half as a percentage of the budget. When Pierre Trudeau took office, we spent more on national defence than we did on servicing the country's debt. When he left office in 1984, for every dollar the government spent on defence, we spent three dollars on paying just the interest on his national debt.

How did he do it? He created 114 agencies and commissions. He created seven new government departments, for a total of 464 Crown corporations with 213 subsidiaries. The annual deficit rose to almost \$40 billion. That does not seem so unreasonable, given what we have seen with the spending in this place lately. However, that \$40 billion was on a base budget, an annual Government of Canada budget, of \$100 billion.

I raise this because, as the adage goes, "Like father, like son." Pierre Trudeau once said, "We're going to build socialism here." Well, he did, and his son just formalized it.

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People who grew up in the 1930s, such as Pierre Trudeau, saw Roosevelt's New Deal of massive government infrastructure spending to pull the U.S. out of the Great Depression. They thought that this approach in the 1970s would stimulate us out of the "stagflation" of that time, which was, for those who do not remember, high inflation combined with high unemployment and a stagnant demand in the economy. It was disastrous.

It was so bad that at one point Pierre Trudeau brought in wage and price controls. He said, "Zap, you're frozen", and froze all wages and prices. When those socialist wage and price controls came off, the floodgates of wage demands and price adjustments went up even faster. By the time Pierre Trudeau left office, 38¢ of every dollar collected in taxes by the Government of Canada was to pay interest, and only interest, on the debt. The biggest single government program was paying interest on Pierre Trudeau's debt. The government in 1984 spent more on debt interest payments than it spent on defence spending and health care combined. Trudeau's policies of massive spending led to a rapid rise in interest rates to try to reduce inflation. All that government spending simply made it worse.

● (1005)

In the early 1980s, banks were creating home mortgages at 21% annual interest rates. When Brian Mulroney took office in 1984, and I joined that government as a young staffer, we had to break the cycle of spending and deficits that were killing Canada's economy and jobs. By 1987, Mulroney was managing the government in an operating surplus position, reversing the structural deficits created by the Liberals. The deficits after 1987 were entirely as a result of paying interest on Pierre Trudeau's debt.

The government remained in an operating surplus through successive prime ministers until the current Liberal government came to office. The Mulroney government reined in spending and fundamentally restructured the economy with a new vision to deal with the economics of the day. There were fundamental changes, such as a complete restructuring of Canada's financial services industry; the first introduction anywhere in the world of free trade, which did not exist anywhere before then; the replacement of the 13.5% manufacturers' sales tax with the 7% goods and services tax; the elimination of the national energy program and the job-killing foreign investment review agency; and, yes, the privatization of 23 Crown corporations, which I was proud to be a part of, including Air Canada.

The Chrétien government continued this work with further cuts in government spending, although it took a different approach. It collapsed the separate unemployment insurance fund into the consolidated revenue fund, and then artificially kept payments high in order to build up a surplus that was not needed to pay unemployment insurance but was used to pay down the debt. It dropped the government spending on health care by 50%.

It took the governments that followed more than 25 years to break the back of Trudeau's disastrous spending, but he was a piker compared to his son, who has added more debt to Canada's national accounts in six years than all other governments since our founding in 1867. The son, in 2015, promised small stimulus deficits that would be balanced by 2019. Just like his father did in 1968, when

he said he would not spend, the son promised the same thing in 2015. We know how that turned out.

The government spent \$600 million on high school students living at home in its first round of COVID spending. The government also spent \$11.8 billion on CERB for 15- to 24-year-olds who were living with their parents; \$7 billion on spouses in households with more than \$100,000 in earnings; \$110 billion on the Canada wage subsidy. Some studies have found that the money did obviously go to struggling companies during COVID, but many were strong enough to withstand it on their own; 24% of that money went to companies whose revenue actually increased during COVID, and 49% to companies whose profits increased during COVID.

Spending more than \$600 billion in two years, printing more than \$3 billion a week in new money, has caused the structural inflation of almost 6% we now see. In the coming year or two, we will start to see wage inflation as a result of the way companies, both unionized and not, determine how their employees get pay raises, which is usually based on inflation. As publicly traded companies raise salaries at all levels, because consultants and their HR board committees will say they need to do so or risk losing their employees to other competitors, combined with the demands for CPI adjustments in union contracts, that is what is going to create wage inflation. We have not seen anything yet. Wage inflation will fuel further goods inflation as more dollars will flood the market chasing limited goods, which in turn leads to higher inflation.

The consequences of providing all these universal government COVID programs, pushing all this money into the economy at levels not needed, and now new social programs when the government is not even properly funding health care, will add to the structural deficit that the country has. The government has no plans to reduce the footprint of government in the economy, which means we are heading toward stagnation, a 1970s-type of situation.

I cannot support this bill, because Bill C-8 and the recently tabled budget will just make Canada's finances drastically worse. The NDP and the Liberals have not learned in their pact from what happened in the 1970s, and they had a pact in the 1970s, too. History is repeating. Like father, like son.

• (1010)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the member for Carleton does ultimately become leader of the Conservative Party, there is no doubt he has a credible finance critic for the Conservative right. What we all just witnessed is that reform mentality, that extreme right, of just cutting everything. That is the type of opposition that we could be heading towards, so I wish him well in his future endeavours.

Is the position of the Conservative Party now that the expenses that were used to support programs, such as the wage subsidy and the CERB program, was money not well spent? Does he believe that we should not have ventured into that area?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I am always intrigued by the interventions of the member for Winnipeg North, and I appreciate that he thinks I am a future finance minister. I hope he passes that on to the member for Carleton and others. Well, I promoted myself to government.

As members know, we supported those initial programs because of the speed with which the pandemic hit us. Absolutely, all of the parties supported it. However, after we reviewed them a month in, and we all recall that back then people thought it would be for a very short time, but it ended up being longer, and it was time for more targeted programs. It was clear that not all companies and all people were suffering at the same level during COVID. The government failed to do that, and that is the danger of universal social programs.

• (1015)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and congratulate him.

If we look at the budget and government bills such as Bill C-8, for example, it is clear that they want to centralize everything. It seems as though the government is far more interested in encroaching on someone else's territory than in properly managing its own files.

With Bill C-8, we can see that Ottawa is seeking, for the first time, to take over an area of taxation that it has never been in charge of before—specifically, property taxes—even if it is for noble purpose. However, it seems that the government did not consult municipalities or the provinces.

Like his colleague from Simcoe North, does my colleague believe that the government should have gone to the provinces?

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, it is a long history. I went through some of the history on the financial side of the Liberal Party, which always intervenes in provincial jurisdiction. Our party and I know the hon. member's party is very conscious of the Constitution, abiding by the Constitution and allowing the provinces to do their role, whether it is property taxes or the recently announced pharmacare program, which is of course another example of the intrusions into provincial responsibility that the Liberals do.

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There is not a dollar of federal government money, which really is not government money as it is taxpayer money, that the Liberals would not want to put a Canadian flag on to send out. Rather than letting the provinces do it, they will ignore the Constitution and intervene in those areas for their own gain and political purposes.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the history that the member for South Shore—St. Margarets has spoken about today. It really made me reflect on the importance of teachers. I am wondering if the member could please share whether he is in support of the refundable tax credit for teachers and ECEs. So many educators are spending money out of their own pockets to do the work they do so well in educating our future generations.

I am wondering if you could speak to whether you support this tax credit or not.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has to address her questions and comments through the Chair. She may want to refrain from using the word “you”.

The hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets has time for a brief answer, please.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, it is a great question. Of course we support teachers. If I did not support teachers, I could not go home because all my in-laws are teachers in Ontario. They are the Waite family.

At the root of it is that teachers should not have to buy supplies for their classrooms. The education system should be funding that. One of the reasons the provinces are having trouble funding the education system is because of the underfunding at the federal level of the health care system. It has been cut from 50% support under the Chrétien government to 22% under the current government.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in the House. Before starting my intervention on Bill C-8, I will say that we have heard in the House that a couple of Canadian hockey icons have passed away. Ironically, when I was writing my speech, I got a text message saying that coach Greg Lanigan, who was from my riding and who was absolutely instrumental in my hockey career and building me to whom I am today, passed away on Monday. Coach Greg Lanigan will be in heavens' hockey hall of fame, at least in my books.

I will go through about five or six points here on Bill C-8. I will go through them in order, and I am reading all of this directly off of the summary sheet from that bill.

The first point is on the northern resident deductions. It says part 1(b) would:

expand the travel component of the northern residents deduction by giving all northern residents the option to claim up to \$1,200 in eligible travel expenses even if the individual has not received travel assistance from their employer;

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As I continued to go through Bill C-8, I did not see a deduction of travel expenses for skilled trades workers. I did not see that. I did not see a bill that could have simply been, quite frankly, infused into the budget, which is Bill C-241, my private member's bill, which would have a complete deduction of travel expenses. It makes one wonder, if we are going to give a \$1,200 travel expense deduction to northern residents, which is great, would it not make sense, if indeed it is so important to pass this bill, to make sure that we recognize the skilled trades and those folks who are going to build back Canada.

The second point is on part 1(d). The bill proposes to:

introduce a new refundable tax credit to return fuel charge proceeds to farming businesses in backstop jurisdictions.

At least in Essex, and I just happen to be a bona fide farmer myself, Bill C-8 does not speak to those farmers who are still going through challenging times. As an example, dairy farmers in my riding are still waiting for compensation from the CUSMA deal. Therefore, why do we delay, as we are quite often accused of doing? Bill C-8 does not even consider all the issues.

The third point is housing, which is something that has been talked about an awful lot in the debate of Bill C-8. In the summary, by the way, I do not see where it says that young adults would be able to afford a home or find a home. Nowhere in there does it say that a hard-working young man or woman can actually find a home, let alone afford a home. The bill states:

Part 2 enacts the Underused Housing Tax Act. This Act implements an annual tax of 1% on the value of vacant or underused residential property directly or indirectly owned by non-resident non-Canadians.

That is a measly 1% tax. Here is an idea that may be a little bit crazy: Why not give support to municipalities? We could give support to municipalities such as the municipality of Lakeshore in my riding, which has had to turn away major investments from major hotel chains because it has no stormwater capacity. Why not give major investments to the town of Essex and hamlets such as Colchester and McGregor so they could build the proper sewage systems and, all along the way, build capacity for homes? They are taking it from lagoons, and they are building plants.

● (1020)

Some might say it is because that falls under provincial jurisdiction. We all know there is only one taxpayer, so as opposed to pointing the finger at all of this unused property, let us give it to the municipalities. Let us give them support so they can build hundreds and hundreds of homes.

The other crazy one might just be that perhaps the government should tax itself 1% on unused property because we have a lot of federal buildings that are underused, and there are probably a bunch more now because of all the people who have not come back to work.

The fourth point is denied EI benefits. Bill C-8's summary states:

Part 7 amends the Employment Insurance Act to specify the maximum number of weeks for which benefits may be paid in a benefit period to certain seasonal workers.

Just like many other members in this House, I can say in confidence that my office is completely inundated with phone calls

about citizenship, about passports or the lack thereof, about EI claims and about tax returns. Before COVID hit, for the four months of what I guess I could call "normalcy" as a member of Parliament, but I am not sure we can, we got return phone calls to our office helping us out along the way. Now, even our offices cannot get return phone calls.

Instead of coming up with ideas for the Employment Insurance Act, and instead of spending money on proof of vaccination for federal employees, why not get them back to work? That way, our offices could actually get answers on citizenships, passports, EI claims and tax returns, and we could actually help our constituents. I got a phone call from Sarah from Canada Post, who is still off work. By the way, she is a letter carrier. She works outside, and she still cannot go back to work. This is not brain surgery. They need to get back to work.

Regarding homelessness, mental health, opioid abuse and suicide, we all know the stories. We all have them in our own backyards. I know in the town of Kingsville, homelessness is on the rise. Again, we have all these federal buildings not being used. Perhaps that would be a great start for affordable housing.

If we want to talk about support. I recently spoke to the Canadian Mental Health Association of Windsor Essex and its members told us that they are completely burnt out. In Bill C-8, which is so important, where is the funding for mental health issues and more staff?

Finally, with regard to a just transition, I spoke to a gentleman from IBEW earlier this week, and he told me that some 700 coal jobs will be eliminated very shortly in the Regina area. Where in Bill C-8 does it talk about training for these 700 folks, so they do not lose their jobs forever and they can just transition into another clean energy project?

In closing, and I think I have laid it out pretty well, Bill C-8 would spend a whole bunch of money, but it would get very little accomplished. Those who need the greatest support have, one more time, been walked past and left behind, all while the remaining Canadians are left holding the tax bill.

• (1025)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what the member does not necessarily realize is that Bill C-8 is the fall of 2021 economic statement. It is a bill that provides substantial support. For example, there is approximately \$1.5 billion towards rapid testing. If the member thinks about it, that was back in the fall, when we recognized the need to make a budgetary allocation for those rapid tests. I am thinking of how much in demand they were in December and January.

There are also many benefits to support small businesses in this legislation.

My question is this: Can the member explain to Canadians why it is that although the Conservative Party recognizes how important the legislation is, its members continue to debate and debate the bill? We had to bring in time allocation to finally try to get the bill, the fall economic statement, passed, when in fact we have already debated the budget for 2022-23.

• (1030)

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I will tell the House what this member does recognize. What he does recognize is homelessness. What he does recognize is jobs being lost. What he does recognize is farmers not being taken care of. What he does recognize is skilled trades being walked past and people being denied benefits.

What I really recognize is the fact that I have so many constituents calling my office, and they cannot get answers because of this government.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

In recent years, we have been seeing more and more of all kinds of not-so-subtle little interferences in areas under the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces.

This latest one is new: interference in municipal jurisdiction. I know it, the Bloc Québécois knows it, and constitutional lawyer Patrick Taillon confirms that the federal government's move to interfere in municipal jurisdiction is encroachment.

I see something a little insidious and worrisome in the way we are letting these little intrusions slide, even though my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I have expressed our outrage clearly here in the House.

I would like my Conservative colleague to comment on this. I assume he is not wholly in favour of centralization. What are his thoughts on the government's interference in health care and now in municipal taxation?

[English]

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, to be honest, in my perusal of Bill C-8, I did not read a lot into that.

I am a freedom fighter. I have always been a freedom fighter. I really think that through all levels of government, if we have open communication and dialogue, there is always a solution, but the so-

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lution never happens unless the conversations happen. I thank the member, and let us continue to have open discussion and conversations.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for Essex for his intervention.

With regard to taking time, I want to ask the member about this: Since 2007, the citizens of Windsor-Essex County have been waiting for this government to help save Ojibway Shores, and we have yet to see any action on that. I have a private member's bill that would do that, but we still do not have a commitment from the government to do it. I would like to hear from the member about that.

I mean, the Liberals are making complaints about the bill being delayed in this chamber, but at the same time, since 2007, over 130 endangered species are still at risk, and I would like to hear the member's comments on that.

Mr. Chris Lewis: Madam Speaker, I did speak to this a couple of weeks ago.

I have met with the mayors. They are in support, and they are in favour. The truth of the matter is that it is already kind of a natural space, so yes, absolutely, let us continue the discussion and let us move it forward.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise and represent the constituents from Kelowna—Lake Country. The government often likes to speak of the economic strength of immigrants who choose to make new lives here in Canada. On this, it is not wrong. Generations of new Canadians have made this country prosper.

The government also likes to make the point, again not wrongly, that immigrants will be strong contributors to ensuring that our nation, as it exits out of this pandemic, rebuilds itself economically. However, immigrants will not be able to do that if they do not choose to stay in Canada. Increasingly, we are seeing troubling signs that both Canadians and newcomers to Canada are looking to take their ingenuity, entrepreneurship and experience elsewhere, thanks to the government's high-cost, high-priced fiscal strategy.

A recent Leger poll showed that 46% of young immigrants say they are less likely to stay in Canada. The top two reasons they look to leave when asked why they would not recommend Canada to future immigrants were the cost of living and the current leadership in government. Some have come from the world's poorest, often corrupt, regions. They come to Canada to escape hostile governments and the dire economic approaches they practise.

Inflation is not a new concept to newcomers. Some have seen bad regimes dilute the value of their earned dollars, and they are seeing the early warning signs of those similarly inflating approaches here in Canada. It does not take training in microeconomics or macroeconomics to get this: \$100 buys only two bags of groceries when it used to buy three.

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The government continues to say that it is transitory, yet the transition has been from bad to worse. Numerous small businesses and entrepreneurs are telling me they have looked to move south of the border to find better opportunities for their own success. Those comments are not flippant. They are serious, and if we take a step back, we get an idea of how serious they are.

We are now exiting from a once-in-a-century global pandemic and an economic crisis, yet even after weathering two years of economic disruption beyond what anyone can remember, people are still potentially looking to move.

I talked to a business owner from Kelowna—Lake Country recently on the phone while I was at the Toronto airport waiting for a flight, and they were commenting to me on this. Red tape, regulatory burdens and tax increases do not give hope for prosperity. They were looking to move their lives and businesses because of the uncertainty about what the Liberal-NDP plans have done and will do to our economy going forward. A Liberal-NDP government's over-inflating fiscal policy, through legislation like Bill C-8, will ruin small businesses' ability to succeed. It will leave families at the mercy of higher prices for gas, groceries and homes. It will leave workers with less purchasing power in their paycheques. The government's insistence on passing yet another overpriced package of spending commitments will only make this worse.

Members of Parliament on that side of the House do not need to take my word for it either. They can take it from the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Earlier this year, the Parliamentary Budget Officer expressed his confusion about the government's proposal for \$100 billion over the next three years, a number already exponentially increased by NDP agreements. After all, in December 2020, the Prime Minister and his finance minister committed to having guardrails on our economic recovery spending. They said that if Canadians were able to return to their jobs faster, it would decrease the stimulus needing to be spent.

Even though the government claims to have recovered 100% of jobs lost, it has not just ignored those guardrails; it has joined with the New Democrats to build a steep ramp. The Liberal-New Democrat deal outlines new spending sprees even higher than before, deriving even less value for money for Canadian taxpayers while ensuring they will receive an even higher bill by the end of this Parliament.

An area where less value for dollar is of particular concern in my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country is on the issue of housing. A recent community survey I sent out had hundreds and hundreds of people respond about how the rise in house prices is affecting them. They gave their suggestions. The government has now sat on that side of the House for seven years. In that time, they have watched the prices of homes in my riding rise year after year, to the point that they have now doubled.

• (1035)

The benchmark selling price of a single-family home in Kelowna has now risen to \$1 million. Housing prices in Lake Country rose similarly, with new figures from BC Assessment showing a one-year increase of 32%. These increases jeopardize the ability of retirees on fixed incomes to stay in their homes. They prevent first-time homebuyers from ever being able to buy a home. They force

families to live in homes that no longer suit their family's size. They force people to spend far more than 30% of their pre-tax income on rent. The Liberal government and its housing minister insist on saying they support affordable housing, yet they are not insistent on seeing any of it built.

We have a national housing strategy that now effectively applies only to millionaires and a housing accelerator that accelerates prices, but not construction. What is the new Liberal-NDP government's solution to these broken programs via Bill C-8 and other policies? It is to pour more tax dollars into it. Pouring water into a broken dishwasher does not fix it. Spending sprees are not just unfair to those looking for homes today as prices rise, but to those who will be paying for it tomorrow.

The legislation before us alone would cost taxpayers over \$70 billion, while our national debt has already risen to \$1.2 trillion. The national debt is not talked about by the government. In checking records, unless it was very recently, no member of the government has said the words “national debt” since the last election. Perhaps the government does not believe Canadians care about what the debt load is that they are carrying, but I can report that I have now had the opportunity to see them proved wrong on this twice already within the last month.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation organized a truck to carry a national debt clock around the country. It gives Canadians a second-by-second look at how fast our debt rises. They made a new debt clock, as the government broke the previous one because the total was too high. When they announced they would be in Kelowna—Lake Country, I attended, and I saw them again here in Ottawa. Everyday people I speak with understand that \$1 borrowed by the government today is \$1 owed by their children and grandchildren of tomorrow. Legislation like what we see here today is only an extension of the ever-increasing receipt, one the government looks insistent on ensuring is passed down the checkout line to those behind them.

Speaking of checkout lines, this month I am surveying my riding of Kelowna—Lake Country with a mail-out to households, to get feedback on how much families are paying at the grocery store. I am looking forward to going through all of those responses as they come in. No one comes up to me to say their dollars are going farther at the grocery store. They tell me that they are thinking of eating less so their kids can have a full meal, or that someone they know personally is starting to skip meals. The CEO of my local food bank recently stated they had seen a 20% increase in clients.

I think of an email I received from a constituent in Kelowna—Lake Country some months ago that stated, “We are taxed to poverty. With EI and CPP premiums all increasing, carbon tax increases along with inflation running rampant, our paycheques keep getting smaller. Canadians are all going to be in the poorhouse.”

I have received hundreds of emails like this. It is my duty to bring these voices from Kelowna—Lake Country into this House, and it is the duty of the government to listen. Sadly, the government is failing to listen, as legislation like this will only leave life more expensive. There is nothing in this \$70-billion piece of legislation for fighting inflation or for economic recovery and growth.

• (1040)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would differ with the member. Within this legislation, for example, there are supports for small businesses. Contrary to what members opposite believe, when we reflect back on the months of December, January and February, there were many small businesses that needed the type of support that is being provided by this piece of legislation.

Does the member not recognize the need to support small businesses in Canada? If so, why would she make a false accusation that there is no support for people? This is just one example.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, this piece of legislation is like an omnibus bill; it has a number of pieces in it. We have been very supportive all along the way of legislation that has helped small businesses. However, we have also made recommendations to amend a lot of legislation over the last couple of years because the government would put out legislation that was not accommodating and helpful to small businesses. The legislation had a lot of parameters and rules, and small businesses could not apply. We have made many suggestions for that.

One example was that a person had to deal with a major bank and not a credit union in order to apply for programs. Another was that a person had to have a corporate bank account. We have continually made recommendations to the government to help small businesses and have supported small businesses all along the way.

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Kelowna—Lake Country for that great speech.

We are painfully aware that Bill C-8 falls short on many fronts, from labour, at a time when there is a severe labour shortage across Canada and Quebec, to fighting tax havens, an area where nothing has been done. Also, forget about health transfers—that is a provincial responsibility.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

• (1045)

[English]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, absolutely, we have a labour crisis in this country, and this legislation does not look at addressing that at all. It is one of the issues that I hear the most about from small business owners, who are placing ads and there is literally no

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one applying. This is not, as we might assume, in some of the traditional industries that have had challenges in the past, such as hospitality and restaurants. This is across the board. These are construction companies, manufacturing companies and shipping companies. We have to seriously look at this. We have to get people back to work who are able to work, and also put policies forth to deal with this labour crisis.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Kelowna—Lake Country spoke a lot about the cost of living, and like her, I am deeply concerned about the impact of the cost of living on Canadians.

One thing I want to ask her about is corporate pre-tax profits. In 2021, they hit an all-time high of \$445 billion. We are seeing gouging happening in all kinds of industries. The profits for the food industry, for example, have gone through the roof. People cannot afford their groceries despite the fact that there are billions of dollars lining the pockets of our corporate sector.

We have seen the Conservatives time and time again vote for actions in the House that will benefit the corporate sector at the expense of regular Canadians. I am wondering whether the member would support an excess profit tax on a number of different industries to make sure they are not gouging consumers.

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, on this side of the House, as the official opposition, we have continually spoken out against some of the large corporations that have received benefits. For example, we can remember back when the government gave Loblaw's millions of dollars to upgrade its fridges. Meanwhile, I was getting phone calls from constituents in my riding, such as small flower shop owners and convenience store operators, asking if they could access this money to upgrade their fridges.

During this time, some of the largest grocery store chains were allowed to be open during the entire pandemic when other small businesses in the mall or down the street were forced to close. They were classified as essential services, yet they were still able to sell all of their goods, not just food and medication. We were standing against that and asking why the government was closing these small businesses while these largest of companies were allowed to stay open.

*Government Orders***EXTENSION OF SITTING HOURS AND CONDUCT OF EXTENDED PROCEEDINGS**

NOTICE OF CLOSURE MOTION

Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I give notice that with respect to the consideration of Government Business No. 11, at the next sitting of the House a minister of the Crown shall move, pursuant to Standing Order 57, that debate not be further adjourned.

* * *

ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021

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

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, the weight of a Canadian one-dollar coin, what we call the loonie, is 6.27 grams. This is a simple number that even a child can understand. I bring that to the House's attention because it seems me that members opposite have lost touch with reality, while at the same time losing their ability to manage Canada's economy. Let us go back to basics in the hope that the Liberals and their NDP friends can gain a glimmer of understanding. I will try to use simple numbers, ones that even a Liberal can understand.

Bill C-8, the economic and fiscal update 2021, adds an additional \$70 billion to government spending and brings our national debt to \$1.2 trillion. Until the government, such a number was inconceivable, which means the members opposite can be forgiven for not understanding the number, even if Canadians cannot forgive them for their spendthrift ways.

A trillion dollars is a million million dollars. That is a one with 12 zeroes, if we are writing it on paper. It is tough to visualize a trillion dollars. However, if we were to take that debt and pay it off with loonie coins, the weight of cash would be 8,400,000,000 kilograms. That is still a difficult number to comprehend, but since the Liberals have no plan to ever reduce the debt, let alone pay it, maybe it does not matter if we cannot visualize it.

Let us look at it in a different way. Using imperial measures, this debt of 1.2 trillion loonies would weigh 7,860,428 tonnes. This is also an unfathomable number, but let us visualize this. The Liberal disaster weighs 150 times as much as the RMS *Titanic*, the unsinkable ship that went down off the coast of Newfoundland 110 years ago this month in one of the biggest maritime disasters in history, or of all time, to be specific.

The government's fiscal management is a disaster that is 150 times as bad. It is no wonder the Liberals hide behind the big numbers that they hope people do not understand. They have used the pandemic as an excuse to make changes to the economy, to bring in \$176 billion in new spending completely unrelated to COVID-19. They are hoping Canadians will not notice, that they will be too distracted by events to notice that the Liberals are spending without any concerns about the future.

Canadians are, on the whole, a financially responsible people. We know that we should not spend more than we earn and that bills must be paid. We know that money for government programs comes from taxes paid by each Canadian. Canadians understand that we are already taxed at the breaking point. The taxpayers of this country cannot afford new taxes and tax increases. At least most Canadians understand that. Those who do not apparently become Liberal or NDP members of Parliament. Those two parties seem determined to spend this country into bankruptcy.

I was born in a country where the government has had to declare bankruptcy. The suffering of ordinary citizens there is heartbreaking. I do not want to see this happen here in Canada.

People in my riding of Edmonton Manning are concerned about rising prices. They feel they will not be able to make ends meet. They want to know when the Liberals will get serious about the economy. They are not happy that the answer seems to be "never".

Inflation was 6.7% in March, the highest level in more than 30 years. The government response has been a collective shrug. It is an international problem, they say, as they add more inflationary taxes to Canadians' burdens. As gasoline prices reach record highs, the Liberals' response is to raise the tax on fuel to make things more expensive for Canadians. Gasoline costs are up almost 40% in the last year, and groceries are up by almost 10%. Furniture prices are up about 8% in March alone. Housing prices have doubled under the government.

● (1050)

Young Canadians used to dream of graduating from university, getting a job and buying their first home. These were the milestones of adulthood and rites of passage. With the Liberal government, that dream has changed to a nightmare of crippling student debt and living with parents forever because they will never be able to afford a house of their own.

My constituents are concluding that either the Liberals do not understand the problem or they do not care. Canadians deserve a government that will take real action to fight the cost of living crisis and outline a clear commitment to control inflation. We will not find that in Bill C-8.

Under the government, the cost of a typical house has risen from \$435,000 to \$810,000. With inflation, purchasing power is down, not up, and wages are not keeping pace. Who can afford a house under this titanic disaster of a Liberal policy? Our economy has hit an iceberg and is sinking fast under the weight of 150 *Titanic* ships.

We are told inflation will cost Canadians \$2,000 each this year. We already know the Prime Minister does not shop for his own groceries, so he has not noticed the increases in prices on everything in the store. Bread, milk and other dairy products, meat and vegetables are all more expensive than they were this time last year. What is the government doing to address the concerns of Canadians concerned about their ability to afford nutritious food? It is doing absolutely nothing.

Rising prices and inflation are happening everywhere, they say. That is just an excuse for inaction. If the government does not understand how the economy works, if it cannot figure out how to help average Canadians in their time of need, maybe it should do the honourable thing, step aside and let someone else fix its problems, someone who will have Canadians' backs instead of stabbing those backs with high prices. That, of course, is not going to happen. The Liberals have no idea what a trillion dollars is, or how much 1.2 trillion loonies weigh. They do not seem to understand that there is a problem.

The Prime Minister has asked Canadians to forgive him for not thinking about monetary policy. That is a disaster. How can we forgive him and his government for policies that make things worse for families and worse for the middle class? How can we forgive him for a \$1.2-trillion debt that our grandchildren will still be paying off?

The government is a fiscal disaster of titanic proportions. There is nothing in this bill that can hide that fact.

• (1055)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one thing we do know is that when we stick to the facts of reality, we will find that the Canadian economy is doing relatively well when we compare it with other economies, whether it is that of the United States or Europe. In fact, when we take a look at the number of jobs that have been recovered since the pandemic, Canada has more than recovered the jobs that had been lost. This is in good part because we are working with Canadians and other levels of government and have the backs of Canadians. That seems to be going in the opposite direction of how the Conservative Party would have approached the pandemic, believing in not supporting small businesses and not supporting Canadians who are in difficult times.

I am wondering if the member has any regret in supporting some of the programs we initially brought in that the Conservatives said they would support but today seem to criticize.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, the answer is simple. This is a government that tries to use excuses every time they have their backs to the wall because they are doing a bad job and because they are mismanaging. What I am hearing from the other side is complete irresponsibility over how to deal with the economy or how to even understand the economy. The Liberals are talking about figures, rhetoric and how much we spend, and are trying to pit Canadians against each other over their spending for COVID.

Now more than ever, they need to be responsible. They need to understand what inflation can do to the loonie and what inflation can do to the currency. It is not buying as much as it should. They

Government Orders

need to understand the economy before they talk about it, stop the rhetoric and get to work.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I heard my Conservative colleague say a moment ago that if the Liberals do not understand how the economy works and do not know how to get the job done, they should step aside and let a responsible party do it. I heard my colleague's appeal, but I regret to say that the Bloc Québécois has no intention of taking over the government. We are here to make proposals, but we do not want to govern. I think we are the only responsible option and that will simply not work right now.

My question is about the announcement we heard earlier that a new gag order is going to be imposed a bit later. I would like to know whether my colleague has any concerns about the number of time allocation motions that are starting to pile up. Would he agree that this suggests that the government does not seem to fully understand that Quebecers and Canadians have given it a mandate to govern in co-operation with the opposition parties, and not as though it were a majority government?

• (1100)

[English]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, to the first part of the question, Canadians will answer to the mismanagement that is going on through the NDP-Liberal coalition or agreement, just to continue doing what they are doing until 2025. I believe the Bloc Québécois was part of that in 2008, trying to somehow topple the government, to disallow us to continue doing what we were doing to make sure we built the Canadian economy properly.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed the member's speech, especially the rich, maritime analogies.

I would continue that analogy by saying that many people feel this is a bill that needs to get to port. This is a ship that needs to get to port. There are things in it that people are waiting for, especially teachers, who are waiting for their school supplies tax credit. Right now, CRA is sitting on their tax returns because certain parties in this place have drawn out the debate for much longer and have kept the ship at sea much longer than it needed to be. There have been five debates at second reading and six at report stage.

What does the member have to say to those teachers in my riding?

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Madam Speaker, the ship is loaded with debt and will never make it to port. As for the teachers the hon. member is asking about, he knows that education is a provincial jurisdiction.

Statements by Members

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SPRING RENEWAL

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, on May 1, people around the world mark the beginning of the summer season, and across Canada we are all enjoying the greening of the earth and the end of a long winter. This is a good metaphor as Canada emerges from the pandemic. Many have hoped for better days ahead but are fragile from the events of the last two years.

For us as parliamentarians, each of us must now guide our country to a place of strength and recognize the concerns of a divided and weary nation. There are a lot of things working against us: social media algorithms, polarized politics, ideological purity tests, egos, and two years of separating ourselves from one another. However, I would like to think that if we as leaders see each other as actual thinking and feeling human beings, as opposed to things to be vilified, hated, beaten or silenced, then we can actually do right by our country.

I would say this to all members. When they watch the grass green this spring, I ask them to look within, set aside the petty hate of the past and find it within themselves to do something that gives our country hope. So may it be.

* * *

VIOLENCE AGAINST MUSLIMS

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in two days, Muslims in Canada will break the fast of Ramadan and celebrate the feast of Eid-al-Fitr. During Ramadan, I had the honour of attending Iftars and learning more about the religion of Islam. I am now more appreciative of the compassion at the heart of Ramadan. Muslims fast to empathize with the suffering of others. In response to their empathy, they practise acts of charity.

By contrast, it is reprehensible that attacks are happening against Muslims. I have received many emails from constituents who are horrified by such acts taking place against their fellow Muslims and humanity. During the month of Ramadan in Jerusalem, more than 150 Palestinians were injured in the attack on the al-Aqsa Mosque. In India, far-right Hindu groups marched to Muslim neighbourhoods, attacking property and threatening genocide.

I share the sadness of my Muslim friends and neighbours and invite members to reflect on how we can support our Muslim brothers and sisters in Canada and around the world.

* * *

● (1105)

THE SS AKBAR

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as Sikh Heritage Month celebrations come to a close on this 125th year since Sikhs first set foot on Canada's west coast, a tragic part of the Sikh story in Canada is the *Komagata Maru*, but today I wish to tell members about another ship that sailed in 1914, the *SS Akbar*.

Aboard the *SS Akbar* were Punjabi soldiers rallied to war to reinforce the allied forces on the western front. These troops and fellow British subjects received a hero's welcome and were no different than the passengers of the *Komagata Maru*. On April 26, 1915, when the call came to reinforce the Canadians in their baptism by fire in Flanders, Punjabi brothers-in-arms did not turn their backs, despite the discrimination their community had faced in Vancouver.

As we confront the realities of systemic racism, I believe all Canadians should come to know of this shared heritage of selfless sacrifice for this nation, which unfortunately has been erased from our history books on account of a people's colour.

* * *

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, this week is volunteer week, and I want to thank all of the organizations and volunteers in Port Moody, Coquitlam, Anmore and Belcarra who share their time and expertise with the community. There are volunteers in organizations like Soroptimist TriCities, who empower women and girls with programs like Bea's Closet, a place where women fleeing violence or aging out of care can come and choose household items for free. There is the Immigrant Link Centre Society, which rescues and redistributes perishable food from grocery stores to families in need. There is the Wheat Mission Society, which improves the quality of life for people with disabilities through numerous programs in the community.

I want to express my gratitude for every single volunteer. I thank them, I see them and I will see them in Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra.

* * *

[Translation]

INVICTUS GAMES

Mr. Darrell Samson (Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook, Lib.): Madam Speaker, last week, the closing ceremonies of the 2022 Invictus Games were held in The Hague, in the Netherlands. I want to congratulate Team Canada and all the athletes from around the world who participated in the games.

The team representing Canada consisted of 28 competitors, active members of the Canadian Armed Forces or veterans who contracted an illness or a physical or mental injury during their service to Canada.

During the events, Harry, Duke of Sussex, announced that the 2025 Invictus Games would be held in Vancouver and Whistler, British Columbia. Those games will be the first hybrid winter Invictus Games and will include adapted winter sports. What is more, the 2025 Invictus Games will work in close collaboration with their first nations partners to honour the sacrifices of first nations veterans.

I look forward to taking part in this event.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind members that if they are reading from their paper, they should maybe keep their paper down because it is covering the camera, and we would prefer to see the individual member than the piece of paper.

The hon. member for Perth—Wellington.

* * *

ANDREW GRAHAM

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Andrew Graham, who passed away last week after a remarkable and varied life of purpose. Andy served as warden of the Kingston Penitentiary, senior deputy commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada, and assistant deputy minister at Agriculture Canada.

Following his 30-plus-year career in the public service, he embarked on a two-decade academic career with the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University. Countless students, including me, benefited from Andy's enthusiastic and kind-hearted teaching style. Students for years to come will benefit from Professor Graham's use and development of case studies in the teaching of public administration across Canada.

To Andy's wife Katherine and all of his friends and loved ones, we offer our deepest condolences.

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FOOD INSECURITY SOLUTIONS IN HALTON REGION

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Milton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canadians have a lot to be grateful for in our country, but sadly food insecurity continues to be a reality for too many of our neighbours. Today, I would like to highlight some of the incredible work being done in my riding of Milton and across Halton Region to find solutions.

Recently, I visited Country Heritage Park to announce \$100,000 in funding from our government's local food infrastructure fund for an integrated and automated aquaponic system, as well as a walk-in freezer and food prep tables to help process and store the food that they grow. At the Conestoga Room, I got the chance to thank Chef Melani Bastians, who founded No One Goes Hungry, providing thousands of free hot meals to residents, prepared on site at Country Heritage Park.

Food for Life is a food rescue organization that, also through the LFIF, purchased a refrigerated truck to support its distribution programs and its new free fresh food market. Yesterday, Food for Life hosted an event with the Milton Public Library to announce the Penguin food locker initiative to give transitional and at-risk youth access to fresh food in a discreet, accessible and secure manner.

Tackling food insecurity is a team sport, and I thank everyone throughout the region of Halton who is pitching in.

Statements by Members

• (1110)

THE GREAT LAKES

Mr. Vance Badawey (Niagara Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the minister was still reading her budget speech when my office received two calls thanking the government and every member of this House. The first was from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, and the second from a senior member of the U.S. congressional Great Lakes task force.

That is because budget 2022 made millions of dollars' worth of smart investments into the long-term sustainability of the Great Lakes, with a promise of real and substantial action to protect this critical binational treasure in the years ahead.

Money toward a Canada water agency, the beginnings of a freshwater action plan, and resources for sea lamprey control in the Great Lakes will make a difference both in Canada and on the U.S. side of this great treasure. This includes the riding of Niagara Centre, but also many other ridings throughout this great country.

While it is true that there is always more to do, stakeholders are applauding the budget and thanking the government for a strong Great Lakes commitment. I also want to add my personal appreciation—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has used up the time, and I even gave him a little more time there.

The hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

* * *

DEFIBRILLATORS

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a fact that when heart attacks happen at home, police are often the first responders. It is a fact that equipping police cars with defibrillators saves one life per 1.7 defibrillators over the 10-year life of the unit. It is a fact that the RCMP has 5,600 cruisers coast to coast. It is a fact that equipping each one with a defibrillator would cost only \$10 million. The conclusion is that we could save 3,000 lives over the next decade, at the cost of only \$3000 per life saved, by installing defibrillators in RCMP cruisers, but it is also a fact that the Liberal government has done nothing since I first raised this issue six years ago. Those six years of inaction have caused nearly 2,000 completely preventable deaths.

During that time, the government has spent literally hundreds of billions of dollars on thousands of new priorities. Why is it, within this tsunami of spending, that the Liberals cannot find the pocket change necessary to save 300 Canadians lives per year, every year?

*Statements by Members**[Translation]***CLAUDE LEBLANC**

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Madam Speaker, 2022 was a difficult year for Hull—Aylmer. I would like to talk about Claude LeBlanc, who died suddenly on March 20 at the age of 67.

For almost 40 years, Claude was Garage Grande-Rivière's mechanic and owner. He was honest, hard-working and generous. He loved a good joke. He was the most generous of men. He was always there to help the less fortunate in our community. Not only did Claude give good mechanical advice, he would charge next to nothing, if anything at all, to people in need.

I have been going to his garage for more than 20 years. Unfortunately for me, I only sat down with him twice. I thought there would be time for us to get to know each other better.

I extend my most sincere condolences to his brothers, Pierre and Gilles, his sisters, Line and Sylvie, his nieces and nephews, and his young business partner and good friend Justin Fortin.

Rest in peace, Claude.

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*[English]***PASSPORTS**

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are hearing from so many people in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove who are frustrated with the dysfunction of the passport office. We hear of people lining up at six o'clock in the morning, and even camping overnight, in the hopes of being the first in line, yet even some of those people are being turned away. We have heard some people calling it "the lineup of despair". We heard from one person who actually got close enough to the front door to see that there were 20 workstations available for members of the public to meet with passport office staff, yet only four were being used. Where is everyone?

With the lifting of travel restrictions around the world, the government could have and should have anticipated that there would be a huge demand for passport services, yet once again a lack of planning on the part of the government is resulting in a crisis in the lives of so many Canadian citizens. We are a G7 country, and we are an advanced society. Surely we can do better than this.

* * *

• (1115)

CANADIAN FARMERS

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is spring time, and today I am talking about high rollers, but not the ones who go to Vegas. I am talking about the hard-working farmers who risk it all by buying the seed, equipment and tools they need to put food on Canadian tables.

They hope there is enough moisture in the earth, and enough rain coming down from the heavens, to germinate those seeds. They hope that the sun shines bright, and that the wind, grasshoppers and hail do not destroy their precious crop. As the season goes from

spring to summer to fall, farmers pray for a harvest moon. All of this is while maintaining their heavy machinery, created from humanity's unparalleled innovation.

Canadian farmers do not get a break. They cannot go on vacation, as their work is never finished. They cannot just turn off the screen and be done. Our farmers sell to markets that ebb and flow, but there are constant hungry mouths to feed. Canadian farmers do a damn good job of it, and only to do it over again next year. I say, "yes", to Canadian farmers.

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*[Translation]***LAUREN SMALL-PENNEFATHER**

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Lauren Small-Pennefather, one of my constituents, has been volunteering for the Terry Fox Foundation for a decade.

Lauren has organized the Montreal West Terry Fox Run for the past 10 years and has not missed a run in 24 years. Lauren lost both of her parents to cancer.

[English]

After celebrating a milestone 50th birthday, Lauren launched her 50 for Fox Canadian tour in support of the foundation, running 10 kilometres in every province across Canada once per month with the goal of raising \$50,000 for the foundation. Lauren has already completed Quebec and Nova Scotia and will be running on the Rideau Canal in Ottawa on May 15.

[Translation]

Lauren will cap her national tour by running a marathon in Vancouver. She will run with Terry's brother, Darrell Fox. This special fundraising initiative is Lauren's way of highlighting the important work that the foundation is doing and honouring all those who lived or are living with cancer.

I congratulate Lauren and wish her well. We are with her.

* * *

GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE, CONDEMNATION AND PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, on April 24, 1915, a telegram sent by the minister of the interior of the Ottoman empire launched the operations that would eventually lead to the massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in the first genocide of the 20th century. This tragedy was sadly followed by the Holodomor, the Shoah and the Rwandan genocide. We have a duty and a responsibility to never forget.

The situation is still tense for Armenians as a result of the deadly conflict in Artsakh. There are others around the world who are targeted because of who they are. This has happened with the Yazidi, the Uighur and the Rohingya peoples, among others. The spectre of ultra-nationalist movements is ever-present. Today, war is still raging in Europe and Ukrainians are once again the victims of unspeakable crimes.

During this genocide remembrance month, let us work around the clock to promote peace, mutual respect and human rights, because all human beings and all peoples have the fundamental right to live in security and in dignity.

* * *

JULIE DARAÎCHE

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, country music great Julie Daraïche passed away suddenly this week, leaving millions of Quebecers and Acadians in mourning.

Whether she performed solo, with the Daraïche family or as a duo with her brother Paul, this extraordinary artist made Quebec's cowboys dance and sing for over 50 years. Her songs will continue to resonate for many years to come. With hits like *Pardonnez-moi* and *Un verre sur la table*, Julie Daraïche definitely made her mark on Quebec's country music scene.

Born in Saint-François-de-Pabos in the Gaspé, and very proud of it, she travelled Quebec's highways for decades to meet her fans, who adored her and whom she adored in return.

I extend my sincere condolences to the members of her very famous family, her children, her friends and all her fans.

I thank Julie Daraïche. Chin-chin!

* * *

[English]

SERVICE CANADA

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, we continue to hear about Canadians being in line for days at Service Canada outlets for simple issues such as passport renewals. As a former consul, I know first-hand just how essential it is for people to have these documents available to them in a timely fashion. I have seen the desperation of those wanting to say goodbye to a loved one.

Canadians have already spent two years missing important life events such as births, anniversaries, weddings, and sadly, in far too many cases, funerals. It is unacceptable that the government, as a result of its continued lack of foresight, is still interfering in Canadians' ability to get on with their lives. We need a clear timeline as to when these delays and backlogs will be resolved, and we need it as soon as possible so Canadians can return to the lives and the living that they deserve.

* * *

• (1120)

WE'KOQMA'Q FIRST NATION CHIEF

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to offer my sincerest congratulations to We'koqma'q First Nation Chief Annie Bernard-Daisley on being recognized with a place on the Riva Spatz Women's Wall of Honour.

Chief Annie has been the chief since 2020. She was elected by her community as chief after serving as a councillor for three consecutive terms. Prior to her term as chief, she served as the first

woman from We'koqma'q to lead the Nova Scotia Native Women's Association. Chief Annie has been outspoken on the issue of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, stating that she has been driven by the need to generate goodness from the tragic events in her own life.

The wall of honour is located at Mount Saint Vincent University. It exists to honour extraordinary women from all walks of life who make a difference across families, communities and professions. I can think of no one more deserving than Chief Annie Bernard-Daisley to be recognized with such an honour.

On behalf of my constituents, colleagues here today and myself, I send congratulations to Chief Annie.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[English]

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, what a week it has been. It is a week that has seen a further decline in Canadian democracy.

Yesterday, with the support from their NDP partners, the Liberals introduced Motion No. 11, which gives the NDP-Liberal coalition complete control over Parliament until June 23. With the NDP's help, the Prime Minister now has exactly what he has always been looking for, which is an audience, not an opposition.

Do these Liberals not understand that these types of tactics contribute to declining public confidence in our institutions and to a further decline in our democracy, or do they simply not care?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, despite what the member wants Canadians to believe, the reality is quite simple. Motion No. 11 would enable members of Parliament to have debates beyond 6:30 p.m. That means instead of adjourning at 6:30 p.m., we get to sit until midnight.

There are millions of Canadians who work night shifts. I am sure members of the Conservative Party should be able to show up and put a little bit of effort and work in after six o'clock.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is what Motion No. 11 does. The NDP-Liberal coalition is scrapping the constitutional requirement of quorum in the House of Commons. That means that NDP and Liberal members do not even have to show up to work. They can sit at home in their PJs and their fuzzy slippers watching reruns of *This Is Us* or socialist documentaries. It also gives the power to the Prime Minister to shut down Parliament at any point if one of his many scandals gets too hot, like the RCMP investigation, for example.

Oral Questions

Therefore, I ask this again: Do the Liberals and the NDP not understand that they are contributing to the decline of democracy in Canada, or do they simply not care?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the waiving of quorum happens on many occasions, whether it is emergency debates or take-note debates, and the member opposite knows that.

The reality is that Motion No. 11 enables members of Parliament to have additional debate time. That is a good thing. That is what the Conservatives were asking for at one time. Whether they want to work or not, I can assure members that Liberals and New Democrats are committed to being able to have those additional hours so that members can have additional debate time.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There was talking over the hon. parliamentary secretary while he had the floor. It is hard for people at home to hear what is going on, and I am sure for individuals who are in the seats here watching.

Order. I cannot even hear myself talk at this point. I think that parliamentarians should be setting an example for the people watching at home.

The hon. member Louis-Saint-Laurent.

• (1125)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have never seen a government show such arrogance towards Canada's Parliament. Let us not forget that these people took office with fewer votes than the official opposition. They quickly bought themselves a majority by forming a coalition with the few members of the NPD. That is disgraceful for the NDP, but they did it anyway. Too bad for them. The result is that, yesterday, the government moved a motion to give itself overly broad powers to control Parliament.

Why is the government being so arrogant? What does it have to hide?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not understand why the Conservatives are afraid of extra debate time. Do they not realize that Canadians from coast to coast to coast often work beyond 6:30 p.m.?

What Motion No. 11 would do, in reality, is allow for additional debate time. That is something that is not new. Provincial and federal governments have used that for many years. We are doing the same thing in allowing for additional debate. It is as simple as that.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, oh, how wonderful it is to hear that, but there is one tiny problem. The hon. parliamentary secretary has forgotten one minor detail. There will no longer be quorum in the House as a result of this motion. What will happen then? We, the Conservatives, will do

all the work, while the Liberals stay home and watch TV or do something else, like hanging out with their buddies or going out for dinner. They will not be in the House doing their job.

I ask once again, why do they want to adopt such an arrogant motion that only erodes parliamentary democracy in Canada?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what the Conservative members might be doing is watching Netflix and so forth, but I can assure Canadians that whether it is virtual Parliament or sitting in the House, we take this very seriously. We are engaged. We want to encourage additional debate. That is why we brought forward a motion that would allow members of Parliament to work till midnight at the closing of a session because there is a substantial legislative agenda.

Let us get to work for Canadians. That is what it is all about.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, "let us get to work", he says. Of course, let us get to work.

The problem, however, is yet another minor detail that the member has forgotten. What about prorogation? The government is granting itself the privilege of proroguing the House, as if it were no big deal. This brings back bad memories.

Need I remind members what happened two years ago when we were in the middle of the WE Charity scandal? When the Prime Minister was in hot water because of the evidence we had, what did he do? He prorogued the House.

Why adopt another arrogant Liberal motion that could undermine the work of our parliamentary committees?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, talk about gross exaggeration. There is a clause in there that says we will come back in September, which we could potentially bring in at the end of June, but what the member does not tell us is that the motion would be voted on. We are a minority government. The only way in which a motion of that nature can pass is if a majority of the members of the House support it.

Unlike the Conservatives, we believe in working in co-operation, even with members of the opposition party, which includes the member who just asked the question.

* * *

[Translation]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, the House demanded that a committee study the dismissal of the scientists in Winnipeg.

Instead of providing the documents to the committee, the Liberals and their NDP accomplices decide to create their own committee, which will operate according to their own rules, without a single care for the other parties. Of course, since it signed a pact with the Liberals, the NDP is no longer a real opposition party. It is contractually tied to the government. So far, not a single actual opposition party has been consulted.

What is happening to democracy?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what is clear is that we have established a mechanism that is not truly unique, because former prime minister Stephen Harper used the same mechanism, which ensured there is a sense of national security. That should be a concern of all members of the House.

The government House leader has indicated both to the Conservatives and to the Bloc that we would like to see them participate in this mechanism, which ensures that there is a high sense of accountability and that national interests are served. It is the same mechanism that Stephen Harper used.

• (1130)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, two sides can only end up agreeing insofar as they start by not agreeing.

If committees are created exclusively between parties that agree on every detail from the get-go, then what is the point?

By sealing their fate with a contract, these two parties have basically merged and no longer have the authority to unilaterally set the rules of democracy for other House bodies. They need to sit back down at the table with the real opposition parties and put an end to this monkey business.

When will democracy be restored?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the only merger I see is the double blue of the Conservatives and the Bloc on this particular issue, like other issues. At the end of the day, the mechanism that has been put into place will ensure the interests of national security, while at the same time ensuring a high sense of accountability for those documents.

I hope the Conservatives and the Bloc will recognize the true value, as Stephen Harper did, in recognizing the importance of this particular mechanism.

COVID-19 PROTESTS

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, as we watch another convoy roll into Ottawa, the city of Windsor is still recovering from the blockades two months ago. We learned this week that the government will reimburse the City of Ottawa for the policing costs of the mismanaged convoy crisis. Meanwhile,

Oral Questions

Windsor has heard nothing about the \$6 million the city had to spend to clear the Ambassador Bridge blockade.

All week, we have heard the Liberals take credit for the work done in Windsor, but it is my residents who still pay the price. We did all the right things and we took it on the chin for this country.

Why are the Liberals making it so hard for the city of Windsor's residents, who have to pay for the blockade?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are committed to protecting the safety and well-being of Canadians. I just spoke with the minister this week about that very issue. I know he is alert to the problem.

I invite the hon. member to have a conversation. I would be happy to chat with him as well.

PASSPORT CANADA

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, Canadians are finally able to travel and to see loved ones again, but there are huge delays. The passport system is broken. Canadians are waiting hours in line at passport offices, making multiple visits, only to be turned away. This week many constituents have reached out to my office desperate for help. The passport system is failing them. This is causing immense amounts of stress and anxiety.

My question is simple. Does the minister think that these delays are acceptable, and when will they be fixed?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that Canadians are eager to travel again, and there has been a significant and overwhelming increase in demand for passports at all Service Canada centres across the country from those wanting in-person service. I have spoken to the minister about this and she is well aware that it is very stressful and difficult for Canadians. She has been visiting Service Canada centres throughout the country speaking to local staff. In addition, already in December, we hired 500 more passport officers to process applications.

We are using every tool that we have in our tool box at this time to improve service to Canadians for what they deserve.

HOUSING

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, the average price of a home in Canada is \$874,000 and quickly rising. For millennials looking to buy a home, the thought of buying a home is like getting that pet unicorn they dreamed of when they were children.

Will the government stop adopting policies that drive up inflation, find a common-sense solution and help millennials and young families hoping to buy a home?

*Oral Questions**[Translation]*

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Madam Speaker, we agree with everyone that Canadians are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to buy a house right now.

For that reason, the budget we just presented includes major investments, including \$200 million to develop and scale up rent-to-own projects, because we must give Canadians an opportunity to buy their first home. The tax-free first home savings account will also help.

On this side of the House, we take this issue seriously and we are working on several programs to address it.

● (1135)

[English]

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, how can the member opposite say that? The government is not being helpful. In fact, Ipsos says that 63% of Canadians hoping to own have given up on that hope. One couple even told me that every single broker they have spoken to has told them the first-time homebuyer program is a scam and they should not participate in it. Instead of offering common-sense solutions, the government is more concerned about prosecuting crimes on the moon.

Will the minister admit his failure, go back to the drawing board and come up with a real plan?

[Translation]

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

We are determined to level the playing field. Not only must we advance the right to housing, but we must also advance buyers' rights in order to ensure that the rules are fair for everyone. What we want is for everyone to have access to a home.

* * *

*[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberal-NDP government is pricing Canadians out of their own lives. Instead of coming up with solutions, it likes to refer to other countries' inflation levels. I have some numbers for it. France is at 4.4% and Japan is at 1.2%. However, comparison does not help a millennial afford a home or give hope to Canadians who are one paycheque away from bankruptcy. It is Liberal spending that is leaving a debt load for future generations.

When will the government take responsibility for the position it has put Canadians in and cut its spending?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, global inflation is having a significant impact on household budgets. While Canada's rate of inflation is below that of the U.S., Europe, the G7 and the OECD, we are continuing to focus on making life more affordable.

We are indexing important programs, such as the Canada child benefit, OAS and GIS, to the cost of living. We are implementing an economic growth plan that creates job, grows the economy and doubles the amount of residential construction so that millennials can afford their first home. We are doing this while unwinding Canada's pandemic deficits and reducing our debt-to-GDP ratio because that is the fiscally responsible thing to do.

* * *

*[Translation]***CARBON PRICING**

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, the cost of living continues to affect Canadians.

In rural ridings like mine, we do not have access to transit. Workers have to use a car to get to work. With rising gas prices, Canadians are having a hard time making ends meet.

The Conservative Party moved a motion to pause the carbon tax hike, but our greedy Prime Minister only sees dollar signs, not the difficulties being faced by ordinary working people.

Why is the government unwilling to give Canadians a break so they can catch up after a two-year pandemic?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Obviously, increased energy costs are a result of the war in Ukraine, but the federal government is here to help Canadians deal with the rising cost of living, whether it is through subsidies for dental care, programs that make it easier to access housing, or the fact that we are helping lower the cost of child care.

We are here to help Canadians, and I would like to thank my colleague for his interest and for his question.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, before the Liberals even presented their NDP budget, they were proudly bragging about how inflated tax revenues, from tax increases and inflation, would let them spend even more than before. They proudly announced the billions added to the national debt, yet for all that spending, they cannot explain to my constituents why food and house prices will only continue to rise. The Liberals point their fingers away from themselves.

Is the government ever going to connect the dots and see that its continued high spending means higher costs of basic necessities for hard-working Canadians?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party herself has already admitted that the extraordinary investments that were made over the course of the pandemic were necessary to protect Canadian families and Canadian workers.

Our plan has worked. In fact, we have maintained the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7 while growing the economy and recovering 115% of jobs lost due to COVID-19. Canada was able to do this because of our prudent fiscal management. It is now time to unwind the pandemic deficits and continue to grow our economy while reducing our debt-to-GDP ratio. This is what good fiscal managers do, and it is going to allow us to make Canada and life—

• (1140)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Thornhill.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, aggressive rate hikes are coming and that is because the government continues to spend recklessly. Here is what that means for an average Canadian. If they are lucky enough to buy a house for the \$800,000 that it costs, with a 2% mortgage they are paying about \$3,400 a month for mortgage payments. The potential of a 3% rate hike means \$3,400 turns into \$5,200.

Why is the government drowning Canadian homeowners in the debt of tomorrow to pay for the pet projects of today?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we just recently had an election where the Conservatives committed to spending more than what we proposed. They pretend to be good fiscal managers, but this is impossible if they are not committed to evidence-based decision-making.

Our government will lower our debt-to-GDP ratio every single year for the next five years. Unlike the Conservatives, we will do this while fighting climate change, investing in housing affordability and building a Canadian economy of the future alongside our indigenous partners.

*[Translation]***NEWS MEDIA INDUSTRY**

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, these are tough times for local and regional newspapers. Even as they grapple with challenges brought on by online competition, they have to contend with changing habits as “Publisac”, the plastic bag used for door-to-door flyer distribution, fades from view. Across most of Quebec, the unassuming Publisac is how our regional newspapers are distributed because Canada Post charges exorbitant rates for delivery.

Given the ongoing decline of Publisac, Canada Post needs to be ready to take over and deliver local and regional papers at special rates.

I have talked about this with the Minister of Canadian Heritage, who was very open and told me he would take care of it. He even made a media announcement the day after our conversation. I would like an update because this is a pressing issue for our press.

[English]

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Bill C-18 is good news for small media. Thanks to collective bargaining, small media will be able to make agreements. We wrote into the law that tech giants would have to make those agreements with a diversity of media, not just the big ones.

Local media are essential to so many communities, and we will support them through budget 2022, which I hope the Bloc will support. We added \$50 million in the last budget to support small media.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really liked the parliamentary secretary's answer, but it was a good answer to a question I did not ask. The answer had nothing to do with the question.

Local and regional news has been dwindling before our very eyes for the past 20 years. This did not become a crisis overnight. I am not talking about digital media; I am talking about the distribution of local and regional weekly papers.

Given the impending situation and the gradual disappearance of Publisac, every dollar that a weekly paper needs to spend on Canada Post delivery is one less dollar it can spend on the newsroom. Every newspaper carrier who will have to be hired, all the effort put into distribution, that is effort that will no longer be put into newsrooms and the essential news the paper can print. This is very worrisome.

When will the minister announce special rates for Canada Post to deliver our weekly papers?

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. We completely agree that local media needs to be supported through programs like the Canada periodical fund.

Oral Questions

As the member knows, Canada Post is a Crown corporation that is at arm's length from the government. Canada Post makes its own decisions on delivery and fees.

However, the government will work with Canada Post to do what it can and also support local media.

* * *

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, misuse of taxpayers' money, sexual harassment and special treatment for wealthy tax dodgers. No, this is not a Liberal cabinet meeting but rather misdeeds at the CRA that were exposed by whistle-blowers, whistle-blowers who have been publicly exposed by the very person in government who is meant to protect them.

Will the President of the Treasury Board do the right thing and commit to ensuring every single one of these whistle-blowers is protected from retribution by the government for exposing this scandal?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, our government believes those who disclose serious wrongdoing should be protected. The Office of the Public Security and Integrity Commissioner of Canada is an independent agency of Canada. It is mandated to allow anyone to disclose wrongdoing in the federal public service.

I have been advised that information has been removed by the Federal Court, and a new certified tribunal record is being produced. Later this year, our government will be launching a review to strengthen the protection of whistle-blowers. Clearly, this incident raises serious questions, which we will discuss in that review.

* * *

• (1145)

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, the PBO has exposed \$15 billion in unexplained defence spending in the budget. Now, in a briefing with the PBO, we were told it asked finance but that finance said it did not know and to go ask DND. It asked DND, but DND said that it did not know and to ask finance. It went back to finance and finance said, "Well, we don't know the details. Maybe it's just a forecast."

Maybe someone on that side of the House could tell us, or perhaps finance or DND, what that \$15 billion is for?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we are increasing our defence spending by over 70% under the defence policy "Strong, Secure, Engaged" and budget 2022 contains an additional \$8 billion in new defence spending.

The department plan only contains current capital spending that has been fully approved by the Treasury Board and Parliament, whereas the budget contains forward-looking forecasts. In other words, these are two different ways of presenting our forecasted spending.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, contrary to the song the Liberal government has been singing about inflation being transitory and tied to short-term supply chain disruptions, Bank of Canada Governor Macklem is now acknowledging that inflation is going to be with us longer than anticipated and 6% higher than anticipated. This inflation costs the average Canadian worker \$2,000 a year and the average family \$4,000 a year.

How does the government think the average hard-working, middle-class family can adjust to and manage that kind of a shock to the family budget?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before the pandemic, it took only two Conservative governments to accrue more than 70% of Canada's pre-pandemic debt. That is because their fiscal ideology is to cut taxes for the wealthy and to cut services for everyone else.

In stark contrast, our last Liberal government paid down our national debt significantly. We have demonstrated that one can be a good fiscal manager while investing in Canadians, growing the economy and continuing to fight poverty and climate change.

Budget 2022 lowers our debt-to-GDP ratio and will help build a Canada where no one is left behind.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, as inflation and interest rates continue to rise, Canadians are feeling the financial pain, but the NDP-Liberal government does not seem to care. It has no problem with its \$53-billion deficit in this year's budget. Experts are sounding the alarm. A new report by RBC Economics reveals that "low-income Canadians will feel the sharpest financial sting from climbing inflation and interest rate hikes."

Will the government finally admit that its reckless spending is hurting Canadians?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, budget 2022 is entitled, "A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable". This budget lowers our debt-to-GDP ratio and seeks solutions for the labour shortage because our jobs-based recovery strategy has successfully lowered Canada's unemployment rate to all-time historic lows.

The budget addresses some of Canada's greatest challenges, including child care, affordability, climate change, economic growth and indigenous reconciliation. It is a plan that invests in people and that will help build an economy where no one gets left behind.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, Kamloops, 215; Brandon, 104; Cowessess, 751; Cross Lake, 54. These are just a few of the children discovered in mass graves in residential schools across the country in the last year. So many children still to find, children who were stolen from their homes and families, oftentimes by the RCMP. Now the government wants the very same RCMP to assist in investigations, having given them millions in the budget.

Why did the government not just give the money directly to communities that are looking to bring their children home?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Madam Speaker, clearly, we have heard that communities, pursuant to the calls to action 72 through 76 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, have to have the leadership. It is not the place of the Government of Canada to step into communities and provide all the answers. Certainly we have to stand by and provide the financing and support to those communities, which are still reeling, to search for answers and search for their lost loved ones.

The financing for the RCMP is to complete that element of accountability. It is work in ensuring that that institution is accountable to those survivors and that work will continue.

* * *

• (1150)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, drive 100 kilometres in an electric vehicle and it will cost about \$2. That kind of mileage would go a long way in helping families who are struggling today with high gas prices. The upfront cost of new electric vehicles puts them out of reach for many lower-income families.

The Liberals, in their election platform, promised an incentive for used zero-emission vehicles. B.C. and Quebec already have programs in place and yet, in this recent federal budget, we saw nothing.

Can the minister please explain why?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in fact, we have expanded, in the last budget, the purchase incentive for electric vehicles. We have doubled the number of charging stations we will be installing across Canada to 50,000 and we are investing with companies to transform Canada's auto sector from gasoline to electric vehicles. We will be coming up with more measures to help people adopt electric vehicles in the future.

Oral Questions

TOURISM

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we approach the warmer spring and summer weather, small businesses and constituents in my riding of Hamilton East—Stoney Creek are looking forward to increased tourism opportunities.

Can the Minister for Economic Development for Southern Ontario inform the House of what our government is doing to support local tourism across the region?

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 want to thank the hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek for his ongoing advocacy for small businesses and tourism in his riding. Our government has made targeted investments to support the tourism industry and the local communities that rely on tourism.

Just recently, the Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario announced \$68.5 million in funding to be delivered by Indigenous Tourism Ontario and 11 regional tourism organizations, to support up to 40 indigenous projects and up to 1,300 tourism entities.

That will create or maintain up to 4,100 jobs across southern Ontario. Our government will continue to be there for small business and tourism agencies.

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HEALTH

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, if the NDP-Liberals will not follow the province's lead and give unvaccinated Canadians their rights back, maybe they will follow our international partners. We know that the Prime Minister values his playboy image on the world stage more than anything else, as his travels and selfies prove, but our international partners are bewildered as to why the Canadian government is so reluctant to let life return to normal for all Canadians.

Switzerland and Greece are removing all travel-related restrictions next week and virtually no other country requires them for domestic travel for their citizens, so why will the government not follow the science?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for giving me the opportunity to highlight a recent study indicating that unfortunately the unvaccinated continue to disproportionately risk the safety of those vaccinated against COVID-19, and highlight the fact that in the last week, almost 12,000 Canadians have received their first dose, 30,000 Canadians have received their second, 89,000 received their third and over 220,000 have received their fourth dose.

Oral Questions

This pandemic is not over. We all want it to be, but we must continue to follow the science, we must continue to support our neighbours, we must continue to fight for kids to ensure that young people under six do not get COVID-19, as they have been the biggest numbers in the last couple of days.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, the parliamentary secretary talks about supporting our neighbours. Under the government, we still have neighbours and members of our community who are not able to travel and who are not able to provide for themselves and their families because of unscientific mandates that the government continues to perpetuate. It is the end of April and the Prime Minister still refuses to follow the science. International allies and most of the provinces have done the right thing, but the government continues to lag behind.

Enough is enough. Will the Prime Minister finally take the politics out of it, follow the science and end the mandates?

[Translation]

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

On this side of the House, we are very concerned about the safety of Canadians and we rely on the advice of Canadian experts.

Canada's policy has not changed. It remains the same, and we will base our decisions on the advice of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

• (1155)

[English]

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Madam Speaker, provinces have now ended mandates for vaccination requirements for public spaces and businesses are following suit. People need to work to support their families.

When will the federal government catch up with the rest of the country and the world, and end vaccine requirements for its workers?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like my hon. colleague, I want this pandemic to be over too, but unfortunately, nationally, last week 383 new deaths were recorded. That is unfortunate. Over the last 30 days, kids under five had the third-highest hospitalization rate of any age group. The highest rates were among those 60 and older. However, the rate in the under-five age group was more than fivefold higher than those above five. We must continue to support our neighbours. We must continue to encourage vaccination.

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, in my home province of Manitoba, provincial public servants can actually come to work without having to be vaccinated. In Ottawa, if a public servant is not vaccinated, they get the pink slip.

Why should federal public servants be held to a different standard than provincial ones? It is time to be reasonable.

Will the minister show just a little compassion, act like a reasonable person and finally lift mandates on federal public servants?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, having a fully vaccinated workforce makes our work sites and communities safer. When we asked employees of the federal public service to stand up and do their part, 99% said yes. We are committed to review this policy every six months. Right now, we are in the middle of a review. We will make our decisions based on science and on facts. I look forward to keeping this House updated on that.

* * *

[Translation]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, there is a fraud epidemic at Service Canada, and the federal government is doing nothing to help victims.

In my riding alone, over 175 people have come to me for help. Ottawa is withholding their benefits because they have been the victims of fraud. The fraudsters are the ones who should be punished, not the victims.

As we speak, thousands of people across Quebec have lost their jobs and are being denied employment insurance.

When will the government stop penalizing victims of fraud and give them their money?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

[English]

We recognize the concern and the hardship of identity theft and attempted EI fraud that has happened to many Canadian families, particularly in Quebec. The department has seen an increase in the attempt in fraudulent activity and we know it has impacted the benefit payments of many individuals.

In response to the situation, the minister has expressed her concern to officials and then asked officials to explore every effort possible to assist Canadians in combatting fraudulent activity in their accounts and to make sure that their benefits are secured and received in a timely manner. This includes adding approximately 150 investigators who are dedicated to resolving these issues in Quebec.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, nearly a hundred people in the riding of Abitibi—Témiscamingue have contacted me because they paid into EI their whole lives but are not getting a cent. Why? It is because they are the victims of fraud. Thousands of Quebecers are in this situation.

The cost of living is skyrocketing. Service Canada has been withholding income from honest people, since November in some cases. We need to investigate and punish the guilty parties, not hold the victims hostage.

When will the government give workers the insurance benefits they paid into their whole lives?

This is causing people anxiety, undermining their dignity and affecting their mental health.

[English]

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned previously, we are doing everything we can to ensure that the EI services and support that Canadians have paid into are received by them in a timely manner. We recognize the concern and the hardship that they are experiencing through fraud, and we are working diligently with officials to make sure they receive their benefits in an integrated action plan. We have increased our EI call centre and Service Canada centre officers to be trained to address these hardships and to be a first point of contact for those who are experiencing them. We will continue to work diligently with our officials to make sure that people receive the benefits they deserve.

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IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, IRCC's backlog of caregiver cases has risen to above 16,000. My office hears from people every day, desperate to have their caregiver's case finally get processed. While caregiver cases remain stuck, families are forced to stay at home, not able to work or contribute to the economy. This is causing mental health issues both for Canadians needing caregivers and for those who want to come to Canada under the caregiver program. It is time to stop stranding people in this Liberal-made backlog. When will the minister clear this Liberal-made backlog in the caregiver program?

• (1200)

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the last few years have taught us anything, it is the importance of those who provide care to members of our community to allow them to stay in their homes and to receive the care they need in their communities. In the last year, we have made final decisions on approximately 6,000 cases, with nearly 2,800 caregivers who have arrived, or more than 4,000 if we include their families. Across six programs, we expect to see another 6,000 or so landed in Canada this year. We will continue to work to bring caregivers to Canada to make sure they can provide support to families who live in our communities.

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PASSPORT CANADA

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, backlogs are a common theme under the current Liberal government, whether it's for veterans, seniors, immigration or now passports. Despite knowing that Canadians want to travel and need to get their passports renewed, the government has failed

to prepare. Now, people are having to wait in long lineups at 4 a.m. and have no way of knowing when they will finally get their passport. When will the minister do her job and clear up the passport backlog the Liberals knew was coming?

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, there is an overwhelming increase in demand for passport services at this time, of nearly 40%. The minister has been working with officials. As I mentioned before, as of December we had already hired 500 new passport employees, but we have done more than that. We created three additional passport application processing centres. We have extended service into weekends and overtime. Our Service Canada officials are working day and night to make sure that Canadians get the passports and services they need.

* * *

[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, planting season has arrived and we are expecting a large number of temporary foreign workers.

Unfortunately, many companies are still waiting for their workers, even though they got the ball rolling back in late 2021. Is the Minister of Immigration incapable of planning ahead? This problem has been going on for years.

Once again, this government is in reaction mode, and our farmers are the ones who will pay the price.

What does the minister have to say to the many farmers who must delay planting or even reduce the amount of land to be planted?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

We value the contribution that temporary foreign workers make to Canada's economy. That is why budget 2022 will invest \$29.3 million over three years to create a trusted employer model and \$64.6 million to increase capacity for employer inspections and guarantee that workers are treated fairly and decently.

We will always be there for temporary foreign workers and their employers.

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY**

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, COVID-19 has had a huge impact on our economy. Thanks to the government's sensible, ongoing support for Canadians and Canadian businesses, we are experiencing a strong economic recovery. However, we know that there are still opportunities for economic growth in our great country.

Could the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance rise to tell us how budget 2022 will support economic growth?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle for her excellent question.

The budget contains many measures that support economic growth. We will create a new Canada growth fund to attract more private sector investment, and we will continue to invest in our innovation clusters as well.

This morning in Montreal, less than an hour and a half ago, the Prime Minister announced that Moderna will be setting up a manufacturing facility here, in Quebec.

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[English]

PASSPORT CANADA

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, Laura, a nurse in my riding, has worked long hours to guarantee the health and well-being of our community during the pandemic. She was upset to learn that renewing her passport would take several months. Her credit card was charged, but her passport was nowhere to be found. Our health care providers have given up a lot to keep our communities safe.

When is the government going to recognize hard-working Canadians and get them back to work?

• (1205)

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as we know, Canadians have waited a long time to travel again, and many of them are eager to do so to reunite with loved ones and to take a much-needed rest and vacation, but as I mentioned before, demand for passports is up over 40%, and our Service Canada employees are working night and day, overtime and weekends. As I said before, we will continue to uncover every opportunity to ensure Canadians receive the service they deserve.

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CORRECTIONAL SERVICE CANADA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, on April 8 I asked the Minister of Public Safety about proposed prison dairy farm operations at Joyceville and Collins Bay. The minister told this House that a contract had been signed. I think he was talking about a contract unrelated to the concerns I raised, but I cannot know for sure, because he neglected to provide any details about that contract.

What exactly was the contract for? With whom was the contract signed? Is it related to goat milk production for export, and will the minister table the contract in the House?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I have told the hon. member personally, while Correctional Service was considering goat milk production, it is no longer under consideration. Correctional Service Canada does not intend to do any goat milk production.

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CANADA BORDER SERVICES AGENCY

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, my office continues to hear from small businesses, including farmers, about the reduced hours at land border crossings and the negative impacts on local economies. With seeding under way and crop export shipments imminent, many transport operators are driving hundreds of extra kilometres just to get to a 24-hour port. With skyrocketing gas prices on top of the carbon tax, they cannot afford the unnecessary detours.

When will the minister stop making life harder for these small businesses and put border crossing hours back to normal?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sorry. I was listening to a lot of noise in the background, and I will be very honest with members: I did not hear the question, so if the member would like to speak to me afterward, I would be happy to answer it, and I do apologize.

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WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, period poverty is a real issue affecting Canadians all over the country. People who menstruate should have access to menstrual products when they need them. Can the Parliamentary Secretary of Women and Gender Equality and Youth share what our government is doing to support menstrual equity?

Mrs. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, menstrual products are a basic need and essential to upholding the sexual and reproductive health and rights of Canadians. They ensure that people who menstruate can continue to participate in school, in work and in their communities. However, period stigma still exists, and it creates barriers for Canadians every day.

That is why, as part of budget 2022, our government has allocated \$25 million, starting this year and continuing into the next, to pilot a menstrual equity fund to make menstrual products available to people who need them. I look forward to working with the stakeholders and ensuring—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

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FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, last week a federal court judge called into question the current government's approach to removing open-net fish farms in the Discovery Islands. Liberal mismanagement has put B.C.'s vulnerable wild salmon at risk. It has also cast serious doubts on the government's ability to meet its commitment to remove open-net fish farms by 2025. When will the government deliver a real transition that supports first nations and workers, and finally remove fish farms from our waters?

• (1210)

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the sustainable management of our oceans' ecosystems, including that of the wild Pacific salmon, is a priority for our government. The decision to phase out fish farms in the Discovery Islands was based on consultations with local first nations.

We are aware of the court decision, and the department is carefully reviewing it ahead of determining next steps.

We remain committed to transitioning away from open-net pen salmon farming in coastal B.C. waters.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That brings us to the end of question period.

On a point of order, the hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The parliamentary secretary to the Treasury Board's response regarding whistle-blowers from the CRA who, right now, are being harassed and forced out of their work, is that, as he says, they are going to continue with a review lasting five years.

With the House's permission, I would like to table the 2017 OGO report listing every item needed for whistle-blower protection in the country, and it can be done now.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have consent?

Some hon. members: No.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Madam Speaker, I rise on a second point of order concerning the parliamentary secretary for defence's answer. I would like to retable the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report on, "Strong, Secure, Engaged", which was done at the same time as the budget, where defence actually noted that they do not have that added \$15 billion either.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Does the hon. member have consent?

Oral Questions

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If individuals want to have conversations across the way, I would ask them to please do so out in the lobby.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. This is not a new point of order, but I would like confirmation that the Standing Orders have not changed in regard to the use of props, the wearing of buttons and other proclamations of positions.

I certainly have a number of buttons I would like to wear in the House. However, on this occasion, the hon. member for Bow River, who is a good guy and with whom I like spending time with, as far as I can see, is thwarting and flaunting the rules of this place in continuing to wear a button that says, "I heart oil and gas".

The reality of it is that, when people ignore the rules of this place, it invites further contempt for our rules. Standing Orders 16 and 18 are routinely violated, and those would absolutely eliminate heckling. Is it still the rule that people should not wear buttons into the House?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I say anything, I see that the hon. member for Bow River would like to add to the point of order.

Mr. Martin Shields: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. The member from B.C. is misleading the House, as that is not what this button says. It says, in symbols, "I love Canada". That is all that is on it. If people in the House disregard their love for Canada, I have a problem with that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. member clarifying that button, but I know that earlier it was a different button.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): No? That is my mistake, and I apologize.

In order to ensure that we do not have any points of orders on the buttons, it would be best to not use any type of button that is not approved across party lines. Generally, if we have one for something like the Moose Hide Campaign, it is approved by everyone.

I think that would prevent any points of order from being raised. However, he is not the only member who has worn a button, and I want to remind members that it is best not to wear buttons in the House.

*Government Orders***ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

● (1215)

*[English]***GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE**HEALTH**

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the third report of the Standing Committee on Health entitled, "Full Participation of Taiwan in the World Health Assembly and the World Health Organization". It is a very brief report in which the committee sets forth its support of the full participation of Taiwan in those two organizations.

I would like to recognize the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for bringing this matter to the committee and all members of the committee for their immediate and unanimous adoption of the report.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration entitled, "Supporting Uyghurs and Other Turkic Muslims to Find Safety in Canada".

The committee reports that:

In light of the fact that Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in China face an on-going genocide, and in light of the fact that those in third countries are at continuing risk of detention and deportation back to China, where they face serious risk of arbitrary detention, torture, and other atrocities, the committee calls on the government to:

- a) extend existing special immigration measures to Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims, including the expansion of biometrics collection capabilities in third countries and the issuance of Temporary Resident Permits and single journey travel documents to those without a passport;
- b) allow displaced Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in third countries, who face risk of detention and deportation back to China, to seek refuge in Canada;
- c) waive the UNHCR refugee determination;
- d) and the government provide a comprehensive response by letter to the committee within 30 days.

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PETITIONS**ANIMAL WELFARE**

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have a petition to present. It is e-petition 3763, and it has been signed by over 4,000 Canadians. It relates to the issue of animal testing in research. The petitioners point out that the European Parliament has banned using animals in testing. It points out that animal testing does not accurately anticipate the way in which vari-

ous products or pharmaceuticals will affect humans, and if the European Parliament has taken this step, the petitioners ask why Canada cannot follow suit and end the use of animals in testing.

I submit this petition on their behalf.

● (1220)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from Prince Edward Islanders who are very concerned about the climate emergency. They are calling on the Government of Canada to enact just transition legislation that reduces emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels, creates good green jobs, protects and strengthens human rights and workers' rights and respects indigenous rights, emphasizes the support for historically marginalized communities, and expands the social safety net.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS*[English]***ECONOMIC AND FISCAL UPDATE IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2021**

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

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill C-8 at report stage. Bill C-8 has been a bit of a baby on our side over here. I actually helped shepherd this through when it was first introduced in the House, and we looked at it at finance committee for some time. We had a number of proposals brought forward at committee to try to make it a better bill. We are still trying to make it a better bill, but one of the issues we have been focusing on, and I think the government has finally started to try and focus on, although I do not really think the Liberals know what they are doing, is housing. I say that with some concern for our country going forward because I do not think the government has its eye on the ball with housing. I think it has missed the mark for seven long years.

Government Orders

If we look at housing in Canada seven years ago and at housing now, the demographics have changed. We are more and more of an investing country for real estate, as opposed to a living country for real estate. That is because we have lost everything else to invest in in this country.

If a Canadian wants to put their money safely into an investment that would return 15% a year, their financial adviser would say there is one commodity under this broken government with which they would get 15% a year. The only thing happening in the Canadian economy of any extent right now is residential housing. Everything else has fallen to the wayside.

As a matter of fact, combined investment in the Canadian economy has gone negative. That means depreciation of our assets in Canada. Our capital stock, such as farms, factories and buildings, is negative if it depreciates more than the money that has been invested in Canada over the past number of years. That is a problem because we need long-term sustainability. It is the first time in our history when we have experienced this.

The government has to start paying attention to that because it has been ignoring too much as far as our economy goes. Part of the reason for that is the regulations that have stopped investment in this country and the regulations that have stymied the development of our best industries in Canada, with no clear thought about the outcome of what happens there.

In the bill there is a 1% surtax for non-resident owners of passively held real estate. This is a trap. I am going to tell the government this right now. What Canadian people need to understand is that this is a way for the federal government to find a way to tax what should be within a municipal taxation mechanism, and that is a tax on property. Right now there is already a tax on property. Everybody here who owns a home knows that tax. We pay it once a year in June in my province. It is our municipal taxes. Those municipal taxes are based on the value of our property, and they have an escalation in some provinces.

B.C. in particular has started escalating that based on non-resident owners, and in some cases it is as much as 6% higher in British Columbia. Regardless of that application of an extra 5%, plus 1%, plus 2%, or however it happens in Vancouver and different parts of the Lower Mainland, 7.7% of the housing stock in the Lower Mainland is still owned by foreign investors. Not that that is a bad thing, although it is in some cases, which I will go into later in my speech. I think Canada should be a country that does accept foreign investment. I wish that foreign investment coming into Canada was going into productive uses in our economy. Housing is a passive investment, and I do not think the government understands any of that.

This is part of the problem we have. The Liberals are being schizophrenic. We now have a budget in front of the House of Commons, in addition to the measures taken in Bill C-8. We have a budget that says we are going to stop foreign buying for two years. We will put on the brakes while we figure this out. That is what the government is saying at this point. Interestingly, this was part of the Conservative platform in the election. I take pride in that because we had identified foreign interference in the Canadian housing market as the one issue that first and foremost we needed to adjust in

order to get back to a level playing field, where Canadians could actually buy the houses and the condos they live in. That was identified by the Conservatives in the election, and I am glad that the Liberals have finally, after seven years, figured out how to move this lever forward.

Think about that. In Bill C-8 we have a 1% surtax, and the government is saying that it will also stop this for two years. Liberals are only figuring this out now, and I am going to suggest that they are not getting good advice on this file.

• (1225)

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is a Crown corporation of the government. I would say that in the last seven years, its non-partisanship has been diminished to the point where it is just an instrument of the Liberal Party of Canada. That is an absolute shame.

I look at what is happening here and around the world, and I see this group of people who are continuing to put more money in their own pockets with huge bonuses, but with what outcome? In most parts of Canada, when we get a bonus it is based on the fact that we did our job very well. The bonuses being received by our public officials in this case are being received because they are ruining the Canadian housing economy for Canadians. How are they doing that? Well, they are coming up with all kinds of programs, none of which are working and all of which are throwing words against the wall and have no real outcome for Canadians.

I am going to suggest that perhaps we need new leadership and perhaps we need a new minister. The minister disclosed earlier this week, and I am reporting what I heard on the news, that he has also recently invested in the Canadian housing market. It is good that he has a financial adviser who says that since there is nothing else to invest in in Canada, go into housing. However, I think that is part and parcel of the problem here, and maybe the people advising him to do that are at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. I do not think he would have invested in housing if he saw a correction on the horizon.

We need a slowdown in the escalation of housing prices in Canada. That is what the country requires in order to get back to a basis where new families and new Canadians can afford to buy a home and live here.

Part of the problem we have in the Canadian housing market, of course, is the foreign influence of money laundering. I am going to go through money laundering here with the House. An amount between \$43 billion and \$113 billion is laundered in Canada each year, and it contributes to domestic problems such as higher house prices and fentanyl.

Government Orders

I have knocked on doors in Calgary Centre in two elections now, in 2019 and 2021. The number of homeless people, the number of people dying of fentanyl and the amount of drug addiction in my riding in downtown Calgary has grown exponentially. Part of that is linked to foreign money that is coming in, bad foreign money. There is good foreign money coming in to invest, but there is also laundered foreign money, the proceeds of crime, that is just looking for a home. That is what we need to combat here in Canada more than anything else, and it is the main issue on which the government has failed. I have always said that the number one thing we could do is address the money laundering laws in Canada to stop this from happening any further.

Now, \$43 billion to \$113 billion is a big gap because it is an estimation, but a bunch of that is going into investments that are safe, like houses. I have called on the minister and called on the government to stop that trade, and the Minister of Finance says they will look at doing this in 2025. I am curious as to why. If they know there is a problem and they know we are the worst perpetrator of money laundering in the G7, why are they going to wait another three years before they decide to look at it?

I am going to suggest that there might be some link there. Is it a long-term exit, where they get a whole bunch of buyers coming in and laundering money in Canada who are associated with people they know? I am going to suggest that maybe there is no impetus on the other side of the House to actually reduce the price of houses for Canadians across Canada. This is a travesty. Take the first step first, and get toward a base of housing investment in Canada that makes sense.

In the budget, the government came up with this crazy idea of building a whole bunch more houses in Canada. We have lots of houses in Canada. As a percentage of our economy, it is actually more than any other sector at this point in time. By throwing more money at the wall, we are going to further inflate the cost of houses because there are not enough trades out there to build them. There is also not enough money out there and lumber out there to do it. Let us think about all that is going to go up in this process.

As I said, this is a crazy approach from a government that is only trying to find its feet. It does not have good advisers on housing and does not have good policy on housing. It needs to set itself back, say that this is a major problem in Canada, particularly for young Canadians and people buying their first home, and get back to a basis where we start making sense in this country again.

● (1230)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a bit much when we think about it. We have gone from the days of Stephen Harper, who completely ignored the housing industry as a whole, to a government that brought in the first national housing strategy, committing literally billions of dollars to low-income, non-profit housing and supporting the provinces and territories in providing units, repairs and so forth. In many ways, in the first-time homebuyer program we have recognized the value and importance of housing. At the end of the day, the federal government needs to play a leadership role and has been playing a leadership role.

There is a shortage of housing stock, so would my friend not agree that the best way to deal with the housing shortage, inasmuch as we play a leadership role, is for municipalities and, to a certain degree, provinces to also come on? It is an issue of supply. Does he have any recommendations on what he believes we can do to increase the supply of housing?

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague's admiration of Stephen Harper and his government's admiration of Stephen Harper's policies. The first-time homebuyer program is a bit of a copy of the tax-free savings account, a great savings instrument for Canadians. I know the Liberals copied that to have something called the first-time homebuyer program, which would be great if people had money to put into another savings account while they are saving for a mortgage at the same time. I thank the member for some constructive comments on that. We will see how it works. It is not the worst plan I have seen from those on the other side of the House, and I have to give them that credit, but there are other issues.

To deal with my friend's question, he talked about the supply of housing. The supply of housing in Canada is as high as it has ever been. The issue is that the supply of money going into housing is also as high as it has ever been. Thirty per cent of the houses built in Canada now are owned by investors, like the member's cabinet minister, the Minister of Housing, who recently went into that as well. This is part of the problem. Everybody is investing in housing because there is nowhere else to invest. I wish the member had heard that in my speech.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois supported this bill at second reading because it did not have much substance and there were so many things to improve. Acting in good faith, we voted in favour of the bill so we could work on it. Basically, not much has happened since, and we are once again left with a bill that is devoid of substance.

This bill does very little to address the labour shortage and gives almost no consideration to supply chain problems. Basically, there is very little in the bill despite the urgent problems. What are my colleague's thoughts on the absence of any real solutions in Bill C-8?

● (1235)

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I quite agree with my colleague from Drummond. Inflation is a problem in the Canadian economy. Inflation is caused by price increases and other factors, but the economy is also partially to blame for inflation.

Consider the lumber shortage, for example. Lumber prices skyrocketed last summer, increasing by nearly four times. It was a real problem, which significantly increased the cost of houses. Other supply chain issues are also going to drive up the price of homes.

Government Orders

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing my colleague from Calgary talked about is that fentanyl is one of the things being used as a money-laundering tool. We have talked about housing and affordability, and he brought up the issue of fentanyl. I am someone who is deeply concerned about the poisoned drug supply in our communities and who recognizes that housing is part of the solution for those suffering from the poisoned drug supply. In fact, the combination of mental health, housing and a safe supply is part of the solution.

I am wondering if the member will be supporting my colleague, the member for Courtenay—Alberni, regarding his bill, Bill C-216, on making sure there is safe supply for folks in Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jamie Schmale): The hon. member for Calgary Centre has 20 seconds or less.

Mr. Greg McLean: Mr. Speaker, I remember reading an article from a well-known Canadian years ago that said the source of the money being brought into Canada does not matter: If it is dirty elsewhere, once it gets to Canada it will be fine. That is completely absurd, and a well-known Canadian wrote that.

When we are inviting dirty money into Canada, we are inviting everything that is associated with that dirty money, such as the drug pushing and the other crimes associated therewith. Making sure it stays isolated from Canada is part of our goal in getting more investment into Canada.

I am sorry I was not able to address the question fully.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to see you in the chair. It suits you well. We never know what will happen in the future, but I think you would really appreciate being on the other side in three years, just as the Conservatives would and as all Canadians would like to see, by the way.

[Translation]

We are therefore gathered here today to talk about Bill C-8, which deals with the economic update and implements some of the government's financial measures.

I want to say from the outset that my speech will deal exclusively with something that is currently affecting the financial situation of all Canadians, and that is inflation, of course.

For many months now, Canada has been grappling with its highest inflation rate in 31 years. It is important to remember that, at that time, there were also substantial interest rate hikes and we finally managed to bring inflation under control. However, we have not had an inflation rate of 6.7% in 31 years, and it is affecting all Canadian families. Everyone, without exception, has been directly affected by the high inflation rate.

Why do I want to talk about that today?

It is simply because I do not think there is anything at all in Bill C-8 that directly addresses the problem of inflation, which is having an impact on all Canadian families. The bill provides no relief for them. However, there are two things that the government could do but has failed to do.

Inflation affects everyone. However, as the report issued by the Royal Bank of Canada a few days ago indicates, unfortunately, the poorest among us are those who are hardest hit by inflation. Why? The reason is that essential goods, such as food, housing and transportation, are directly impacted by inflation.

A high-income person eats just as much as a person with a lower income. If the price of food goes up, those with a very high income will be much less affected than people with a low income. We are not talking about luxuries here, or the proverbial cherry on top, but about essential goods that have been drastically affected by inflation. That is why this affects every Canadian family and that is why the government should focus its financial and budgetary efforts on helping Canadians cope with inflation.

I must have asked the government dozens and dozens of questions about inflation, as has my colleague from Carleton, and as have all my colleagues on this side of the House.

The Minister of Finance generally tells us that it is not the government's fault, that this is happening all around the world. She says it is because of the health crisis we had, the supply problems affecting the entire globe, and the war in Ukraine. It is not Canada's fault; this is happening all around the world. To that, I say no.

Let us not forget that when Bill C-8 was introduced and we were asking questions about inflation, this government told us that it was temporary. We were told that this problem would sort itself out, which brought to mind the sadly infamous and pitiful statement of the current Prime Minister, who said in 2015 that budgets balance themselves.

That is not true. A budget does not balance itself. Nor is it right to say that inflation resolves itself, as the government claimed just six months ago. As the Governor of the Bank of Canada says, it is here to stay, and we must get a handle on it.

The government needs to take two measures to directly address inflation, and this has nothing to do with what is happening in Ukraine, or with the supply chain or with the pandemic. The government needs to freeze price and tax increases and control spending. Why?

When people have concerns about their personal budget and are unsure whether they can buy something, invest in a place, or pay for an unexpected expense, they have to ask themselves questions and think twice. They cannot just spend as much as they would like, and they have to make choices.

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● (1240)

This is exactly the approach that should be taken by the head of any family—father, mother or anyone taking care of a family. Sometimes the entire family deals with it, and that is what needs to happen. People take action, think twice and control their spending. That is the responsible way to govern. However, this government has done everything except control spending. Everything that has been done since 2015 shows a total lack of fiscal responsibility.

Let us not forget that in 2015 they got elected on a promise that they would run three small deficits and in 2019 there would be no deficit—zero deficit. That was the proposal, the solemn commitment from the Liberals in 2015. The reality is that we have not had three small deficits and then, poof, none at all. We have had one, two, three, four astronomical deficits each time. They just cannot help themselves. It increases year after year.

I cannot help but laugh at the budget tabled by the government, which states that, in five years, the deficit will be a tiny \$8 billion. No one believes that, because these people have not governed properly since 2015.

Of course we understand there had to be extraordinary spending because of the pandemic. That is completely understandable. We will give the government that. However, just because the government was spending does not mean it could not keep that spending under control. That is the issue. Let me point out that, when our party was in government, it had to deal with the worst economic crisis ever, the 2008 crisis. That was the worst economic crisis since the 1920s and 1930s. Our government governed responsibly. Yes, there were deficits, but we had a plan. As a result of that plan, in 2015, under the Conservative government and thanks to the sound management of our finance ministers, we were the first G7 country to recover after the 2008 crisis. That is something to be proud of, and our management of public monies was realistic and responsible.

The current government went on a spending spree, even though economic growth was strong from 2015 to 2019 and money could have been set aside. We are not against the extraordinary spending and the very high deficits that happened because of the pandemic, but now that it has been done, the government needs to manage matters properly and accountably and keep things under control, which it is not doing. The more the government spends, the more that spurs inflation. The more money is injected into the economy, the more prices rise. The first thing to do is control spending.

The second thing to do is freeze increases. In an ideal world, we might ask for taxes to be waived. That might be nice, but it would not be realistic or responsible. Yes, there are some taxes that we do not agree with, such as the Liberal carbon tax, but at the very least, to give Canadian families a break, the government should not increase these taxes. It had a golden opportunity to give families a break on April 1, but it decided to go ahead as if it was business as usual, as if there were no inflation, as if money flowed like water and everyone had money jingling in their pockets, as if no family had any problems. Consequently, today, because of the Liberal carbon tax, the cost of transportation is spiralling upwards and not downwards, and that is unfortunate.

The government should have looked to President Macron and his management approach. I may perhaps surprise many people by saying that, but it is true. France had opportunities to freeze certain prices and it did so. The inflation rate in France is 4.1%; in Canada, it is 6.7%.

Those are some tangible things that the government could have chosen, and should choose, to do in order to give families a break. Every Canadian family has been affected by inflation. The hardest hit are the most vulnerable. This government must pay close attention to this situation and the reality on the ground. This government must do two things: control spending and stop scattering money willy-nilly, and immediately freeze all rate increases and tax hikes.

● (1245)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to approach the issue of inflation. We have had, whether it was during the budget debate or the Bill C-8 debate, a great deal of concern raised about the issue of inflation.

When Canadians look at the issue and reflect on it, we have to be fair in debating it. We need to recognize that yes, we do have an inflation rate in Canada that we would all like to see lower. At the same time, we need to recognize that by comparison, in the United States of America or many European countries, their inflation rate is actually higher than the Canadian inflation rate.

In terms of recognizing the importance of inflation and reflecting on comparisons, does he have countries he likes to compare Canada to specifically when it comes to some of these economic indicators?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, when I said earlier in question period that all the Liberal MPs would be at home watching TV, I was quite sure the member for Winnipeg North would be here in the House of Commons, like he is right now. I cannot say whether he is alone, but there are some clear indications around that.

That has been a serious question, and yes, there is some comparison, positive and negative. As a Canadian, I see Canada as a gold mine for the economy, because we have everything. When we make comparisons, I prefer to compare my country to the best in the world, instead of those that struggle too much. There are France and Italy, and I want to remind the member of the example of France, when the French government decided to shut down every increase of tariffs. It said there would be no increase in tariffs. Canada's government should take inspiration.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to hear my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent speak in the House.

One thing we would have liked to see in this bill is a bit more recognition of the issues facing small businesses.

My numbers are from October 31, 2021, and the situation may have gotten worse since then, but the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, or CFIB, states that more than one-quarter of SMEs in Quebec may not make it through 2022. Recovery is not a given, and it is not easy.

Does my colleague agree that the criteria for partial loan forgiveness under the Canada emergency business account could be made more flexible, based on certain conditions that would be determined down the road? That would be a big help to businesses that are having a hard time getting out of pandemic-related debt, including these loans.

• (1250)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I salute my colleague from Drummond, whom I respect and hold in high regard, and with whom I share certain areas of interest, such as transportation.

I want to point out that the hon. member has hit on something important. When the health crisis occurred with the pandemic, immediate steps had to be taken to help our businesses and business owners. Were those steps good? Were there too many? Could they have been better? Of course, the answers vary.

However, as my colleague so aptly put it, we are now seeing businesses struggling to get back to normal because of supply chain issues and the labour shortage. Some businesses are even struggling with production. They have contracts, orders and calls to go ahead with the work, but they are unable to do it because of supply chain issues and the labour shortage.

Speaking of the labour shortage—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must interrupt the member to give someone else a chance to ask a question.

The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, we talk a lot in the House about the hardships currently facing Canadians across the country. Unfortunately, when the Conservatives had the chance to help them, they decided to keep stock options for rich CEOs.

Why do the Conservatives insist on protecting the profits of the wealthiest rather than helping the most vulnerable members of our society?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, let me begin by congratulating my colleague from western Canada on the quality of her French.

Each and every tax measure deserves to be assessed on its own merits and should be reviewed at the appropriate time.

[English]

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House and contribute to a debate. Today, we are debating at report stage Bill C-8, an act to implement certain provisions of the economic and fiscal update tabled in Parliament on December 14, 2021, and other measures. I always enjoy the long titles to bills because they give a sense of what the bill actually is. An economic statement or a fiscal update is kind of

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like a mini-budget. It is a chance for a government to provide some economic and budgetary measures without having an entire budget.

However, what we have seen now is that we have had the fall economic statement, we have had Bill C-8, we have had the actual budget, and in the coming days we will have the budget implementation act for this year's budget. Those are four different opportunities for the government to take meaningful action to help the people of Canada, to help people who are struggling with the cost of living, to help people struggling with inflation and to help those small business owners who over the last two years have faced lockdowns and restrictions, including restaurants, hospitality and tourism sector. The government has had all these opportunities and yet time and time again we have seen the government fail to meaningfully act to help the people in Perth—Wellington and the people across Canada.

What is equally concerning is that today's debate is being done under the threat of a guillotine motion. That guillotine motion is a time allocation motion, a motion that cuts off debate. We have seen this before. We have seen the Liberals rail for years against time allocation and against closure and then flip around and use that themselves. What is especially interesting this time is that it is being done in the shadow of Motion No. 11. Here we have the government using time allocation on this bill and yet at the same time it has given notice for closure on Motion No. 11.

Some may not know what Motion No. 11 actually would do. Motion No. 11 would allow the government not to show up for work. Motion No. 11 would allow the House of Commons to function without quorum. Just to show how out of the ordinary this is, the concept of quorum in the House of Commons, a minimum number of people being present in the chamber, is constitutionally protected. It is not a large number. We can count it on two sets of hands. It is 20 people. Some people may want to take off their socks to count that high, but it is not that high a number. That is including the Speaker. It is the Speaker plus 19 members.

In fact, if we consult the authorities of this place, including *Beauchesne's Rules and Forms of the House of Commons of Canada*, 6th edition, edited by our good friend Mr. John Holtby of Brockville, Ontario, we see that it says this at paragraph 280: "The Constitution Act, s. 48 specifies that the quorum of the House is twenty, including the Speaker." Paragraph 281 states, "Any Member may direct the Speaker's attention to the fact that there is not a quorum present."

This is something that is provided for in the authorities of this place, consistent with the Constitution of our country, Constitution Act, 1867. The government, with Motion No. 11, would withdraw the concept of quorum, allowing this place to function without the bare number of 20 people. This is simply unacceptable and in the coming days I hope to contribute more specifically to this debate. However, for now I will leave it at that and I will move on to some of the issues included in Bill C-8.

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As I have mentioned in this House many times, the great riding of Perth—Wellington includes some of the most fertile farmland in the world. Quite literally, Perth—Wellington is the heartland of Canadian agriculture. There are more dairy farmers in Perth—Wellington than in any other electoral district in the country. Wellington County is number one for chicken production in Canada and in the top five in Ontario for beef and pork. What I hear all the time from farmers and farm families is the struggle they are facing, particularly when it comes to the rising cost of things. One thing in particular that we hear about time and time again is the carbon tax. The carbon tax is adding extra costs to farmers and farm families with no way to recoup those costs.

● (1255)

The Liberals will point to Bill C-8 saying there is going to be a rebate in it and that farmers can apply for those rebates. That is not what farmers are asking for. They are asking for the bill that was brought forward in the previous Parliament by my colleague, the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South, Bill C-206, which passed through the House of Commons with support from our friends in the Bloc, the New Democrats and the Greens. It made it through this place and was in the Senate. However, as we all know, it was killed when the government dissolved Parliament to call its unnecessary election. With the budget, the fiscal update, Bill C-8 and the budget implementation act, the government had the opportunity to do the right thing and adopt the measures that were contained in Bill C-206.

Our friend, our colleague, the member for Huron—Bruce, has introduced Bill C-234, which is in direct response to what farmers and farm families are asking for. They are asking for the on-farm use for drying of grain to be excluded from the carbon tax, when there are no alternatives. There are no ways for farmers to use other alternatives to dry their grains. They must use carbon-based fuel. Therefore, it makes no sense that the government is charging them, time and again, with no results. Once again, this is a missed opportunity for the government to take meaningful action when it comes to the cost of on-farm fuel.

That is not the only problem farmers are facing today. The other is the rising cost of fertilizer. I want to be clear. Every farmer, every farm business and every Canadian I have spoken to agree that tough sanctions against Vladimir Putin and his thugs are needed and warranted. However, those farmers and agri-businesses that purchased and have purchase orders for fertilizer pre-March 2, before the sanctions were introduced, should not be subject to a 35% tariff. That 35% tariff does nothing to Vladimir Putin and his thugs, because the purchase has already been made; it is simply money coming out of the pockets of farmers and farm families and going into the government coffers.

The government has not yet even addressed this. It has not provided a response. Yesterday in question period, in response to a question from the Bloc Québécois, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food said:

Mr. Speaker, I want to assure my colleague that we are taking the situation very seriously. We are looking at various options.

We want to make sure our farmers have the inputs they need for a good season so Canada can contribute to food security at home and around the world.

The planting season is upon us. Farmers and farm families are making decisions right now. They are paying for fertilizer right now with a 35% tariff that they did not anticipate and could not have anticipated in October, November or December when they purchased it. They are now being levied a 35% tariff on top of it. It is completely unacceptable, because it hurts only farmers, not Vladimir Putin and his regime. I again encourage the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, if she has any sway at the cabinet table, if she has any influence with her own government, to stand up for farmers and for those who are working hard to literally feed our country, to feed the world, and do the right thing.

We are going to be seeing challenges in the years to come based on the out-of-commission farmland that is currently in Ukraine. We are going to be called upon as Canadians, as Canadian farmers, to address that shortage, and if the government is hamstringing and preventing Canadian farmers from feeding the world, then it is a crying shame and simply unacceptable.

I have been given the one-minute warning, so I want to address very quickly the point of housing.

We have seen house prices in Canada skyrocket over the last two years. I have seen it in the small rural communities within Perth—Wellington. We are seeing prices skyrocket, which makes housing unaffordable for young families, people getting out of university and newly married families with young kids trying to find a spot. It is unacceptable. The cost is being driven up for young people and it is driving them out of the market. The government needs to address it. We need to increase the supply of housing in Canada, and it needs to be done now, not five or 10 years from now.

I look forward to questions from my colleagues.

● (1300)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Motion No. 11, and do not let anyone be fooled, is all about extending the hours. The quorum the member is making reference to is something that occurs at emergency debates, take-note debates and other situations. What we are talking about is in the evenings. It is a question of whether or not the Conservatives want to show up to work. Do they want to have additional debate time, or do they not want to have additional debate time?

The question is more focused when the member makes reference to the mini-budget idea, why the government is coming forward and why, in his opinion, we are not doing anything.

Let me give a specific example, that of child care. We have the very first national child care program. It is going to help families. It is going to help businesses. It is going to help our economy. However, the Conservatives are opposing it. When it comes to any idea of any value, the Conservatives consistently vote against initiatives that are for the betterment of Canadians. Why is that?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, I want to address, first, Motion No. 11. The member has been in this place for many years. He physically is in this place all the time. I often wonder if he has a sleeping bag underneath his desk, and I say that in a positive light, because he is here a lot.

What he fails to understand is that in the examples he has raised, there is no question put. What he is talking about now is that a parliamentary debate on legislation where questions are put to this Parliament assembled will no longer have a quorum, and parliamentarians will no longer have the ability to fulfill our constitutional duty to review government legislation, so the member is wrong. In the examples he raised, there are no questions put.

When he is talking about other measures within the budget, I hear from families in rural communities that will receive zero benefits from the measures he is talking about. They use family members. They use unlicensed child care. They use the neighbourhood to provide child care, and they will not get any benefit from the measures that the member is talking about.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague and thank him for his substantive speech.

I would also like to make a comment. I find it truly shocking to see the government's attitude as it imposes closure, limiting the powers of parliamentarians in the House, as its members rise to say that this is the right thing to do. We truly see that the government would like to exercise its power autocratically, without being accountable to the House. It is deplorable.

My question on his speech refers to the part regarding tariffs on fertilizer. It is disastrous. We know how many hours farmers have to work and how much money has to be invested to be able to produce this.

Does my colleague think that the government will act on time?

• (1305)

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his good question.

Indeed, the government must take action. It has to do something about the taxes on fertilizers. Our farmers and our families are working hard every day. Now they are facing uncertainty because of the current government.

Where is the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food? She is not doing anything. She gives answers during question period, but does not take any meaningful measures to help the families and the farmers who produce food for everyone in Canada and around the world.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague used some very evocative language and the term “guillotine” to describe the fact that we are in time allocation on this bill. I would be compelled by his arguments if this bill had not received very much debate in the House but, to my understand-

ing, it has been debated five times in second reading and six times at report stage, and here we find ourselves again.

The people caught in the crossfire, among others, are teachers who have already done their taxes and have claimed the school supplies tax credit, and farmers who have claimed the tax credit. Maybe they wish there was a different mechanism, but some will obviously claim the tax credit here, in the bill. Can the member speak to those two groups who are waiting for CRA to process their tax filings?

Mr. John Nater: Madam Speaker, first, to the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley, the term “guillotine motion” is a common phrase. It is used at Westminster all the time.

To his specific question, the government could have acted. They have had the ways and means motion passed in the House of Commons, which could direct CRA to implement these changes on this year's tax return. They are using this as a delay mechanism. Specifically, the member mentions the number of times this has been debated. This is the first time I have been able to get up in the House and speak to the bill at any reading, because this has been pushed along through the parliamentary process. It is our job as parliamentarians to debate the issues, not to be an audience for the government.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Madam Speaker, like my colleague from Perth—Wellington, this is my first opportunity to speak to Bill C-8 at any stage of this bill's process going through the House of Commons, and I appreciate the opportunity to actually have the ability to speak to Bill C-8 at least while I still have it under the guillotine of Motion No. 11.

I find it more than a bit strange that the Liberal leadership has managed to mismanage this House so much so that we are debating an act to implement provisions of the 2021 winter fiscal update two days after we voted on the 2022 budget. I suppose Liberal incompetence really should not be a surprise after all we have seen in the last six years.

The economic and fiscal update 2021 committed to add an additional \$70 billion of spending that would do little more than continue to drive up inflation. The fiscal update also made it clear that the so-called fiscal guardrails that the government likes to reference when it abandons any semblance of a fiscal anchor are simply a communications tool and not actually something the government is committed to using to guide their economic decisions.

The need for stimulus right now is simply non-existent. The notion has been panned by the Parliamentary Budget Officer and virtually every reasonable private sector economist. Despite this, the government has committed to all kinds of unnecessary spending in the fiscal update, and now it has added even more in the 2022 budget with numerous costly campaign promises still waiting in the wings.

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To make matters worse, much of this spending is not actually stimulus, because it would not do anything to stimulate the economy, attract investment or promote long-term, sustainable growth. Much of the government's proposed spending is simply about ideological goals. It has been using the excuse that interest rates are low, so the debt service payments will also be low. Well, the bill has already started to come due on this line of thinking.

The Bank of Canada has increased interest rates twice already in order to combat inflation that is in large part being driven by the government's out-of-control spending, most recently by a full half a percentage point, the single largest jump in more than two decades. The reality is that the Bank of Canada has been very clear that it is not even close to being done when it comes to raising rates. The Governor has said it will use the interest rate policy to return inflation to target and will do so forcefully if necessary.

The chief economist at BMO Capital Markets suggested there is a solid possibility that we can expect another half a percentage point increase in June of this year as well. We expect the rate to double at an absolute minimum, and the suggestion that it could triple or more is completely within the realm of possible.

That should give the Liberals and the NDP consideration to pause, and to think that the more money they spend, the more they drive up inflation, the higher the interest rate is going to go and, ultimately, the worse off Canadians would be. Unfortunately, it appears there is absolutely no foresight in the government. The focus is on the announcement and the photo-op. It is all style, with very little, if any, substance, and on giving the social media influencers on its payroll something to work with so they can go out and actually try to convince and mislead Canadians that it is accomplishing a lot, when in reality it is spending a lot with no results at all.

This also is not just about affordability now either, though that is certainly a vital component. With 53% of Canadians less than \$200 from insolvency, the cost-of-living crisis we are currently experiencing cannot be overstated. As inflation drives up the costs of goods, ever smaller unanticipated issues are hitting Canadians hard. Some are one car repair away from insolvency.

As interest rates increase, it will become more and more expensive for Canadians to take out a loan, add debt to their credit card or put more on their line of credit to deal with these types of emergencies.

We also need to consider the generations to come, and the moral implications of the NDP-Liberal spending and how it will affect our children, our grandchildren and subsequent generations.

● (1310)

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance described the housing affordability crisis in Canada as an “intergenerational injustice”. While the budget she has presented certainly did not seem to treat it like an issue of importance, it is good to know that at least somebody understands the words “intergenerational injustice”. What about the intergenerational injustice and impact of all of this spending, housing only being a small part of it?

We have an aging population. In fact, the census data that came out just yesterday from StatsCan showed that the working-age popu-

lation in Canada has never been older and over 21% of the population is close to retirement, which is an all-time high. Between 2016 and 2021, the number of children under 15 grew at a pace six times slower than those over the age of 65.

Even with ambitious immigration, the NDP-Liberal government is creating the perfect storm that will absolutely devastate our society for future generations. We are going to have fewer people starting from a place of disadvantage being required to repay the debt the government is racking up through some unholy combination of either increased taxes or reduced services. Instead of pulling back, the Liberals are pushing expensive ideological pet projects and buying off the support of the New Democrats with programs that provinces are not even asking for and Canadians simply cannot afford. They are doing this to avoid any accountability or scrutiny for another four years.

How is this any less of an intergenerational injustice than the 100% increase in the average cost of a home, which has been what the current government has overseen in the last six years? It is not, but the elites in the Liberal Party are not worried about that, because they measure success by dollars out the door, not any outcomes whatsoever. When someone has a standing invitation to Davos they are not too worried about the future financial tremors that feel like seismic quakes to us poor lowly working-class Canadians.

Embracing fiscally responsible spending is not just an economic imperative; it is a moral one. Unfortunately, when it comes to the current government, those are the two areas—

● (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately the time is up for now.

[Translation]

It being 1:15 p.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, April 28, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

[English]

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 2 to 10.

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

The hon. member for Red Deer—Lacombe.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, we respectfully request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the division stands deferred until Monday, May 2, 2022, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[Translation]

The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 2 to 10.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I suspect if you were to canvass the chamber you would find unanimous leave at this time to call it 1:30, so we could begin Private Members' Business.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Do we have unanimous consent to see the clock at 1:30?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 1:30, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business, as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[Translation]

CRIMINAL CODE

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.) moved that Bill C-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner), be read the second time and referred to committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, I dedicate my Bill C-233 to François L'Heureux, who was more than just a mentor; he was like a second father to me.

I was incredibly lucky that he was part of my life. The moments we shared are among the most memorable of my life. He was a brilliant lawyer. He always argued his cases with passion and conviction.

His passing is a huge loss on every level. He was respected and admired by all. He was attentive to everyone's needs. His friendship was the greatest gift that life could offer to those who knew and understood him.

[English]

I thought it was for a lifetime, but a few weeks ago, he left us all behind. I wake up every day thinking that I live in a world without Maître L'Heureux, a world that needs more people like him. He was a bold, courageous man who always stood to defend human rights and fight oppression. He did not fear anything and to me he was larger than life. He was a giant who walked this earth.

He was sensitive and had a soft heart, he wanted everyone around him to be okay and would do whatever he could to make it so. He was selfless and a man of honour. He was incredibly intelligent, deep and thoughtful, a real class act. He gave me invaluable advice on all aspects of my life. He meant something different to each person, but the one message that came back to me over and over was that every time somebody asked him for help, he would never refuse.

Private Members' Business

• (1320)

[Translation]

I never would have imagined that he would not be able to be here for the debate on my bill. He was always there for me, to encourage me or to give me advice during difficult periods. He was my guardian angel. I will cherish the memory of our times together and his words of wisdom and love.

He always ended his conversations by saying, "Okay friends, I have to go." I would reply, "Hugs, Mr. L'Heureux. We love you." We will always love him.

It is with a great deal of emotion that I introduce in the House today Bill C-233, an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act regarding violence against an intimate partner.

This enactment would amend the Criminal Code to require a justice, before making a release order in respect of an accused who is charged with an offence against their intimate partner, to consider whether it is desirable, in the interests of the safety and security of any person, to include as a condition of the order that the accused wear an electronic monitoring device.

The enactment would also amend the Judges Act to provide for continuing education seminars for judges on matters related to intimate partner violence and coercive control.

[English]

I am grateful for the work that the member for Oakville North—Burlington and the member for York Centre have done with Dr. Kagan and Maître Viater to give Keira a voice. With all of these efforts combined, we will help prevent such horrendous acts from taking place in the future. I truly appreciate their support and strong advocacy to make sure that domestic violence in all its forms will be taken seriously throughout the judicial process.

The two initiatives within my proposed bill complement each other and are supported by the statistics and studies that demonstrate more needs to be accomplished in order to halt femicides and filicides, as well as domestic violence, offences that seem to increase by the year, especially the last two years during the pandemic. In its December 6, 2021 edition, the Canadian Medical Association Journal, in its article, "The physician's role in the prevention of femicide in Canada", recalled some staggering findings. It stated:

In Canada, a woman is murdered every 2.5 days—ranging from 144 to 178 murders each year between 2015 and 2019—and in 2021, the rate of femicide is trending even higher.... Of the women murdered, 50% were killed by intimate partners and 26% by family members. Ending the relationship does not end a woman's risk of death: 20%–22% of intimate partner femicides were perpetrated by estranged spouses within the first 18 months of separation.

Women account for 80% of reported incidents of intimate partner violence (IPV), which affects all ages, races, ethnicities and socioeconomic strata. Women at highest risk are those who are young (15–24 yr), immigrants, refugees, Indigenous or living with disabilities. Furthermore, data on femicide in Canada show alarming trends among nonurban and Indigenous women. From 2016 to 2019, women living in nonurban areas accounted for 42% of femicides in Canada, even though only 16% of Canadians lived outside of cities, and one-quarter of all murdered women in Canada are Indigenous.

Furthermore, violent and aggressive behaviour toward female partners is not always weighed heavily enough to change outcomes during decision-making in Canadian family court, such as a child custody case.

Private Members' Business

[Translation]

That last part makes me think of the tragic story of little Keira Kagan, who was killed by her father in what was likely a murder-suicide. The signs were there.

Dr. Kagan-Viater and her spouse, Philip Viater, are working very hard to ensure other families do not suffer the pain of losing a child under such unspeakable circumstances.

They believe that providing continuing education on intimate partner violence and coercive control to judges who rule on custody and parental-access cases is a positive step towards better protecting children from violent and abusive parents and to protect their parents from intimate partner violence.

I completely agree with them. In my work as a lawyer practising family law and criminal law, I witnessed just how deeply intimate partner violence can insidiously invade all aspects of the victim's life and how it can even leave deep scars on children who witness or experience that violence.

Abuse is sometimes silent and takes the form of coercive control, while other times it leaves physical marks. In many cases, victims become increasingly helpless and unrecognizable to those who know them.

This is an extremely complex phenomenon, and as time goes on, it becomes clearer that violence against intimate partners and children can take many forms and manifest in many different ways.

That is why all those involved in such cases, such as judges, lawyers, doctors, social workers and law enforcement, must be aware of the latest developments and scientific findings regarding domestic violence and its repercussions.

• (1325)

[English]

In Spain, where electronic monitoring was used in domestic violence, it showed 45 women were killed by their intimate partners, and 72 in 2004.

A pilot conducted in Australia suggests that electronic monitoring contributed to an 82% reduction of high-risk incidents. Often, intimate victims do not denounce their abuser for various reasons such as the conviction they will not be believed by the system, shame, fear of repercussions on the victim and/or their children, financial anxiety and so forth.

However, the telltale signs are habitually present in such circumstances. That is why those who interact with victims of this type of abuse should have or should develop the ability to detect even when it is silent or not denounced. Judges play a pivotal role in our society. They are the guardians of democracy as well as constitutional and human rights.

They sometimes have the daunting task of adjudicating complex factual cases, and that could have a very long-lasting effect on people's lives. That is why it is imperative for our judiciary to have access to complete training on complex and evolving matters, such as domestic violence and coercive control, so that the best outcomes can be reached with their decisions.

Our way of life evolves. If we take a second to think, our interactions have changed since COVID-19, and that is only in the past two years. The rule of law must keep up with these changes and challenging times. As seen in 2021, a pandemic year, the femicide rate was trending even higher than in previous years. We cannot ignore these sobering and sometimes terrifying statistics.

The Lawyer's Daily, in an article from its December 21, 2021 edition, reported on a voluminous study conducted by Jean-Pierre Guay and Francis Fortin, professors of criminology at the Université de Montréal who were mandated by the Quebec government to study the use of electronic tracking devices. The study had found that these increased a complainant's sense of safety and developed a feeling of empowerment and autonomy in complainants, while "allowing for a more focused and optimized police response".

In other words, where implemented, electronic monitoring can and will save lives. I think everyone will agree that there is nothing more important in this world than the preservation of human life. The bill I propose is meant to do just that.

• (1330)

[Translation]

I was shaken by the story of Ms. Khaoula Grissa, who narrowly escaped death in December 2019. Her ex-partner broke into her house and lay in wait to rape and kill her. Ms. Grissa bravely did everything she could to avoid that by moving to a different apartment and changing her car. She knew full well what her ex-partner was capable of. In the past he had violated restraining orders, and the police had told him they were keeping an eye on him. That did not prevent him from brazenly entering her home. She was able to escape by locking herself in the bathroom with her two-year-old daughter, but not before the man raped her. Many other victims have lost their lives to their intimate partner.

Ms. Grissa openly stated that the system failed her and that the memory of that terrifying day is forever burned into her brain.

[English]

My bill will not solve the problem of domestic violence and its devastating repercussions; however, it is my firm belief and that of the people who helped me with this project that it will be one of the solutions to better protect victims of domestic violence.

[Translation]

I invite my esteemed colleagues to join me in recognizing the usefulness and importance of this bill by voting in favour of it.

*Private Members' Business**[English]*

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for bringing this important legislation to the House. I look forward to sharing my comments with the House and to telling her formally that she has my full support.

She said in her comments that more needs to be done. I am wondering if she could comment on how that can happen, whether it is by imposing tougher sentences on those who assault their spouse, treating abuse like an aggravating factor in sentencing, or making mandatory minimums a possibility. The death of Keira was an entirely preventable one and there is more that could be done. I just want to know if the hon. member would be amenable to things like that.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from the bottom of my heart for her heartfelt words and her support for the bill. It means so much to everybody across Canada who is advocating for women's rights, for victims' rights, and for the rights of children and of those who are most vulnerable.

Keira's death, as her mother said, could have been prevented if such measures had been put in place a long time ago, but I am very glad and grateful to be able to bring such a bill forward with the support of my colleagues and even the support of opposition parties. I believe that this is a huge step. As we are all aware, coercive control is not even part of the Criminal Code, so this acknowledgement will be a huge step forward in bringing justice for victims and complainants.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I too would like to congratulate my colleague on her bill. I hope it will get to committee as soon as possible. It is an excellent bill. I also want to thank her for her tribute to her colleague who was taken too soon. It was very moving and very much appreciated. The example she gave of the woman who had to hide was also very touching. Let us hope that this kind of thing never happens again. I believe her bill will be a step in the right direction.

Something is already being done about this in Quebec, which is following in the footsteps of France and Spain.

Can my colleague tell us what she knows about what is being done in Quebec and Europe to address this issue?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague. I very much appreciate his words and his support. He too is a man of dignity, so I thank him for everything he has said about the bill and his tribute to François L'Heureux.

I am really proud of what the province of Quebec has done. Quebec passed legislation on electronic monitoring bracelets last month. We need to learn from other countries as well. As we have seen, this type of approach has worked in other countries. These kinds of measures have helped reduce incidents of violence in Spain and Australia, for example.

I really look forward to getting this bill passed and working with all the provinces to improve the situation for victims.

● (1335)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for bringing forward this important legislation. I know she has stood in this place time and time again, advocating for the rights of those less fortunate, advocating for the rights of people who are victimized, and advocating for the rights of women and girls.

I have to say that I am proud to be a Canadian, because we have a feminist foreign policy that looks at the way we can support women and girls around the world. Looking at Canada's role here in Canada and also around the world, can the member tell us about other ways we could be protecting women and girls outside of our borders, outside of Canada?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her words and for her advocacy when it comes to the rights of women and girls. It is very important that these subjects always remain at the forefront.

Canada's foreign policy, and our government's policy, has always been to advocate for women's rights, not just here in Canada but all over the world. We will continue to do so.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle for introducing this bill. I want to thank her for her efforts to right a wrong in our court system with her bill that will ensure that we educate judges on domestic violence and coercive control and, most importantly, I want to tell her that she has the support of the member of Parliament for Thornhill and members on this side of the House.

I want to share the story of Keira. I want to share the story of her mother Jennifer, her stepfather Philip and her baby brother. I want to share the story of her family, of her friends and of her community. I want to share the story of Jenn and Phil's pleas for Keira's safety in the face of well-documented, known and proven coercive control and abuse in our court system.

Keira was a whip-smart, rambunctious and beautiful four-year-old whose family was from Thornhill and whose life was stolen by an angry father who killed himself and Keira just over two years ago. Keira should be playing with her friends. She should be making her parents proud. She should be protecting her little brother. This was entirely preventable. Keira should be seven years old. Instead, today, Keira is a statistic of a broken system that failed her. She is a court file number of those who did not know what they were looking for. She is anything but. She was a daughter, a granddaughter, a big sister, a friend and a neighbour. She was so many things. She was an entire world of light and her death was entirely preventable.

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I cannot begin to imagine the heartbreak and the pain of the Kagan family. Keira's mother Jenn and stepfather Phil, in addition to being busy parents, a busy doctor, and a busy lawyer respectively, both have become full-time advocates for changes to the court system to educate judges on domestic violence and coercive control. That is where this bill came from. While nothing will bring back their daughter, they are on the front lines of ensuring that what happened to Keira will never happen to another child in this country again. That is a tremendous responsibility.

For victims of domestic abuse, their struggle to protect themselves and their children is a petrifying reality. Parents place their trust and their faith in the family courts to provide child protection. They would likely believe that decision-makers in the system are making decisions from a place of knowledge and appropriate training. It should never have been up to Jenn and Phil to plead with judges to show them what they needed to see.

If someone wants to be an accredited mediator in this province, they have to do 21 hours of mandatory domestic violence training, which has to be updated every year for five years, but judges do not. If judges were properly trained in understanding what violent family situations looked like, if they knew what they were looking for, they would have been properly equipped to ensure Keira's life would have been saved.

Jenn's cry for action as a mother resonated in my community and in communities across the country. Jenn and Phil did the work and now it is up to members of this House to show them that their work and their courage to share their story will be the legacy of a painful journey they will always know. This was entirely preventable.

I speak to Keira's parents often. Even more often I speak with our mutual friends, friends whose children loved Keira. I want to leave colleagues with a sense of the impact of Keira's death on her friends.

Zach is seven years old. He said, "I really really miss Keira bad and hope she would be still alive now and I am really sad that she did die. She really liked to play with dogs. I liked to go on trips with her and go fun places with her and I liked to have meals with her and I liked to do a lot of things with her and I miss her every single day."

Ben, who is nine, said, "Keira was like a little cousin to me. She always acted like a little girl and a little boy at the same time, which was very cool. We would go swimming and do a lot of fun stuff. We would make lots of noise in the hallway of her condo. She was funny, crazy and fun. I really miss Keira."

• (1340)

Taylor is seven. She said she missed play dates with Keira and that she knows they would have been best friends. She asked if she could celebrate Keira's birthday, and she and her mother had an extra cupcake for Keira.

These are just a few of the quotes and stories from a whole community that has been affected by this. Children aged seven and nine should never have to cope with the death of one of their friends. This was entirely preventable. Keira should be seven years old.

There are so many Canadians who are currently experiencing domestic violence at the hands of a parent or at the hands of their partner. Domestic violence leaves scars. It breaks people. It silences them. Children are not just exposed to domestic violence. They experience it. Children who experience domestic violence have higher rates of mental health issues, anxiety, depression, panic attacks and eating disorders, and the list goes on.

Members of my party, for a long time before I was in this place, have supported recommendations on adding terms such as "coercive control" to the Criminal Code. I am sincerely grateful to see it in this bill today. However, I never thought that was enough. I believe this bill is a start to see that the injustice this little girl faced is never repeated. It is so the many other victims of domestic violence can see an outcome. We have the power in this place to change this.

While I support this bill, I also believe that imposing tough sentences on those who assault their spouse or partner is needed, while making it easier for victims to escape their abusers and rebuild their lives. Further amendments to the Criminal Code are needed so there is an aggravating factor in sentencing for assault. Mandatory minimum penalties of two years should also be imposed. I hope that this conversation is a start to the much-needed, broader reform to protect victims, victims like Keira.

I think members will remember that the Hon. Rona Ambrose introduced legislation in this House in 2017, which required judges to undergo training with respect to sexual assault cases. That legislation eventually became law, and so should this bill.

Yesterday, Keira's mother told me a story about an interaction she fondly remembered about her daughter. Jenn said jokingly that if Keira did not behave, she was going to take her back to the baby store. Without hesitation, the rambunctious four-year-old snapped back that she was going to bring her mom back to the grown-up store.

We should listen to Keira's retort carefully, because if we do not heed the warning right in front of us, if we relent on doing the right thing, if we allow domestic violence to go unchecked without using every single tool in the tool box to stop it, and if we let another child die senselessly, we should all be returned to the grown-up store. This was entirely preventable. Keira should be seven years old.

I will end with this because I believe that we can ensure that we have the tools in place so that it does not happen again. I think we can do that, and we should do it now.

There have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practices in the House, at the conclusion of the time provided for Private Members' Business today, C-233, An Act to amend the Criminal Code and the Judges Act (violence against an intimate partner) be deemed to have been read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

• (1345)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order, only because what is being asked here is somewhat unique. My understanding is that we are hoping to see, because of the unanimous support of the chamber, the bill pass out of second reading so it can go to committee.

I do not necessarily want to prejudge 338 members by saying that every member of the House is saying that. I just want to get clarification from the member. We are supportive of it going through and getting into committee.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The procedure is that there is a motion before the House. I will ask if there is unanimous consent and it will be determined by the response.

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

[Translation]

I hear none.

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

[English]

(Motion agreed to)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, as the Bloc Qu  b  cois critic for the status of women and the vice-chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I rise today to speak to Bill C-233, which amends the Criminal Code to require a justice, before making a release order in respect of an accused who is charged with an offence against their intimate partner, to consider whether it is desirable, in the interests of the safety and security of any person, to include as a condition of the order that the accused wear an electronic monitoring device.

The bill also amends the Judges Act to provide for continuing education seminars for judges on matters related to intimate partner violence and coercive control.

Since we just completed a study of this matter in committee and keeping in mind the progress that has been made on this sensitive issue in Quebec, I would like to make my modest contribution to this debate.

I want to begin by saying that the Bloc Qu  b  cois will vote in favour of Bill C-233. I am also very pleased to see that my committee will be able to examine this bill quickly.

I will start my speech by talking about what has already been voted on in Quebec, and then I will talk about the importance of educating all those who work with the victims. I will close by talking a bit more about coercive control.

First of all, the proposed amendments to the Criminal Code regarding electronic monitoring devices are in line with the legislation passed in Quebec. The National Assembly's Bill 24, which makes changes to Quebec's correctional system, provides for the power to require that an offender be connected to a device that al-

lows the offender's whereabouts to be known. This legislation came into force on March 18, 2022.

The use of anti-approach bracelets in this bill refers to cases involving serious sex offenders who have received a sentence of more than two years, to be served in a federal institution. That is what we are talking about today. Sentences under two years are served in institutions run by Quebec. The federal government had little choice but to follow suit, especially since electronic monitoring devices are already used in other countries, like Spain and France.

The Legault government announced the use of these devices as part of a package of 14 new measures intended to address intimate partner violence.

According to the findings of a study commissioned by Quebec's public safety department, anti-approach bracelets increase victims' sense of security and improve their quality of life. They reduce peace bond violations and increase offenders' compliance with treatment programs in the community.

On its own, an electronic monitoring device cannot reduce the incidence of intimate partner violence, although it is a promising tool. It must be used as part of a series of measures to help both the victims and the perpetrators of this violence. In no way must these devices be used as a justification to cut funding for other measures aimed at curbing intimate partner violence. These assistance and support measures are managed by the Government of Quebec, which must continue to receive the funding it needs to implement them.

This issue has also been raised by the Regroupement des maisons pour femmes victimes de violence conjugale, an association representing women's shelters. It pointed out that the use of these devices also affects the victim, since she needs to wear one as well so that authorities can keep track of her whereabouts and intervene if her abuser gets too close.

Although this device generally makes victims feel safer, it can also contribute to their feelings of hypervigilance. That is why these women must also be given access to specialized resources to support them throughout the process. This is yet another reason it is so important to maintain, if not increase, funding to combat intimate partner violence.

Regarding the importance of the device, Ms. Lemeltier cautioned that we must not think that intimate partner violence ends once the woman leaves the family home, because that is not true. The violence can morph into what is referred to as postseparation spousal abuse. It can manifest in many ways, including harassment on social media, maintaining financial control, withholding a woman's immigration documents or denying supervised right of access, which impacts children's safety.

This controlling behaviour continues and gets worse over time. The period after a separation is the most dangerous time for women and children. I also want to point out that the electronic monitoring device is only as reliable as the cell network that it uses. Network reliability and the vast territory that police forces have to cover, both in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada, can pose significant challenges for the implementation and use of such devices.

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Second, the proposed amendments to the Judges Act are in keeping with the Bloc Québécois's positions in that they help enhance the protection of complainants. The issue of victims' safety is crucial. This amendment would expand judges' education on sexual assault by adding a component on coercive control so they have a more in-depth understanding of intimate partner violence. It is reasonable to believe that a better understanding on the judges' part will improve the protection and safety of victims of intimate partner violence. That is something that I insisted on adding in our committee study.

• (1350)

I would again like to thank Myrabelle Poulin, an activist who taught me about the concept of coercive control, because violence is not always about hitting, but it always hurts.

My party welcomes any measure designed to increase the safety of victims of domestic violence. It also condemns any violence between intimate partners, the victims of which are most often women. We stand in solidarity against intimate partner violence and femicide, both of which have sadly and unacceptably increased during this pandemic. I would like to reiterate my condolences to the families of the many victims.

We also want an inquiry into how to prevent, eliminate and create a legislative framework for the form of family violence known as honour crimes. Furthermore, we demand that the federal government contribute financially to the Quebec government's efforts in the area of violence prevention. During the 2021 election campaign, the Bloc Québécois argued that funds for the fight against intimate partner violence should come from the Canada health transfers, which should immediately increase by \$28 billion.

This being National Volunteer Week, I want to acknowledge the work of organizations that use this funding, organizations like CALACS. Long-term investments will also enable the generational change that is crucial to fighting this fight. Sabrina Lemeltier, president of the Alliance des maisons d'hébergement de 2e étape pour femmes et enfants victimes de violence conjugale, also illustrated the importance of maintaining this funding when she spoke to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

In Quebec, just before the pandemic, the expert committee on support for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence released its report on rebuilding trust. The report is a heavyweight. It contains 190 bold recommendations that will finally result in the creation of the safety net. It talks about a continuum of services. It is extremely important to emphasize that victims need support every step of the way.

I want to take a moment to thank the MNA for Joliette, Véronique Hivon, who helped put together this all-party committee as well as the committee on the right to die with dignity, and who announced that she will not be running in Quebec's next election.

Court cases involving crimes of a sexual nature are heavily influenced by the training and abilities of judges. It goes without saying that continuing education for judges on matters related to sexual assault law could use some updating. The Bloc Québécois has unequivocally supported this type of initiative since the subject was first raised in the House in 2020.

The amendments to the Criminal Code and the Judges Act that have to do with continuing education for judges and that seek to increase public trust in the criminal justice system have the force of law. They came into force on May 6, 2021.

This bill also complies with a recent recommendation of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights. In its April 6, 2022, report entitled "The Shadow Pandemic: Stopping Coercive and Controlling Behaviour in Intimate Relationships", the committee recommends that "the federal government engage with provincial and territorial governments [as well as the Government of Quebec] and other relevant stakeholders to promote and fund a public awareness campaign on coercive and controlling behaviour, as well as training of judicial system actors, such as police, lawyers, and judges, about the dynamics of such behaviour. Training must be trauma-informed, integrate intersectional perspectives and be accompanied by tools and policies to support action on this issue."

At the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, Pamela Cross, a representative from Luke's Place Support and Resource Centre for Women and Children, reminded us that, "Until every actor in both the criminal and family legal systems has a fulsome understanding of the reality of violence in families, the prevalence of it, the fact that it doesn't end at separation, the fact that there are many fathers...who use the child, weaponize the child, to get back at their partner, we are going to continue to see shelters that are turning away 500 women and children a year and we are going to continue to see women and children being killed".

To wrap up, in light of Quebec's progressive step forward with the first pilot project establishing a court specializing in sexual violence and domestic violence, the Bloc Québécois can only be in favour of better and more comprehensive training for judges. We still have the impression that Quebec is one step ahead of Ottawa, but we welcome all new advancements that aim to provide better treatment and protection for victims of intimate partner violence, in order to help put an end to the terrible and all too numerous femicides. As a new mother to my little Naomie, I fully understand the rallying cry "not one more".

• (1355)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to stand today to share my thoughts on this very important piece of legislation. I would like to begin by thanking the member for Dorval—LaSalle—LaSalle for bringing it forward. This legislation should have come forward much sooner. The fact that we have it now is a testament to the work the member has done and a testament to her appreciation for, and efforts on behalf of, women in Canada.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my support for this piece of legislation. The New Democrats have always looked for ways to do more to support women, protect women and children from violence and intimate partner violence and support necessary reforms to the judicial system. The New Democrats will continue to advocate for more action and investment from the Liberal government to continue to eliminate gender-based violence. As the foreign affairs critic for the New Democratic Party, I will of course be pushing for additional funding, additional support and additional action to support women and girls outside of the country as well.

This bill is an important step forward. It is an important step that needed to be taken. It includes judicial reform and allows for better support for victims to protect them. I think all of us in this place need to think about how it must feel to live in coercive situations, to live in abusive situations and to live in that fear and trauma. It is very, very important that as parliamentarians and lawmakers we consider this in the work we do.

There can be no greater job for parliamentarians than to protect the lives of children and women in this country. I know that intimate partner violence is not solely done to women, but it is predominantly done to women. I think we can all agree that violence against women in this country is a crisis. It is a national crisis.

Prior to COVID-19, globally, one in three women experienced some sort of intimate partner violence. We know that intimate partner violence occurs in low-income households and that there is a higher incidence of it in indigenous homes. We know that COVID-19 has resulted in a surge in gender-based violence. During the first six months of 2021, 92 women and girls were killed in Canada. In recognition of this upsurge in violence, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women has recently undertaken a study on IPV.

I want to give members a little sense of the situation in Alberta as well. In Alberta, one in three Albertans will experience domestic violence in their lifetime, and the overwhelming majority of these victims are female. In Calgary, the Calgary-based Sagesse Domestic Violence Prevention Society had to expand its services, with demand increasing by more than 100% between 2019 and 2021. In fact, as Andrea Silverstone, the CEO of Sagesse, said:

After every natural disaster that we've seen in Alberta, whether it was the flood or the fires, the rates of domestic violence went up and they never went down again.

The effects of COVID on domestic violence and the rise in the numbers is going to continue for two to five years or even longer because there are issues of employment and economic stress that is also a contributing factor that we know is still ongoing and probably going to get worse before it gets better.

• (1400)

The number of victims of domestic violence was up 13.5% from 2019 to 2020, according to information provided by the Edmonton Police Service, and that is in Canada, but the increase that was caused during COVID is echoed around the world. We know that the impacts of COVID will be felt disproportionately by women and girls around the world.

I brought up earlier today that I am very proud of the fact that our country is one of the first countries to have a feminist international assistance policy. I am very proud that I was able to con-

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tribute to the building of that policy before I was a member of this place. I am looking forward to the day when the government tables and brings forward the feminist foreign policy. I think it is important, when we look at supporting women and girls around the world, that this is not a development issue but a diplomacy issue, a defence issue, and an issue where I cannot think of a single ministry within this government that does not need to have a feminist lens applied to it.

Some of the ways that we can do more to protect women and girls in Canada and around the world is to do things like have predictable and targeted funding made available to ensure that those resources are in place. A key thing we can do to protect women and girls in Canada is to look at those 231 calls for action from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls report.

We have seen the commission bring forward this road map for us. We have seen the commission outline exactly what needs to be done, and we could be doing those things right now. It would be additional support that we could do. However, that is not what the bill talks about. It talks about putting pieces in place that will provide that additional level of security for women who are experiencing violence from their intimate partners.

I think that everyone in the House agrees that this is an excellent step to take. We are all looking forward to bringing this to committee, to having the bill go forward and made into law. We can see by the unanimous consent that we saw earlier today that it is important for all of us.

Some of the things we also need to consider as we look at the bill before us and future bills to improve supports for women and girls are things like low-barrier housing, low-barrier shelters, so that more women can have shelter, find relief and be safe with their children against intimate partner violence.

We can ensure that there are better supports for the training of judges. The bill is an excellent step for training of judges, but we have seen it around this country where judges do not understand intimate partner violence, they do not understand coercion and they do not know how to deal with that when it comes in front of them.

We have a case in southern Alberta right now, in Lethbridge. This is an example of where a mother has not seen her child for over a year. They have been separated. The father, who was awarded custody, has not followed the law that was outlined and has not provided shared custody to the mother. This is despite the fact that he has been charged with seven pending offences, including possession of a weapon, death threats, criminal harassment and stalking. This is a situation where the Queen's Bench justice does not seem to feel that this man is a risk, and I think this education for judges is vitally important.

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I will conclude by once again thanking the member for bringing this piece of legislation forward. I was touched by her intervention earlier today, and I fully support what she has done to bring this forward. The NDP will be supporting this legislation. I also want to express my sympathy to all those for whom this bill did not come soon enough.

• (1405)

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today is a very special day as we begin debate on this important bill. Let me begin by thanking the MP for Dorval—Lachine—Lasalle for bringing forward Bill C-233 and for her passion and commitment to ending gender-based violence. I would also like to thank the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle and the member for York Centre for their support. Finally, I give special thanks to the Minister of Justice and his team for their empathetic work and advice on this critical issue.

Bill C-233 would enhance continuing education for judges on matters related to intimate partner violence and coercive control, as well as introduce into the Criminal Code electronic monitoring control.

The bill holds a special place in my heart because of a young girl, Keira Kagan. In fact, the bill has been called “Keira’s law” in her memory. Keira’s life was taken from her two years ago by her father in an act of revenge. I cannot imagine the pain that Keira’s mom Jennifer feels every single day, yet Jennifer has become an inspiring advocate for changes to the court system to educate judges on domestic violence and coercive control.

Children are not merely exposed to domestic violence; they experience it. In the worst case, children are killed by a violent parent. Keira’s father had a history of intimate partner violence, but the judge was dismissive of the abuse and still granted unsupervised access. Today, Keira is dead. This is a devastating example of the dire need for judicial education on intimate partner violence and its effect on children. In Keira’s case, the judge was a labour lawyer prior to being appointed to the bench. One would assume that judges presiding over cases like this would have specialized training or expertise, but that is not the case. In fact, no formal training is required in cases involving domestic violence and coercive control.

Darian Henderson-Bellman was a young woman from Halton Region who was killed by her violent ex-boyfriend in 2020. Darian’s murderer was under judicial interim release in connection with previous alleged domestic violence incidents. Darian’s death might have been prevented if a judge had decided to issue electronic monitoring control on her abuser when he was placed under judicial interim release.

Bill C-233 would introduce into the Criminal Code electronic monitoring control, in some cases at the judicial interim release phase, which is under section 515 of the Criminal Code. This mechanism would ensure to a greater extent the safety and security of intimate partner complainants and their children.

With Bill C-233, we want to grow a movement that goes beyond the federal government, sparking conversations across the country. In my riding of Oakville North—Burlington, Halton Women’s

Place has been a staunch advocate for Keira’s law and has been educating our region on the effects that coercive control and intimate partner violence have on children. Laurie Hepburn, executive director of Halton Women’s Place, and her team have been working with Women’s Shelters Canada to raise awareness, connecting with women’s shelters in all provinces, on the importance of Keira’s law.

A constituent of mine, Sonia Robinson, was so moved by Jennifer’s story that she created a petition calling on the House of Commons to pass Bill C-233. The petition has now garnered over 4,000 signatures. This is yet another example of the palpable effect that Jennifer and Keira’s story has had on Canadians. I urge everyone watching today to sign the petition, and I thank Sonia for her advocacy.

Recently, Burlington’s mayor, Marianne Meed Ward, learned of Keira’s law and brought a motion to Burlington’s council in support, which was passed unanimously. The same motion supporting the bill has been passed unanimously by the Halton regional council and the City of Vaughan, and I know other municipalities are actively working on motions of support.

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of Keira’s mother and stepfather, Dr. Jennifer Kagan and Philip Viater. Jennifer and Phil are devoting their lives to spreading awareness about coercive control and intimate partner violence and have made sure that Keira Kagan will always be remembered. Jennifer and Philip regularly meet with members of Parliament from across the country. Because of their work, I have been able to collaborate with my colleagues from across the floor on this important and non-partisan issue. I would especially like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and the chair of the status of women committee, the member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, for their help and support.

• (1410)

When I woke up this morning the sun was shining brighter than it has for weeks. I think that is Keira shining down on us, an angel whose legacy truly can change the world. We owe it to Keira, Jennifer and Philip to get this bill passed. By passing Bill C-233, Keira will truly be changing the world, something she always wanted to do.

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

[Translation]

The hon. member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle has five minutes for a right of reply if she wishes.

The hon. member.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would simply like to thank my colleagues from the bottom of my heart for the words I heard here today. I am deeply moved.

Private Members' Business

[English]

I have so much eternal gratitude to my colleagues for their heartfelt, compassionate and even empathetic words they used today in the chamber for this very important subject. I again thank Dr. Kagan and her husband, Maître Philip Viater, for their work and all the advocacy groups across Canada who have pushed for this legislation to become law. I am very humbled.

I do not have any more words. I am bursting with emotions. I thank everyone for everything they said today. They have my eternal gratitude.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made earlier today, Bill C-233 is deemed read a second time.

Accordingly, the bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

(Bill read the second time and referred to a committee)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 2:15 p.m., this House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:14 p.m.)

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