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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, May 9, 2022

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1100)

[*Translation*]

AN ACT RESPECTING THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ) moved that Bill C-238, An Act respecting the French language, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying that I am challenging myself. On Friday, I participated in a Mental Health Week activity. I went to the open house event at Ancres et Ailes in Ormstown.

An anglophone participant come up to say hello, to thank me and to thank the Bloc Québécois for everything it is fighting for in Ottawa. He was aware of my bill on the French language; he even spoke to me about the bill we are discussing today, Bill C-238. I was very touched by his remarks and the fact that he clearly understands the fight for French in Quebec. He understands our assertiveness, which is accompanied by a real respect for anglophone communities. He also understands that French is threatened and that when French is protected, it is never at the expense of English.

I know he is not the only anglophone who supports protecting French in Quebec. I am grateful to this individual who also told me that he enjoys listening to my speeches and gently pointed out that I gesticulate and move around too much while delivering them. He challenged me to dial it down a little, so today, for his sake, I am making an effort to restrain the way I express myself.

I would like to challenge my colleagues from other parties. I know that a language bill can elicit a lot of passionate debate. Nevertheless, I know that, here in the House, we are capable of speaking to and understanding one another, so I am reaching out to all my colleagues. I hope this debate will give us all an opportunity for reflection. I hope we will be able to move beyond the usual arguments.

I would hope that, if my colleagues are genuinely curious and open-minded about the language situation in Quebec, they will come to the same conclusion as the Bloc Québécois, the Govern-

ment of Quebec and all members of the National Assembly: Bill 101 must apply to federally regulated businesses. That is why Quebec must have the authority to choose its host language. That is the purpose of Bill C-238.

When I ask around, it is a given. The language of work in Quebec is French. It is not particularly revolutionary or controversial to say that, in Quebec, people work in French. The language of work is one of the cornerstones of Quebec's language policy. French in the workplace is the result of an intense struggle by the generation that came before me.

The first thing I want to point out to members of all parties is that not all workers in Quebec have the same rights. I have never heard anyone complain that too much French is spoken in their workplace. Still, Bill 101 and its language of work provisions apply in all workplaces: in hospitals, in the service industry, in factories, in small convenience stores, in grocery stores, in technology companies, in retail and so on. Life in the Quebec workplace happens in French.

The beauty of Bill 101 is that it requires all workplaces to use French, yes, but it does even more. Perhaps my colleagues are learning this for the first time, and I do hope they are listening, but Bill 101 does not prohibit the use of another language, as long as all the information is available in French. A business can operate in any language, as long as the equivalent information exists in French. That is the beauty of Quebec's language policy. It respects other languages. Everyone agrees that we can come together around French. To reiterate, as the law stipulates, we can work in any language, provided that the equivalent information exists in French. However, the common language is French.

• (1105)

Bill 101 has been in force since 1977. This summer we are celebrating its 45th anniversary. The fact remains that even though every workplace has adapted to the provisions of Bill 101 with respect to the language of work, only one sector is dragging its feet. All sectors have done their part. All sectors have done what needed to be done. There is just one sector missing: federally regulated businesses. I humbly submit to my colleagues that this fact should come as a surprise to them.

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All of my colleagues should wonder how it is possible that an SME or a restaurant is able to comply with Bill 101, but federally regulated businesses are resisting. How is it okay for these major businesses to fail to respect Quebecers' right to work in French?

For 45 years a worker who repairs the tracks in Les Coteaux, in my riding, has not had the same linguistic rights as his colleagues who work on the municipal roads, and that has been tolerated. For 45 years a financial officer at a bank in Salaberry-de-Valleyfield has not had the same linguistic rights as her colleague at a credit union, and that has been tolerated. For 45 years a technician at a telecommunications company has not had the same linguistic rights as the people he provides high-speed Internet to, and that has been tolerated.

I will say it again, and I am certain this is my colleagues' experience as well: I have never heard anyone tell me that the workforce in Quebec is becoming overly French. I wonder then what could possibly explain why we have tolerated for so long that there are two classes of workers in Quebec: those who have the right to work in French and the others, the federally regulated employees.

With its Bill 96, Quebec is going ahead with the reform of its Charter of the French Language. As I stated, Quebec already has a law that provides for the right to work in French for all Quebec workers. However, it has never been applied from the outset to federally regulated businesses.

To be very clear, the Government of Quebec moved an amendment to section 89 of the Charter of the French Language to clarify its intent to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses. The amendment was adopted unanimously. All parties in the National Assembly of Quebec voted in favour of this amendment. Therefore, it is the clear will of Quebec's parliament. In my view, the federal government should accept Quebecers' invitation to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses.

My colleagues will be pleased to hear that the Office québécois de la langue française is already prepared to apply the Charter of the French Language to federally regulated businesses. It will provide professional services to help businesses with the francization process. There are some very interesting initiatives being worked on right now, and these initiatives will continue to be implemented.

I am sure that major corporations, like Air Canada or CN, will appreciate the helpful advice from the team at the Office québécois de la langue française and will be able to gradually introduce respect for and promotion of the French fact at all levels within their company.

After all, the effective use of French ultimately benefits their employees and their French-speaking customers. In other words, Quebec has the political will to right a historical wrong, namely that federally regulated businesses have not been consistently subjected to Bill 101, and Quebec has professionals who are available and ready to help.

I know that the Minister of Official Languages has introduced a bill to reform the Official Languages Act.

I will briefly summarize our position on that: We believe that this bill has some merit for francophone communities outside Quebec.

These communities will determine whether the bill does enough. However, Bill C-13 would create two overlapping language regimes in Quebec.

Bill C-13 offers businesses a choice to apply either federal provisions or the Charter of the French Language.

• (1110)

Our analysis indicates that even a modernized federal regime is not the best tool for ensuring that Quebec workers have the right to work in French. It is actually not surprising that Air Canada told the Standing Committee on Official Languages that it wanted to remain subject to the federal language regime rather than be subject to Bill 101.

One has to wonder about Ottawa's sudden desire to legislate on the French language at a time when Quebec is specifically stating its intention to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses.

Let us not create legislative confusion between the Official Languages Act and Quebec's Charter of the French Language. Let us give every worker in Quebec the same rights. That is what Bill C-238 does.

My bill's second objective echoes the Bloc Québécois motion to recognize Quebec as a francophone nation. I want to reiterate that that motion was adopted by a strong majority in the House. The motion could have a number of practical implications. Given that language is central to the way Quebec thinks about immigration, I believe that Quebec has the right to make its own decisions regarding host language and integration.

Bill C-238 states that all permanent residents must have an adequate knowledge of French in order to obtain citizenship in Quebec. When I hear my colleagues in the House say that requiring knowledge of French as a criterion for permanent residents in Quebec is discriminatory, I am astounded, since Canada chose to recognize either French or English as a host language. This criterion reflects a legitimate societal choice.

However, when Quebec chooses its host language and language of integration and the Quebec government does everything in its power to help immigrants learn that language, all of a sudden it is an illegitimate choice. That is discriminatory, and, in my opinion, an entirely obsolete concept. Every nation in the world makes linguistic choices; that is normal. I am eager to see the Quebec nation have the right to what is normal.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work done by L'Insulaire, a French learning centre, La magie des mots and the Centre du Nouvel-Envol, which offer French and francization courses in my riding, much like the ones offered throughout Quebec. These francization courses are often paid for by the government, in other words, with Quebecers' tax dollars, or by employers.

In one factory in my riding, I met with Victor, a young welder from Mexico who works full time and then some. He was proud to speak with me in French about his plans for a life and a future in Quebec. Thanks to his work and his francization courses, Victor has French-speaking friends and works in French; his children have access to quality education in French.

I am truly touched when I see and meet with immigrant Quebecers who are learning French and love the language. In my opinion, Victor is a Quebec welder who is an asset for our community.

Bill C-238 will have no impact on the lives of people like Victor, who discovered the charm and beauty of the French language and immediately understood that learning French was key to actively participating in community life in Quebec. Bill C-238, with its provisions regarding the host language in Quebec, is simply intended to celebrate the French fact in North America.

Today, my goal was to create an opening and to share a little of my love for the French language with my colleagues, who, I am certain, will prove to be open.

I truly hope that this first hour of debate will give everyone an opportunity to reflect on the language issue in Quebec, and to become curious and inspired by Quebec's struggle to protect its national language, a struggle we must support. Who better than the Government of Quebec, the only francophone state in North America, to actively champion this cause?

Passing Bill C-238 will give Quebec more tools to give new life to the French fact. Let us not stand in the way of the Quebec government or the Quebec nation. Let us love French enough to protect it. Let us pass Bill C-238.

• (1115)

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît for her speech.

I agree with many of the things she said in her speech, in particular the fact that the two official languages do not have equal status and that French is in decline in Quebec. However, we need to concern ourselves with minority languages across Canada and not just in Quebec.

I would like her to clarify a few points. She said that asking immigrants to take a French test would not have an impact on immigration. She gave the example of Victor, a young man in her riding.

I wonder whether taking a French test will not hold back some immigrants. Afterwards, I would obviously like for these people to learn French.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Sherbrooke, a Quebec MP, for her question. Sherbrooke is a predominantly francophone city.

Personally, I do not see the French test as an obstacle, but rather as support we must provide for new immigrants. Sometimes people confuse the concepts of permanent resident and political refugee.

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Let us be clear: For someone who is already in Canada and wants to become a Canadian citizen, it takes at least two or three years of effort and integration. In my opinion, if we welcome and support immigrants before they obtain their citizenship, francization is possible.

I see evidence of this every day, since my riding is home to several factories that employ immigrants. These newcomers are currently learning French, and the community supports them in their efforts to learn and integrate.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît to know that we, Conservatives, will not argue with the Bloc Québécois.

I, too, love the French language. Several elements of Bill C-238 lead me to believe in a future for French in Canada.

In my colleague's opinion, is this the most effective way to stop the decline of French in Quebec and across Canada?

• (1120)

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, we are members of the House here in Ottawa.

As members, the best decision we can make to protect the French language and, especially, to respect the Quebec nation—Quebec has full jurisdiction over its language of integration—is to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses and to accept that Quebec will soon pass Bill 96, which also requires that Bill 101 apply to federally regulated businesses.

Since my Conservative colleague is also from Quebec, he is well aware that we want the federal government to respect the powers of Quebec's National Assembly. Given the statistics on the decline of the French language, especially in the greater Montreal area, The National Assembly decided that we needed stricter measures. This involves the federal government's agreement not to intervene and not to create two classes of workers in Quebec: those who are protected by the Official Languages Act and those who are protected by the application of Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît for her speech, and for having introduced Bill C-238.

Does she have any suggestions about how to improve access to French courses for new Quebecers who would like to learn or improve their French?

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, there are many community organizations dedicated to integrating newcomers into French society. In fact, I would like to acknowledge the work of Centre de français L'Insulaire and Centre du Nouvel-Envol, organizations in my riding. The school board also offers a complete range of francization classes.

My riding, which is 85% francophone, welcomes immigrants from the Philippines, Mexico and pretty much everywhere, and they learn French thanks to these community groups and the school board.

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If the bill passes, it will provide those who want to become Quebecers with a great opportunity to learn to speak French well. Our system is a good system.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to discuss Bill C-238 on the French language, sponsored by the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

This bill is similar to bills tabled in previous sittings of Parliament. In the 43rd Parliament, we had Bill C-223, which would have required that immigrants living in Quebec have an adequate knowledge of Quebec, as well as Bill C-254, which sought to apply Quebec's Charter of the French Language to federally regulated companies by amending the Official Languages Act, the Canada Labour Code and the Canada Business Corporations Act.

Bill C-238 essentially combines those two bills into one. We understand the Bloc's concern about the future of the French language, and we share that concern. As we acknowledged in the throne speech, the use of French is in decline throughout Quebec and across Canada. We have a responsibility to protect and promote French across Canada, including in Quebec.

Where we differ from the Bloc is in our response to this problem. In the last Parliament, the former minister of official languages tabled a document entitled "English and French: Towards a substantive equality of official languages in Canada", which laid out our government's vision for official languages reform, and Bill C-32, our modernization of the Official Languages Act.

Together, these two documents represented the most ambitious reform of the Official Languages Act since its passage more than 50 years ago. They acknowledged the challenges faced by the French language from coast to coast to coast, including in Quebec, and they recognized for the first time that our government has a duty to protect and promote the French language. However, during our consultations with stakeholders across Canada over the summer, during the election campaign and after the election, we kept hearing that we needed to do more.

That is why, on March 1, in Grand-Pré, Nova Scotia, which is an important historical site for our Acadian community, the current Minister of Official Languages, a proud Acadian herself, tabled Bill C-13, an act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act and to make related amendments to other acts. This bill is noteworthy because it shares similar objectives with Bill C-238, namely protecting and promoting the French language. However, it goes much further.

Bill C-13 broadens the historical scope of the former Bill C-32 by introducing even more protections for the French language. It ensures that francophones can work and receive services in their language, not only in Quebec, but in other regions of Canada with a strong francophone presence.

That is why our government will not support Bill C-238, because it does not protect and, by its very nature, cannot protect the French language and francophones from coast to coast to coast.

Let us compare the immigration provisions of Bill C-238 with those in our bill. In the preamble to Bill C-13, our government recognizes the importance of the contribution of francophone immigration to enhancing the vitality of French linguistic minority communities and that immigration is one of the factors that contributes to maintaining or increasing the demographic weight of those communities.

Moreover, our bill requires that the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship adopt a policy on francophone immigration in order to enhance the vitality of French linguistic minority communities in Canada. This policy is to include objectives, targets and indicators, as well as a statement that the federal government recognizes that immigration is one of the factors that contributes to maintaining or increasing the demographic weight of French linguistic minority communities in Canada.

• (1125)

This is in addition to the administrative measures set out in the reform paper, which instruct the Minister of Immigration to set up a new francophone immigration corridor, recognize the importance of recruiting and retaining French-speaking and French-language teachers and increase opportunities for newcomers to learn French. There is a shortage of French-language teachers in Canada, particularly outside Quebec, and we need these measures in order to meet our francophone immigration objectives and to nurture the next generation of French-speaking Canadians.

As for the other part of Bill C-238, the section dealing with federally regulated businesses such as banks and airlines, here again, Bill C-13 offers a more comprehensive solution.

Bill C-13 recognizes that Quebec has adopted the Charter of the French Language. In fact, it even creates a new law, the Use of French in Federally Regulated Private Businesses Act, which states that, in relation to communications with or services provided to consumers in Quebec or in relation to workplaces in Quebec, Quebec's Charter of the French Language applies instead of this bill if a federally regulated private business must be subject to the charter.

However, the Charter of the French Language does not protect francophones outside Quebec. As our government recognized in last year's reform paper, we have a duty to encourage federally regulated private businesses to promote the equal status of our two official languages in order to increase the use of French as a language of service and a language of work across the country.

That is what Bill C-13 does. We are making sure that Canadians have the right to work and be served in French in federally regulated private businesses in Quebec and other regions of Canada with a strong francophone presence. We require employers to communicate with their employees in French and prohibit discrimination against an employee solely because they speak only French or do not have adequate knowledge of a language other than French. We are also enacting legislation to ensure that consumers of goods and services have the right to be served in French.

These tools are necessary to support francophones across the country. That is what we are doing with Bill C-13, and Bill C-238 simply cannot do the same.

Once again, I would like to thank the member for Salaberry—Suroît for raising this extremely important issue. Like her, our government recognizes that the use of French is in decline across the country and that urgent action is needed not only to stop this decline, but also to reverse it and move toward a future where French grows stronger.

However, Bill C-238 does not and cannot do that. I hope that all members of the House will join us in passing Bill C-13 as quickly as possible so that we can meet the objective of protecting and promoting French from coast to coast to coast, including Quebec, for francophones across the country.

• (1130)

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I am speaking to Bill C-238, an act respecting the French language, which was introduced by the member for Salaberry—Suroît. I thank her for her work on this important piece of legislation.

Bill C-238 does several things. It amends the Canada Labour Code and certain provisions of the Official Languages Act and the Citizenship Act. It also makes a change to the Canada Business Corporations Act.

As I said in a recent speech in this place, the experts tell us that French is becoming increasingly precarious, even across government and this very government's ministerial offices. Action must be taken immediately and judiciously to achieve the desired effects. In deciding which legislative measures to adopt to protect French, we need to build on existing rights and official language modernization statutes and listen to what official language minority community leaders tell us.

As we know, recognizing official languages tops the list of our most fundamental rights in this country. According to subsection 16(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, “English and French are the official languages of Canada and have equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all institutions of the Parliament and government of Canada”. The charter guarantees that members of the public can communicate with and receive services from the federal government in the official language of their choice. There is no obligation to become bilingual under the charter.

We also need to bear in mind that Quebec has decided to modernize its own legislation to better protect the French language. We must salute the hard work of the members of the Quebec National

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Assembly who are about to vote on and pass Bill 96, an act respecting French, the official and common language of Quebec.

Bill C-238 has been introduced in a context that has not occurred in Canada for decades. Right now, provincial and federal language laws are being reviewed from top to bottom, including in Canada's only bilingual province, New Brunswick.

As I was saying earlier, Bill C-238 amends the Citizenship Act in order to ensure, among other things, that permanent residents who ordinarily reside in Quebec must have an adequate knowledge of French in order to obtain citizenship. I would remind the House that these changes to the Citizenship Act are the same as the ones proposed in another bill, Bill C-223, which the Conservatives supported at second reading before the last election.

In addition to the citizenship aspect, Bill C-238 also proposes amending the Canada Business Corporations Act so that “the name of a corporation that carries on business in the Province of Quebec shall meet the requirements of the *Charter of the French Language*”. This proposal needs to be analyzed in relation to what the Charter of the French Language already does in Quebec and especially in relation to the scope it will have once Bill 96 is passed.

Bill C-238 also proposes amending the Canada Labour Code by adding a new provision just after section 4, which stipulates that “any federal work, undertaking or business operating in Quebec is subject to the requirements of the *Charter of the French Language*”.

If this amendment is applied, will it be consistent with the rest of the federal legislation, including the new Charter of the French Language? That is the question. It is clear to me that federally regulated businesses in Quebec should not aim for the lowest common denominator. We do not want more of what is happening with Air Canada, CN and so on.

• (1135)

Bill C-238 also proposes amendments to the Official Languages Act to add an undertaking that the Official Languages Act will not obstruct the Charter of the French Language. Is the term “obstruct” sufficiently clear and precise? We certainly must ask ourselves how the new version of the Official Languages Act, which could be passed in a few weeks, will work with the Charter of the French Language in Quebec.

I also note that the measures in section 43 must be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the objectives of the Charter of the French Language. How will the courts rule if this provision is adopted?

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I agree with several of the underlying principles of this bill, in particular the vital importance of preserving the French language and stopping its decline. I believe that we all share legitimate and common concerns about making the Official Languages Act a modern, effective act that will achieve its objective of ensuring respect for French and English as the official languages of Canada.

Setting aside the objectives themselves, I believe it is important to point out that, as legislators, we must ascertain the optimal way of implementing these objectives to protect the French language and ensure respect for the official languages. I believe that it is important to keep in mind the progress of the work of the House. Bill C-238 is being introduced while Bill C-13, which seeks to amend many provisions of the Official Languages Act, is in the process of being passed.

Before I vote on this bill that was introduced not long ago, I plan to carefully go through all of the underlying details regarding the proposed measures. There are a number of angles to consider and I encourage all of my colleagues to do the same. Nicolas Poussin, a 17th-century French painter, once said that anything worth doing is worth doing well. As legislators, we must determine the best way to achieve our objectives. To better protect the French language, we need the best bills and therefore the best possible amendments, all working together as one to create an effective body of law that addresses the problems.

After studying Bill C-238, we will have to determine whether this bill provides all of the tools required to achieve the objectives that I described. I want my colleagues to have enough time to study this bill in depth. I will keep repeating that if we want our country's bilingualism to remain a unique and appealing feature, with English and French as our two official languages, we must act now to stop the decline of French. We must protect and promote French so that it can continue to develop.

• (1140)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in the House to talk about something that is so important for Quebecers, as well as for all francophones in Canada and North America.

I would like to thank my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît for introducing Bill C-238 and giving us the opportunity to have this vital discussion in the House of Commons.

From what I hear from my colleagues, I think that we are all concerned about the status of French, its place in Canada, the respect it receives, and making sure it is defended and promoted in Quebec and in the rest of Canada.

It is in this context that, during the last Parliament, the House unanimously adopted a motion recognizing the decline of French in Canada and Quebec. I remember it well, because I am the one who tabled the motion. I am very pleased to have personally contributed to this discussion so that, together, we can make an effort to ensure that French remains the common language in Quebec and that francophone minority communities are better protected and have access to cultural activities and the right to work in French.

The first part of Bill C-238, which we are debating today, is extremely important. The NDP has agreed with this principle for

years. Ever since the Sherbrooke declaration, we have wanted the principles enshrined in the Charter of the French Language to apply to federally regulated companies. It is a matter of equal rights for workers. It is also a matter of defending the French language. The right of these employees to work and communicate in French within their company is fundamental. That is why, for years now, under the leadership of Jack Layton, then Thomas Mulcair and now the hon. member for Burnaby South, the NDP has been advocating for employees working in federally regulated companies in Quebec, whether it be in air transportation, marine shipping or telecommunications, to have the same rights as other workers.

The current situation is completely absurd. If someone works for a credit union, they have the right to demand that their employment contract and communications with their employer be in French. That has always been the case, and there has never been a problem. However, someone who works for Royal Bank or the Bank of Montreal does not have the same right. This is a double standard, since all of these institutions are banks. The employees do not have the same rights or recourse, so we really need to find a solution.

That is why, for years now, the NDP has wholeheartedly agreed with the proposal set out in the first part of the member for Salaberry—Suroît's Bill C-238. In our opinion, it is very important. We support this goal and we want to see it achieved. We must avoid the fiascos we saw with Air Canada and Canadian National, as well as the attacks on French-language universities like Campus Saint-Jean in Alberta and Laurentian University in Ontario.

Whether through laws enacted by Quebec's National Assembly such as Bill 96, which our Conservative colleague mentioned earlier, a bill like the one presented in the House, or the proposal to modernize the Official Languages Act, we need to work together to fight the decline of the French language and ensure French is promoted and remains strong in Quebec and across the country.

Since we are talking about the situation of the French language, I will take this opportunity to express my concern about the use of certain indicators and send a message to my colleague, the hon. member for La Pointe-de-l'Île. I cannot raise this issue in the Standing Committee on Official Languages because we do not have enough time. I will therefore take the time now to say that I am very concerned about what I see as the abusive use of criteria and indicators of the first language and main language used at home. I do not find these indicators and criteria particularly revealing or even appropriate to describe the situation of the French language. Let me explain.

• (1145)

I find that the whole idea of Bill 96 is precisely to reduce the importance of the first-language indicator. Since we want children of immigrants to go to French school, their first language should not count and will count less and less. The more immigrants we host who are not francophone, the less valid this indicator is, since they must learn French in school and will then become francophone.

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With respect to the language used at home, in the Quebec nation, which is a nation of immigrants, children may continue to speak their parents' first language at home. That is okay, and it is normal. What is important is that French be the language used in the public arena and at work. That is my opinion and we can debate it, but I think that these criteria are much more important in a modern Quebec and an immigrant society.

I will give an example that my spouse will not like. My spouse is anglophone. Her second language is Armenian. Her third language is French. She works in French. She prepares communications. She writes in French. Therefore, based on the first-language criterion, she is not francophone, even if she works in French 99% of the time and interacts in the community with neighbours and in stores in French. If we look at the primary language used at home, when I am not at home, she speaks with the children in English so that they can learn English. Therefore, when I am not at home, she is not francophone, either. On the other hand, when I am at home, she is francophone because we speak French.

Is this an exceptional case? No. I have four employees, two of whom are in exactly the same situation. One is Colombian, and the other Italian. Their first language is not French, the primary language they use at home is not French, but they work and function in Quebec society in French. We need to be careful with these indicators. I think that we should choose them carefully to get an accurate picture.

The problem with the bill before us today is in the second part, which states that all immigrants must take a French test to obtain citizenship. It is important to note that Quebec already controls economic immigration and that the number of points granted for knowledge of French significantly favours francophones. That is great for people who want to come work and settle in Quebec and build Quebec society with the rest of us. For economic immigration, we essentially have all the tools we need. The National Assembly and successive Quebec governments have found ways to prioritize francophones who already speak French.

Where federal jurisdiction over immigration comes into play is with family reunification and refugees. As a progressive party, the NDP considers the French test requirement for people arriving here under family reunification and refugee provisions to be unreasonable. Their personal situations are so different that their access to citizenship should not be delayed just because they do not speak French. Delaying access to citizenship also means delaying access to voting rights and participation in our society's democratic life. That worries me, and I do not think this is the best available tool. There are many other things that could be done rather than imposing this on refugees who come here because they are fleeing war and trying to save their lives.

The second problem with requiring knowledge of French for citizenship is that this bill does not take interprovincial migration into account. Someone who does not speak French and does not want to do the French test in Quebec to obtain citizenship can just go to New Brunswick or Ontario, do their test there, get their citizenship and then move to Quebec, so this idea will not really work. I think the idea is fine, but not very practical.

• (1150)

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-238, which was introduced by a member of the Bloc Québécois, includes two proposals on which there is broad consensus in Quebec.

The first part of the bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act to ensure that permanent residents who reside in Quebec have an adequate knowledge of French in order to obtain citizenship. Under the current legislation, Canada requires knowledge of English or French. Accordingly, a person can get their citizenship and settle in Quebec without knowing how to speak French. Quebec thinks it is only reasonable for people to have a knowledge of its only official language before being granted citizenship.

What my colleague fails to grasp is that people who arrive under the family reunification program will be here for several years before they apply for citizenship. I therefore do not see why we would not encourage them to learn French. That is what the current Quebec government wanted to do in another way by requiring people to pass a French test in order to obtain permanent resident status.

A survey showed that three-quarters of Quebecers believe that the francization of immigrants is vital to the future of Quebec and that a basic knowledge of French should be mandatory in order to live in Quebec.

The first time the Bloc introduced a bill to this effect, it was simply rejected. It was deemed unconstitutional and therefore non-votable, even though the parliamentary law clerks disagreed. We were more or less told that taking measures to integrate immigrants into francophone Quebec was unconstitutional.

We introduced the bill a second time in 2021. This time, it was not declared unconstitutional, but it was defeated because it did not receive the support of the Liberals or the NDP. The only NDP member from Quebec told us that it was a divisive measure that excluded new immigrants. The odd thing is that no one ever says that requiring English is a divisive measure that excludes new immigrants. Our measure is actually the opposite of divisive. The best way to include new immigrants and form a cohesive society is to make sure that they know Quebec's official and common language.

The second part of our bill seeks to apply the Charter of the French Language to federally regulated businesses. This measure has widespread support in Quebec, having been endorsed by all the former premiers, the big city mayors and the major unions. It was the subject of a unanimous motion in Quebec's National Assembly.

Private Members' Business

The Bloc Québécois has introduced multiple bills to this effect since 2009. The most recent attempt was my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou's bill during the last Parliament. That is the time we came closest to success. The bill passed second reading after receiving the support of all parties except the Liberals. It then died on the Order Paper, because the Liberal Prime Minister called an election. There is still a legal vacuum, meaning federally regulated private businesses are not subject to any regulations.

Through its reform of Bill 101, the Quebec government intends to apply the Charter of the French Language to all companies in Quebec, including federally regulated businesses. However, the Liberal government wants to stop it by making Bill 101 optional, so that companies get to choose between Bill 101 and the federal Official Languages Act.

The Quebec minister responsible for Canadian relations and the Canadian francophonie, who is usually very discreet, even told the federal government to keep its hands off when it comes to Quebec.

When Air Canada representatives appeared before the Standing Committee on Official Languages, they were asked this question and were quick to say that they prefer to be subject to the Official Languages Act.

The Liberals tell us that their new bill modernizing the federal law uses Bill 101 as a model for the Official Languages Act in terms of federally regulated businesses. This is not true. Canada's language law and Bill 101 are based on very different and contrary approaches. Canada's language law, the Official Languages Act, is based on an approach that does not aim to strengthen French in Quebec, but rather to strengthen English-language services and the anglophone community in Quebec.

• (1155)

It is based on what language planning experts around the world call the personality principle, that is, a policy of institutional bilingualism based on individual rights, on the right to choose one official language or the other, that is, English in Quebec.

Throughout the world, it has been noted that this model of language policy allows the stronger language to develop to the detriment of the more vulnerable one. This can be seen in the assimilation rates of francophones outside Quebec, which increase with each census.

The other major approach to language planning is based on collective and territorial rights. It aims to establish an official and common language in a given territory. This is the approach of territorial bilingualism or multilingualism used in Belgium or Switzerland, for example. These are the models that André Laurendeau, who first suggested the Laurendeau-Dunton commission, referred to. Guillaume Rousseau, a lawyer from Quebec who specializes in language law, said that "virtually all language policy experts around the world believe that only a territoriality-based approach can guarantee the survival and development of a minority language".

The Charter of the French Language is based mainly on this approach, although it has been considerably weakened by legal challenges funded by the federal government and decisions handed down by the federal courts under the Constitution Act, 1982, which

imposed the principles of the federal law despite the fact that no Quebec government has ever ratified them.

Bill 101 sought to make French the common language in the workplace, whereas the Official Languages Act gives people the right to work in French or in English. It strengthens bilingualism rather than the French language. For example, Bill 101 protects Quebec workers from reprisals or sanctions if they speak only French. The new federal law includes similar measures with fewer remedies and less effectiveness, but it also protects anglophones who wish to continue working in English in Quebec at federally regulated businesses.

Bill 101 imposes the predominance of French in signage. It seeks to generalize the use of French at every level of the business. There is nothing of the sort in the new Official Languages Act proposed by the Liberals. Their bill does not give French predominance as the language of work, the language of communication with consumers, or the language of signage.

The decline of French in Canada and Quebec is increasingly worrisome. For example, language transfers for allophones are typically toward English. For years, my NDP colleague has been advancing the wrong-headed argument that indicators such as mother tongue and language used at home are unimportant, when every demographer agrees that they are in fact extremely important. They do not exclude anyone; they are linguistic indicators. When used properly, the linguistic indicators, even those relating to language of work and the common language, all point in the same direction. It is a false argument.

As I said, the decline of French in Canada and Quebec is increasingly worrisome. According to Statistics Canada, by 2036, the relative weight of Quebec's French-mother-tongue population could have dropped to 69%, and the weight of Quebecers who speak French most often at home could have dropped to 73.6%. This means that there will also be a decline in French as the language of work. Quebec has its back to the wall. We cannot go back any farther. What happens to our bill will say a lot about the future of French in Quebec and Canada.

For 52 years, or since always, actually, the biggest adversary of French as the common and official language of Quebec has been the Canadian government. For the first time, the federal government has admitted the obvious: that French is in decline and that the government has a responsibility to promote French across Canada, including in Quebec. Is this just more smoke and mirrors from the Liberals to try to win a few more francophone votes in Quebec?

That seems to be the explanation, because, as we saw, they are not changing their position. They are still against applying Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses. The two measures in our bill will certainly not solve everything, but they will respond to what Quebec is looking for.

• (1200)

In conclusion, if no changes are made to the Official Languages Act, Quebecers will have to once again ask themselves a critical question that is becoming more and more real: Is the choice between assimilation and an independent Quebec?

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before we resume debate, I will advise the hon. member that, unfortunately, I will have to interrupt him at one point.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened attentively to members talk about what is no doubt a very important issue.

I think of Canada and our great diversity. No matter where I have been in the world, I often boast about Canada's diversity, and a part of that diversity, the founding of our nation, is the fact that we are a bilingual nation. We are a nation that supports, from a federal perspective, English and French.

When I reflect on the province of Manitoba today, and compare it to the early 1970s, before Pierre Trudeau brought in such a heavy emphasis on learning French in our school system, Manitoba has benefited by having a national government that wants to recognize the importance of the French language and ensure that Canadians from coast to coast learn more French.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

CONDUCT OF THE MEMBER FOR BRAMPTON CENTRE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, it does not give me any pleasure, but I am arising on a question of privilege concerning an occurrence of misconduct that happened in the House of Commons late Friday afternoon by a member of the Liberal Party.

As it would happen, I had just left the chamber about 10 minutes prior, as I had to hit the road to make an important engagement in Barrie—Innisfil on Friday evening, so I am raising this at my earliest opportunity.

The facts are these: The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake rose on a point of order to inquire whether the Liberal member for Brampton Centre was participating virtually from an inappropriate location. A brief discussion arose, and at its conclusion the Assistant Deputy Speaker confirmed this to the House, which is documented at page 4931 of the Debates, when she said, “I have confirmation from the Table that a page has confirmed that there was a member who appeared to be in the washroom.”

I have subsequently been informed that those who witnessed the events saw quite clearly the Liberal MP enter what appeared to be a toilet stall in one of the men's washrooms located on this very floor of this building. The visible stonework, the wooden door, the stainless steel door hinges and the coat hook on the back of the door, which is part of the long side of the stall, looked quite familiar to

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all, I am told. Based on the angle, I am informed that it appeared that the camera was mounted on the ledge or ridge on the wall just above the back of the toilet. The member of Parliament was literally using the washroom while participating in a sitting of the House of Commons, the cathedral of Canadian democracy. I cannot believe I actually just said those words.

You might think that this is an unprecedented situation, but sadly and unbelievably, it is not. In fact, there is a recent precedent that is practically identical. The former member for Pontiac Will Amos also used the washroom on camera during a sitting of the House just last May. In his case, he urinated into a coffee cup for all to see.

The Chair ruled on June 7, 2021, at page 8034 of the Debates, that this was a *prima facie* contempt and invited my colleague, the hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London, to move a motion to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs. The committee did not have the opportunity to take up the matter and report its reflections on what was then an unprecedented situation during the two sitting weeks between the ruling and the dissolution of Parliament. In light of Mr. Amos's subsequent retirement, the matter was not pursued further in the current Parliament.

The Chair's words in making last spring's ruling are, I think, equally pertinent today. He said:

The Chair has on many occasions reminded members that virtual sessions are an extension of the proceedings of the House and that their conduct must respect our rules and practices, even if they are participating remotely. I want to reiterate, yet again, the importance of everyone adjusting to the temporary measures put in place in response to the pandemic and exercising continued vigilance to prevent such incidents from recurring. As soon as a member connects to a virtual sitting and opens their camera, they are considered to be, for all intents and purposes, in the House.

There is no dispute about the facts in question, and they constitute a serious breach of the rules of decorum and an affront against the dignity of the House. *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states, at page 60, “Any conduct which offends the authority or dignity of the House...is referred to as a contempt of the House.”

Frankly, we have now had two years of Zoom meetings in a hybrid Parliament. Surely to God we have figured out when and where to turn our cameras on and off. It is the Liberal Party, the party that keeps shoving hybrid procedures down our throats, that cannot seem to get its act together.

On Friday, the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader did not react with the shock and contrition that one might naturally expect in this situation. Instead, he tried to present this as a positive thing when he said:

When people are in their offices, working virtually, sometimes it can be very easy to shy away from the camera to do something else, much like we might shift over a couple of seats. I believe the most important thing is that members have the camera on and are in the room.

I cannot believe that. The most important thing is that the member for Brampton Centre's camera was on and he was in the shot. The room in question was a toilet stall, for crying out loud. The Liberals simply do not get it.

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• (1205)

If you ask me, given the blatant disrespect the Liberals have shown Parliament over the past couple of years, from playing games with the resources available for committees to posing grave health risks for our dwindling ranks of simultaneous interpreters, to quite literally urinating in the House, the answer here is to shut down the hybrid parliament and end this remote participation. It is time we all get back here, in our places in this chamber. On top of the disrespect shown to the House, there is also the matter of the potential consequential effects here on Parliament Hill.

Under the Canada Labour Code, each of us is required to have an occupational health and safety officer. My health and safety officer has impressed upon me some very legitimate concerns that, when entering any given washroom in the West Block, parliamentary staff now have to wonder whether any of the MPs they may encounter, Liberal in this case, are carrying an active video camera connected to a live, televised broadcast.

Government Motion No. 11 has already put enough burdens and strain on all the staff of this place, who support the functions of the House. The last thing we need is now to add the stress that their privacy might be compromised by some Liberal MP desperate not to incur the wrath of the chief government whip by not contributing to quorum, at least until 6:30 when Motion No. 11 lets them go have patio drinks down on Sparks Street with their coalition partners in the NDP, while the rest of us are here carrying on the nation's business.

In conclusion, just like last year, there is no dispute about the facts in question. They were, as I said, confirmed by the chair occupant, the Assistant Deputy Speaker, on Friday afternoon. A clearly relevant, precisely on point and well-remembered precedent is on our books. This case, I believe, is open and shut.

Therefore, if you agree that this incident amounts to a *prima facie* contempt, I am prepared to move the following motion, "That the *prima facie* contempt concerning the misconduct of the member for Brampton Centre committed in the presence of the House be referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs."

That motion is, in fact, identical to the one the Speaker allowed on June 7, 2021, with, of course, the substitution of the riding name for the offending Liberal member of Parliament.

On the strength of undisputed facts and a clear precedent, I invite you to rule now from the chair, so that the House may pronounce itself on the disappointing and contemptuous conduct of yet another Liberal MP.

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the additional information that was provided on this particular matter. I, as Assistant Deputy Speaker, was not in the chair on Friday and, therefore, am not prepared to rule immediately. What I will do, though, is to take the additional information the hon. member has provided into consideration along with the info to the point that was raised on Friday.

In addition, I would like to remind all members that, when they join virtually, they are, in fact, always considered to be in the room.

When I am, in particular, sitting in this chair, there is always someone who is probably unaware that their screen is right in front of me. I want to remind members to be extremely respectful of Parliament. As well, members should ensure that, if they need to leave their screens for whatever reason or have an interruption that they need to tend to, they should make sure they log off or ensure that their screens are completely off.

I am deeply concerned by this matter, given the fact that there have been other incidents in the past. It is certainly something that the chair occupants and the Speaker himself will take into consideration and come back to the House with a ruling on.

[Translation]

ALLEGED INTERFERENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE WORK OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to respond to the question of privilege raised by the member for Simcoe—Grey on May 5, 2022. In our view, it is deeply concerning.

The email discussions referred to by the member do indeed amount to interference by the executive in parliamentary work that is the sole responsibility of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. There was an email chain concerning the preparation of drafting instructions for a report on a study the committee has been conducting on differential outcomes in Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada decisions.

In our view, it is deeply concerning that the chair communicated with employees of the executive branch to receive guidance on how the committee report should be drafted by non-partisan analysts, who must be impartial and independent in their professional duties.

However, contrary to what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons alleged last Friday on the matter, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration and the Privy Council Office could in fact be trying to interfere with the work of the committee in this situation.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government said that the email chains make it clear that the advice from the minister's office was to suggest an approach to the drafting of the report to ensure that the government's position was understood by the Liberal members on the committee. The very fact that ministers are suggesting how parliamentary committee reports should be drafted is what is troubling and disturbing.

I remind members that the committee is required to be completely independent from the government and that it is meant to monitor what the department and the government are doing. It is rather ironic that the department and the Privy Council Office can give opinions on certain findings and recommendations that could cause embarrassment for the government. The House recognizes that the government must not see a draft committee report before it is approved by the committee members. That said, the committee and committee staff cannot be instructed by the federal public service, cabinet or the government. We understand how this might not be viewed as a breach of a specific privilege.

However, according to Bosc and Gagnon in *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, beginning at page 81, “any action which...tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions...or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House” may be found as a contempt of Parliament.

It is up to the House itself to consider any misconduct as contempt and to deal with the situation as it sees fit.

In this case, the email chains informing the immigration minister's office of the committee's work and the replies from his staff giving instructions raise concerns about the independence of the House in managing its own business.

We must not forget that, initially, as the member for Simcoe—Grey mentioned in referring to Bosc and Gagnon at page 62, parliamentary privileges were considered and established “to protect the House and its Members...from the power and interference of the King and the House of Lords”.

It is important to remember that the House must oppose any attempt or action by the government suggesting interference in the work of parliamentary committees, which must remain independent in accordance with their mandate.

The Bloc Québécois believes that the facts raised require the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs to be mandated by the House to conduct a broader study on the real or potential issues of government interference in the reports of parliamentary committees.

• (1215)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît for elaborating on the question of privilege. This issue has been raised before. We will examine the additional information provided by the member today and get back to the House with a ruling.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

BILL C-19—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That, in relation to Bill C-19, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, not more than one further sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of

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the bill; and that, 15 minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at second reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and, in turn, every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill shall be put forthwith and successively, without further debate or amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

[Translation]

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

[English]

Questions and comments, the hon. opposition House leader.

• (1220)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am not quite surprised by this. The only thing surprising me is that the motion was not seconded by the NDP House leader.

This is just amazing to me. This is a government that argued with its coalition partners in the NDP about Motion No. 11. What Motion No. 11 was going to do was expand the time, give more opportunities for members to speak by expanding the hours, and yet, with just two and a half days of debate, the government moved time allocation on an important piece of legislation, doing the exact opposite of what it argued Motion No. 11 was going to do.

Before the Liberals spare us the false indignation of obstruction, in fact what the government is doing is utilizing this motion to obstruct members of Parliament from doing their job, which is providing oversight and scrutiny on important pieces of legislation. Therefore, it is not surprising to me that we are at this point. I know the opposition House leader is going to go on about Friday and about the movement of a motion to committee, splitting up a bill. We called a vote. There was no reason for Bill C-19 not to be debated, except the filibuster by the government.

My question is a simple one. Is it not true that the government House leader and the Prime Minister, in fact, because of this tag-team partnership with the NDP, actually have exactly what they want and need in this Parliament, and that is an audience, not an opposition?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I do not know what forces drove the member opposite to come to office and to be in this chamber. I know him well enough to know that he is a good and honourable individual who has good intentions for this place. However, I cannot imagine that his desire when he came here was to basically, day after day, obstruct the business of the House. If the member opposite and his party really wanted more debate, I would think they would not move concurrence motions every day.

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The fact of the matter is that we tried, with Bill C-8, to engage the party opposite over more than four months, every day over four months asking how many more speakers the Conservatives wanted. What we ended up seeing was that they had no interest in debate. What they had interest in was obstruction.

In fact, if we take a look at what we are dealing with in front of us here today, in only two days of debate the Conservatives have proposed an amendment that would not even allow the budget implementation act to be scrutinized, which is an integral role of the parliamentary process. They used motions of concurrence for two House reports to delay and obstruct debate in the House. They put forward subamendments to create further delays. What they have done all through this process is show that they have no interest. They basically want to hijack, as one party, the entire Parliament and not allow it to function, and then they are surprised that we would object to this.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the official opposition House leader that he had an opportunity to ask a question, and if he has more, there will be an opportunity to ask more. It is not polite to interrupt the government House leader while he is responding.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Salaberry—Suroît.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I knew that this time allocation motion was coming, but I did not think it would be moved so soon. It is important for people to know that we have not yet even had five hours of debate on Bill C-19, which is a big bill with numerous measures. Many sectors have been calling us after seeing the budget. We need to debate this big, important bill, and five hours is not enough time.

I am surprised because I think this demonstrates carelessness and contempt on the part of the government. The Liberals are saying that we have debated this long enough, and they are eager for the bill to be passed. We, too, are eager for it to pass, but debating bills is part of our job. I am therefore very surprised, and even appalled, that this motion was moved today when I was not expecting it until later.

I think that is an exaggeration. I think the government is counting on its tacit agreement with the NDP to prevent meaningful and thorough debate, especially in the case of Bill C-19. This is not a small bill; it is 452 pages long and the Standing Committee on Finance has already begun its study.

This is not a question, but I will say to my colleague that it is a bit discouraging to see that the leader continues to be contemptuous of the legislative work that we have to do here in the House.

• (1225)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, it is very important to have debate in the House. At every stage of a bill, it is important to have time to ask questions and seek information.

In the case of Bill C-19, time is allocated in the House, but also during the committee stage. Then the bill will come back to the House. Therefore there will be many opportunities to talk about this

bill and ask questions, and I encourage members on the other side to participate at every stage.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, over the last couple of months we have seen a total blocking of important legislation by the Conservatives.

Teachers and farmers were basically being stopped from getting the important measures that were in Bill C-8, and that continued on for months. Now we have the budget implementation bill, which does a number of things that the NDP has pushed the government to put into place, including the first stage of national dental care. Thousands of people in the official opposition House leader's riding, Barrie—Innisfil, would benefit from that, and yet the Conservatives do not want to let it go through.

We have not seen any real, substantive action by the federal government on affordable housing for decades, and now, finally, in the budget implementation bill and in the budget this year, because of the confidence and supply agreement with the NDP, we are seeing tens of thousands of affordable housing units that could be built, including in Barrie—Innisfil. Right across the country people could benefit.

Why does my colleague, the government House leader, feel the Conservatives have been blocking everything? Why have the Conservatives disrupted every single Routine Proceedings now for almost two weeks, and why are they being so stubborn about refusing to allow important legislation to get through the House, legislation that would help people?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, my colleague opposite enumerates a number of things that are exceptionally important within this bill, things that we need to make progress on and that Canadians expect us to make progress on.

Frankly, I am confused. I have tried with the official opposition on numerous occasions to find opportunities, to find out how many speakers they want and to work with them, and it has just come back with no level of co-operation whatsoever. I look at this bill as a case in point. Conservatives say they want to have more debate, and yet they move concurrence motions that kill debate. It means that less debate occurs.

At some point, I would say that obstruction could be a temporary tool and on that basis could be called strategy, but if the only gear they have is obstruction, that is not really a strategy; it is just obstinance. I am really confused as to its aim.

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Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to start by noting that I have supported time allocation motions in the past and we had a sufficient number of speakers. I will also mention, on the point by the government House leader, that I have been similarly concerned by some of the motions for concurrence we have seen here over the past week. That being said, my understanding is that we have had 11 speakers so far on Bill C-19 at second reading, out of 338 members in this place. This is a substantial piece of legislation. As we have heard from the Bloc, there are 452 pages.

How can we ensure that sufficient debate is provided? If the government House leader is concerned with some tactics from opposition parties, why is the response to those tactics to further erode the quality of debate that we can have in this place?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the reality is that there is lots of opportunity. We are talking about five days. Unfortunately, all of the obstruction and concurrence motions by the Conservatives have vastly reduced the amount of debate that is available, and I recognize that.

I am sure the member would be sympathetic to the fact that as we are trying to take action on climate change, increase our economic outcomes and take action on housing, there are a lot of bills, and all of this obstruction means that there is an enormous backlog. Canadians would rightfully expect that this Parliament, in its majority representation from many different parts of the country and certainly different parties, would take action on those items. It would not sit idly by, allowing one party to hijack the House and stick it in mud period after period.

I am hopeful that the Conservatives will rethink this strategy. I do not think it would resonate with Canadians. I cannot imagine Conservatives going to the doors and saying they had great news: that, day after day, they had stuck everything in the mud and not let Parliament do anything. I do not think that is a very effective message for them to take to the doors.

Instead, I would say members should work creatively with us. The committee stage is coming up after this, and the bill has to return to the House. There are multiple phases where they could participate. Hopefully they will do so constructively, but that has not been the case so far.

• (1230)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Here are the facts, Madam Speaker. Two concurrence motions have been moved: one on fisheries and one on ethics. There was an important issue with respect to fisheries coming out of committee and, of course, important issues as they relate to the scandalous behaviour of the government on ethics.

Bill C-8 was introduced December 16, and we had 10 weeks when the House was not sitting. What did the Liberals expect for the fall economic statement, when we are not going to have debate on this?

The other thing we are seeing is that before the coalition agreement with the NDP, the NDP sided with the government 89% of the time on votes. Since that coalition agreement, it has sided with the government 95% of the time. It is not surprising to me that I am

hearing the NDP House leader parroting the talking points of the government.

The fact is that we are seeing a decline in democracy. This is the government's attempt to seize complete control over this place on important legislation, such as Bill C-19, when members have the right to speak and members have the right to move motions. We have those rights because these are important issues to Canadians.

Will the government House leader just admit that he is contributing to a further decline in democracy in this country, and that Canadians did not vote for a coalition agreement between the NDP and the Liberals? They actually voted for an effective opposition, including the Conservative Party, which, by the way, is the official opposition: Her Majesty's loyal opposition. We will continue to do our job, despite the fact that the government does not want us to do it.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I can only reflect that, unfortunately, in all of the conversations I have had with the opposition House leader, there just has not been any interest in engaging to talk about the calendar or moving things forward. Every time we talk, it is more obfuscation. That is disappointing to me, because I have to say that I was hoping for more and I continue to hope for more.

It is important to reflect on two things. One, I was here in opposition. It is a little difficult for me to listen to the Conservative Party, which used time allocation not as a tool, but as a hammer to hammer the opposition every day that it was there. It literally created a playbook 200 pages long talking about how to control committees and shut them down, and telling its members exactly how to puppeteer all of these committees: to object now, after four months of blocking any government legislation from moving forward; to object now, when we have all of these important issues for Canadians that are expected to be dealt with; and to object now, when we are utilizing these tools so that this place can get its business done.

The Conservatives represent only a small fraction of the members in the House. They do not have the right to hijack all of Parliament. If they were to win a majority government, they could go back to using a cudgel to hammer the opposition and ram things through and not allow debate, as they did before. They could do that.

They do not have a majority. We do not have a majority. We are attempting to work with other parties. I would say to the party members opposite that if they want to be constructive, and if they want to get things done and if they do not want to spend the next three years simply blocking everything that moves, they should talk to us. We want to work with them to move things forward.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if the government House leader could provide his thoughts on the fact that we have a legislative agenda, which incorporates the changing of laws, and we have budgetary measures. It is a government agenda that does ultimately need to get through. There is nothing wrong with opposition parties critiquing it and offering amendments: changes and so forth. I am not in opposition to that. It is the official opposition's attempt to frustrate all things in all ways; for example, on Bill C-8.

Could he provide his thoughts on Bill C-8, which was the fall economic statement? It ultimately passed the House after the budget was released, a couple of weeks back. The Conservatives did that through frustrating, filibustering and concurrence reports. They even attempted to adjourn the House. They had different ways to prevent the bill from being debated. I am referring to Bill C-8.

Can he provide his thoughts in regard to Bill C-8?

• (1235)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, after more than four months of dealing with Bill C-8, which was dealing with the previous fall, it became apparent that we would be lucky to get to the coming fall if we had not used measures to move it forward.

There were critical supports there for teachers and for workers. Similarly, regarding the budget implementation act, it is not just that there are important measures in it to be taken on everything from housing, to banning foreign investment, to labour mobility and reducing, by half, corporate and small business tax breaks. There are so many things that are essential here. It is everything that also flows behind it. We have a responsibility to that.

I would say that at the onset of my time as House leader, going back to December, the Conservatives came forward with good proposals on Bill C-3, and we were able to work together. We had an opportunity when they came forward on Bill C-4 to move it forward because we recognized it.

We are in a minority government, and how we comport ourselves is a choice for each of us. As the government House leader, I recognize the minority status that we are in and that we are going to be in the House for a period of time. I would imagine that Conservative MPs want to do some things here and want to get some things done.

I can imagine that standing up every day on dilatory motions and obfuscating has to get pretty old for you guys at some point. You want to take some things back to your constituencies, and I am willing to work with you on that. Come forward with stuff.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. government House leader needs to address all questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the members or their party.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the government House leader about the complete lack of self-awareness in the Conservative MPs. They blocked, for months, important legislative changes that would help teachers and would help farmers. I certainly heard from teachers in

my riding and people saying, "Let us get this done." Conservatives said, "No, we are not going to let anything through."

Now we have the budget implementation act, which, for the first time, would put in place national dental care. Thanks to the NDP and the member for Burnaby South, we actually would see thousands of people in every Conservative constituency, but also in the constituencies of every one of us in the House of Commons, have access to dental care. This is a significant shift. With respect to affordable housing, as well for the first time, we would have in place an affordable housing program that would create tens of thousands of affordable housing units right across the country to address the housing crisis. These are all things that benefit everybody: every constituent of not just Conservative MPs, but all MPs in the House.

This is what we should be working on. For five days in a row, the budget implementation act was supposed to be brought forward, and for five days in a row, the Conservatives blocked any sort of discussion. They just refused to let this move forward in any way and they would not debate it either. The official opposition House leader neglects the fact that, every single day for two weeks, Routine Proceedings has been disrupted by the Conservatives.

Why is there no self-awareness, among Conservative MPs, that what they are doing is harming Canadians?

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I agree. Sometimes in the thrust and parry in this place, we can lose the purpose for which we come here. Again, I would go back to what we did with the Conservatives on Bill C-3. That was a great opportunity to work together. We absolutely have a supply and confidence agreement with the NDP. We are working on a lot of important issues, from affordable housing to the environment to the dental care plan that the member referenced, but I would suggest to the members opposite that, just as we did in Bill C-3, there remain opportunities for every member in the House.

This is the fifth minority government that I have had the privilege to serve in. I have seen it done all ways, and I can say that when I was in opposition I spent my fair time both criticizing the government and trying to obstruct at different moments. However, when I lost, which I did in 2011, the reflections that I had were the opportunities that I had to get things done.

We are going to be here for a while, is my guess, and, instead of moving things to obstruct every day, I would invite Conservative members to come and have a conversation with us about the things they are hearing from their constituents that they want movement on. It is totally fair that they are going to vote against some bills and totally fair that every once in a while, to make a point, they might want to obstruct, but I hope they will also reflect that when we were trying to deal with a bill like Bill C-8, after it being dragged out for more than four months, this is where we wind up. It is not healthy. There is a better way to work together, and I extend that bridge. I thought that we had a really good start and I would like to get back to it.

• (1240)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is interesting to hear the government House leader ask for Conservative MPs to come and actually tell him what they are hearing from their constituents, when all the Liberals have done is shut down debate once again. The Liberals do not really want to hear how rural and remote Canadians feel about their policies.

Also interesting is that the lapdog from New Westminster—Burnaby comes to the defence of the government. It is challenging to be one of the 338 members of Parliament elected to bring the voice of Canadians here and then, once again, the government is shutting down debate. Madam Speaker—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We are all hon. members here. I know that debates get heated from time to time, but it is entirely inappropriate for that member to refer to my colleague, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, as a “lapdog”. It is entirely inappropriate to use that kind of language in the House and to refer to any hon. member in the House in that manner.

Madam Speaker, I seek your advice on how to proceed with the outrageous point of view offered by that member.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I appreciate the hon. member's interruption. It is something that I was going to raise as soon as the hon. member had finished. I would ask members not to attack individual members in the House in that way.

I trust that the member will offer an apology before he continues his remarks, which I am going to ask him to wrap up soon.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I apologize if perhaps my comments struck a nerve with our colleagues. With all due respect, I know our colleagues to be honourable. I do, but it is frustrating—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to ask the member whether he is going to apologize to the member.

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, I was just getting to it.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would ask the member to respond to that and finish his question, so that I can get to the hon. member, because we are running out of time and I am going to have to start cutting questions on that side of the House.

Government Orders

Mr. Todd Doherty: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, I do apologize for saying the comments, but I do not apologize for the feelings that this side of the House has, when the government has essentially given itself a majority with its colleagues from the NDP.

I want to ask what happened to the “sunny ways” of 2015, when the Liberals were not going to start with dilatory motions; they were going to be the most open and responsive government, and they were not going to force closure on debates. This, they have done time and time again, not only in this session, but any time the heat is turned up on them. What happened to that government?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that name-calling is really not a very professional thing to do, especially in this House.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I spent a lot of time in opposition, and one of the things that I think is really not becoming of this place is to use that kind of language toward any other member. The reality is that the NDP House leader and I have our differences, but we both recognize that we were elected in a minority government to find ways to get things done for Canadians.

I would reflect back to the member that we had a really great start. I mentioned Bill C-3 and Bill C-4, but there were a lot of things that were put forward by the Conservatives that were reasonable and that we were able to work with. What I am experiencing now is nothing but obstruction. I do not have anything to work with, and after four months of this place being bottlenecked with obstruction, we had to recognize there was no interest in actually having more debate; there was just an interest in unilaterally shutting this place down and sticking it in the mud.

No party should try to do that from the position of having a minority of elected seats. The Conservatives talk about the elected will of Canadians. The elected will of Canadians is for this chamber to work, and to work together.

• (1245)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, in the last election, the electorate sent a clear message to all of us, which is that we need to come back to this House and to work for the people. New Democrats took that seriously, and one of the things we are working on is to advance the needs of the community and to fight for them. What we have done is to use the power of 25 New Democrats to negotiate a supply and confidence agreement with the government, and what we have in this bill is a proposal to bring forward, for people in our communities, a dental care program. A national dental care program is needed, certainly, for my constituents. There are seniors who have not been able to get their teeth fixed, because they cannot afford to see a dentist. There are seniors who are blending up their food to eat.

The obstructions that are being put forward by the Conservatives obstruct not only this House, but also the work of committees—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry; the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies is rising on a point of order.

Government Orders

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I guess it is just a question to you. Is this a statement by a government member, or a question from the opposition?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is debate, and I have been hearing a lot of heckling on that side of the House. I would ask members to respect the fact that other members have the floor.

The hon. member can ask her question, because I have other parliamentarians who want to ask questions as well.

The hon. member for Vancouver East.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Madam Speaker, to that end, my question to all members of the House is this: Do they not want to see a national dental program in place for their constituents? Do they not want to see and ensure that teachers are not being impeded by their inability to get the tax credits that have been promised in this bill? Why are we trying to obstruct—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, the hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, we just heard the member ask a question of another opposition party. I do not know if she does not know the role of the NDP in this place—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, that is a point of debate.

The hon. government House leader has the floor.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, what we are seeing at the crux of this is a different view of what Canadians sent us here to do and what the role of official opposition is, or of opposition generally.

It is my view that Canadians sent us here in a minority government with an expectation that we are going to work together. Yes, we are going to disagree, and will do so respectfully. We are going to be voting either for or against different things, but we will be putting ideas on the table and moving them respectfully through this place. That is what Canadians' expectations are.

We could knock on doors this week and have Canadians ask us what we are doing here. If we told people that dental care, the environment and housing were extremely important, what they would want to hear is that we are making sure we get to those issues, that we get to the legislation and to the debate that is going to inform the policies that are going to drive forward an agenda that is going to serve and help Canadians.

I would reflect back to the members, particularly as they draw the weeks on and on and do the same thing again and again, that it is not a great message to go back to those same constituents and say, "I tried to block the House from doing its work. I stood up every day and moved concurrence motions. I limited debate. I tried to make sure other elected members did not have an opportunity to engage in debate, and I tried to stop legislation from coming forward." I cannot imagine that is a very compelling narrative to give to constituents.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I share concerns with how long it took to get Bill C-8 through this

place. I also recognize and appreciate that the government House leader is a reasonable person.

However, let us be honest about what is in Bill C-19. Climate is mentioned only with respect to the climate action incentive's being delivered once a quarter as opposed to once a year. I do not see a section in here that implements dental care.

If this does move through time allocation, does it mean we will see more substantial climate legislation? Does it mean we will see legislation for the Canada disability benefit? Over 100 MPs from all parties in this place have made clear they want to see the government move forward fast on that.

● (1250)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, the quick answer is absolutely. By moving forward after this, we have a raft of things that are going to be helping Canadians and improving their lives: taking action on climate and housing, making sure we are helping workers and businesses as we start returning to normal, and building on the remarkable economic success.

Canada has recovered 115% of the jobs lost in the pandemic, which compares to 93% in the United States. We have a leading plan, and I would say one of the best, if not the best, to tackle climate change and to take appropriate climate action. There are so many things following behind this. It is why we cannot accept that the Conservatives scuttle the agenda of the government or the House. We have to get to these things.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings at this time and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on the motion.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

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

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we would ask that the motion be passed on division.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Call in the members.

● (1335)

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

(Division No. 79)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Boulerice	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duguid
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fergus
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garneau
Garrison	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Jones	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	O'Regan

Government Orders

Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sorbara
Spengemann	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Thompson
Trudeau	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vuong
Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 178

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Benzen	Bergen
Bergeron	Berthold
Bérubé	Bezan
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Brunelle-Duceppe	Calkins
Caputo	Carrie
Chabot	Chambers
Champoux	Chong
Cooper	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Ellis	Epp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Fortin
Gallant	Garon
Gaudreau	Généreux
Genuis	Gill
Gladu	Godin
Goodridge	Gourde
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
MacKenzie	Maguire
Martel	May (Saatch—Gulf Islands)
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Melillo
Michaud	Moore
Morantz	Morrice
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater

Government Orders

Normandin	O'Toole
Patzner	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Savard-Tremblay	Scheer
Schmale	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Small	Soroka
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer— 149	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

The House resumed from May 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the proceedings on the time allocation motion, Government Orders will be extended by 30 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Terrebonne.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to inform the House that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague, the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Today we are debating Bill C-19, a massive, 500-page bill that contains a little of everything. This bill could be considered an omnibus bill. However, it does not contain all of the measures from the budget statement. We expect to see another bill introduced in the coming weeks.

The Bloc Québécois supports the principle of the bill, although a number of measures could have been, and would benefit, from being studied more carefully. Allow me to explain.

Although we agree on the principle of the bill, we will nevertheless wait to study all of its measures carefully in committee. We certainly will not agree to pass this bill so that we can finish far too early after debating it for just a few hours.

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

The hon. member for Terrebonne is making a speech. I would ask the members who are talking to their colleagues to leave the chamber or wait until later to chat with colleagues.

The hon. member for Terrebonne may continue.

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I was saying that, even though the Bloc is in favour of the principle of the bill, many of the measures described in Bill C-19 could do with being fleshed out.

That is what we will do in committee. My colleague, the member for Joliette, will make sure that every measure in the bill is examined and scrutinized so it can be passed with due diligence. Even though we support the bill in principle, we will still take the time to improve it in committee.

This bill includes several measures we feel are reasonable, emergency measures that, in all sincerity, I think are pretty good. Let us start with the extension of pandemic-related measures. We are in favour of this idea and always have been. Even now, many businesses need economic support to weather the pandemic. I want to make it clear that the Bloc Québécois has always supported targeted assistance.

We want businesses to be supported. As we know, the pandemic disrupted the various sectors of the economy in different ways. While some sectors are coping well, other sectors, such as tourism and hospitality, are still struggling. People have changed their habits and are not going back to the theatre, the movies or restaurants. It is great to be able to help certain sectors that have been especially hard hit by the pandemic.

The second urgent measure is the extension, by five weeks, of employment insurance for seasonal workers. Again, we commend this measure. The third urgent measure is the one-time immediate payment of \$2 billion through the Canada health transfer, in addition to \$750 million for public transit.

Let us come back to the extension of pandemic-related financial supports. We are in favour of well-targeted assistance. We agree in principle with this measure. I just want to point out that businesses have been approaching us for months. We contacted the government and wrote letters to the minister, but there is nothing in the short term to help the businesses affected by the semiconductor shortage. It is bad.

Businesses are being forced to lay off workers or shut down completely because they are missing an essential component needed for their products to function properly. I am talking about semiconductors. Even though I have asked the question several times in the House, there is still nothing to help these businesses in the short and medium terms. There may be a line or two in the budget about plans to potentially have this technology in Quebec or Canada some day. However, for now, there is nothing tangible; in fact, there is nothing at all for these businesses that are losing employees, losing jobs, losing expertise and even facing the risk of bankruptcy. This is unacceptable at this point in time.

The five-week extension of EI benefits for seasonal workers is all well and good, but I think many of my colleagues would agree that employment insurance needs to be completely overhauled. We would not have needed financial assistance measures during the pandemic if our employment insurance system were working properly. This is still not the case, and it is a real problem. One of my colleagues is working very hard on this issue and has made all kinds of proposals, but we all agree that the EI system is completely broken. The system is designed to ensure that people get the least amount of benefits possible, despite having paid into the system. It is just wrong that the system is managed by the federal government, when it is our money. It is unacceptable that it is so dysfunctional, when we have needed additional financial supports for nearly two and a half years. EI reform is critical, and it must be done now.

Lastly, the third measure that is urgent and warrants discussion today is the immediate one-time payment of \$2 billion in Canada health transfers. We have been waiting and asking for this for quite some time now. Our health care system is suffocating. We have the know-how, but we need the money and the Canada health transfers with no strings attached right now.

• (1340)

We obtained \$2 billion through the Canada health transfer with Bill C-19. However, that is our money. Why must we always beg for our own money?

Not only that, but it is also tied to \$750 million to support public transportation. That is a good thing because public transportation took a big hit during the pandemic. Ridership on most public transit systems is very low. As I mentioned, low ridership is due to the fact that people have changed their habits and are still afraid of the virus, which continues to spread.

We need to upgrade this infrastructure and provide new options. More money is needed to support public transportation. I repeat that this money belongs to us and there should be absolutely no strings attached to it. It is not right that our money has strings attached to it.

We will ensure that the money that will be put to good use by the various provinces and Quebec will not have strings attached.

I will now digress for a moment to talk about the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, on which I have the pleasure of serving.

As we have been examining the public accounts in recent months, we discovered that there was information on how different departments provide funding or make expenditures. We know who they fund, where that funding goes and how much is being given. Departments are subject to certain accounting standards. The average person can see how any amount over \$100,000 has been spent, where it was spent and how much was spent.

We recently discovered something that is quite significant. Crown corporations, such as Export Development Canada and the Business Development Bank of Canada, are not subject to these same accounting rules. That means that citizens will not be able to see how their money is being spent, for expenditures over \$100,000, by Crown corporations, because these corporations are subject to IFRS. IFRS are internationally recognized standards,

Government Orders

but they are used by the private sector and should not apply to the government. The public must have the information they need to see how expenditures over \$100,000 are spent, who received the money, in what province and what it was used for.

Between 20% and 30% of all government spending goes through Crown corporations. That means it is impossible to know how much money is being handed over. However, we hear a lot about equalization. In the case of equalization, it is easier to have an approximate idea of how much is given and how much is received. There is a lot of emphasis on that, yet we do not know how much we receive in total in terms of government spending because the Crown corporations make it impossible to know how much each province in Canada receives, which is unacceptable.

Until we know how much we are receiving, we demand that the transfers, our money, be given to us without conditions.

* * *

• (1345)

[English]

PRIVILEGE

CONDUCT OF THE MEMBER FOR BRAMPTON CENTRE

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the question of privilege that was raised by the member for Barrie—Innisfil earlier today. I want to take this opportunity to apologize sincerely and unreservedly to all members of Parliament for the unfortunate event that transpired last Friday. I ask the House and its members to forgive me for my lapse in judgment. I take this matter extremely seriously and I promise never to repeat this ever again.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for his intervention.

* * *

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing that is really important to recognize is that when we talk about the budget implementation bill, it is part of the bigger picture of the national budget, a budget that delivers, in many ways, for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

One issue is dealing with child care. We can take the example of what has taken place in the province of Quebec. Quebec has clearly demonstrated how successful a national child care plan could be, because of the success of the child care plan in the province of Quebec.

Government Orders

I wonder if my colleague could provide her thoughts on the benefits of having a \$10-a-day child care program for all provinces, in particular for parents from a perspective of affordability, but also for the economy in terms of the possible engagement of literally thousands of future workers.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his excellent question, which allows me to mention that, unfortunately, there are not enough child care spaces.

This system is fundamental. It was introduced by the Parti Québécois, which is a sovereignist party. Everyone knows that all the positive measures in Quebec are driven by sovereignist parties.

Not only are there not enough child care spaces, but it is a provincial system. The federal government should not interfere. We are tired of seeing the federal government interfere in everything that falls under provincial jurisdiction, particularly in Quebec.

• (1350)

[English]

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like my friend to speak a little more about the theme of paternalism that we saw in this budget. The Prime Minister seems to be adding strings attached with funding that is supposed to be going to provinces for what is within provincial jurisdiction. I have said in this House before that we could sometimes mistake the Prime Minister for wanting to become a premier instead of a prime minister, given all the meddling in provincial jurisdiction that he has been doing over the last number of years.

I would like the hon. member to comment on that.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy conversing with my hon. colleague. His question really ties in to my previous answer.

The federal government always has to impose conditions, even for a system Quebec already has. It is extremely paternalistic, as the member just said. When we want our money back for what we consider to be our needs, the federal government imposes conditions.

The federal government should not be constantly meddling in what the provinces decide to do. Provinces have the right to make their own decisions about certain programs and where their money should be spent. Provinces are different, and their priorities are different.

Why not give the provinces, especially Quebec, a little more decision-making power? As we all know, Quebec is another country and one of the two solitudes.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply grateful to my colleague for her excellent speech. I have a question for her as an economics expert.

Last year, the president of CMHC told the Standing Committee on Finance that the way to deal with the crisis is to increase supply.

We know the budget contains plenty of housing measures, such as the tax-free first home savings account. These measures will ac-

tually boost demand, and many economists say this is counterproductive. What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Mr. Speaker, the overheated housing market does differ from one city to the next. We can all agree that Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and the regions of Quebec do not all have the same problems.

Using a single pan-Canadian measure to address all of the country's challenges is therefore a bad idea. Additionally, the housing problem is caused by a lack of supply, since the occupancy rate is very high. Providing support measures to a segment of the population that is already able to save for a home, which is what the proposed TFSA does, will ultimately stimulate even more demand. It is counterproductive.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to rise to speak to this issue and to Bill C-19. There is a lot to discuss, of course, and we have already talked about some of it.

It is really too bad that our debate time has been cut short, as we saw earlier. To say that we deplore it would be a massive understatement. The Liberals across the aisle do not like to debate. We saw this during the election campaign. Important bills were scheduled to be voted on, but the Liberals called an election and wiped the slate clean, killing bills like the one on the Official Languages Act. This means we have to start over on a number of important bills. They also prorogued the House two years ago. Now we have this important, mammoth bill before us, which does not even contain all the measures in the budget. Only some of them are included.

However, I am going to focus on the part that interests and concerns me the most. I think everyone in the House knows that I have risen here about a billion times to talk about the housing crisis.

In fact, there are four major crises in Canada at this time. We spoke about the language crisis earlier. My colleague from Salaberry—Suroît introduced a bill on that issue. It is an important issue for my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île, who is a staunch advocate for the French language in Quebec, as I and all members of the Bloc Québécois are. There is a major language crisis in Canada. The federal government does not want to acknowledge that French and English do not have equal status. That is a major problem.

Obviously, there is the health crisis, from which we are emerging. We are pleased and we are hopeful. Once again, the repercussions of the health crisis will be difficult to deal with. There are major problems in the area of mental health. Once again, even though it says it sent money during the crisis and one-time transfers to help the health care system in Quebec and across the country, the federal government is rejecting all the provinces' ongoing request to increase health transfers from 22% to 35%. This could help them deal with the next crisis. We are talking with organizations across the province, and another crisis is looming, the mental health crisis. It will be costly, and the federal government needs to get it through its head that this is a provincial jurisdiction. It is not up to the federal government to establish standards. It just has to sign the cheques. The provinces run the hospitals, pay the doctors and manage the system, and they need money because they know what they require. However, the money is in Ottawa.

The climate crisis is another crisis, and it is connected to the housing crisis, which is the main topic I want to talk about today and one of the topics I talk most often about in the House. The government has taken some small steps to address the housing crisis, as it has for the climate crisis. A year ago, in the span of about a month, the government increased its targets, which were around 30% before the latest budget. With its latest budget, the government wondered why it should stop there. Since the government was not going to meet this target anyway, it might as well increase it to 36%. The government increased the target to 36% but still had no way to reach it. The government did not know how it would meet its targets, but at 36%, it was not afraid of anything. On Earth Day, the government increased the targets to between 40% and 45%, still without backing them up with any measures. There are still no details about how we will reach those targets. The Liberals are not afraid of anything, so they are throwing out percentages and hoping to meet them. In the meantime, along came the Bay du Nord project, which will extract one billion barrels over 30 years. I remind members that Canada has never met a single one of its greenhouse gas reduction targets. Now, the government expects to reach a 40% to 45% target, but that is nonsense.

This brings me to the topic I wanted to talk about: housing.

On housing, the government is taking the same kind of gamble. In other words, it is offering up figures, any figures, and then crossing its fingers, closing its eyes, bracing itself and hoping everything works out. That is how the federal government is acting.

The budget says that Canada needs 3.5 million housing units to address the current crisis. We are not entirely sure how the Liberals came up with that number.

• (1355)

In a study published a few months ago, Scotiabank said that we would need 1.7 million housing units. I think the bank was talking about current needs, but the budget is talking about the government's projected needs to 2031 based on higher expected immigration numbers for the coming years. The government added 1.7 million housing units to the 200,000 to 300,000 people who would arrive each year and somehow came up with 3.5 million housing units, which is a significant target.

Statements by Members

The budget actually contains an admission of failure, since it recognizes that Canada needs 3.5 million housing units in order to solve the crisis, but it does not say how the government is going to get there, just like the climate change targets. There are a few programs, figures and dollar amounts for dealing with the crisis.

The example of the rapid housing initiative is already a major problem and a scandal. The municipalities are creations of the provinces. When the federal government says again that it is going to send money directly to Matane, Rimouski, Quebec City, Longueuil or Valleyfield, it is bypassing Quebec.

At some point, the federal government is going to have to come to an agreement with Quebec on this. The last time it tried to negotiate with Quebec, it took three years, during which money was spent in Toronto, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, but nothing in Quebec—

• (1400)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to have to interrupt the member, but we have to proceed to Statements by Members. He will have three minutes and twenty-five seconds remaining when debate resumes after question period.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

SIKH STUDIES PROGRAM

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the past few years, the University of Calgary has been collaborating with the Sikh sangat in the city to raise money for a Sikh Studies program. Many of the residents from my riding of Calgary Skyview have contributed to this initiative. The Sikh Studies program consists of an instructorship in Sikh studies, additional courses, a post-doctoral research fellowship, a Sikh Studies community advisory group and a library fund for Sikh literature.

The university and stakeholders are still collecting donations for the program's endowment. I thank the Sikh sangat, which has and will donate. I want to thank the gurdwaras, including the Dashmesh Culture Centre, the Sikh Society of Calgary, Guru Ram Das Darbar and Darbar Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji for their leadership. I thank the University of Calgary for providing a home to Canada's first Sikh Studies program, and finally, I give special thanks to the MP for Surrey—Newton for joining me to raise money for the program.

* * *

BEV EWEN AND RAE FLEMING

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this month, residents at Kawartha Lakes felt the loss of two prominent historians and authors.

Statements by Members

Bev Ewen grew up working at his family's convenience store in Kirkfield, delivering milk to try to get himself through university to complete his teaching degree. After retiring from the Durham District School Board, Bev volunteered with the Kirkfield and District Historical Society, acting as the editor and publisher of its regular newsletter, as well as managing the society's website and other newsletters. Bev was a regular speaker at local events and will be remembered by generations of children as Santa Claus at the Kirkfield Museum's Christmas concert each year.

In an interesting parallel, Dr. Rae Fleming also grew up in a general store, in Argyle. In fact, after completing his Ph.D. in Canadian history, Dr. Fleming went on to write many books, including one entitled *General Stores of Canada*.

Throughout his career, Dr. Fleming was a lecturer at various universities and was a research associate at Trent University's Frost Centre for Canadian Studies and Indigenous Studies.

Both men were pillars in the community and will be greatly missed by many.

* * *

JEOPARDY! CHAMPION

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate a now-iconic Canadian from my riding of Halifax West: Mattea Roach. Mattea first appeared on *Jeopardy!* back on April 5 and, for more than a month, she dazzled viewers with her knowledge about everything from Belgian kings to Nova Scotian duck tolling retrievers. Through her 23 winning performances, she became the first Canadian *Jeopardy!* super champion, but what shone through most about Mattea was her warmth and kindness. She is a role model for women, youth, members of the LGBTQ community and, indeed, everyone who knows the value of knowledge, no matter how obscure it may be.

I know my community, and all Canadians, will be cheering her on in the Tournament of Champions in November, and none as loudly as her proud parents Patti and Phil.

Join me in congratulating Mattea and wishing her success in her *Jeopardy!* journey and in law school.

* * *

[Translation]

MICHEL DÉSY

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to commend Michel Désy for the 35 years he has devoted to the farm union movement.

This farmer in Berthier has been involved with the Fédération de l'Union des producteurs agricoles since 1984 and the Producteurs de bovins de Lanaudière since 1986. He has held various roles, such as administrator, vice-president of UPA Lanaudière and president of UPA Autray.

Among his numerous other accomplishments, he was part of the steering committee for Autray RCM's development plan for an agricultural zone. Charity work is also important to him, and he has served as grand knight of the Berthier Knights of Columbus.

His colleagues and I all tip our hats to him for the work he has accomplished. I wish him all the best in his retirement and thank him for his contribution and passion.

* * *

● (1405)

MOTHER'S DAY

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of Mother's Day, I want to wish all the best to all women.

In particular, I want to acknowledge the resilience of seniors in Bourassa, who are paying a heavy price because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Health-wise, seniors are suffering the most due to isolation from their loved ones.

I am pleased to say that my team and I held Mother's Day celebrations in person for the first time. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the organizers and the members of the seniors' clubs and seniors' residences, as well as the organizations working in my riding to bring our seniors out of isolation and contribute to their well-being.

I thank them, and I want to send Mother's Day wishes to the mothers in the diverse communities that shape our beautiful country.

* * *

[English]

MOTHER'S DAY

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mother's Day is a day to be celebrated. I spent this last weekend in gratitude for, and celebration of, the women in my life. I am blessed to have my incredible grandmother, Audrey, with us. She has always been a pillar of strength for my family. My wonderful mother Heather and my wife Allyson make sure our children know they are always loved and supported unconditionally.

Mother's Day is a celebration, but for some it often comes with mixed emotions, including grief from a mother passing, from a relationship of estrangement, from infertility and longing for the opportunity to be a mom, or from the heaviness of losing a child of one's own. I think the hardest job in the world is mothering a child one can no longer hold.

I want to thank all the moms for everything they do. I want them to know that if grief or mixed feelings accompanied them this Mother's Day, they are not alone and we see them. Let us celebrate these amazing women this whole week and this whole year, and let them truly know that they deserve more than just one day.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity to recognize the contributions Canadians of Asian heritage have made and continue to make to the social, economic, political and cultural heritage of Canada.

I organized Asian Heritage Month celebrations on Parliament Hill yesterday, with about 500 people attending and performances from 10 diaspora groups. I would like to thank the volunteer team, led by my friend Karunakar Reddy Papala, fondly known as KK. The team included Bangladeshi-Canadian Shah Bahauddin, Cambodian-Canadian Vuthy Lay, Chinese-Canadian Alex He, Iranian-Canadian Alma Rahmani, Pakistani-Canadian Dr. Syed Aziz, Sri Lankan-Canadian Anura Ferdinand, Taiwanese-Canadian Tony Fan, Tamil-Canadian Sivaruban Sivalingam, Vietnamese-Canadian Can Le and also, Jessie Xue, Monica Gupta, Puneet Aggarwal, Reaz Zaman and Subir Paul Chowdhury.

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SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the age of five, my daughter signed up to play hockey. She was able to do that because of the leadership of great Canadian athlete Abby Hoffman.

In 1956, when she was nine years old, Abby Hoffman wanted to play hockey. She cut her hair short, registered as “Ab Hoffman” and excelled. When it was discovered that she was a girl, her hockey career ended. Later, Abby discovered her love for running. She represented Canada at the Olympics and Pan American Games and won medals for Canada as a runner, but to do that she also, once again, had to break through barriers. She actually opened up Hart House, which was only open to men until that time, to women so that they could run and play sports as well.

She continues to fight to this day for women in sports. Next week, she is going to be inducted into the Ontario Sports Hall of Fame. I thank Abby for her leadership and congratulate her, from all Canadian girls. I wish her a happy Canadian Jewish Heritage Month. She is a big part of our wonderful heritage.

* * *

NATIONAL RANGE DAY

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on June 4, we will celebrate National Range Day. There are over 2.3 million licensed firearms owners in Canada. We enjoy our property, our culture and our passion safely without issue. That deserves to be celebrated.

National Range Day is an opportunity for all Canadians to learn and participate in any of the hundreds of events happening in almost every community across the country. Sport shooters, collectors, recreational shooters and hunters alike will host the country by opening their doors and their communities to all Canadians. People can find an event near them at nationalrangeday.ca.

As co-chair of the Parliamentary Outdoor Caucus, I am proud to support the millions of Canadians who responsibly, legally and safely own and use firearms. I hope more will get to know the posi-

Statements by Members

tives of Canada's firearms culture, and I am excited for more Canadians to get to know the sport. Let us remember that this June 4 is National Range Day. I hope to see people there.

* * *

• (1410)

WINDSOR AUTO SECTOR

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Windsor—Tecumseh, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House and declare we are bringing back the third shift at the Windsor Assembly Plant. Last week, I had the privilege of hosting the Prime Minister in my community to announce a historic \$3.7-billion investment with Stellantis to restore all three shifts in Windsor and Brampton. This is a great thing for auto workers. Auto workers are the heartbeat of our community, and when auto thrives our community thrives. From working families to restaurants and small businesses, young people now have thousands of good-paying jobs and a bright future here at home.

This investment, plus last month's record battery plant announcement, mean thousands of new jobs in Windsor—Tecumseh. Our government has invested more in Windsor auto workers than any government in Canada's history. Together, we are building not just batteries and electric vehicles, but we are also building a strong, prosperous and zero-emission Canada.

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ORVILLE JOHN ZERBIN

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Pastor Orville John Zerbin, lovingly known as Pastor OJ, was one of the great pillars of our Edmonton Mill Woods community. Sadly, he lost his battle with cancer on Good Friday, at the age of 66. He is survived by his loving wife Barb, six children, eight grandchildren, many relatives and friends, and a large congregation he helped to build.

Pastor OJ joined the Calvary Community Church in 1977, where he faithfully served for over 44 years. During that time, he spent 12 years with the Edmonton Police Service, followed by many years as a business owner and 21 years as lead pastor.

Under his leadership, Calvary Community Church has become an integral part of Edmonton, providing care and supporting families through Millwoods Christian School, the child care program, Mill Woods Care Closet and other community initiatives.

Statements by Members

Pastor OJ's loving and welcoming spirit drew people together, making his congregation a very diverse and loving one. I will miss our conversations about faith, family and community. He will be missed.

* * *

[Translation]

ANDRÉ ARTHUR

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, back when I was studying communications, I had the privilege of interviewing the king of radio, André Arthur, for a school assignment. He was very generous in answering my questions.

His popularity was impressive, and people had strong feelings about him. He portrayed himself as a defender of widows and orphans. Steeped in culture, he was a master of the French language and excelled at wordplay.

After criticizing politicians, he decided to try his own hand at the job and was elected as the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier. For almost six years, he represented the people of the wonderful riding I currently represent. He left his mark on the world of communications with his outspokenness. One expression he enjoyed using and that I quite like as well was, "If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen".

I would like to extend my condolences to his children, René and Pascale; his three grandchildren; his partner, Lucy; his brother, Louis; and all his loved ones.

I thank André Arthur for serving, and may he rest in peace.

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BRAIN TUMOUR AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us turn May grey.

May is Brain Tumour Awareness Month. Every day, 27 Canadians hear the words "you have a brain tumour". These tumours are unpredictable and complex, and can affect anyone at any time.

Malignant or benign, they leave a physical, psychological and financial mark on the lives of patients and their loved ones, who will be left shaken by waves of emotion and a desire to do something, anything, to help.

This year, the Brain Tumour Walk is celebrating 40 years of hope. I invite everyone to sign up for the weekend of the walk, June 17 to 19, to say goodbye to brain tumours, to support patients and their families and to give hope.

I will be walking in memory of my mother. To those participating, for whom will you walk?

* * *

● (1415)

[English]

NATIONAL NURSING WEEK

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize National Nursing Week. This is our opportu-

nity to thank Canada's nurses for their outstanding leadership delivering health care to all Canadians. During this pandemic, nurses made tremendous sacrifices to answer the call when we needed them most. They provided care with skill, compassion and courage in the face of unrelenting waves of COVID-19.

We know Canada's nurses provide critical services to patients at all times in all health care environments. Nurses take care of us at our most vulnerable, and we must take care of them in return. This National Nursing Week, let us turn our words of gratitude into action by addressing important issues such as staffing shortages, workplace violence and unacceptable working conditions.

Canadian nurses are the backbone of our health care system. This week, take a moment to thank them for their professionalism, skill and dedication. I will be doing exactly that for my sister, Cheryl Davies, and her partner, Bob Jaspersen, who have been superb nurses for over 30 years.

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[Translation]

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, many Bloc Québécois supporters contributed to our party's fundraiser in support of Ukraine.

On behalf of all our members, I warmly thank everyone who made a donation. We collected \$35,000, which was donated to the Red Cross. This amount will be boosted to \$70,000 because the federal government is matching donations. It will obviously take more to overcome the horror we are seeing and are powerless to address in Ukraine, but I salute the people who chose to donate despite the discouraging situation.

I invite the other parties to do their part. The Bloc Québécois is only active in Quebec, but the other parties have networks across the country: in the Maritimes, Ontario, the Prairies and the west. They could easily raise more than the Bloc Québécois. I hope they will do so. After 75 days of war, all efforts are needed.

[English]

BILL C-5

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, recently the justice committee heard the testimony from Robert Davis, Chief of the Brantford Police Service. During his testimony, and I am quoting from the blues, Chief Davis said, “With Bill C-5 and the proposed changes now we are going to see sentencing become a joke”. He then continued, “with...turning sentences into conditional sentences...the justice system...is being brought into disrepute. People will operate with impunity, the victims' rights are going to be given away for the rights of the criminal.” He also said, “Victims of communities will live in fear of gun violence, fearful of retaliation by armed criminals and people will continue to overdose”.

Chief Davis is a proud Mohawk from the Six Nations of the Grand River territory in my riding of Brantford—Brant. He has been policing since 1990 and is the only indigenous leader on a municipal police service in Ontario. His first-hand experience debunks the ideologically driven narrative the Liberal members are selling.

Despite this, sadly and dangerously, the NDP-Liberal government does not want to listen to the warnings of Chief Davis. My message is simple: The Minister of Justice must withdraw this soft-on-crime bill now.

* * *

NATIONAL MINING WEEK

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today marks the beginning of National Mining Week. The focus of Mining Week is to highlight the innovations and accomplishments made by the mining industry and showcase the idea of advancing the industry to become more sustainable and environmentally sound. Canada's mining industry is essential to the products that we rely on as an economic driver and major employer in communities all across the country. In Northern Ontario alone, over 23,000 are employed, generating \$5.5 billion in annual revenue.

I want to recognize and thank the mining industry in Canada, which continues to make large strides to ensure safety is at the forefront of its operations, while also working hard to enable a low-carbon future. Specifically, I would like to recognize the incredible efforts made by the Mining Association of Canada and its commitment to advocating for the mining and mining supply sectors across the country.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[English]

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, flooding has been affecting communities across Manitoba, particularly in my riding of Portage—Lisgar, and although there was warm weather and wind this past weekend, which helped, we are hearing that there is more heavy rain in the forecast today. Resources are quickly being used up, and people are exhausted. Com-

Oral Questions

munities are tired of being isolated and cut off from the rest of the province.

Can the Minister of Emergency Preparedness tell us what, if anything, the federal government is doing to help those affected by flooding in Manitoba?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are very much engaged with the Province of Manitoba and the impacted communities. Flooding continues to affect multiple communities across the province due to high water levels on the Red River and its tributaries. We have been working very closely through our Government Operations Centre and Indigenous Services Canada with the Manitoba Emergency Coordination Centre.

I have reached out a number of times to my counterpart, Minister Piwniuk. We are in regular contact, and we have offered every assistance that Manitoba may require. At this point, Manitoba advises that the flood response remains within provincial capabilities, but we have also engaged with the Red Cross to assist with evacuations, and we are working with the municipalities, 26 of which have declared states of local emergency.

We will continue to be there for the people of Manitoba.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals invoked the Emergencies Act without just cause, and they are now trying to cover it up. The government used extraordinary power on innocent Canadians, restricting their movement and freezing their bank accounts, and now they are trying to cover up the fact that they did not need to use the act.

As Perrin Beatty, the author of the Emergencies Act, said, “wherever you have extraordinary powers, there must be extraordinary accountability.” Where is the “extraordinary accountability” that Canadians deserve? What are the Liberals trying to hide when it comes to the Emergencies Act?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the accountability comes in the professionalism and the way the police undertook their work to restore public safety. There is accountability in the ongoing way in which we are being fully transparent with the events that led to the invocation of the Emergencies Act, including testimony before the committee and our planned co-operation with Judge Rouleau.

We invoked the act because it was necessary. It worked, and we will continue to be transparent about this.

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Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' "just trust us" is not enough. This is the same Prime Minister who covered up his involvement in the SNC-Lavalin scandal. He covered up his involvement in the WE scandal, and he is hiding documents right now about the Winnipeg microbiology lab. He covers up every single scandal that he is a part of, and now he is trying to cover up the fact that he was abusing his power when he invoked the Emergencies Act.

Why do the Liberals think Canadians should just trust them on the Emergencies Act when they continually hide, cover up and deflect?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with respect, it continues to be astounding how the hon. leader for the opposition continues to deflect her responsibility for her conduct during the Emergencies Act and for the posture of the Conservative Party, which continued to encourage illegal blockers to stay. If they do not want to take it from the government, they can listen to what the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, which said that the Emergencies Act "is critical to assisting law enforcement in addressing the mass national and international organization of the [so-called] Freedom Convoy". These are the words of law enforcement, non-partisan, professional law enforcement.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he must waive cabinet confidence.

Gas is at \$2.04 a litre in Montreal, \$2.04 in Newfoundland and \$2.23 in British Columbia, and I am just talking about regular gas. It costs more than \$100 for 50 litres of gas. Putting in \$20 will not even get your gas gauge above empty. The Liberals are not even hiding the fact that they are happy the price of gas is so high.

When will the NDP-Liberal government give Canadians some relief to help them make ends meet?

• (1425)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at a time when all members of the House should stand united in response to Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the Conservatives are just playing politics.

They know that the recent rise in gas prices is the result of this illegal war, but they continue to ignore these facts in an attempt to score political points. While the Conservatives remain focused on politics, we are focused on implementing real measures to improve the lives of Canadians.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would be interested in knowing how much extra revenue the government is getting from the carbon tax. It would be nice if it provided those figures instead of all kinds of excuses.

The rising cost of living is expensive for everyone. It costs more to go to work. It costs more to grow our fruits and vegetables. It costs more to transport goods.

As the Prime Minister himself said in 2018, he likes to tax everyone to cover his endless spending. In 2018, on the subject of rising gas prices, he said that is exactly what he wants. Is that really what he wants, to impoverish all Canadian families?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is a serious issue and Canadians deserve a discussion rooted in facts, not partisan speaking points. The fact is that this is a global phenomenon caused, in large part, by Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

We continue to propose concrete measures to make life more affordable for Canadians. The Conservatives continue to vote against them.

* * *

GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a democracy, one of the most fundamental principles is no taxation without representation. In other words, no elected officials, no taxes. This is at the heart of modern democracy.

The budget and the budget implementation bill are therefore essential moments in democratic life and in its exercise.

Does anyone in the government realize the damage that is being done to democracy by stifling the voices of the opposition on the budget implementation bill?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, debate is essential, but the problem on the other side of the House is the Conservative Party's obstructionist tactics, which continue day after day. It took four months to pass Bill C-8, and that is completely unacceptable.

Unfortunately, we need to work as quickly as possible. There will be several opportunities for debate in committee and at third reading.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the bill that just went under time allocation is 500 pages long. It contains 60 measures and amends 37 acts. Just reading it takes longer than the time we have to debate it.

It covers issues such as COVID-19 support measures, employment insurance, fighting anti-Semitism, the Social Security Tribunal, aerospace and more.

Every one of these topics deserves its own fulsome debate, but, no, they are using time allocation to shove it down our throats. Why deny democracy like this?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have spent five days trying to get this bill passed, but the problem with the Conservative Party is that it gets in the way of our work at every turn. That is what happened for four months with Bill C-8.

That is also what is happening here at a time when Canadians are in dire need of these supports. We know beyond a doubt that the bill needs to be passed, and the committee and the House will have plenty of opportunities to keep debating the legislation.

* * *

HOUSING

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, while people are paying more and more for necessities, there is a bunch of bad apples lining their pockets.

In the seven years that this government has been in power, becoming a first-time homeowner has become an impossible dream, and it is getting harder and harder to find decent housing at an affordable price.

In the meantime, the housing market is overheating and there is a growing number of renovations. Just yesterday, the federal housing advocate, Marie-Josée Houle, told us that Ottawa could address the crisis by combatting the financialization of housing. Will the Liberals listen?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to agree with the hon. member that we need to support renters throughout Canada. We are the government that introduced the Canada housing benefit, and in budget 2022, we are adding more investments in that program, with a top-up of \$500 on average to vulnerable renters. This adds to the over \$2,500 on average that we provide to the most vulnerable members of our community who need help with rent.

● (1430)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada's housing crisis has been escalated by those using the housing market to make huge profits. The largest 25 financial landlords hold nearly 20% of the country's private rentals. For every one affordable housing unit built, 15 are taken up by investors making money on the backs of Canadians.

It is time to stop treating housing as a stock market. Will the government stop corporate landlords from buying up affordable housing and help non-profits purchase them for Canadians?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with the hon. member that we need to build more rental housing in Canada. That is why, as part of the national housing strategy, we have the rental construction financing initiative, a program that has increased so many times over the last number of budgets because we recognize that as a government we have a responsibility to build the next generation of affordable rental units across the country. In addition to that, while we were building more rentals, we introduced the Canada housing benefit, which we are topping up in budget 2022.

Oral Questions

We agree that we need to tackle speculation and agree that we need to build more rental housing, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, millennials were told that if they got a bunch of degrees, a skilled trade and a good job, they would have no problem owning a home, yet they still live in their parents' basements. The government's signature housing promise to solve this is a new savings account, but people need \$8,000 a year in savings to use it. To add insult to injury, the government said that it will put \$500 toward a house that people cannot afford, and that is not a typo.

The more the government does, the worse it gets. When will the minister actually help anybody in this country buy a home?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really difficult to take the member seriously on this issue because she claimed in the House that we will not build a single affordable home in her region this year. We know that the national housing strategy's rapid housing initiative alone has built 10,250 permanent affordable homes, including in her region. It is really difficult to deal with the misinformation, disinformation and talking down of our housing market every single day from that side of the House.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it used to be thought here in Canada that if people worked hard, made good choices and saved, they could be homeowners, but under the Liberal government housing prices have increased by 100%. Millennials and working Canadians have watched the dream of home ownership slip through their fingers. Never has a government spent so much and congratulated itself more while doing so much damage to the dreams of Canadians.

When will the Liberals climb down from their ivory tower, admit their policies have failed and fix the broken housing system they have created?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. member would save that energy, enthusiasm and advocacy for his own caucus. One day they ask us to move away from investments in housing and leave that money to the provinces. Another time they say that we should not help first-time homebuyers. In another instance they are against the ban on foreign ownership of Canadian residential real estate.

They talk down investments in affordable housing. They do not give any credit to the Canada housing benefit, a program that is helping tens of thousands of Canadians pay their rent.

Oral Questions

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, the government was elected on a promise to make housing affordable, but since then the average Canadian house price has increased by 100%. In Orillia, it is up 300%. The government's solution is to throw a few more billion dollars at the wall and see what sticks, but the shiny new tax-free home savings account will not be available for at least one year. Then people will have five years to deposit enough money to max out the program.

Help is six years away, not today. The government is abandoning young people on housing. Why?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely not true. In one instance, through the housing accelerator fund, we are putting on the table \$4 billion to work with the municipalities to increase housing supply. We know that supply is a big part of the challenge facing Canada. Canada has one of the fastest-growing populations among G7 countries, but our housing supply has not kept up with that.

We are also helping first-time homebuyers, and we are making sure that we crack down on speculation and unfair practices in the real estate sector. On top of that, we are doubling down and investing more in affordable housing.

• (1435)

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the dream of home ownership is being stolen from my generation, as now 80% of young Canadians do not believe they will ever be able to afford a home. They do not need a few hundred bucks from the government and they do not need a new savings account. They need a plan to address the real issues, like the lack of housing supply.

Over the last seven years, the government has failed to incentivize enough development, creating this housing crisis, so why should Canadians believe that the minister is going to get the job done this time?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about housing supply, yet that party, including him, voted against the first stage of investments in the housing accelerator fund, a program that single-handedly will deliver 100,000 units in new housing supply across the country. They vote against investments in co-ops, in the rapid housing initiative and to make sure that we reinvest more money in the Canada housing benefit. We are bringing forward money for the national housing co-investment fund to build 22,000 permanent affordable homes, for the housing accelerator fund and for the innovation fund.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, despite all of the government's rhetoric, the reality is that the price of a home continues to be unattainable for many young families. You just have to admit you failed. Now the Liberals say they are going to address housing supply, yet they excluded any measure in the budget implementation act to address housing supply.

When will the government realize that promises and empty rhetoric do not build houses?

The Deputy Speaker: I remind members to address the Chair and not members directly.

The hon. Minister of Housing.

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon is on record as saying that we should walk away from our leadership role and investments in affordable housing and just leave it to the provinces. That is the leadership he is suggesting.

He talks about housing supply. We are dedicated to housing supply through the housing accelerator fund for 100,000 new homes and making permanent, sustainable changes in permitting, zoning, intensification and infrastructure to make sure we build more housing for the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government seems to think that everything is going well.

Inflation has not been this high in 30 years, the deficit is huge, immigration is in a terrible state and every young Canadian's dream of owning property is shattered.

What is this government going to do so that our young people can believe in the future and own property? What is it going to do now, not in 10 years or five years?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives continue to talk down the Canadian economy with their false economic rhetoric.

However, the latest data from Statistics Canada shows that our GDP grew by 5.6% in the first quarter, exceeding market expectations, and the International Monetary Fund recently forecast that Canada will have the highest growth rate in the G7.

We are here to make life more affordable for Canadians. The economy is growing. Canadians should be proud.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Camille Laurin, father of the Charter of the French Language, would have turned 100 last Friday. To mark the occasion, every minister responsible for the French language over the past 30 years, across party lines, indicated how important it is to be constantly taking action to promote French. That proves that French is in danger.

Bill C-13 will reinforce institutional bilingualism and enable federally regulated businesses to use English instead of French. That is not what Quebecers want.

Why is Ottawa continuing to undermine Quebec and the protection of French?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

As a woman from New Brunswick who lives in an official language minority community, I know how important it is to protect and promote French across the country, including in Quebec, because French is in decline. That is why we are moving forward with a new version of Bill C-13.

This will ensure that we can do more to protect and strengthen our rights as francophones across Canada.

• (1440)

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is French that is in decline in Quebec, not English. It is French that must be protected, not bilingualism.

Bill C-13 prevents Quebec from imposing the Charter of the French Language and instead lets federally regulated businesses choose between French and the Canada-wide bilingual model. That is the very model followed by Air Canada and CN, two federal businesses located in Quebec that are required to provide services in French, but that, despite everything, could not care less about francophones.

Is this really the model that must apply throughout Quebec? If it is, that is unacceptable.

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I am not here to play politics. I am here to protect and promote French across the country, including in Quebec.

We have been very clear: French is declining in Canada, including Quebec. That is why we are moving forward with a new version of Bill C-13, which seeks to protect and promote the rights of francophones across the country.

I hope that the Bloc Québécois will work with us to ensure that this bill is passed as quickly as possible, because it will make a real difference in the lives of all Canadians.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if they want to work with us, then they need to listen to us a little.

With their new Bill C-13, the Liberals are denying French's uniqueness in a sea of hundreds of millions of anglophones. They are preventing Quebec from applying the Charter of the French Language to all federally regulated businesses. They are not protecting French. They are protecting bilingualism, which is not at all at risk in Quebec, any more than English is. Bilingualism is doing so well that it is undermining French as the common language.

Does the minister realize that her bill does not protect French but instead encourages anglicization?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I see is that the opposition member did not read Bill C-13 in its entirety. The exact opposite is true. We are moving forward to ensure that we do everything we

Oral Questions

can to protect and promote French across Canada, including in Quebec.

As a francophone who lives in an official language minority community in New Brunswick, I object to the question the member opposite asked because I protect and promote French every day.

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[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know that our special forces King Air intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platform was monitoring the truckers convoy protest on Parliament Hill. The Prime Minister has called it a “training flight”. If the government was prepared to send up ISR aircraft over the protest, what was it doing to gather intelligence on the ground? One does not engage one without the other.

My question is this. What was the coordination between Public Safety, National Defence, the Canadian Forces, the Privy Council and the Prime Minister's Office during the protest?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate what the Prime Minister said last week a number of times, for the benefit of my hon. colleague. He stated:

The flight in question was part of a Canadian Armed Forces training exercise that was planned prior to and was unrelated to the convoy protest.

The training had nothing to do with the convoy blockade, and we will continue to reiterate that fact.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we know a special forces surveillance flight took place. We know the government even let the health agency spy on Canadians' liquor habits during COVID.

The Prime Minister has called it a “training exercise”. What does the government think an ISR does for training, just fly around in circles? It gathers intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance over a target, and that target clearly was the protest.

I have two questions: Who was that reconnaissance platform reporting to when it was gathering intelligence on Canadians, and what special policing authorities were granted to the Canadian Armed Forces at that time?

Oral Questions

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that the assumptions underlying that question are misguided. Again, the Canadian Armed Forces flight was part of a training exercise. The exercise was planned prior to and was unrelated to the presence of the protesters and the convoy. The opposition does not seem to appreciate or like this point, but it is the truth.

• (1445)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Defence told my colleague that the special forces had planned the King Air flight over Ottawa long before the convoy. However, the operations, which lasted four days, were conducted while people were using cellular communications and moving around.

My question is simple. Was the intelligence gathered by the King Air during training used by the government, or was it destroyed?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said in English, the flight in question was part of a training exercise. The Canadian Armed Forces also conducted this exercise. The training had nothing to do with the convoy. Those are the facts.

* * *

[English]

WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, abortion and reproductive health services are not accessible across the country. Women, particularly in northern and rural communities, are forced to drive for hours to access essential health care services. Last year, the government promised \$45 million for a sexual and reproductive health fund, but providers have not seen a single dollar for these essential services. It is not good enough for the government to say the right things; it must increase accessibility now. When will it actually deliver the promised funding for abortion and health services in Canada?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to hear this question, because defending the rights of women here and across Canada is absolutely essential.

We will be there every step of the way to do that. I look forward to making further announcements. I ask my colleague to be watching closely for what is soon to be news on that particular front.

* * *

NATURAL RESSOURCES

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, when it comes to delivering help to oil and gas companies, the government is far better at that than it is at delivering help for women who are looking for health services.

While the price of gas soars, Imperial Oil is making its highest profit in 30 years, and Cenovus saw its profits increase sevenfold. This is not just about companies passing along higher costs to consumers; it is about them taking home more profit on every litre sold.

Not only are the Liberals not doing anything to stop that price gouging, but they are also continuing to throw public money at companies like these that are already taking advantage of Canadians. When are they going to end public subsidies to oil and gas companies that are already making record profits?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows very well, the government has committed to phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. We are in the process of working through that now.

We have been working, though, with all sectors of the economy, including the oil and gas sector, but also including the steel sector, the aluminum sector and others, to ensure that they are able to reduce their emissions in line with what is required to achieve our targets and achieve the commitments we have made to the international community while growing a strong and healthy economy that creates jobs and economic opportunity for Canadians going forward.

That is exactly what we are doing.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today is National Indigenous Nurses Day.

Indigenous nurses play an integral role in society for indigenous people in Canada and for Canadians nationwide. Having nurses from first nations and with Inuit and Métis ancestry helps ensure that communities have someone who understands the importance of culture in healing and who is familiar with the health care system.

Could the Minister of Indigenous Services please comment on the significant role that indigenous nurses serve in Canada?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Northwest Territories for his unwavering advocacy for the health of people in Northwest Territories.

Nurses have always been the backbone of our health care system. I think we can all say a huge thanks for the efforts of nurses, especially through the pandemic. They have put up such an effort to protect us all, and they have been unwavering in their commitment.

For over 47 years, the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association has been a leader in supporting indigenous nurses and improving indigenous health. We are supporting their efforts by investing in programs to recruit and support indigenous students in health care across Canada.

I am thrilled to welcome the Canadian Indigenous Nurses Association today and applaud them for their work.

* * *

• (1450)

[Translation]

PASSPORT CANADA

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the delays in processing passport applications are completely unacceptable.

People are saying that it is chaos at Service Canada. People are getting abominable service, and some have had to cancel their travel plans.

However, this government has a ready-made solution: allow employees to return to work in person at the Service Canada passport offices. When does it plan to recall government employees?

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

I understand Canadians' frustration. It is truly frustrating. We are seeing an unbelievable increase in the number of passport applications.

However, this week, every passport office will be open. Employees are returning to the office and are working overtime on evenings and weekends to ensure that we can serve Canadians.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a report from October 2021 states that the government was bracing for a surge of passport applications. Fast forward to seven months later and clearly it did not brace well enough.

Wait times have become so outrageous that people are offering a service to wait in line for passport renewals. One of my constituents was recommended by Service Canada to line up at 1:00 a.m. Constituents are also being charged extra processing fees, meaning that a \$160 10-year passport is now costing Canadians \$315.

If the Liberals knew, why are Canadians paying the price for the Liberals' inability to prepare?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have mentioned many times in the House, we are experiencing an unprecedented increase in the demand for passports. After two years, Canadians understandably would like to travel again, but that means that when everyone is applying at the same time, it is a lot for the system to handle.

That being said, we have ensured that we have hired additional people. We have opened on evenings and weekends. In fact, this past weekend, 12 centres were open to service folks, and we have ensured that every wicket will now be open in passport offices to make sure that we are serving Canadians as well as possible.

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the passport process has become a nightmare to thousands of Canadians. Tyler and Ira from Dawson

Creek, through no fault of their own, had to travel 14 hours and spend hundreds of dollars to get their passports, just hours before their trip. What used to be a simple task of completing a passport form is now causing sleepless nights, unnecessary stress and huge expense to those who just want a break from the past two years of this Prime Minister's lockdowns.

When will the minister end the nightmare?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I certainly understand that this is very frustrating for Canadians, but when we have people who are all asking to renew a passport at the same time, it is unprecedented. We did ensure that we had hired 500 additional passport officers ahead of time. We changed it so that 303 Service Canada—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. minister might want to restart her answer.

The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, as I said, I understand that this is frustrating for Canadians and that after two years of staying home, Canadians want to travel. However, when everyone is applying at the same time, there is unprecedented volume that is happening. To accommodate this, we have hired 500 additional passport officers and enabled Canadians to apply not just to passport offices but at the 303 Service Canada offices across the country. We have also opened passport offices through the evenings and into the weekends. We opened 12 centres over the weekend.

People are working overtime and doing everything they can, because at the end of the day, Service Canada employees want to serve Canadians.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week the minister bragged about her visit to the Saskatoon “out-of-Service Canada” office, yet, after her visit, the daughter of my constituent, Viktoriia, still cannot get a passport, because they lost her birth certificate. By contrast, the Bangladesh High Commission sent six people to Saskatoon on the weekend, and they processed 800 passports in two days.

How is it that a foreign government can get more done in two days than this minister can in two months?

Oral Questions

● (1455)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say to the people working at Service Canada who have been working over-time and weekends and doing everything they can to service Canadians, “Thank you.” They are under extreme stress because of the overwhelming volume of passports that they are working really hard to process. I know, as I visited the folks at Service Canada in Saskatoon and they spoke about the good working relationship they have with that member of Parliament. At no point would I ever want to disparage the incredibly hard-working public servants who are working around the clock to serve Canadians.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the epidemic of gun violence continued Saturday night. Two shootings left one man dead and five injured in Laval and Montreal. In the meantime, in Montérégie, the biker gangs were having a grand old time. Four hundred Hells Angels were partying and laughing about the federal government's failure to deal with arms trafficking and to take action against criminal groups.

People are fed up. Is it not time to create a registry of criminal organizations and to crack down on them?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to express my sympathies for the victims of this tragedy. We are investing more than \$300 million over five years, including \$40 million for the RCMP to fight smuggling, \$15 million for tracing and more than \$21 million to equip the CBSA to stop all illegal firearms. I was in Montreal almost a month ago discussing more concrete measures with the mayor of Montreal.

On this side of the House, we have a good understanding of the firearms problem and we want to work with the Bloc Québécois to fix it.

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that money is being spent on ways to do nothing or to justify doing nothing.

Quite simply, what we need is a registry of criminal organizations. If it can be proven that someone belongs to an organization that is on the registry, then it would be an offence. Gone would be the 400-person Hells Angels parties, the intimidation and the shows of force. If someone boasts about belonging to a criminal organization, they will end up in the back of a police car. It is as simple as that.

Montreal is flooded with illegal guns that are creating victims week after week. Are government members not sick of watching criminals having parties on TV?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague, and that is why we are taking concrete measures and have banned AR-15s and two other military-style weapons.

That is why we are making investments in Montreal, in Quebec, with the mayor of Montreal, to protect young people and vulnerable populations. We will do more with the Bloc Québécois and all members of the House.

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[English]

HEALTH

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Mr. Speaker, when I say “ArriveCAN”, what words come to mind? “Unreliable”, “frustrating”, “ageist”, “broken” and “painful” are just some of the words constituents of mine have used. The app is so difficult that some seniors are having to cancel trips to funerals, weddings and the birth of grandchildren. They are facing massive fines and mandatory quarantine, all because of a government app.

After two long years, seniors in this country deserve a lot better from the government. It is time to end the mandatory use of the loathsome ArriveCAN app and allow Canadians to travel freely once again.

What are the Liberals waiting for?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's concerns with regard to ArriveCAN, and of course we work with the CBSA to ensure that as an application it is smooth and efficient, but there are also other words to attribute to ArriveCAN, which are that it is an important tool to protect Canadians.

We will continue to ensure we work with my hon. colleague, along with all other communities, to ensure that trade and travel continue to increase and make sure our economy is going again. That is what our goal is, and that is what we will continue to do.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Gail and John from the South Shore of Nova Scotia were refused entry into Canada upon their return from Florida, in spite of having vaccine proof and their passports. These Canadians were denied entry because they had not filled out the “no ArriveCAN” app. Like many Canadians, they do not have smart phones. Canadians are being hoisted on the government's phone petard.

Why is the government not allowing Canadians to come home if they do not have a smart phone?

● (1500)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said to my hon. colleague last week during question period, we are prepared to work with him and other members of the chamber to ensure that ArriveCAN is smooth and efficient. We are open to receiving feedback. We are not only working with members opposite; we are working with members on this side of the House. The reason we introduced the app was to protect Canadians, and of course now that trade and travel are going again, we will see more individuals come at the border and we will see to it that their experience is consistent with best practices of the CBSA.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for once, could the government acknowledge the issues affecting all Canadians, not just those who have an iPhone or those who have access to a lot of information, but all Canadians?

There are issues with the ArriveCAN app. There are issues for those who fill it out correctly as well as for those who do not have access to an iPhone or the Internet.

Could the government consider the fact that, as the member for Louis-Hébert said, not everyone has access to a computer all the time? Could the government have a project, a program, that works for all Canadians?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said multiple times already, we are working with the Canada Border Services Agency to strengthen border access and address the difficulties with this program.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has focused on Canadians' health and safety by relying on the most recent scientific data. As we have said, since the start of the pandemic, Canada's border measures will remain flexible and adaptable, guided by science and prudence.

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[English]

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the pandemic has disproportionately affected women, especially the millennial women and girls. This is much more true for women and girls in the global south, for whom the pandemic has reversed decades of hard work in the development gains. Could the Minister of International Development tell us how Canada is going to ensure that all women, adolescents and children not only survive this pandemic but thrive?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to women's health as a long-standing priority. That is why I recently announced \$40 million in additional funding to support the Global Financing Facility's "Reclaim the Gains" campaign, bringing Canada's total contribution to \$190 million. The funds will help lower-income countries improve the resilience of their health systems and reverse the impact of COVID-19. Canada sees the GFF as a critical part of strengthening country-led health systems and reinforcing sexual and reproductive health rights as core components of the health care system.

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AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian farmers feed the world, but the Liberals are crippling our ag sector. From increasing the regulatory burden to the carbon tax, opposition to much-needed tax reform, pushing for the displacement of meat and the talk of mandated reductions in things like fertilizer, Canadian farmers are facing the full brunt of a leftist ideological crusade.

Oral Questions

Why is the government sandbagging the family farms and ranches in Canada? Will the minister today commit to scrapping her proposed nitrogen fertilizer mandated reductions?

[Translation]

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, I want to assure the House that we are working closely with various representatives from across agricultural sectors to see how we can help them deal with these input costs, which are particularly high this year. In fact, that is why we have improved the advance payments program.

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[English]

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, regardless of the language, there was no answer there.

On January 24, 2022, the Minister of Transport affirmed that Via would be back to full operations. However, it appears that this promise is broken, as the Via route 651 is not being put back to restoration and the Liberals will not even tell us when. When will route 651 be fully restored?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me share with the hon. colleague and all Canadians the excellent news. We are investing in Via to increase public transportation for Canadians. One of the largest investments in Canada's history is the high-frequency rail that is going to connect Quebec and Ontario. We are also investing in other routes in the country. We are committed to supporting rail across the country, either through Infrastructure Canada or through Transport Canada. We look forward to working with our colleagues on delivering on that.

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● (1505)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, salmon anglers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador are expressing their concerns about inadequate enforcement on our rivers. The minister has had this brought to her attention, and it is now decision time. She knows what is in her mandate letter, and it is about protecting Atlantic salmon. Will she commit to adding extra weeks to the river guardian program, or will she continue to neglect Atlantic salmon stocks?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our goal is the conservation of stocks of all kinds, on both the east coast and the west coast. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans works with guardian programs and their conservation and protection officers to be available and to ensure the rules are followed. We will continue to do that, as well as work with indigenous guardians more and more to do this very important work.

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[Translation]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the past two years have shown us that businesses need to adapt to the digital economy if they want to grow. Post-secondary educational institutions have a key role to play in that transformation because they are doing innovative research and training students for the jobs of the future.

Would the minister responsible for ACOA tell the House how this government is preparing workers for the jobs of tomorrow, supporting the growth of these businesses and attracting investment to New Brunswick?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst for recognizing the important role that New Brunswick can play in the digital transformation.

Last week, our government announced almost \$4 million for the Université de Moncton and the University of New Brunswick. These investments will help students from across New Brunswick enhance their skills, make connections and acquire valuable experience in industry.

Our government is helping to stimulate economic growth in New Brunswick and across Atlantic Canada and the rest of the country so that everyone can benefit from the digital economy.

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[English]

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the ice and river rose dangerously high against the dike wall at Kashechewan. People in Kashechewan and Fort Albany were scrambling to get planes in order to get families to safety.

The government knows that the dike wall is at risk of catastrophic failure and yet, every spring, it gambles with people's lives. An agreement was signed to move the people to higher ground, and yet they are still on the flood plain.

When will the people of Kashechewan be moved off that flood plain and moved to a safe and secure future?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, because we have spoken a number of times and communicated over the weekend, we have, in fact,

made arrangements to evacuate the people of Kashechewan from the impacted area, and we are arranging for accommodation in a number of communities across northern Ontario.

The planes are being made available to move people in a timely way. We will continue with that work. We are also very ably supported by Emergency Management Ontario and people on the ground, and the hard work of the people at Indigenous Services Canada in support of that community.

* * *

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, it is not just gas prices that are out of control. According to a report released by the Chinese Canadian National Council, there were nearly 1,000 incidents of anti-Asian hate in Canada last year. That is a 47% increase from 2020 and, sadly, the upward trend will likely grow in 2022.

In January, the government announced that it will create a special representative on combatting Islamophobia. Muslim Canadians are still waiting.

In November 2021, the government reappointed a special envoy on combating anti-Semitism.

As we celebrate Asian Heritage Month, will the government create a special representative to help fight Asian hate, or do Asian Canadians not matter?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, we condemn all forms of hate, racism and discrimination against all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. We have recently seen a disturbing rise in anti-Asian hate and discrimination, and we stand strongly in solidarity, shoulder to shoulder, with Asian Canadians. We have invested and we will continue to invest in community programs and organizations that are fighting hate and discrimination on the ground, including against Asian Canadians.

Today marks 20 years since the introduction of Asian Heritage Month, so I wish a happy Asian Heritage Month to all my colleagues.

● (1510)

The Deputy Speaker: That is all the time we have for question period.

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Deputy Speaker: I'd like to draw the attention of the hon. members to some visitors we have in the gallery today. We have a parliamentary delegation from the Kingdom of Sweden. Accompanying them is His Excellency Dr. Andreas Norlén, Speaker of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

* * *

PRIVILEGE

CONDUCT OF THE MEMBER FOR BRAMPTON CENTRE—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to return to the question of privilege raised earlier today by the House leader of the official opposition.

[Translation]

I thank the member for raising this matter. All members, individually and collectively, are responsible for maintaining the dignity of the House.

[English]

In light of the, I believe, sincere apology from the member for Brampton Centre, I consider the matter closed.

With that said, as the Assistant Deputy Speaker stated earlier in response to the question of privilege, I too take this opportunity to again encourage all members to always be vigilant when participating remotely in proceedings of the House. If members do not have to have the camera on, turn it off. If they do not have to be in voting, turn it off.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Today in question period, I asked a very specific question of the Minister of Agriculture, to which the response was wholly unrelated to the question that was asked.

I believe it is standard practice of the House that responses to members' questions have to be related, and there have been opportunities when members have been able to re-ask questions. I would ask for the Speaker's indulgence as this is an incredibly important issue that my constituents certainly deserve an answer to.

The Deputy Speaker: A question has to be in order, but unfortunately the Chair is not the arbiter of whether it is a good question or bad question, nor whether it is a good answer or a bad answer. I appreciate the frustration, and I encourage the member to take it up with the minister in person.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 36(8)(a), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the government's response to 16 petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

Routine Proceedings

PETITIONS

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present today. I am not sure of the exact number.

The first petition deals with a commitment that was in the Liberals' 2021 election platform. It was a commitment to essentially politicize the application of charitable status. The petitioners, including a broad range of stakeholders, are opposed to the politicization of charitable status, the adding of another values test to the charitable status test. The petitioners express concern that a similar effort was made with respect to the Canada summer jobs program. They do not want to see that happen again.

The petitioners call on the government to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values and without being in possession of another values test and to affirm the rights of Canadians to protection in terms of their freedom of expression.

• (1515)

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling is in support of Bill S-223, a bill that will be debated on Friday. It is a bill that would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad and receive an organ taken without consent. It would also create a mechanism by which someone could be deemed inadmissible to Canada if they were involved in forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

Bills on this issue have been before the House for about 15 years and have always had broad support, but never made it all the way. The petitioners are hopeful that this Parliament will be the one that finally gets it done.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in a similar vein, this is a petition that highlights the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, in particular, in China. They note that it has been decades since the Chinese Communist regime began its campaign, attempting to eradicate Falun Gong as a spiritual practice that simply centres on advancing the ideas of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance. Many resolutions have been adopted in parliaments around the world and it is relevant to the previous petition because we know that Falun Gong practitioners, as well as Uighurs and others in China, have been victims of forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

The petitioners urge the government and Parliament to establish measures to stop the murder of Falun Gong practitioners, including organ harvesting and trafficking, to take every opportunity to call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and also to bring former leader Jiang Zemin and his cohorts to justice for their involvement in what took place.

Routine Proceedings

ETHIOPIA

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling highlights the human rights situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The petitioners are very concerned about the ongoing conflict, as well as the humanitarian challenges that have been unfolding, and they call for greater engagement by the Government of Canada in the context of this situation. They want to see the government engaging with the Government of Ethiopia, as well as the neighbouring Government of Eritrea, and encourage them to not be—

The Deputy Speaker: I know there is a lot of pent-up demand today, so I am just reminding the member that there are even members of his own caucus who would like to present some petitions.

The hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, they normally call me last, so I thought I was the only one when I was called. I will table one more for now, and if members agree I will return at the end of other members' presentations.

For now, I will table one more petition respecting Bill C-257: a private member's bill I have also put forward in the House. The petition recognizes concerns about increasing political discrimination against Canadians based on their political views. This bill would seek to add political belief and activity as prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act. Petitioners are calling on the House to support Bill C-257, which would ban this discrimination and defend the rights of Canadians to peacefully express their political opinions.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am rising today to table this petition on behalf of constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. They recently signed a petition calling on the federal government to take concrete action to ensure Canadian companies operating abroad adopt stronger human rights and environmental standards. They are calling on the federal government to implement stronger legislation to prevent human rights abuses through global supply chains and ensure Canadian companies are held fully accountable for their actions around the world in Canadian courts.

I want to thank the members of the All Saints Catholic Parish for bringing this petition forward and for its work to bring light to human rights and sustainable development.

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise today to present a petition initiated by a constituent and friend of mine, Zoe. Zoe initiated this petition calling on the government to follow through on the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, specifically focusing on those with respect to health: calls to action 18 through to 21. Petitioners, of which there are 713, call on the government to put calls to action 18 to 21 at the forefront of its agenda.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting a petition on behalf of my constituent, the chief of the Sts'ailes first nation.

In 2006, Ralph Leon Jr. and 12 other individuals were charged after a 15-month investigation into alleged eagle poaching. This legal action languished in the courts for nine years and included a mistrial, a fraud conviction against a senior conservation officer in charge of the investigation, calls from local Sts'ailes to drop the case and accusations of highly unethical and disrespectful behaviour on the part of the B.C. Conservation Officer Service. After charges were laid, 3,422 days later, Ralph Leon Jr. and other individuals were acquitted after Crown council directed a stay in proceedings.

Those wrongfully charged have gathered sufficient evidence showcasing conspiracy to prosecute innocent people, a defamatory media release vilifying indigenous peoples and cultures, fabrication of evidence and concealment of evidence including perjury, commission of fraud against the federal and provincial governments, counselling and aiding indigenous people to commit offences, trespassing on indigenous reserve lands, conferring of a corrupt benefit on a foreign official, and violation of the privacy of indigenous people on and off reserve lands. The continued denial of what happened to these indigenous Canadians taints Canadian history and leads to mistrust in our institution and justice system.

Therefore, these citizens of Canada call upon the Minister of Justice to conduct a public inquiry into the injustices committed by the B.C. Conservation Officer Service and the BC Prosecution Service against Chief Ralph Leon Jr. and the 12 other individuals, because of their race and culture, with the express purpose of reconciling these injustices through a reversal of all convictions, return of property seized and appropriate compensation.

● (1520)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to present a petition signed by many people in Winnipeg calling on the government to enact "just transition" legislation. Among other things, it calls for far more ambitious emissions reduction targets, getting rid of fossil fuel subsidies, creating new public economic institutions to assist in the transition toward the decarbonized economy, ensuring we are creating good jobs for workers in the context of that transition, protecting and strengthening human rights and indigenous rights in that effort while expanding our social safety net with new income supports and decarbonizing public housing, and paying for this transition by increasing taxes on the wealthiest and corporations and financing through a public national bank.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Bardish Chagger (Waterloo, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present petition e-3821, titled “National Defence and Military Operations”. The initiator of this petition and a few supporters from the riding of Waterloo shared concerns directly with me. They also shared the importance of the emissions reduction plan, fighting climate change and their hope for transition toward a green care economy and future.

HEALTH

Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting this petition from my constituents and Canadians across the country who want an end to the vaccine mandates, especially for domestic travel, which is federally regulated. The petitioners note that several reviews and studies have revealed nearly non-existent transmission rates on airplanes. WestJet's chief medical officer said that there were no known records of transmission. Also, the petitioners note that countries around the world have removed their vaccine mandates and restrictions.

Finally, petitioners state that the vaccine mandate imposed on Canadians taking domestic flights, trains and ferries is an unreasonable infringement on their rights and freedoms. The petitioners ask the government to abolish the domestic vaccine passport requirement for Canadian citizens and permanent residents taking domestic flights, and they ask for an end to all federally regulated COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by a host of Canadians who have expressed grave concern about how the Liberals are willing to politicize things like charitable status within this country. These petitioners from across Canada call upon the House of Commons to, one, protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis without discrimination on the basis of political or religious values without the imposition of another values test; and two, affirm the right of Canadians to freedom of expression in Canada. It is an honour to stand with these Canadians and present this petition in the House today.

• (1525)

AGE VERIFICATION SOFTWARE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a number of petitions from hundreds of Canadians across Canada, including my own constituents.

In the first petition, the petitioners are concerned about the accessibility and impact of violent and degrading sexually explicit material online and the impacts on public health, especially on the well-being of women and girls. The petitioners recognize that we cannot say that we believe in preventing sexual violence toward women while allowing pornography companies to freely expose our children to violent sexually explicit imagery day after day, which is a form of child abuse.

They note that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires Canada to develop the means to protect children from forms of media that are injurious to their well-being. As such, the peti-

Routine Proceedings

tioners are calling on the House of Commons to require meaningful age verification on all adult websites.

NORTHERN RESIDENTS TAX DEDUCTION

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition is from folks in my riding who live in the towns of Fox Creek and Swan Hills. These two towns are in northern Alberta.

The petitioners state that the rise in heating costs and other expenses of life has made life more expensive in these communities. They also have to travel great distances to access groceries and shopping centres. The petitioners state that there is an arbitrary line that runs across Alberta preventing Fox Creek and Swan Hills residents from accessing the northern residents living allowance.

The petitioners are asking that the government include Fox Creek and Swan Hills as communities within the prescribed intermediate zone and allow these people to receive the northern living allowance for living in northern Alberta.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am presenting today is from folks across Canada who are concerned that certain charities could be targeted based on their views and forced into a values test. The petitioners note that the Liberals have promised to deny charitable status to groups that they view as being dishonest. This could jeopardize the charitable status of hospitals, houses of worship, schools, homeless shelters and other organizations. We have seen a similar values test applied to the Canada summer jobs grant.

The petitioners are asking the House of Commons to protect and preserve the application of charitable status rules on a politically and ideologically neutral basis, without discrimination on the basis of political or religious views and without the imposition of another values test. They also ask for an affirmation of the freedom of expression for all Canadians.

AGE VERIFICATION SOFTWARE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am presenting today is from Canadians across the country who are concerned about the impact of sexually explicit material, including demeaning and violent material on the Internet. These folks are worried about the consumption of sexually explicit material by young persons and a range of harms, including the development of gender stereotypes and the development of harassment and violence, including sexual harassment and sexual violence particularly against women.

Routine Proceedings

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to enact meaningful age verification. Also, a recommendation was brought forward by the health committee in 2017, so they call for the House to adopt Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my final petition today is from petitioners across the country who want an end to the vaccine mandates, especially for domestic travel, which is federally regulated. The petitioners note that several reviews and studies have revealed that there are non-existent transmission rates on airplanes.

The petitioners state that the vaccine mandates imposed on Canadians taking domestic flights, trains and ferries are an unreasonable infringement on their rights and freedoms. They are asking for an end to all federally regulated COVID-19 vaccine mandates and restrictions.

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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, the following questions will be answered today: Nos. 399, 400, 403, 408, 411, 413 to 416, 421 to 423 and 425.

[Text]

Question No. 399—**Mr. Blaine Calkins:**

With regard to the government's proposal to buy-back firearms from Canadians: (a) which department or agency will be responsible for (i) collecting the firearms, (ii) storing the firearms, (iii) destroying or deactivating the firearms; (b) which department or agency will be responsible for financially reimbursing Canadians; (c) how will Canadians receive the funds for their firearms; (d) how long will Canadians have to wait from surrendering their firearm until they are reimbursed; (e) which law enforcement agencies will be involved in the program; (f) what amount will be paid for each firearm, broken down by type and model; and (g) how was the amount being paid for each type and model of firearm determined?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to bringing forward a buyback program in early 2023 that offers fair compensation to affected owners and businesses while making sure implementation and management are done in a safe and cost-effective manner. This commitment was reaffirmed in the November 2021 Speech from the Throne and the most recent mandate letter for the Minister of Public Safety. Government officials are currently in the process of refining requirements and developing program and implementation options for cabinet consideration.

The government is equally committed to providing parliamentarians and Canadians with information on the design of the buyback program, including collection and transportation, processing facility, compensation, and destruction or deactivation, as it becomes available.

Question No. 400—**Mr. Clifford Small:**

With regard to funding applications received by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency since October 1, 2021: what are the details of each application, including the (i) name of the applicant, (ii) program under which the funding application was made, (iii) type of funding requested (loan, grant, etc.), (iv) date the application was received, (v) current status of the application, (vi) amount of funding approved, if applicable, (vii) location of the applicant, (viii) project description or the purpose of the funding?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, insofar as the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency is concerned, with regard to funding applications received from October 1, 2021 to March 17, 2022, the requested information is available on the Government of Canada's Open Government portal at the following link: <https://search.open.canada.ca/en/gc/>.

Question No. 403—**Mr. Pat Kelly:**

With regard to Access to Information requests received by federal departments and agencies: (a) for each department and agency, how many requests were received in (i) 2018, (ii) 2019, (iii) 2020, (iv) 2021; (b) for each department and agency in (a), how many requests were resolved in each year; (c) for each department and agency in (a), what was the median processing time for requests resolved in those years; (d) for each department and agency in (a), by how much has the median processing time for requests increased since 2019; and (e) for each department and agency in (a), by how much has the backlog of outstanding requests increased since 2019?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, each fiscal year, the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, TBS, collects data on the number of requests received, completed, closed, outstanding, carried over and responded to according to legislative timelines (30 days), and extensions taken, broken down by length of time taken (30 days or less, 31 to 60 days, 61 to 120 days, 121 to 180 days, 181 to 365 days or more than 365 days), as well as the amount of time required to close requests (0 to 30 days, 31 to 60 days, 61 to 120 days, or 121 days or more).

TBS publishes a summary of this information annually in the Access to Information and Privacy Statistical Report, as well as datasets that contain all the statistical data reported by all institutions, broken down by institution, at <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/access-information-privacy/statistics-atip.html>. The information requested can be calculated and compared from year to year based on the published datasets.

Institutions also individually report this information to Parliament in their annual reports on the Access to Information Act and the Privacy Act, which institutions table in Parliament and publish online each fall. The latest available data is for fiscal year 2020-21 (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021). Data for fiscal year 2021-22 is expected to be collected by the end of September 2022 and published by December 31, 2022.

Question No. 408—**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:**

With regard to Canada's representation abroad: (a) why are there no Canadian embassies in Nepal and Armenia, and are there any plans to open one in the near future; (b) why is there currently no Canadian ambassador to France, and are there any plans to appoint one in the near future; and (c) why is there no Canadian ambassador to China since the resignation of the previous one, and are there any plans to appoint one?

Routine Proceedings

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, Canada's bilateral relations with Nepal are supported through the High Commission of Canada in New Delhi and the Consulate of Canada in Nepal. Canada's high commissioner to India is also accredited as Canada's ambassador to Nepal and regularly visits Nepal to advance a range of issues in the bilateral relationship, including diplomatic, trade and development issues. The Consulate of Canada in Nepal, with the support of Canada's honorary consul to Nepal, provides emergency consular services to Canadians in Nepal. Canadian funding to Nepal through both bilateral and multilateral channels averaged \$39.7 million per year between 2014 and 2020. During the pandemic, Canada has also provided significant COVID-19 assistance to Nepal through multilateral channels and through the direct delivery of critical medical supplies from Canada's national emergency strategic stockpile to Kathmandu in June 2021.

The Government of Canada manages its bilateral relations with Armenia through its embassy in Moscow, with Alison LeClaire serving as Canada's ambassador to Armenia. The embassy has continued to foster strong ties with Armenia, including through regular visits to Yerevan, which have continued despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada continues to strengthen its ties with Armenia through a variety of ways, such as the mission undertaken by Special Envoy to the European Union and Europe Stéphane Dion to explore options for Canada to better support Armenian democracy. Building on the joint work of recent years and long-standing people-to-people ties, Special Envoy Dion recently conducted a visit in Armenia and examined options as to how Canada can encourage the ongoing efforts of Armenian civil society, strengthen democratic institutions, grow Armenia's engagement with multilateral institutions, and promote inclusive economic growth. The Government of Canada is also in the process of appointing a new honorary consul in Armenia.

In response to parts (b) and (c) of the question, announcements regarding the appointment of ambassadors to France and China will be made in due course.

Question No. 411—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile and potassium iodide pills: (a) what is the number of potassium iodide pills that Canada possesses; (b) how many of the pills are reserved or designated for (i) military personnel, (ii) medical personnel, (iii) public office holders, (iv) emergency services; (c) how many pills are expired; (d) when was the last time the pills were purchased and how many were purchased at that time; (e) on what date do the most recently purchased pills expire; (f) how many pills have been distributed to each warehouse, broken down by location; and (g) what is the government's plan for how the pills are to be distributed in the event of an emergency?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the national emergency strategic stockpile, or NESS, is a part of the national emergency management critical infrastructure. As such, information on NESS warehouse locations and details on holdings are not released due to security implications.

With regard to the NESS and potassium iodide pills, in response to parts (a) and (e) of the question, the NESS does not disclose specific details of its medical countermeasures for security reasons. In response to part (b), the NESS does not reserve or designate potassium iodide pills by category of user. In response to part (c), the

NESS does not hold any expired potassium iodide pills. In response to part (d), potassium iodide was most recently purchased in 2022, and the NESS does not disclose specific details of its medical countermeasures for security reasons. In response to part (f), the NESS does not disclose locations of its warehouses for security reasons. In response to part (g), the provision of medical care, including the medical response to a nuclear emergency, primarily falls under provincial/territorial, or P/T jurisdiction. If local and P/T supplies are exhausted, potassium iodide can be made available to P/T authorities for use in their response to a nuclear emergency upon request by the appropriate medical or public health authorities.

Question No. 413—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to emergency preparedness for Canadians living within 100 km of a nuclear facility: (a) what are the government's instructions for (i) individual homeowners, (ii) apartment dwellers, (iii) schools, (iv) businesses, (v) hospitals, (vi) seniors' residences, (vii) long-term care facilities, (viii) military installations; and (b) where are each of the instructions mentioned in (a) published?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, provincial and territorial governments have the primary responsibility for managing emergencies within their respective jurisdictions. Any instructions given to Canadians within 100 kilometres of a nuclear power plant would be based on the relevant province's emergency plans and the particular situation. Provincial responsibilities include public alerting and providing instructions to homeowners, apartment dwellers, schools, businesses, hospitals, seniors' residences and long-term care facilities on protective action, which may include evacuation, sheltering and/or the use of potassium iodide, KI, for iodine thyroid blocking, or ITB, and ingestion controls. While military installations and indigenous lands fall within federal jurisdiction, individuals would be instructed to follow the instructions provided by provincial health authorities in an emergency.

Routine Proceedings

Provinces with nuclear power plants have provincial nuclear emergency plans, which detail the preparedness and response actions of the province in the event of a nuclear emergency. New Brunswick's provincial health nuclear emergency plan for the Point Lepreau nuclear generating station can be consulted at <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/h-s/pdf/en/Publications/ProvincialHealthNuclearEmergencyPlan.pdf>, and its Point Lepreau nuclear off-site emergency plan is found at <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ps-sp/pdf/emo/Nuclear/PointLepreau-NOEM.pdf>, while the provincial nuclear emergency response plan, PNERP, for the nuclear power plants in Ontario is found at <https://www.ontario.ca/document/provincial-nuclear-emergency-response-plan-pnerp-master-plan>.

At the federal level, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, CNSC, is responsible, among other things, for maintaining regulatory oversight of nuclear power plants. Regulatory requirements placed on the licensee include robust emergency plans for the plant, a public education program for the local population about the plant and what to do in an emergency, and a requirement for the pre-distribution of KI for the population around a nuclear power plant.

Public Safety Canada maintains the federal emergency response plan, FERP, and is responsible for overall federal coordination on behalf of the Government of Canada in the event of a nuclear emergency requiring a coordinated Government of Canada response. The plan is found at <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/mrgnc-rspns-pln/index-en.aspx>

Health Canada leads the federal nuclear emergency plan, FNEP, which is an annex to the FERP and coordinates scientific and technical support from 18 federal departments for a whole-of-government response to a nuclear emergency. It can be consulted at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-risks-safety/federal-nuclear-emergency-master-plan-part-1.html>

In addition to the FNEP, Health Canada has published guidance documents to assist provincial authorities in developing protection strategies for nuclear emergencies, to help inform the instructions referenced above. Guidance documents include "Generic Criteria and Operational Intervention Levels for Nuclear Emergency Planning and Response", found online at <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.855963/publication.html>, and "Guidance on Planning for Recovery Following a Nuclear or Radiological Emergency", at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-risks-safety/planning-recovery-nuclear-emergency.html>.

Health Canada is committed to protecting the health and safety of Canadians by strengthening nuclear emergency preparedness in Canada and providing guidance, support and recommendations based on the scientific and technical resources of the Government of Canada.

Health Canada works closely with partners across all jurisdictions to test nuclear emergency plans through regular exercises and other reviews as part of an ongoing effort to ensure readiness for a nuclear emergency in Canada or abroad.

Recent exercises in Ontario, with Exercise Unified Command, and New Brunswick, with Synergy Challenge, have shown that all

jurisdictions and the nuclear operators are prepared to respond to a nuclear emergency in Canada. More details on Synergy Challenge can be found at <https://www.nbpower.com/en/safety/nuclear-safety/synergy-challenge-2021>

In 2019, Canada hosted an international peer review of its nuclear emergency preparedness. The review report concluded that Canada had a well-developed and mature nuclear emergency preparedness and response system in place across all levels of government. The report is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/health-risks-safety/radiation/radiological-nuclear-emergencies/how-canada-prepares/international-atomic-energy-agency-emergency-preparedness-review-mission-canada-june-2019.html>

Question No. 414—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) exercises for assistance to civilian protection of Canada's nuclear sites: (a) what is the date of the last exercise, broken down by each regiment or base; and (b) what number of currently active CAF personnel are available or can be made available to protect Canada's nuclear sites?

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Public Safety is the lead coordinating body for the Government of Canada's overall response to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents. The Canadian Armed Forces is responsible for providing support to domestic operations, including chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear incidents, with military expertise, intelligence, and scientific support.

In response to parts (a) and (b), the Canadian Armed Forces remains prepared to respond to requests from the government, and to assist other government departments and law enforcement agencies. This includes supporting and participating in exercises initiated by other government departments and external nuclear industry stakeholders, as well as under the auspices of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD.

Under the auspices of NORAD, the Canadian Armed Forces participates in Operation Noble Eagle, which is an ongoing operation designed to monitor and protect continental airspace. Under this NORAD operation, the Royal Canadian Air Force stands ready to deter and defend against air attacks on critical infrastructure, including nuclear power plants. Operation Noble Eagle processes are exercised, typically on a monthly basis, with Canadian civil authorities.

Additionally, the Canadian Armed Forces participates in the annual NORAD-sponsored exercise Vigilant Shield, which enhances readiness to protect critical infrastructure against air threats, including nuclear facilities.

Routine Proceedings

In terms of civilian-led exercises, the Canadian Armed Forces participated in the exercise Synergy Challenge 2021. The exercise was hosted by New Brunswick Power on October 6-7, 2021. The exercise focused on responding to a hypothetical incident at the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station. The Canadian Joint Operations Command, Joint Task Force Atlantic area, and 403 Squadron from Canadian Forces Base Gagetown provided support to this exercise.

Ultimately, the Canadian Armed Forces stands ready to support the protection of Canada's nuclear sites at the request of the federal government.

Question No. 415—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to action by the current Minister of Environment and Climate Change to prevent eco-terrorism in Canada, since being sworn in as minister: (a) what specific measures, if any, has the minister done to prevent eco-terrorism in Canada; (b) has the minister publicly called for individuals and organizations to refrain from participating in such activity, and, (i) if not, why not, (ii) if so, what are the details; and (c) has the minister been provided with any documents showing the dangers or economic damage caused by eco-terrorism or the threat of eco-terrorism, and, if so, what are the details of all such documents, including the (i) date they were provided to the minister, (ii) sender, (iii) title, (iv) summary of the contents, (v) file number, (vi) type of document?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change denounces the use or threat of violence to achieve personal or societal goals. Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms grants everyone the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. The Government of Canada supports the peaceful and lawful expression of these rights.

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness is the lead for overall counter-terrorism planning, preparedness and response within the Government of Canada.

Question No. 416—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to legal costs incurred by the government in relation to the invocation of the Emergencies Act in 2022, as well as any subsequent legal action: what is the total amount (i) paid out to date, (ii) scheduled to be paid out, on outside legal counsel, broken down by department, agency or other government entity which encountered the expense?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no legal expenses were incurred by the government for outside legal counsel on work related to the invocation of the Emergencies Act in 2022, as well as any subsequent legal action.

There have been no costs paid, or scheduled to be paid, to outside legal counsel.

All advisory and litigation services provided in relation to the invocation of the Emergencies Act in 2022, as well as any subsequent legal action, have been provided internally.

Question No. 421—Mr. Tony Baldinelli:

With regard to hospitality events hosted by Canadian embassies, consulates or missions abroad, since January 1, 2019: (a) how many events were hosted by each embassy, consulate, or mission, broken down by location, and by month; (b) what was the total amount spent on hospitality each month, broken down by location; and (c) what are the details of all events which were attended by more than 20 people, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) location, (iii) number of attendees, (iv) event description or the purpose of the event, (v) total expenditures related to the event?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following reflects a consolidated response approved on behalf of Global Affairs Canada ministers. The department manages an extensive network of 178 missions in 110 countries, which host hospitality events that are necessary for the effective conduct of government business and for courtesy, diplomacy or protocol purposes.

In response to the questions, the department undertook an extensive preliminary search in order to determine the amount of information that would fall within the scope of the question and the amount of time that would be required to prepare a comprehensive response. The information requested is not systematically tracked in a centralized database. The department concluded that producing and validating a comprehensive response to this question would require a manual collection of information that is not possible in the time allotted and could lead to the disclosure of incomplete and misleading information.

Question No. 422—Mr. Warren Steinley:

With regard to the agreement made between the Prime Minister and the leader of the New Democratic Party which was announced on March 22, 2022: what is the estimated cost to implement the items contained in the agreement, broken down by each item?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect their politicians to come together and get to work to help make their lives better. The Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party have agreed to improve the way we approach politics over the next three years for the benefit of Canadians. The parties have identified key policy areas where there is a desire for a similar medium-term outcome.

This work will be focused on growing our economy by creating green jobs that fight the climate crisis, making people's lives more affordable with housing and childcare, and expanding and protecting our healthcare. As the basis for this work, it is fundamental for the parties to advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples. Both parties hope that by approaching this Parliament more collaboratively, we will be able to deliver on these shared policy objectives before the next election.

Both parties believe strongly in Parliament's role to hold the government to account. Nothing in this agreement will undermine that critical function. The parties will not always agree, and they will continue to seek to work with other parties in Parliament on the priorities that are the subject of this agreement and for other objectives. This agreement is about ensuring those differences do not stand in the way of delivering on shared goals for the benefit of each and every Canadian.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 423—Mr. Warren Steinley:**

With regard to the government's response to question Q-302 concerning the timeline for when a decision on whether or not to ban Huawei from Canada's 5G infrastructure will take place and the reference in the response to "appropriate deliberations": (a) why has it taken more than five years for the government to conclude the "appropriate deliberations" related to Huawei; (b) how many times, if any, has the government deliberated about Huawei over the past five years; (c) on what days did the deliberations in (b) take place, and who participated in each deliberation; and (d) why did the government not fulfill its commitment from May 1, 2019, that a decision on Huawei would take place before the 2019 general election?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government takes the security of Canada's telecommunications infrastructure very seriously. In order to protect the integrity of the process and to enable decision-makers to have frank discussions, the answers to these questions are subject to cabinet confidence.

Question No. 425—Mr. John Barlow:

With regard to the Federal Ministerial Coordinating Committee on PEI Potatoes: (a) what are the (i) dates, (ii) locations, (iii) ministers in attendance, for each meeting of the committee which have occurred since January 26, 2022; and (b) what was accomplished, if anything, at each meeting in (a)?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in response to part (a) of the question, since January 26, 2022, the committee has met once, on February 2, 2022, via video conference. The Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, and the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence were in attendance.

In response to part (b) of the question, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, and Ambassador Hillman provided a debrief of their visit to Washington and next steps, and that was followed by a discussion on communications and stakeholder management. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Deputy Minister Forbes provided an update on producer support and assistance and the implications of the ministerial order for Canadian processors.

* * *

*[English]***QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, if the government's responses to Questions Nos. 394 to 398, 401, 402, 404 to 407, 409, 410, 412, 417 to 420 and 424 could be made orders for return, these returns would be tabled immediately.

[Translation]

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*[Text]***Question No. 394—Mr. Randy Hoback:**

With regard to firearms statistics held by the government, and broken down by year since January 1, 2018: (a) how many (i) firearms, (ii) handguns, (iii) long-guns were seized by all police jurisdictions in relation to a gang or organized crime activity; (b) how many (i) firearms, (ii) handguns, (iii) long-guns were seized by the RCMP in relation to a gang or organized crime activity; (c) how many domestically sourced (i) firearms, (ii) handguns, (iii) long-guns were sourced by all police jurisdictions, broken down by type of offense (theft, illegal manufacture) and province of seizure; (d) how many domestically sourced (i) firearms, (ii) handguns, (iii) long-guns were sourced by the RCMP, broken down by type of offense (theft, illegal manufacture) and province of seizure; (e) how many domestically sourced (i) firearms, (ii) handguns, (iii) long-guns were seized and sourced by all police jurisdictions, broken down by type of offense (theft, illegal manufacture) and province of seizure; and (f) how many (i) firearms, (ii) handguns, (iii) long-guns were seized and sourced by the RCMP, broken down by type of offense (theft, illegal manufacture) and province of seizure?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 395—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to firearms statistics held by the government, and broken down by year since January 1, 2018: (a) how many firearms were seized by (i) the RCMP, (ii) the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), (iii) other police forces, broken down by source (domestic or foreign); (b) how many firearms were seized and traced by (i) the RCMP, (ii) the CBSA, (iii) other police forces; (c) how many firearms seized by other police jurisdictions were traced by a police jurisdiction other than the RCMP; (d) how many (i) long-guns, (ii) handguns, (iii) restricted firearms, (iv) prohibited firearms were traced by all police services, broken down by source (domestic or foreign); (e) how many (i) long-guns, (ii) handguns, (iii) restricted firearms, (iv) prohibited firearms were traced by the RCMP, broken down by source (domestic or foreign); (f) how many (i) long-guns (ii) handguns, (iii) restricted firearms, (iv) prohibited firearms' source (domestic or foreign) could not be traced across all police services; and (g) how many of the (i) long-guns, (ii) handguns, (iii) restricted firearms, (iv) prohibited firearms' source could not be traced by the RCMP?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 396—Ms. Rachel Blaney:

With regard to the Federal Ministerial Coordinating Committee on PEI Potatoes and the ongoing trade disruption with the United States: (a) what are the (i) dates, (ii) specific topics, (iii) deliverables discussed at each of the committee meetings; (b) what is the total amount of federal government funding allocated to the operations of the committee; (c) what is the total amount of federal funding allocated to the Prince Edward Island farmers since the trade disruption and is the federal government planning to provide additional funding to ensure that farmers are compensated for the total yield of their crops; (d) what are the (i) dates, (ii) specific topics, (iii) deliverables discussed at each meeting between the Minister of Agriculture and the United States Secretary of Agriculture since the beginning of the trade disruption; and (e) does the Government of Canada continue to allow Idaho table potatoes in Canada despite a recent detection of a quarantine pest (Potato Cyst Nematode) in Idaho?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 397—Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:

With regard to the \$15 federal minimum wage, since coming into effect on December 29, 2021, broken down by economic sector, size of business, province and territory: (a) how many workers benefitted from a wage adjustment following the coming into effect of the federal minimum wage; (b) how many workers in the federally-regulated private sector are currently paid the federal minimum wage; (c) among the workers in (a), how many work (i) full-time, (ii) part-time; and (d) what is the actual federal minimum wage adjusted for the increase in the consumer price index?

(Return tabled)

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 398—Mr. Blaine Calkins:**

With regard to the government's current advertising campaign to reduce gun violence: (a) how much is the campaign spending on (i) radio, (ii) television, (iii) online, including social media, (iv) other forms of advertising; (b) how much was spent developing the ads for each part of (a); (c) what is the (i) start, (ii) end dates of each part of the advertising campaign, broken down by platform; and (d) what are the details of all contracts related to the campaign, including, for each, (i) the vendor, (ii) the amount or value, (iii) the description of goods or services provided, (iv) whether the contract was sole-sourced?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 401—Mr. Clifford Small:

With regard to funding applications received by the government under the Small Craft Harbours program since October 1, 2021: what are the details of each application, including the (i) name of the applicant, (ii) location, (iii) type of funding requested (loan, grant, etc.), (iv) date the application was received, (v) current status of the application, (vi) amount of funding approved, if applicable, (vii) project description or the purpose of the funding?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 402—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to applications by federal employees for exemptions to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate on religious or medical grounds: (a) for each federal department or agency, how many exemption applications on medical grounds were received; (b) for each federal department or agency, how many exemption applications on religious grounds were received; (c) how many applications in (a) and (b) were approved; (d) how many of the rejected applications in (a) and (b) have prompted grievances by the respective employees' unions; (e) of the grievances in (d), how many have been resolved to date; (f) of the grievances in (e), how many were resolved by accepting or confirming rejection of the application respectively; (g) what guidance did the government provide to management in federal departments and agencies with respect to evaluating applications in (a) and (b); (h) what criteria did management use in evaluating applications in (a) and (b); and (i) how were discussions between management and employees applying the exemptions in (a) or (b) documented?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 404—Mr. Pat Kelly:

With regard to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the commitments in the 2016 and 2017 federal budgets to spend, respectively, \$444.4 and \$523.9 million (combined total of \$968.3 million over five years) to combat tax evasion, as well as the claim by the CRA that "The CRA remains on track to spend the budget investments over the 5-year period for which they have been outlined": (a) as of the end of the fiscal year 2016-17, how much of the \$41.8 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2016 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; (b) as of the end of the fiscal year 2017-18, how much of the \$62.8 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2016 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; (c) as of the end of the fiscal year 2017-18, how much of the \$54.9 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2017 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; (d) as of the end of the fiscal year 2018-19, how much of the \$85.7 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2016 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; (e) as of the end of the fiscal year 2018-19, how much of the \$78.1 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2017 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; (f) as of the end of the fiscal year 2019-20, how much of the \$98.6 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2016 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; (g) as of the end of the fiscal year 2019-20, how much of the \$77.6 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2017 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; (h) as of the end of the fiscal year 2020-21, how much of the \$155.5 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2016 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans; and (i) as of the end of the fiscal year 2020-21, how much of the \$127.6 million budgeted for cracking down on tax evasion and combatting tax avoidance in budget 2017 had actually been (i) spent, (ii) used, to fund employee benefit plans?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 405—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to the response to question Q-143, tabled in the House of Commons on January 31, 2022, on which, on page six of the English version the fourth line from the bottom reads "3236.0-Massage Therapists 672", and broken down by fiscal year starting in 2015-16: (a) how many temporary foreign workers in this employment sector (i) applied for work permits, (ii) received work permits, (iii) came to Canada and were employed in this sector; (b) what is the numerical breakdown of permits sponsored by individual companies and organizations; (c) what steps were taken to ensure that these individuals were not forced into sexual human trafficking when in Canada; (d) how many of these individuals were alleged or found to have been trafficked into sex work; and (e) what enforcement action was taken by (i) Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, (ii) Employment and Social Development Canada, (iii) the Canada Border Services Agency, (iv) the RCMP, (v) provincial police, (vi) municipal police, (vii) any other government department or agency, to protect individuals that were alleged or found to have been trafficked into sex work?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 406—Mr. Brad Redekopp:

With regard to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP), human trafficking and sexual slavery: (a) since the use of the TFWP to actively recruit and sell individuals into sexual slavery in the early 2000s, what internal policy safeguards does (i) Employment and Social Development Canada, (ii) Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, (iii) the Canada Border Services Agency, (iv) the RCMP, have in place to prevent the program from being exploited as a human trafficking route as it once was; (b) what protections are in place for vulnerable individuals in job categories that are used as sex work in Canada such as, but not limited to, massage therapists; (c) how many complaints has each department or agency received, broken down by fiscal year, starting in 2015-16 to present, and job category for unwanted sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual trafficking; (d) of the complaints in (c), how many were (i) investigated, (ii) founded, (iii) unfounded, and what enforcement actions were taken; and (e) are Canadian companies still eligible to receive temporary foreign workers if complaints against them were founded, and if so, why?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 407—Mr. Don Davies:

With regard to the mandate letter of the Minister of Health and the direction in the letter to invest in the study of the long-term health impacts of COVID-19, including the effects of long COVID on different groups, notably vulnerable populations and children: what is the total funding allocated for this purpose, broken down by (i) fiscal year, (ii) department or agency, (iii) initiative, (iv) amount?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 409—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the Climate Action Incentive Fund (CAIF) in Manitoba, broken down by year since 2019: (a) how much revenue was collected through the government's carbon tax, broken down by how much was collected in each (i) municipality, (ii) university, (iii) hospital; and (b) how much of that collected revenue was returned through the CAIF's Municipalities, Universities, Schools and Hospitals Retrofit stream, broken down by (i) municipality, (ii) university, (iii) hospital?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 410—Mr. Dan Mazier:

With regard to the Lake Audy Campground in Riding Mountain National Park, broken down by year since 2017: (a) how much revenue was collected by Parks Canada from camping fees, broken down by type of campsite, including (i) regular campsite, (ii) group camping, (iii) oTENTik camping; and (b) how many registered campers visited the Lake Audy Campground, broken down by type of campsite, including (i) regular campsite, (ii) group camping, (iii) oTENTik camping?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 412—Mrs. Cheryl Gallant:**

With regard to the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF): (a) what is the total inventory by number for (i) radiation protective HazMat suits with breathing gear, (ii) filled oxygen tanks, (iii) robotic, handheld, vehicle mounted, personal dosimeter and radiation detection devices, (iv) decontamination stations, (v) positive pressure safety shelters; and (b) for each item mentioned in (a), (i) where are the items stored, (ii) what are the expiration dates, (iii) on what day were they most recently inspected, (iv) what number passed inspection, (v) what number is currently assigned to CAF personnel deployed in Eastern Europe?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 417—Mr. Blake Desjarlais:

With regard to the government's use of Microsoft Teams, broken down by department: (a) how many employees use Microsoft Teams, reflected as a number and total percentage; and (b) what is the chat-retention policy of the department for one-to-one, group and meeting chat messages?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 418—Mr. Dave MacKenzie:

With regard to the Prime Minister's trip to Europe from March 6 to 11, 2022: (a) excluding security personnel, what are the names and titles of the passengers on the Prime Minister's flights to and from Europe; (b) what are the (i) dates, (ii) times, (iii) location of each meeting attended by either the Prime Minister, other ministers, or any other government representative during the trip; and (c) for each meeting in (b), who were the attendees, including what organization each attendee was representing?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 419—Mr. Matt Jeneroux:

With regard to the government's Black Entrepreneurship Program: (a) how much of the \$265 million allocated to the program has been distributed to date; and (b) what are the details of all projects which have been funded through the program, including, for each, the (i) recipient, (ii) amount of federal contribution, (iii) project description, (iv) date of the announcement, (v) date the recipient actually received the federal funding, (vi) project location, (vii) file number?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 420—Mr. Robert Kitchen:

With regard to electric vehicle charging stations located on property owned by the government, including Parliament Hill, or by government agencies such as Parks Canada: what was the daily average number of cars that used each charging station, broken down by month, since January 1, 2020, and by location of the charging station?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 424—Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman:

With regard to bonuses paid out to government officials in the 2020-21 fiscal year, broken down by department or agency: (a) what was the total amount paid out in bonuses; and (b) how many and what percentage of officials (i) at or above the executive (EX) level (or equivalent), (ii) below the EX level (or equivalent), received bonuses?

(Return tabled)

• (1530)

[English]

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

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, be read the second time and referred to a committee, of the amendment and of the amendment to the amendment.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert had three minutes and 25 seconds remaining when his speech was interrupted.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was saying that we are experiencing four major crises in Canada, and I was talking about the housing crisis. I was explaining that there are some measures in the budget that we find a bit dangerous, particularly with regard to speeding up the construction of housing with the municipalities.

In my riding, La Halte du Coin is an organization for the homeless with high acceptance rates. It was set up during the pandemic when there was an outbreak in downtown Longueuil. I want to recognize Nicolas Gildersleeve, the director, and the entire team at La Halte du Coin for the incredible job they do.

All of Longueuil pitched in to make this organization a reality. The homelessness and housing sector in Longueuil is extremely good. Some people have been working in that field for 25 or 30 years. They are experts, very committed and empathetic individuals. I love them and I learn something new from them every time I see them.

Last Thursday, I left here to participate in a fundraiser for La Halte du Coin. Longueuil's entire housing sector was there already. It was remarkable. I wrote down a list of everyone who participated and I thought I would have a chance to name them all, but I really do not have enough time left.

The last time I went to La Halte du Coin, at the beginning of April, the organization was in need of volunteers. Like many such organizations, they need more people. I went by and spent two hours around supertime serving meals.

That is unique and it is what I wanted to talk about. La Halte du Coin is located in a church on Sainte-Foy Boulevard in Longueuil. The organization serves meals during the day and has 30 beds at night. Around 6 p.m., they ask everyone to leave so that they can get the beds ready. About 50 people had a meal and then went outside to smoke while they waited. That evening in early April was cold and rainy.

After helping to serve supper and set up the beds with the people who were there, I went outside. There were 50 people waiting. It was very upsetting to see because there was not going to be enough room for everyone. Fifty meals were served but there were only 30 beds inside. Those who were unable to get a bed slept on the ground outside the building, in the parking lot or in the ATM vestibule not far from there.

It is terrible. We are unable to house all those who need it in this country. There are many causes for homelessness, including mental health issues and addiction. Homelessness is a complex issue.

I was talking to the people who were there, the homeless. I had the opportunity to talk to them at suppertime. I got the feeling that these are very proud people and that they are not happy about having to rely on a resource for homeless people. They wanted to tell me that soon, in one or two months, they would be able to find a place to live, that they were happy, that they had a job lined up and that things were going to work out. Sometimes that does not happen, but I got the feeling that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to interrupt the member because his time was up a little while ago. I am sure he will have an opportunity to say more during questions and comments.

[English]

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member is talking about housing. It is important for us to recognize that there is a need for strong leadership on the housing file because it is not only Ottawa that plays a role. The provincial governments, municipal governments and different stakeholders all have a role to play.

I think what we have seen from Ottawa over the last number of years is very strong leadership, whether through the first-ever national housing strategy, the historic amount of public dollars being invested in housing or the support of programs such as housing co-ops.

I am wondering if the member would reflect on the importance of the role that the three levels of government in particular need to play to increase the housing stock in Canada.

• (1535)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, let me begin by apologizing for contradicting my colleague, but when he says the federal government has led by example, that is not true.

According to a report published two or three months ago, the government has built only 35,000 units since 2017. In the budget, the government promised to build 100,000 units. We do not even know how that is going to work.

In a newspaper interview a few days ago, the director of the National Housing Council, the organization that was created as part of the National Housing Strategy, said that the strategy had met the needs of only 4.8% of households with urgent housing needs. The point of the strategy is to help the most vulnerable, but right now, it just is not cutting it.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, with respect to the budget implementation act, I know one issue that I have been following very closely is the issue of direction and control. Unreasonable regulations exist in the

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context of charities law. The budget finally recognized there was a problem with this, but at the same time there are some concerns about whether the solution offered is adequate.

We need to fix these regulations. We need to work across party lines to get this done, because right now they are piling millions of dollars' worth of red tape every year onto charitable organizations. I wonder if my colleague has a comment about the need to reform these regulations and remove red tape so that charities can do their work unencumbered.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, I am not really sure I understood the question. In any case, one thing is certain: When I speak with representatives from community and housing organizations, especially those in my riding, the issue of red tape comes up often.

It is important to understand that the housing sector, much like all community sectors in Quebec, has limited means and is short on employees. Moreover, the labour shortage affects them dramatically. There is a reason why Halte du Coin was asking for volunteers. It is because they do not have enough employees and they cannot pay \$150 an hour. The salaries they offer are lower than public service salaries, so they have trouble retaining people with specific expertise. They all mention the red tape and paperwork, especially for grant applications.

I think there must be a way to harmonize all levels of government so that the criteria are more straightforward and the focus is on helping people, as it should be.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member so much for the advocacy he is doing here, but also for the advocacy he has mentioned in the past that he does in his riding.

I want to ask the member about government loans for municipalities and cities. What are you hearing in Quebec about access to operating funds from the government for housing in cities?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I will not tell her what I am hearing, but I am sure the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert is able to do that.

I want to remind the member to address her questions through the Chair and not directly to the member.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert has one minute to respond.

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, there are indeed programs in Quebec. One of them was created after the federal government pulled out in 1993. It is called AccèsLogis Québec, and it is a very good program. Unfortunately, there is some uncertainty right now as to whether it will survive. Like everything else, it lacks funding.

Government Orders

At the federal level, we should focus on programs that really work, such as the rapid housing initiative, the RHI. There are some interesting programs that work but that do not have a big impact on affordability. The RHI is a very good program. The problem is that there is not enough money in it.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

It is an honour to rise in the House to speak to a bill to implement certain provisions of our 2022 budget.

Before I get into my speech, I want to acknowledge my family and express my gratitude to them, to my husband and best friend, and to my daughter Ellie, who, although she might not know it, motivates me to speak to the issues important to me, such as gun control, affordability, the environment or our fight against climate change.

My family has not seen me much since the House resumed in January. I was in Ottawa, either in the House of Commons or in my office, fulfilling a long-time dream of mine to work on drafting a federal budget.

We set ourselves an objective to draft a budget focused on affordability and that was also fiscally responsible and would enable Canada to maintain its favourable fiscal position, with the lowest net debt in the G7 and the smallest deficit among G7 countries.

● (1540)

[English]

I would like to take a moment to pause and note that the statistics I just mentioned mean that we, as a federal government, went from spending very much in an emergency context to support small businesses and Canadians through the pandemic to very quickly adjusting once that period of emergency was behind us in order to be fiscally responsible and to ensure that our spending would go down as global inflation was rising.

What is also interesting is that this pivot was not only done successfully, but it is also causing experts, including experts at the IMF, to predict that our growth here in Canada will be the highest among the G7 countries this year, as well as next year.

[Translation]

This is first and foremost a budget that addresses today's specific needs in the areas of housing, the environment, reconciliation, inclusion and equity. It also had to address needs arising from the current geopolitical context.

I am someone who believes that one of the federal government's roles is to ensure the sovereignty of its territory and its national defence. It must ensure that the country is prepared for any eventuality.

That is why our budget includes historic investments in defence, to support Ukraine in its fight for freedom and democracy, including our own.

[English]

The war in Ukraine is also causing ripple effects in economies throughout the world. Energy prices in particular have soared as a result of the war, and food prices as well. Canadians are feeling this at the pump and the supermarket. This is a period of global inflation. That is why our government has taken unprecedented steps to ensure we were putting money back into the pockets of Canadians. I think often of the Canada child benefit because it is not only a cheque that is received every month by families, but also a program that has lifted over a million Canadians out of poverty, including 300,000 children.

There are many other programs, and this budget provides many other proposals, including a one-time payment for Canadians having difficulty finding access to affordable housing and subsidizing dental care. These are programs that are going to help Canadians meet the rising cost of living.

It is also why this budget proposes the creation of a historic number of new homes, and we are making it easier for people to buy their first home through a tax-free first home savings account, as well as through doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit, and many other measures as part of this historic housing program we have put in place.

[Translation]

This budget also tackles the climate crisis by implementing our ambitious plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% by 2030 and get to net-zero by 2050.

To achieve this, we will establish a national network of charging stations and ensure that 100% of vehicles sold will be zero emission by 2035.

We are investing more to protect more of our land and oceans, and providing funding to Environment and Climate Change Canada to fight plastic pollution.

● (1545)

[English]

There are so many aspects of this budget that I would like to discuss. I touched on housing and the environment. I could speak at length about the importance of ensuring that more and growing small businesses would have access to our 9% small business tax rate, a measure in this budget that I care so deeply about. There are also incredible measures in this budget in order to ensure a bold and successful immigration plan, which would help us bring newcomers to Canada and also deal with the labour shortage we are experiencing.

In the short amount of time I have left, I would like to reflect on our history. During the First World War, Canadians fought bravely and played an instrumental role in the Allies' victory. We have all heard the stories of the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the Hundred Days campaign. Canadians showed their strength, time and time again, in the face of the enemy. Just 21 years later, we found ourselves in the Second World War, and Canada once again played a vital role in ensuring victory against the fascist Axis Powers.

Yesterday was Victory in Europe Day, which celebrates the surrender of Nazi Germany and the liberation of Europe. As I walked to Parliament today, I saw beautiful tulip bulbs everywhere. I saw those red tulips on every corner of our capital city. I thought of the role Canada played in liberating Europe, and this beautiful yearly offering from the Netherlands to honour the role played there by our Canadian men and women in uniform. As we all know, following the Second World War, Canada played a leading role in the establishment of the United Nations and its all-important peacekeeping force.

If we do not know our past, we cannot know our future. Canada has always played an outsized role in setting the world aright again. We do so today with the provision of support, particularly the provision of weapons, for Ukraine, and Canada was among the first, ensuring our initial deliveries of weapons arrived before the invasion.

The current war also makes clear that we must continue to strengthen NATO. I believe that Canada must and will continue to be a leader among nations, and I am encouraged and look forward to welcoming Sweden, Finland and, yes, hopefully and ultimately, Ukraine into NATO.

We know that this decision rests with the entire membership of NATO, and that consent to join NATO has to be unanimous. However, I feel it is important, considering that I have personally been sanctioned by Russia, to continue to make my view known publicly, both here in this chamber and elsewhere.

As a member of the foreign affairs committee, I have been deeply engaged in Canada's response to the illegal war begun by President Putin. As the ambassador-designate of Ukraine, my new friend recently arrived in Canada, told us just a few days ago in response to my questions in committee, what Ukraine needs now, first and foremost, is weapons. This is not to diminish the crucial and important role that humanitarian aid plays and the diplomatic support that Canada has been providing.

However, when Ukrainians are staring down a tank that is poised to hit a school, a shelter or a residential area, what they need are anti-tank missiles. When Ukrainians are fighting by night, what they need are night-vision goggles. When they fight by day, what they need are weapons. Our budget includes \$500 million to continue to support their fight.

I hope that all members in this House will support our budget.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I agree with many of the things my friend and colleague said, at least with respect to our needed engagement in the world.

Respectfully, the government was a little behind. I recall the first throne speech the government came out with in 2015 talked about the need for “a leaner military.” We have been pushing the government, prior to this invasion, to do more in terms of sanctions and weapons supplies.

I hope the member will continue to urge her government to do even more, because I think she put her finger on the right point in terms of the critical importance of supplying weapons.

Government Orders

The member spoke about the issue of debt at the beginning of her speech. Sometimes we make the mistake of comparing Canadian federal debt to other countries' federal debt, when actually in Canada we need to take into consideration the total level of government debt. Canada has very high total government debt when we consider the fact that many of the services that are provided in our country are actually provided by other levels of government.

Federal debt has more than doubled in the time the Prime Minister has been in office. I would submit that, if we are so far in debt that we would not be able to afford to lead anymore, is the member concerned about the debt levels and the impact as interest rates rise?

• (1550)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, there was much in that question. I would like to thank my colleague for recognizing the work that Canada has done to continue to support Ukraine. I would also like to thank my colleague for his work at our foreign affairs committee. However, I do believe that it was former prime minister Harper who cut the most from our national defence investments. I believe that we need to continue investing in our defensive capabilities, and this budget goes a long way in order to do just that.

With respect to the economic aspect of his question, I would point him to the consistently falling net debt-to-GDP ratio in our budget. I would point him to the statistics I mentioned on having the lowest deficit in the G7. This is ensuring that our economy continues to function well and to grow, and that we continue to attract foreign direct investment at unprecedented rates, which we are.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I would like to hear her thoughts about immigration and resources, particularly when it comes to temporary foreign workers.

I am a bit disappointed that there is not much about that in Bill C-19. There are a few general measures on economic targets, but they will not really affect Quebec, because Quebec makes its own selections in the economic classes. What we need is significant resources to process applications.

Again this morning, I spoke to an asparagus farmer in my riding who had asked to have his workers by April 23. He was so worried he would not get any workers at all that he was prepared to pay them to sit around and do nothing until May 10. Tomorrow is May 10 and he is still short six workers. That is a loss of \$100,000.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I completely agree that we need to invest more resources in our immigration system. Members from across the country and I are also getting calls. I know that there are major delays, but there is also work to do in partnership with the Government of Quebec.

Government Orders

We set federal immigration levels, and Quebec set other immigration levels, which unfortunately are lower.

I think that everyone here in the House is capable of working together to ensure that we have enough workers in the country so that our small businesses and farmers can be as successful as we all know they can be.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I note that in the budget speech there was no mention of health care workers and no mention of the very important care economy. With this week being National Nursing Week, I wanted to ask the member about this. There is a top-up in the budget for health care, but the health care workforce is at a crisis point. Will there be additional investments made by the government to make sure that the labour shortages in the nursing profession are addressed?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, I sincerely appreciate this question. I would point the member to the fact that we, as the federal government, must respect the jurisdictions of different layers of government, and health care is provincial jurisdiction. We are absolutely interested in sitting down with provinces and territories to come to an agreement, but, as I am sure she is aware, we would need the provinces to take the lead on such a matter.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise here to speak to Bill C-19, the budget implementation act.

This pandemic has been incredibly difficult for many Canadians, and now we have a housing crisis, rising inflation and a labour shortage, which are all adding to these difficulties. Our health care system has come close to a breaking point on several occasions. Thousands have died. Millions have been seriously ill. Doctors, nurses and all health care workers have been under unbelievable stress and physical exhaustion. I want to say a personal thanks to all of those who cared for us and our loved ones over the past two years and more.

Businesses and workers suffered through a series of lockdowns. Nine million Canadians found themselves out of work, without income and with no way to pay their rent, their mortgage and their grocery bills. Companies were in similar dire straits. Fortunately, this House came together to pass measures that kept people financially afloat and measures that allowed businesses to keep employees on the payroll. However, last year, we learned that still over half of Canadians were only \$200 from insolvency at the end of every month, and that was before the housing crisis reached another level of unbelievable house prices, monthly rents and rental availability.

The NDP is focused on helping Canadians, making sure they get the health care they need no matter where they live or their level of income, making sure they can find a home they can afford, making sure they have the means to live out their senior years in dignity, and making sure that those Canadians who did well through the pandemic, some of whom made billions of dollars in profits, pay their fair share.

This is the first budget after the Liberals and the NDP announced their confidence and supply agreement, so I would like to highlight

some of the gains that we achieved in this agreement by using our power here in the House of Commons to help Canadians.

It is fair to say that the big gains have come in creating a stronger health care system here in Canada. When we created the universal health care system that we are so proud of, several aspects of health care were left out. At the top of that list is dental care, so I am proud that we will be bringing dental care coverage to all Canadians who need it, through this agreement. It would start with free dental care for all children without coverage this year, and by the third year we would have dental care for everyone with a household income of less than \$90,000 who does not have coverage now.

I have already spoken in this House about the impact this would have. It would be literally life-changing for so many lower-income Canadians, who would have access to dental care for the first time, access that so many other Canadians just take for granted. It would not only change people's lives, but it would save our broader health care system millions of dollars. Alex Munter, the CEO of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, has told us that dental restoration is the most common surgery carried out in that hospital, restoration that is needed because of the lack of preventive care. This program would keep kids out of hospital. I have to remind Canadians that both the Liberals and the Conservatives voted down this exact initiative less than a year ago, so the NDP is very proud that it would move ahead to change lives for the better.

Similarly, the confidence and supply agreement ensures that universal pharmacare would be added to our health care coverage. Canada is the only country with comprehensive health care coverage that does not include prescribed medications in that coverage. This program would not only save lives, as 10% of Canadians simply cannot afford to fill their prescriptions, but it would save the Canadian economy more than \$4 billion a year through the power of a single buyer when we purchase medications. More savings, over \$10 billion per year according to some estimates, would accrue by simply keeping people out of hospital and keeping them healthier through proper medication.

I recently spoke here about the crisis in long-term care, so I will not go into detail, other than to say that one of the other points in our agreement was to bring a safe long-term care act, which would go a long way toward ensuring that our seniors can live in dignity.

The issue that is critical for many Canadians, certainly in my riding, is housing: the impossible cost of buying a house, the ridiculous rental rates and the extreme difficulty in even finding rental accommodation. My riding has an unenviable combination of high housing prices, with the average house price in my riding running at about \$1 million, and low incomes. The average single income in my riding is around \$30,000.

• (1555)

In our agreement with the Liberals, the NDP won an extension of the rapid housing initiative, which would add \$1.5 billion in funding to build more than 4,500 affordable housing units.

We have also made the government's rental construction financing initiative actually work for renters across the country. Previously, this program, which is the biggest CMHC program for rental housing, was doing little or nothing to provide affordable housing. It was giving money to developers to build rental units that were then being rented at an average of 50% above the average market value, so we were giving out taxpayers' money to help developers charge excessive rent. The NDP has fixed this, to ensure that 40% of these units will be rented out at below 80% of average market rent. In my riding, that means the production of units that will be offered at \$900 per month, compared to the former Liberal rates of \$2,000 per month.

We still have more to do. The NDP has pledged to build half a million units of affordable housing over 10 years, to make up the effort lost over the past 30 years, after successive Liberal and Conservative governments got out of the affordable housing game. We will continue pressing the government to make these necessary investments so that all Canadians can have a roof over their head.

I will briefly mention that I am disappointed that this budget seems to do little for the fight against climate change. In particular, I have real concerns that billions of dollars will be given to highly profitable oil and gas companies to try to implement carbon capture technologies that will likely delay rather than hasten our shift to a cleaner energy future.

When balancing budgets, governments too often forget the revenue side of the equation. During the pandemic, most Canadians have suffered financially, while a few in the 1% have made extraordinary profits. The NDP had called for an excessive profits tax, as well as a wealth tax of 1% for those Canadians who have assets over \$10 million, to make sure the costs of the pandemic are borne more by those who can afford it rather than have the burden fall on the majority of Canadians who have suffered.

While the Liberals did not agree to our reasonable request, they have agreed to levy a one-time excess profit tax of 15% for banks and a permanent 1.5% tax increase for banks. These two measures will recoup over \$6 billion in taxes over the next five years. The NDP would have preferred that the excess profit tax be extended to big corporations such as big oil companies and big box retailers such as Walmart, which made a \$3.5-billion profit in the fourth quarter of 2021 alone. We are also disappointed that these taxes are not included in this budget implementation act.

I will finish by mentioning one small victory in excise tax reform that stems from my private member's bill, Bill C-267, which would remove the alcohol excise tax from low-alcohol beer. Low-alcohol wine and spirits do not face this tax. None of Canada's trading partners charge this tax. My bill was meant to make a common sense change to the excise tax to level the playing field. The beer industry was paying more than \$1 million every year in excise tax on low-alcohol beer. The beer industry and millions of Canadians who drink low-alcohol beer, including me, are all happy to see this bill incorporated into this budget implementation act.

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I was disappointed to see that other issues stemming from the changes to the Excise Act were not dealt with in this budget. Many wineries in my riding will be paying excise tax for the first time, since their exemption was eliminated after a challenge at the World Trade Organization. Wine Growers Canada has been calling for permanent trade legal support for the industry to match the supports provided by other major wine-producing countries. The government has offered temporary 18-month support, but I was hoping for a more long-lasting measure that would really make a difference in this important industry.

The NDP will continue working to make life better for Canadians. I believe this bill is a step in the right direction, but we have a long journey to go.

• (1600)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I look at the budget from a holistic approach. There are many things within the budget one can talk about. When I reflect on the last federal election, Canadians did send a message that whether one was in government or in opposition, the expectation was that people would take their roles in a very responsible fashion.

Part of what we have witnessed over the last number of weeks and months is that there seems to be a higher sense of co-operation and recognition that by working together we can be more effective at getting things done for Canadians in all regions of the country. That does not limit an opposition party to work with the government and at the same time be a critic of the government. Could my friend provide his thoughts on that?

• (1605)

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I would agree with the member for Winnipeg North. Most Canadians and constituents I talk to want politicians to collaborate and act collegially to create the best for Canadians and to make sure we are working here to make lives better for Canadians.

That is what the NDP has been concentrating on. We were very happy to work on this agreement with the Liberals because they agreed to put forward several pieces of legislation that we have been putting forward and they have been voting against. However, they have agreed to do that because we know it will make life better for Canadians.

Yes, we still have plenty to criticize the Liberals for, and we will continue doing that, but I think this is what Canadians want to see.

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Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, NDP members keep referring to carbon capture and storage. Carbon capture and storage is happening right now. It is happening in my constituency and in other places. There is an existing project that received a substantial amount of public funds, but there is a new project that is being developed, the Polaris project, built entirely with private funds, taking advantage of carbon credits. This is the private sector investing in carbon capture technology, benefiting from carbon credits and doing so in a way that reduces emissions while creating jobs and opportunities.

It is really hard for me to understand politicians in this place who say they care about the environment attacking technology that works, that reduces emissions, and seemingly attacking it only on the basis that the private sector is involved. It is as if the NDP is not so much motivated by concern for the environment as it is by just a general antipathy toward any kind of private sector development or companies involved in the oil and gas sector trying to be part of the solution.

Will NDP members recognize the reality that carbon capture and storage works, that it is working now, and take the opportunity to at least see it in action—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We will have to allow the hon. member to answer.

The hon. member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay.

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I am not so much concerned about carbon capture and storage because the private sector is involved. What I am concerned about is that the oil and gas sector is involved and is using that carbon capture and storage technique to basically pump more oil and gas out of the ground. It is enhanced oil recovery.

It has been going on for years in the United States. There is a lot of data to show that it does not work in terms of reducing the amount of emissions into the atmosphere overall. It is really designed to get more oil and gas out of the ground, which will be burned and create more emissions. That is why we are concerned about this kind of carbon capture and storage.

[Translation]

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech.

At the beginning of his speech, he spoke a lot about the need for new housing. However, the housing announced in the budget will not be available for another two or three years, because housing cannot be built instantaneously. Still, there may be a way to help people find housing.

For example, in some regions, Airbnb has taken over 20, 25 or 30 housing units so that it can profit off of renting them out by the day or the week.

Would this not be a way to control these companies, to ensure that these units remain permanent rental units for residents?

• (1610)

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for that important question. Certainly in my riding, short-term rentals such as Airbnb are a huge part of the housing problem, because everybody wants to come to my riding for a holiday. I would comment that most of the laws regarding Airbnb are municipal and provincial, but I would certainly be happy to enter into that debate here if it were put forward.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Niagara West.

I would like to quote a fiscal Conservative, who stated:

Canadians want to know that the principles guiding government are ones that they share.

Here are our principles.

First, governments created the deficit burden. And so governments must resolve it—by focusing first in their own backyards—by getting spending down, not by putting taxes up.

Second, our fiscal strategy will be worth nothing if at the end of the day we have not provided hope for jobs and for growth. We must focus on getting growth up at the same time as we strive to get spending down.

Third, we must be frugal in everything we do. Waste in government is simply not tolerable.

Fourth, we must forever put aside the old notion that new government programs require additional spending. They don't. What they do require is the will to shut down what doesn't work and focus on what can. That is why a central thrust of our effort is reallocation. Whether on the spending side or on the revenue side, every initiative in this budget reflects a shift from lower to higher priority areas.

...finally, we must always be fair and compassionate. It is the most vulnerable whose voices are often the least strong. We must never let the need to be frugal become an excuse to stop being fair.

That was former finance minister Paul Martin in his 1996 budget speech. He understood how to create jobs and growth: It was to focus on growth at the same time as getting spending down and not putting taxes up. It was to forever put aside the old notion that new government programs required additional spending.

This budget in front of the House today does the opposite. It increases taxes. It increases spending, and spends on consumption rather than on investment. This is an approach the current government has taken since it came to office in 2015, and it is not working. In fact, the government admits to this in its own budget.

On page 25 of the budget document, there is a chart entitled, "Average Potential Annual Growth in Real GDP per capita, Selected OECD Countries, 2020-2060". In this chart, Canada is dead last. It is an indictment of the economic policies of the government over the past six years. While the budget pays lip service to jobs and growth, it does not have a credible plan to create them.

Here is what the CEO of RBC, David McKay, said recently about the government's economic policies. RBC is one of the largest private-sector employers in Canada. He stated:

Tax and spend to me is like eating Sugar Pops for breakfast. You feel really good for an hour and you feel crappy by noon, at the end of the day. And that's what tax-and-spend gives you. It doesn't give you sustainable prosperity.

The budget increases taxes. In fact, it levies a new tax on significant financial institutions, which have been one of the few sectors of growth in the Canadian economy in recent years.

The budget increases government spending. It calls for more than \$56 billion in new spending over the next six years. That comes on top of the additional spending that was announced in last fall's economic update. That, in turn, comes on top of the additional spending announced in last year's budget. In fact, the government is now spending \$70 billion a year more than it did before the pandemic hit. That is more than 3% of GDP, which is an incredible increase in government spending.

• (1615)

Despite all this new spending, the government is not allocating spending in the right places. For example, the spending does not reflect the need to strengthen Canada's defence and security and the need to uphold our international commitments.

All of this new spending announced in the budget in last fall's economic update, and in last year's budget, is not going to the Canadian military. First off, a big problem with the budget documents, in terms of transparency to Parliament, is that the government is proposing two very different and contradictory figures for military spending in the budget documents. One number it proposes is an additional \$8 billion over the next five years, but elsewhere in the budget it proposes an additional \$23 billion over the next three years. These numbers are not fully accounted for.

If we set aside the two different figures in the budget for military spending, even if we take the most optimistic scenario that the government has laid out in the budget, it still doesn't meet Canada's international NATO commitments.

The world changed on February 24. Russia attacked Ukraine, beginning the first war between states in Europe since 1945. In doing so, autocratic states such as Russia have made it clear that they are prepared to attack democracies abroad and here at home.

Other governments have realized that the world has changed. That is why, on February 27, Germany did a U-turn on decades of foreign and military policy. Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who heads a centre-left coalition, announced that Germany would immediately begin increasing defence spending to meet and exceed the 2% NATO commitment, beginning with an immediate infusion of \$140 billion Canadian in new military spending.

The German government understands that the world has changed. The Liberal government does not.

NATO members have had a long-standing commitment to spend 2% of gross domestic product on the military. As I've just mentioned, Germany will be meeting that commitment. Canada's closest allies already exceed that commitment, including the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Canada does not, and the

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budget contains no measures for us to meet that NATO commitment. In fact, in the latest NATO data, Canada ranks 25th out of 29 member states of NATO, in terms of our contribution to our defence and security.

That was not always the case. Canada was once a leading contributor to the alliance. More than 1.1 million Canadians served in the Second World War, and over 40,000 paid the ultimate sacrifice and gave their lives in defence of this country. For decades, throughout the 1980s and well into the early 1990s, Canada exceeded the 2% commitment. Canada spent more than 2% of its gross domestic product on defence.

Here is why that lack of defence spending should concern us all. There is no greater guarantee of peace and security in this world than military strength.

In fact, before 1945, in North America, both Canada and the United States had no standing militaries of any scale to deter aggression. In the century before 1945, our histories were replete with bloody and costly wars that led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of our citizens in defence of democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

That is why, since 1945, we have pledged to never again go through that horrific period in history, as we agreed to establish standing militaries of sufficient size to deter the aggression we are seeing around the world and, potentially, the aggression we might see in the Indo-Pacific region.

The greatest guarantor of peace and security is a strong and robust military. Because the government is not allocating enough spending to Canada's military, it is leaving Canada exposed and vulnerable in a violent and unstable world.

As Mr. Martin understood almost three decades ago, the budget should create jobs and growth by getting spending down and not by getting taxes up, and by forever putting aside the old notion that new government programs require additional spending. What spending does take place should take the form of investment, rather than consumption.

The government, though, has forgotten the lessons of the 1990s. Taxes and spending are up. New programs have not come from re-allocation but from additional spending, and this spending comes in the form of consumption, rather than investment.

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• (1620)

Despite all this additional spending, the government's budget does not uphold our NATO defence spending commitment, as outlined in the Wales Summit Declaration of 2014.

For all those reasons, I cannot support this budget.

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (chief government whip, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the hon. member's speech, and with not just a little puzzlement.

He quoted rather fondly former prime minister Martin, yet he was part of the government that took what was record debt reimbursement and turned it into new, and structural, deficits over the life of the government he was a part of. He quotes NATO spending. NATO spending, as a percentage of GDP, went under 1% under his watch and that of the government he was part of.

I am just wondering this. Now that he has run and knocked on doors and asked people to support a bigger spending platform than that which the Liberal Party proposed in last year's election, how does he reconcile the views he states today with all of these very puzzling seeming contradictions?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, there are no contradictions at all. In fact, when the current government took office on November 5, 2015, it inherited a budget surplus. The previous government had balanced the budget by the time the current government took office. In fact, it then spent an inordinate amount of money until the fiscal year end of March 31, 2016, that actually pushed the country back into deficit. It was under the Liberals' watch that the country went into deficit in early 2016.

With respect to our NATO defence spending commitments, it is true that defence spending did not meet that commitment during much of the aughts, nor did it during much of the 1990s, but that was in the context of the fall of the Berlin Wall, when we assumed that autocratic states such as Russia and China would improve their records on human rights, democracy and rule of law and would be good partners in the international order. That changed on February 24 with Russia's invasion of Ukraine: the first attack on a European democracy by another European state. That is why we now need to do what Germany has done, and increase defence spending to 2% of gross domestic product.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the issues that is very concerning to me, and that was not addressed in this budget at all, is marriage after 60. We know that if veterans, military folks, RCMP and our federal civil servants get married after 60, their partners get no survivor benefits after those members pass. Right now, we are working with an amazing human being who put away \$153,000 out of his own pension to look after his partner when he passed. Now, she is very ill, and it does not look like she is going to make it. I think it is very concerning that the \$153,000 is not going to be returned to that person.

Could the member speak about how important it is to recognize the people who served us so well, and their partners?

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague's question highlights an important debt of gratitude and an important

debt we all owe, as Canadians, to the veterans who have served this country, both in current and past conflicts.

I know that my wife has many members of her family who have contributed to Canada's armed forces and served in uniform in both of the great wars of the 20th century. I would not be here today were it not for Canadian soldiers who defended Hong Kongers during the vicious battle of Hong Kong in the early days of the Second World War, and my mother with her family was liberated by Canadian soldiers during the liberation of the Netherlands. We must do better to ensure that today's generation of veterans has the supports necessary to ensure they can live out their years in peace, and with the sufficient supports we all owe to them.

• (1625)

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague expressed his disappointment with the government's investments in the armed forces. I would have liked to hear more on this topic.

As members know, a lot of the equipment available to our armed forces is positively ancient, and the Canadian Armed Forces are chronically underfunded. For example, our soldiers are using handguns from around the time of the Second World War, and they cannot even get boots.

I would like to hear my colleague share his thoughts on the Canadian army's procurement system and the difficult financial position it is in now.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the hon. member, I want to remind members who want to have side conversations that it is best to take them elsewhere.

I would like a brief answer from the member for Wellington—Halton Hills.

[Translation]

Hon. Michael Chong: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I think we need to invest more in equipment for the Canadian Armed Forces. It is clear that we have a problem because, after sending only \$100 million worth of equipment to Ukraine, the government said it could not give any more, because we have no more equipment to give.

It is therefore clear that spending on the Canadian Forces must be increased to ensure our safety and security here in Canada.

[English]

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the more than six years since the Liberal government was elected, it has proven itself to be good at two things. First, it is excellent at spending massive amounts of money on debt, with limited results. Second, it is phenomenal at wedging, dividing and stigmatizing people, and ridiculing Canadians who disagree with it. That is the sum total of the Prime Minister and his government's record over the last six years.

They are not good stewards of the economy and they certainly—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to interrupt the member. From what I can see, there is a problem with interpretation. I think it is because the hon. member's mike is probably not picking him up.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, the interpretation service is indicating that the member's headset is not working properly. Perhaps it is something technical that should be checked.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Could the hon. member check his mike? I do not know if he has the new headset. It is working.

I want to remind members who are participating virtually to make sure that the correct mike and headphones are being used.

The hon. member for Niagara West can continue.

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, the Liberals are not good stewards of the economy and they certainly were not able to unify the country. However, they have managed to divide Canadians just enough so they can squeak in a minority, although they continue to lose the popular vote election after election. I would not say that it is a strong mandate at all, yet they pretend like it is.

They have also managed to plunge us into inflation so bad that they have had to scramble to explain why. They would have us believe that it is not their fault. We have heard virtually all members deflect and blame everything and everyone else for it, but ultimately it is their fiscal management and astronomical spending and debt that got us into this problem at this point.

What is this point? Well, for the first time in 31 years, prices are up over 6.7% compared with the previous year. This means higher grocery prices for Canadian families every time they go into the store. As a matter of fact, food prices are up 8.7% since last year.

Families are certainly aware of gas prices every time they fill up their tanks on their way to work or to drop kids off at school. Dan McTeague, president of Canadians for Affordable Energy, is warning that gas prices could reach \$2.20 a litre this summer, with diesel going even higher. That is over a 32% increase in gas prices since last year.

In addition to gas, home heating prices are up. We live in a cold country. Canadian families have no choice but to turn up the thermostat in winter, and they have certainly seen the difference in their gas bills this past winter. Electrical bills have also gone up. Ultimately, everything Canadians purchase and pay for, or what economists call the cost of living, is going up and is going up fast.

As the Canadian Press notes:

A report by RBC Economics says inflation and rising borrowing costs will affect all Canadian households, but low income Canadians will feel the sharpest sting.... RBC estimates the lowest income Canadians will also be more affected as they spend a much larger share of their earnings on consumer purchases.

It follows that “low income households have a smaller cash cushion to deal with the rise in prices and borrowing costs.”

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I am sure members of the NDP-Liberal government will stand up after my speech and try to deflect and blame others for their failures, as they usually do. Perhaps they will even invoke Stephen Harper's name again, which is a common theme. Let us remind them that it is 2022. They have been in power for more than six years, and these dismal results are entirely of their own doing.

However, they have started to understand that their tired, old tactic of blaming previous governments is no longer effective. Canadians see that and they no longer believe them. I am sure the Liberals see it in the polls. They have realized it quickly and are trying to pivot to what would be another failed tactic. Political games are what the NDP-Liberal government is good at, not managing the economy and not managing our country's finances. It is only about playing politics. What is the plan? I ask because it certainly does not seem like there is one.

Franco Terrazzano, federal director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, said:

[The finance minister] is giving taxpayers another credit card budget with no plan to pay the bills on time and chip away at the \$1-trillion debt.... [The finance minister] is taking the wait-and-see approach to the government's credit card bills and hoping the economy can grow faster than its borrowing, but that's not a good bet with its track record of runaway spending.

The latest statistics bear repeating because we are in a fairly dire situation. Statistics Canada recently reported that inflation has reached its highest point since January 1991. We have all seen the news. Millions of Canadians are barely hanging on. Canadian families are spending thousands of dollars more in groceries this year compared with last, food prices are up across Canada by more than 7% and housing is a huge problem the government has done almost nothing about. In fact, since the Prime Minister and his Liberals were elected in 2015, prices for homes have doubled. The average price was over \$800,000 in February, a record, and this is more than nine times the average household income.

In fact, according to Fortune magazine, the standard home in Canada costs almost twice as much as the U.S. equivalent. Robert Hogue, RBC assistant chief economist, said that increases are “nothing short of stunning”. That is incredibly discouraging for Canadian families to hear when they are looking to purchase a home.

The Conservatives have raised the alarm bells for many years on this specific issue, but the calls have fallen on deaf ears. Some of the most vulnerable Canadians, such as seniors, are also falling even further behind. Let us put it this way, just so everyone, hopefully including members of the NDP-Liberal government, will understand: More than half of Canadians are \$200 or less away from not being able to pay their bills or rent, and 31% are unable to cover their bills because they do not earn enough income. Three in 10 Canadians are already falling behind at the end of the month.

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• (1630)

What is worse is that this budget does nothing to address any of this. It does not do anything to address our deep economic challenges and make the lives of Canadians easier. It only makes them harder.

Even on one of the Liberals' supposed strong suits, the environment, we recently learned from the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the carbon tax is not revenue-neutral. I hope everyone in the chamber remembers the number of times the Prime Minister and the Liberals repeated that the carbon tax was going to be revenue-neutral. I would venture to say it was hundreds of times, if not thousands, in the House, in the media and in their announcements throughout the country. In the end, was it true? Of course it was not. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said that middle-class Canadians should expect to pay hundreds of dollars, if not thousands, because of the carbon tax. That is not revenue-neutral.

The difficult thing for me is that the Prime Minister and the Liberals already knew this. They knew that this would not be revenue-neutral, yet they still went around repeating what they knew not to be true. They repeated it so often that it convinced many Canadians.

Where are the Liberal MPs and the Prime Minister now? We now have evidence that the carbon tax is not what they told us it would be. In fact, it is pretty much the opposite. Will they take ownership? Will they admit they were not telling the truth? On this side of the House, we will not hold our breath.

Once again, the Liberals will skate around the question, skirt the issue and move on to their next failed attempt to implement another ill-advised policy, perhaps like a digital ID, which Canadians are rejecting because they do not trust the government. Who could blame them? There was the WE Charity scandal, the Prime Minister's trip to Paradise Island, the numerous ethics violations and the constant apologies for misdoings, yet the Liberals do the same thing over and over again.

The digital idea is just another example by a ballooning government to introduce further and unnecessary government restrictions on Canadians. The Liberals will attempt to hurl insults for even bringing this up. On page 74 of budget 2021, they proposed to "provide \$105.3 million over five years...to Transport Canada to collaborate with international partners to further advance the Known Traveller Digital Identity pilot project", a project pushed by the now notorious and controversial World Economic Forum. The government claims that this project will be used to "test advanced technologies to facilitate touchless and secure air travel". However, the concerns around it are already pouring in. Civil liberties groups and governments are sounding off and opposing any form of digital ID. In fact, the Government of Saskatchewan realized the ill-advised nature of the digital ID program and announced a few weeks ago that it was nixing the planned rollout.

Many Canadians are not even aware of the digital ID programs that are now at various phases of rollout in British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario. Now the federal government is planning one of its own. I am not sure why governments, including the current one, are so bent and steadfast on having such a tight, restrictive and intrusive grip on Canadians. Why do the Liberals not trust Canadi-

ans? Why are they attempting to track them as if they are livestock? In a recent interview, Ann Cavoukian, Ontario's former privacy commissioner, said, "I would never want to get a digital ID." That is what Ontario's former privacy commissioner said about digital IDs.

There is something very wrong when a government is obsessed with controlling its own citizens and subjecting them to such divisive and invasive technological tools. It is wrong, it must stop and it must stop now. The now infamous vaccine passports were one of the most intrusive tools to ever be put in place, in addition to being incredibly exclusionary. This trajectory cannot continue with yet another divisive tool like a digital ID.

I understand this is being pushed on the government from external and foreign sources of influence, but submitting to this kind of insidious meddling and perpetual surveillance of Canadians' lives is troublesome, to say the least. Having this sort of government control over citizens is plain wrong in a free and democratic society like ours.

Having said that, the government is not just reluctant to accept or support some of our most basic civil liberties. It is also hurting many industries, including a very important one in my own riding, the wine industry. The Liberals failed to freeze the automatic escalator tax increase on alcohol excise duties on April 1, once again putting our winemakers at a competitive disadvantage. This tax increase hurts not only winemakers, but breweries, cideries and distilleries. Let us not forget that over 95% of these producers are small businesses, many of which have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the inflation crisis, payroll tax increases, labour shortages and ongoing supply chain issues. An increase in the tax on alcohol hurts the industry, from growers and producers to restaurants and consumers. It is time to end this and give this incredible world-renowned sector a break from the never-ending increase on government.

In sum, Canadians cannot afford more—

• (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but I have been trying to give the hon. member a signal. His time is up. I did allow him to wrap up a bit, but I thought he was ending. I see he still has a bit more.

Questions and comments, the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what comes to my mind in listening to the member is that he sure put a lot of words in that speech, much of which, I must say, I disagree with. Canadians can have more hope. They do not have to be as depressed as the member is trying to imply. Whether it is Canada's job sector or many of the different social programs being put into place, there is good reason for Canadians to support the budget, which they have already, for the most part, seen and are receiving quite well.

Does the member recognize anything good in this budget, or is it completely and universally a bad thing, from his perspective? I think there is a lot of good that he is not talking about at all.

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, I would encourage my friend to come down to Niagara some time to see the crippling effect the passport problem is having on tourism in the Niagara area. If he looks at the ArriveCAN app, that is another issue. If the member were to see what is going on with hotels and the whole tourism industry, he would see how people and travel are down in a significant way.

I look around my riding, and I look at the businesses that are struggling right now, and a lot of that comes from the policies of the government. I would encourage the member to not just spend all kinds of money on programs, but to come to see what some of the other things are doing to affect travel and tourism.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. I know he lives in the Niagara region, whose wines I really enjoy, by the way.

He heard what I said earlier about temporary foreign workers, about the lack of resources and about the ridiculous chaos we are experiencing, which is jeopardizing not only our agricultural production, but also the survival of our businesses. Could my colleague comment on that?

• (1640)

[English]

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his love of Niagara wines. I too have a love of Niagara wines. We see a number of challenges in farming. The temporary foreign worker program is definitely an issue. I previously also heard some of my other colleagues talking about fertilizer and tariffs.

A farmer called me the other day and told me they are going to pay almost more money in tariffs than they had to pay for fertilizer. I ask members to think about that. A tariff is a tax. It is a tax on everyone. This is fertilizer that farmers prepaid for last fall. I understand there is a war going on. I understand a number of things are being levied. When we put a tariff on fertilizer, we are putting a tax on Canadians, and that is a huge issue that will cost us more. To make matters worse, we have issues with getting the kind of temporary foreign workers we need so we can get the food in the ground, and once it is there, we also need help getting that food harvested.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to learn that the NDP is in government, because I was not aware of that.

The Liberal government is incapable of providing services to Canadians. The immigration delays are a catastrophe. The unemployed find it impossible to talk to someone about employment insurance. Now there is a crisis with passports, even though everyone knew that people would want to travel when the pandemic ended.

Is my colleague seeing the same thing in his riding? People may well have to give up their plane tickets and their travel plans because government offices cannot meet the demand for passports.

[English]

Mr. Dean Allison: Madam Speaker, we are seeing lineup after lineup of people not being able to get their passports. I have a number of constituents, just as all my colleagues in the House do. There are people who applied in January and February. It is now May, and they are still not able to get their passports. This is causing great consternation. They are wondering if they are going to be able to get their flights, be able to get them on time, or are actually going to be able to travel.

After two years, we realize there are going to be a number of people who want to travel, so it would have been prudent to increase the number of staff to handle the workload that was going to happen as a result of the passports expiring over the last couple of years.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Natural Resources; the hon. member for Brantford—Brant, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

[English]

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

It is always an honour to stand in the House and speak to a number of measures, in this case it is one of the most important measures that a government could introduce, the budget implementation act, or the BIA. I remember when I was on the finance committee for a number of years, this was a very important time of year, when the BIA was sent to the committee for deep analysis and study. I know this year will be no different at the finance committee.

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I want to take an opportunity to address Bill C-19 in the House, and to speak to it from, I suppose, a different point of view. I want to speak on economic matters but economic matters that are proposed in the bill that would impact Canada's foreign relations. I think it would be appropriate to begin, arguably at least, with one of Canada's most important voices on the international scene, and that is former prime minister Lester Pearson.

Long before he was a prime minister, in 1957, while accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, Lester Pearson said:

Of all our dreams today there is none more important — or so hard to realise — than that of peace in the world. May we never lose our faith in it or our resolve to do everything that can be done to convert it one day into reality.

This is a tremendous insight, obviously, one that Pearson believed in very strongly when he was speaking in 1957, and one that has occupied the attention of statesmen and even members of Parliament in democracies throughout the world. Canada is no different.

The question, the challenge, is how to best achieve this, particularly from the vantage point of a middle power such as Canada, a middle power that has tried to find its way, particularly in the post-World War II order, surrounded as we are by superpowers, such as the United States, China and Russia. How exactly is it possible for a middle power to exert influence on the international scene so this goal of world peace could be possible?

The dilemma is a real one and one that could be achieved by looking at what Canada has done. I speak here not only in terms of the Pearsonian legacy of foreign policy, which is a strong and very proud tradition in the Liberal Party, but also of the real important voices from the Conservative Party through Canada's history who have sought to find a place for Canada in middle power terms.

One possible path forward that has worked is diplomacy. I think of Pearson, and I think of diplomats such as George Ignatieff and Saul Rae, and there are others I could point to as well. They, in their work as diplomats, found a way. They carved a way for Canada so we could exert influence on the international scene. That would involve, of course, peacekeeping. That is a great example of what Canada has done in the past to pursue this goal of international peace.

Another example would be working with international development organizations, specifically those non-governmental organizations that are on the ground, carrying out vital work in lesser developed countries, in countries where poverty is the experience of so many, or is the experience of the vast majority.

When we look at governments of the past, when we look at the government, we see governments that have funded, have helped to fund and worked with NGOs, which are pursuing those very laudable aims of economic growth and development, encouraging entrepreneurship, encouraging peace and bringing people together at the same time.

Since 2015, I have had the opportunity to visit a number of countries in my tenure as a member of Parliament, including Ukraine, and I wonder if there will be an opportunity later in questions where I could speak to that. Ukraine was one example, and there is also Colombia, Nicaragua, Kazakhstan, Poland and Latvia. I have

had the opportunity to see NGOs, supported by the Canadian government, carry out that vital work. Through that, the goals of a middle power could be achieved, with that goal of ultimately coming back to peace.

Contributing to multilateral institutions is another key way that a middle power such as Canada could make a contribution to this outcome. Especially now, how relevant it is that we see Canada highly engaged in NATO.

● (1645)

I know there are voices out there that want us to do more, and yes, of course, we can do more. I think if we were to canvass the opinion of NATO allies and NATO leaders, we would find that Canada's contributions, specifically with respect to what is happening now, vis-à-vis Russia and Ukraine, is not just applauded, it is admired. We need to continue that work, and of course there are policy innovations that can help us move toward the path of peace and human rights, which ultimately underpin peace.

That brings me to the budget implementation act, or the BIA, Bill C-19. I am thinking of the Special Economic Measures Act, the SEMA, and the Magnitsky law, which takes its name from the great champion of human rights, Sergei Magnitsky, who lost his life for his advocacy at the hands of Vladimir Putin and his regime. Under those existing laws, property held in Canada by individuals involved in the undermining of international peace and security, or the gross and systematic violation of international human rights norms, can be seized. That property can, in fact, be seized by the Canadian government. There is a challenge, though, which is where the BIA comes in. What is exactly meant in the SEMA and in the Magnitsky act by the term "property"? How is that defined conceptually?

Under SEMA, for example, property is defined as any real or personal property. That is one way forward. Again, I go back to criticisms that have been raised before that this needs greater clarity and greater precision in the legislative language. Bill C-19 rectifies that and would add an extended definition if it is agreed to by the House, which I think and hope it will be. Should Bill C-19 pass, property would be defined as any type of property immovable or movable, tangible or intangible.

What does that mean in concrete terms? It means that property includes not just physical assets, such as a building, for example, or planes, homes, helicopters or jets, all the things that certain individuals, such as tycoons around the Russian regime, for example, are known to keep, but also money and, very importantly, virtual currency. Cryptocurrency would fall under this new definition and something called non-fungible tokens, which are, for example, digital art or audio recordings that can be found and purchased online. This is important because it is crucial that legislation along these lines keeps up with modern developments. I am glad to see the government recognizing that and moving in the right direction.

Most importantly, though, is the change that allows for seized assets to be sold by the Canadian government. Those assets that would be seized from individuals who have been found to be going against or somehow undermining international peace and diplomacy, or who are involved in the violation of international human rights, could be not only seized under this proposed change but also redistributed as compensation. They could be sold, to be simple about it, with the proceeds going to victims to advance goals of international peace and security in some way, or to assist the rebuilding of a foreign state after war. The post-war rebuilding process always proves to be very important. It is complex, to be sure, but very important.

Should this pass, I know that the government has said that certainly the aim would be to assist the Ukrainian people, the victims of Putin's war and, after the carnage that it has brought about for Ukraine, to assist the government in a massive rebuilding. Canada needs to be there and must be there as part of what some have called a "Marshall Plan", envisioning what Ukraine could look like in terms of a project for the future. I say "project" in the sense that allies would come together and assist another vital ally, which is obviously going through a very difficult time.

Others have raised a point of checks and balances, so I am heartened to see that only a superior court justice would be able to give the order allowing for seized assets to be sold. I think that is quite crucial when it comes to ensuring that there are checks and balances on the decision to seize and sell an asset in the way I have described, the way the bill proposes.

Finally, I will conclude on this point: There has been a lot of commentary in the media and other circles that points to the fact that this amendment to the SEMA and the Magnitsky act comes in the context of the crisis in Ukraine. I would say that it sends an example for the world, and I am glad to see that Canada is the first G7 country to lead the effort. Hopefully, the other democracies pick it up and employ it as well.

• (1650)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to say to my colleague that I appreciated his speech. I serve with him on the public accounts committee.

One thing that I would like him to address is the cost of living crisis that is going on. Right now in my riding we see farmers seeding and planting their crops in the ground. Obviously, the price of gas is extremely high, and although there are some exemptions there, it makes it very expensive not only for farmers to buy fuel, but also for the supporting services out there for farmers. I wonder if the member could comment on the lack of mention of that in the BIA.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, the member and I have the opportunity to work together on the public accounts committee, and I have enjoyed the experience with him so far.

I take it that he agrees with everything I said with respect to the amendments that have been proposed to the SEMA and the Magnitsky act, so we can at least agree on that point.

On the cost of living, I certainly sympathize. I hear it in my community. I think all members in this House recognize that inflation is

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a real phenomenon, but we ought to recognize that it is driven completely by events that have transpired at the international level, beginning with the pandemic and the way it has upended supply chains, as well as the irregular weather patterns and the way they have impacted supply chains. The way we can respond is to do what government is able to do. For example, the national child care program that has been proposed will help. The continued impact of the Canada child benefit will help.

There are other examples of areas in which we can work together collaboratively to make life more affordable for Canadians, and I look forward to working with the member to that end on the public accounts committee.

• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, listening to my colleague's speech, which was essentially on foreign affairs, led me to ask myself a personal question that my colleague across the way may be able to answer.

Currently, when we talk about foreign affairs, we talk about ties to other countries, but also about travel. In our offices, we are completely overwhelmed with calls from tearful constituents saying they submitted their passport applications weeks ago. Some applied months ago and still have not received their passport. They are at a loss as to what to do and say they will cancel their trip and lose their reservations.

Since my colleague is passionate about foreign affairs, what does he think about the way the government is handling this situation? Personally, I find it really deplorable.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, it is true. I hear it in my own community. Certainly, the staff at the constituency office are helping individuals as best they can with respect to passports. That is something that has been raised in this House, and I expect it will continue to be raised. We are seeing across the country a huge increase in the demand for travel. I believe there has been a 40% increase, to be specific. Naturally, when we have that kind of an increase, we will have quite a lot of people pushing for a passport renewal. I think the government needs to continue to ensure that individuals have timely access to that, as much as possible, through Service Canada. The minister responsible has been very clear that extra hours have been made available. More staff have been brought in on weekends, for instance, and are working overtime. I know it is a difficult thing for people to go through, but it really does reflect the fact that we are seeing an increase in demand all at once, and this is the outcome, unfortunately.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech with interest as he connected Bill C-19 to international events.

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I want to ask him something that relates to his role as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue. There were some moves against banks to tax their excess profits. Why is the government so reluctant to extend that tax on excess profits to the big box stores and gas companies that are profiteering while other Canadians are struggling to make ends meet?

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, I would be very happy to speak to the member and then have a lengthier conversation and get his thoughts, but certainly, tax fairness is at the very heart of this government's agenda. We have seen taxes go down for the middle class. We have seen taxes rise for the wealthiest 1% in recent years. We have seen the government make sure that corporations are paying their fair share, and that will continue. The NDP will have ideas on this, but I think the government's record speaks for itself, and it is a strong record.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-19, the budget implementation act. This bill proposes to officially implement many of the important measures contained in budget 2022, tabled just a few weeks ago, measures that would impact people from all walks of life in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Budget 2022 contains targeted and responsible investments to create jobs and prosperity today and build a stronger economic future for all Canadians tomorrow. Its proposed measures set out to make investments in Canadians and to make life more affordable for them, in economic growth and innovation and in promoting a clean economy. In particular, budget 2022 takes significant steps to help build more homes and make housing more affordable across the country, and it is housing that I would like to talk about today.

As we know, everyone should have a safe and affordable home, but this goal, which was taken for granted by previous generations, is no longer within the reach of a growing number of Canadians, including young people in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills. Increasing the supply of housing would make housing more affordable, but it is not the only solution; there have to be more measures taken.

For example, in budget 2022 there is an issue that is addressed, and that is the concern that foreign investment and speculation will increase the cost of housing in Canada. The government has an important role to play in addressing these issues. The 2022 budget proposes new measures that would prohibit foreign investment in residential real estate and ensure that speculators and homeowners who quickly sell their properties pay their fair share of taxes. I know that Vancouver and Toronto have received most of the attention in this regard, but those impacts can also be felt in other parts of the country, including in Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Bill C-19 would enact the prohibition on the purchase of residential property by non-Canadians act. It is a new statute that implements a ban on foreign investment in Canadian housing. The ban on foreign investment in Canadian housing is aimed at curtailing foreign demand in light of concerns that foreign buyers may be contributing to pricing some Canadians out of the housing market. The proposed legislation would prohibit people who are neither Canadian citizens nor permanent residents from acquiring residential property in Canada, whether directly or indirectly, for a period of two years.

The government's intention in this regard is that refugees and persons who have been authorized to come to Canada on emergency travel to flee international crises would be exempt. Foreign students who are in the process of obtaining permanent residence would also be exempt in certain circumstances, as would work permit holders who are residents of Canada.

As well, speculative trading in the Canadian housing market contributes to higher prices for Canadians. These transactions can include the resale of homes before they are built or before they are lived in, such as the assignment of a contract of sale. This creates an opportunity for speculators to be dishonest about their original intentions and creates uncertainty for everyone involved in an assignment sale as to whether GST or HST apply. The current rules also result in the uneven application of GST or HST to the full and final prices of these new homes that have not been lived in before.

Therefore, as proposed in budget 2022, Bill C-19 would amend the Excise Tax Act to make assignment sales in respect of newly constructed or substantially renovated residential housing taxable for GST or HST purposes. The amendment also excludes from taxable consideration the amount of deposit paid under an original agreement of purchase and sale that the original purchaser is recovering through that assignment of sale.

This amendment would eliminate the ambiguity that can arise under the existing rules regarding the GST or HST treatment of assignment sales by making all assignment sales by individuals taxable. It would also ensure that the GST or HST applies to the full amount paid for a new home, including any amount paid as a result of an assignment sale, resulting in greater consistency in the tax treatment of new homes.

● (1700)

The government also wants to make housing more affordable for the homes people already live in. For example, seniors and persons with disabilities deserve the opportunity to live and age at home, but renovations and upgrades that make their homes safe and accessible can be costly. In my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills, we see a lot of multi-generational homes, where grandparents live with their children and grandkids in a single dwelling. The opportunity for them to live comfortably is significantly reduced because of the inability of homeowners to provide for important renovations to have that accessibility available to parents as they age.

The home accessibility tax credit already provides supports to offset some of the costs that I am talking about. However, with the rising cost of home renovations, many seniors and people with disabilities feel that they cannot afford the modifications that would allow them to continue to live safely in their homes.

As proposed in budget 2022, to better support independent living and to better support these multi-generational homes, Bill C-19 would amend the Income Tax Act to increase the annual expense limit for the home accessibility tax credit from \$10,000 to \$20,000. This enhancement would apply to the 2022 and subsequent taxation years. It would provide up to an additional \$1,500 in tax support for renovations and alterations that are already eligible under the home accessibility tax credit, for such expenses as the purchase or installation of wheelchair ramps, walk-in bathtubs, wheel-in showers, building a bedroom or bathroom to permit first-floor occupancy, and installing non-slip flooring to help avoid falls.

Our government was elected in 2015 with a promise to deliver a national housing strategy, because even seven years ago it was already hard for Canadians to own a home. We have delivered that strategy and continue to build upon it. We are taking further action to make housing more affordable and to give Canadians that same chance to own a home, as our parents did.

We all know that no one level of government can solve this problem. Our Liberal government is leading the way, and we need every level of government to recognize this issue and work with us to take action. When we talk about building homes, we have to work with the provincial, regional and municipal governments to ensure that developers are operating in a fair and equitable way that is promoting affordable housing and promoting the swift and quality construction of homes that people in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills, for example, can take advantage of.

The measures I just mentioned today in Bill C-19 and from budget 2022 would help make the housing market fairer for Canadians and support more affordable home living for seniors and people with disabilities. If we are serious about taking action on the housing market, I hope that all members in this House can support Bill C-19.

In conclusion, each and every member in this House has a story of a constituent in their community who has struggled with housing and who cannot see a future with a comfortable living space that they can rely on. Housing is a basic right that we should be able to afford to Canadians, and I am proud of the measures being taken in Bill C-19 to ensure that we are continuing to build upon all of the important work we have done with respect to affordable housing over the past seven years.

• (1705)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, as the government continues to increase reliance on temporary foreign workers without the protections that come with permanent resident status, we know that temporary foreign workers are increasingly vulnerable to exploitation. Recently, the Auditor General found, through federal inspections, that the health and safety for temporary foreign workers has gotten worse, and that is after the government promised to fix it in 2020.

Could the member please clarify: Instead of increasing our reliance on exploiting workers to drive down wages, does she agree that the time to negotiate better wages and work conditions for migrant workers, permanent residents and Canadians is now?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, one of the things I hear very regularly within my community, especially from small business

owners, is their inability to find workers and skilled tradespeople who can fill those gaps that are being created. We, as a government, over the past number of years have been finding those pathways to permanent residence for those workers who are highly skilled and want to come and live in Canada on a permanent-residence basis. We need to continue to build and provide those supports.

A number of years ago, I did a study in the justice committee about trafficking in persons and trying to ensure that migrant workers, for example, were very well represented. There is a lot of work that has been done on this, and we are going to continue to do that work with the advocacy of all members in the House.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member about the budget generally. We have seen her government bring forward about \$60 billion of deficits this year. In the past couple of years, it said that it needed it because of COVID. It needed all this program spending. We know that the \$60-billion deficit this year has no COVID spending. I think it is quite reckless.

I am not sure if she would agree. I would like to know her thoughts. Their government is burdening our generation with a tremendous amount of debt and deficits. That means higher taxes and, frankly, higher inflation that families in her riding and my riding are being impacted by. I would like to know her thoughts. Does she think that it is responsible, now that COVID is over, that the government maintains massive deficits?

• (1710)

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the question from the member opposite, I think it is ill-informed. We did spend the past two years making sure that Canadians had roofs over their heads, had food on their tables and were able to safely isolate themselves if they had COVID.

Bill C-19 and budget 2022 are really about providing that economic recovery. The child care plan that we had installed across the country is addressing these very issues. The housing affordability piece in budget 2022 and Bill C-19 is addressing these very issues. The makeup and the buildup toward a greener economy are addressing these issues.

I will remind members in the House that inflation and COVID are not specifically Canadian things. They are worldwide phenomena. Right now is the proper time to invest in Canadians and ensure that they have that foundation to lift up the economy in Canada and globally.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague across the way talked a lot about the impact of inflation on people and what needs to be done to limit that impact. People have been hit hard by this.

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She and I are roughly the same age and therefore probably from the same generation. I am concerned about the people who came before us, those who built our country and Quebec, including seniors who have been hit hard. Year after year, they complain about not getting an adequate increase to their pension.

This time it is even worse because, in addition to the fact that the government is doing nothing, inflation continues to rise. I wonder whether my colleague is proud of her government's record, given how badly it has failed seniors.

[English]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, absolutely, I am proud that it was this government that enhanced the CPP so that future seniors will have more pension to live on.

I am proud of this government for increasing old age security. I am proud of this government for investing in affordable housing and investing in long-term care for our seniors.

Bill C-19 shows us the empathy and the care that we have to really build upon in Canada to ensure that seniors in my riding of Mississauga—Erin Mills and that member's riding, as well, are able to thrive and sustain themselves.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a huge privilege and honour to rise today on the budget implementation act, Bill C-19. I am also very grateful to serve the federal NDP as the critic for mental health and harm reduction.

There are many things in this budget that are a movement toward progress. There are many areas of this budget where there are huge shortfalls. I really want to follow up on what my colleague for Mississauga—Erin Mills spoke about recently, which is housing, because housing has such an impact not just on the economy for small businesses, workers and volunteers in our communities but also on people's mental health, especially when we are seeing the skyrocketing rates of real estate and rents that are out of touch for Canadians. The people who are the most impacted are workers, seniors and those who are the most marginalized. People who were not homeless before are becoming homeless because they are being pushed out onto the streets.

In my home riding and the community I live in, Port Alberni, we saw real estate go up in the last year by 46%. In Oceanside, it went up 34%. The average price of a home is over \$1 million, yet we have seen wages remain fairly stagnant. I am probably the only member of Parliament in the House who, after being elected, moved away from his home community to better serve his riding and cannot actually move home. This is because the price of real estate in my home community of Tofino has gone up 400% since I was elected. This not only has an impact on me, but we can imagine the workers in Tofino and how impossible it is for them, or for the small businesses that require workers.

I know this is a huge challenge. We heard solutions come from the Liberals and questions from the Conservatives about housing, but they are fairly consistent in that they have centred their efforts around the free market. The free market will not solve these problems.

I grew up in the seventies and eighties in Victoria, British Columbia. I am really proud of where I grew up and the community I lived in. It took leadership and worked with the federal government to develop some co-ops. As we know, Canada went on a robust co-op housing program that was actually developed through a minority government of the Liberals and the federal NDP working together in the early seventies under our leader David Lewis. It was that agreement that got the national housing program going. They started to develop about 25,000 units on average throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

I was really fortunate to grow up in a co-op housing development. My dad was a transmission mechanic. He still is, actually, and is in his early seventies. He has been working on transmissions for over 50 years. I am so proud of my dad. My mom worked at HRDC as a clerk. They were middle-class, if we want to call it that. I am proud of my mom, and it was Mother's Day yesterday. To my mom I say that I know I was not home, but happy Mother's Day. I love my mom and thank her so much. To all the moms in our community, I give thanks.

My parents worked really hard. The co-op was unique in that it provided safe, secure and affordable housing for my mom and dad and my brother Rob and I, but it also provided safe and secure housing for seniors, single parents, people of lower incomes and people on income assistance. I can go back to that co-op in Victoria to this day and some of the friends I grew up with are grandparents and live in that co-op. Their kids and their grandkids live in that co-op.

The problem is that there are not enough co-ops anymore. When the government pulled out of building co-ops and pulled out of the national housing strategy in the early 1990s, we lost 25,000 units a year. We are talking about over 750,000 units to this day in the shortfall of co-op housing.

I was visiting my friends Sean and Beth last night, who live in co-op housing here in Ottawa. They received safe and secure housing. They were on a wait-list for four years, terrified, which impacted their mental health. They were working two or three jobs and trying to figure out how they were going to make ends meet. They wanted to make sure their daughter Kira could live in a co-op, but they are not even taking names now in the co-op where they live because the wait-list is so long.

In fact, my daughter, who just graduated from the University of Ottawa, dropped me off today and she said, "Dad, I can't talk about ever owning a home, because I don't want to be disappointed." It is just terrible that this is what we are leaving our children and the people in our communities.

• (1715)

We can look to Europe. First, I will go back to where we are at. We were at 10% of our housing being non-market housing in the 1970s and 1980s. Now we are at about 3%. We can look to Europe, which is at 30%, and Vienna, which is at 60%, because they understand how important it is to have safe, secure and affordable housing. The free market is not going to give us that. It has not. We are developing very rapidly on Vancouver Island.

I sat in local government in Tofino. I remember how frustrated we were when the federal government downloaded to provinces, which then further downloaded to local governments. I was part of the initial Tofino housing corporation. I am proud that today we are finally building a development that we talked about 20 years ago. Here we were, this small local government: this small municipality was trying to figure out how we were going to develop non-market housing to meet the needs of our community.

What a task for small communities to take on. They do not have the expertise or aptitude, and often do not have the leadership. They do not know how to do it. I can assure the House that if the federal government puts money on the table, local governments will access it. They will find the land.

Our province of British Columbia is building half of the non-market housing in the country right now. It needs a federal partner to go to the lengths it is going to. The province just had applications for over 12,500 shovel-ready units by local governments: local non-profit housing. They had funding for 2,500. It would have been great to see the federal government pick up the other 2,500. We are halfway there on shovel-ready developments that could help make sure people have affordable housing.

I get frustrated. I look to my community. We have a non-profit housing group in Ucluelet. Randy Oliwa called me the other day and said, "Gord, we can't even get an answer on a \$5,000 planning grant to get things off the ground." The Beaufort Hotel was being purchased. It is a hotel that already has low-barrier housing and private sector housing. The group made an application through the rapid housing initiative. The applicants were told that it looked very positive, but they got denied because they were oversubscribed. They had \$5 billion in applications and they only had \$1 billion on the table.

They were told to reapply, so they reapplied and got denied again. They decided to apply through the women and children shelter and transitional housing fund, and then got denied again. They brought in Lookout, a great partner from Vancouver, to develop non-market housing and ensure that the people living in this building were not going to get punted and thrown out on the streets. Again, they got denied. Now they are using the co-investment fund. The steps and hurdles these groups have to go through to make sure people have affordable housing are just ridiculous.

I want to speak a little about how important housing is, not just for small businesses, workers and people in our communities, but also to ensure that people are not suffering: those who are on the streets and who may be living with a substance use disorder. I was at a low-barrier housing unit in Duncan, B.C., where they built these sleeper cottages. I met a man who had his first home. It was basic needs. It was not low barrier; it was no barrier. For the first

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time in his adult life, he told me, he was not homeless or living in prison. He was on opioid therapy as a result, which he could never access living as a homeless person. He was treated like a criminal: He was moved from park to park, living in fear and not sleeping.

Another woman I met at the same low-barrier housing was moving to low-barrier from no-barrier housing. As a result of having that, she had been sober for eight months. For the first time in her adult life, she has a chance. Without housing, how can people have mental health? When people are homeless, they do not sleep.

The Prime Minister's goal to house 50% of the homeless people in the next 10 years is not good enough. It is not good enough. We need to move rapidly. We need to build non-market housing, and the government needs to step up its game. We need all parties to work collectively on this, because the free market simply will not solve the problems of our needs right now. Housing is a basic human need. It is a human rights issue. It is an economic issue. It is a social issue.

I have not even tapped into indigenous housing, because I am being told I am running out of time. I could speak another 10 minutes on that alone. I hope we can work together in the House to scale things up rapidly.

• (1720)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member across the way for his passion around housing, as well as mental health and harm reduction.

I was waiting for the member to talk about the budget allocations for co-op housing. He talked about the need for co-op housing, and I 100% agree with him on that. I am quoting the executive director of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, Tim Ross, who said, "Starting with 6,000 new homes over the next five years, we are optimistic that the new co-operative housing development program will kick-start the development of the next generation of co-op housing at scale in Canada."

There is \$1.5 billion there. He ended with indigenous and northern housing. I am looking at the \$300 million going towards indigenous and northern housing. Could the member comment on how we are finally getting a start where we need to see it?

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Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I would say we are getting a start and we are talking about thousands now when it comes to co-op housing, but it falls far short of the 25,000 units we were building per year in the 1970s and 1980s. That is still 19,000 short of what we were doing then. How are we going to make up the gap?

Right now, the federal government's plan in terms of filling the workforce labour market shortage is to bring in new immigrants, but it does not tie housing to immigration. There are huge problems when it comes to the lack of cohesive planning, when it comes to housing and ensuring that we have a strong workforce.

In terms of indigenous housing, there is some money in the budget, which New Democrats helped negotiate, to get this agreement going. We talked about the agreement as the floor. We have much work to do. I have lots more to say on this, and I will.

• (1725)

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciated the member's personal journey and story with co-op housing. I thought he did an excellent job, but I would like to ask him about the issues facing those who need government housing, particularly with inflation.

There are a lot of seniors in my riding who could use the housing described by the member. They live on very fixed incomes, so when inflation goes up 6% or 7%, that may not sound like a lot to folks in this room, but when people have only \$100 a month for groceries, it is a lot and it really impacts their ability to eat well and feed themselves. We are seeing this impact families as well.

I would like the member to comment on the impact inflation is having on his constituents and whether he is at all concerned that the Liberal government is not addressing this.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, we have skyrocketing inflation, but we also have a skyrocketing concentration of wealth and skyrocketing inequality. We have seen grocery store prices and fuel prices go up. We see bank fees go up, and yet banks are having record profits. Grocery stores have record profits. Oil companies have record profits. How is that flowing down to seniors? How is that flowing down to Canadians? It is flowing down in increased costs to them and increased profits to the richest Canadians and shareholders.

What we need is some balance. Corporate taxes have gone from 28% to 15%, and yet people cannot find a place to live in our country. We need to bring a median to this situation and it needs to happen rapidly. Fairness is not happening right now. Inequality is skyrocketing, and we need to address that. It is part of the solution when it comes to taking on inflation and ensuring that people get the best support they can, and there is money. We can make sure that the wealthiest people can pay their fair share. That is a beginning in taking on this crisis, and we absolutely need to do more.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to support a point raised earlier in the House by the hon. member for North Island—Powell River and ask her colleague from Courtenay—Alberni if he is also concerned for seniors who served in our military and former judges, but particularly those who were in the military and the RCMP. Right now, if they remarry after age 65, they do not get to convey any survivor benefits to their sur-

viving spouses. It is called the gold-digger clause. Going back to former finance minister Bill Morneau, the Liberals promised to get rid of it, but they have not.

I wonder if the hon. member has any comments on that.

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, it seems there is commonality in that not just veterans, but seniors are being targeted, and there needs to be more work. The gold-digger clause absolutely needs to be revoked. It is discriminatory to Canada's veterans, the people who put their lives on the line so that we have a fair and free society. We are indebted to them, and we owe them the benefits that every Canadian deserves. This is an unfair penalty on the very people we should be supporting the most.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Madam Speaker, two weeks ago, I had the privilege of rising in the House to speak to the many ways that budget 2022 will improve the lives of Canadians. Today, I have the privilege to speak to how the rubber would hit the road with the budget implementation act.

There are so many topics I would like to cover, but in the short time I have, I am just going to choose one because we are finally setting in motion the changes that are outlined in this bill, and this is a topic that deserves debate in the chamber. These changes are increasing the transparency and accountability in our financial system and in land ownership through legislative changes that would result in the creation of a registry for beneficial ownership.

Canada has developed a reputation as a haven for money laundering, tax evasion and other financial crimes due to the relative sophistication of our banking sector and the opacity, which is a defining characteristic of our corporate and land ownership. This reputation has led Canada to have an internationally recognized term for money laundering, which is "snow washing". It refers to the fact that anonymously owned corporations in Canada are presumed by banks and other financial institutions as being legitimate without the transparency that should underpin such a determination.

An expert panel on money laundering in B.C. real estate estimated that, in 2018, some \$46 billion in list funds were laundered in Canada, much of it moving through real estate. The 2017 analysis by Transparency International found that Canada had the weakest corporate transparency rules in the G20, tied only with South Korea.

Why does this matter? Few realize that white-collar crime such as this has very real impacts, even if it may not be obvious from the beginning. The fact is that these vulnerabilities feed directly into the largest challenges we face in the present day. Consider the example of the Vancouver model of money laundering. In this model, opioids are shipped in large quantities from China to Canada as a way of Chinese residents moving capital out of China to the safe haven of Canada by evading the country's currency export controls of \$50,000 U.S. per year. The proceeds from the drug trade are laundered through casinos or invested in, among other things, Canadian real estate, where it is purchased through blind trusts or numbered companies with the real owners obscured.

Money laundering not only supports criminals. It is also estimated to have contributed to a 5% increase in the price of housing in B.C. as of 2018. When studies show that we do not know the true owners of over half of the 100 most expensive properties in B.C., we know that it is not just causing more housing unaffordability, it may also be linked to tax evasion of our treatment of principal residences. Importantly, it is also fuelling the deadly health emergency we have in the province of B.C., which is the opioid epidemic. Dirty and dark money comes from both domestic and foreign sources.

In the House, it has been a source of great pride to see how members of all parties have come together to support our Ukrainian friends who have been victimized by the brutal invasion of Vladimir Putin. One of the main tools we have relied on has been the use of targeted sanctions on Putin's inner circle. This budget implementation act indeed contains measures that will create the conditions for the seizing and disposal of assets from sanctioned individuals. However, when the ownership of assets is undertaken through complex, international schemes of shell companies in countries that have similar opaque corporate registries, then we currently have very little ability to determine who the real owners of assets are in Canada, which are held in Canadian banks, and our sanctions, therefore, have limited effect.

It is abundantly clear that we need to act, and through measures in this budget, we are doing just that. We are reviewing and strengthening our anti-money laundering and terrorist financing regime by extending the current system to monitor payment service providers and crowdfunding platforms for money laundering and terrorist financing. About \$90 million is provided to FINTRAC to significantly expand and modernize its ability to detect and prevent financial crime.

We are also taking the first steps to establish a new Canada financial crimes agency, which will become Canada's lead enforcement agency for financial crimes. This is important because we need to have financial and accounting experts in law enforcement and the public prosecution services to effectively tackle complex, white-collar crime cases.

Most importantly, we are amending the Canada Business Corporations Act to implement a public and searchable beneficial ownership registry, which would be available by the end of 2023. This will require that corporations report the identities of those who own and control significant portions of any corporation. It will allow law enforcement, the CRA, banks, journalists and the public at large to see exactly who owns any given company and ensure that

criminals can no longer hide behind anonymous numbered corporations. Beneficial ownership registries are the gold standard when it comes to combatting corporate financial crime, and this has been recognized throughout the world.

● (1730)

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In fact, this is not even going to be the first beneficial ownership registry in Canada, as B.C. has had a land registry since May 2019. However, unfortunately, what was supposed to be a world-leading system has been plagued by delays, unclear and poorly defined rules and heretofore a lack of compliance. The system should be in place by the end of this year, but that already puts it a year behind schedule. The registry currently has information on only 46,000 owners with a total of 73,000 properties, which is just a tiny fraction of the 2.2 million titles in British Columbia. Therefore, it is crucial that when we develop our federal beneficial ownership registry, we learn through some of the challenges that British Columbia has had and adopt some of the best practices that we can find from around the world.

The U.K., as one of the first countries to create a publicly accessible beneficial ownership registry, has one of the best systems in the world so far. U.K. companies are required to keep an up-to-date register of people with significant control over it, meaning anyone who holds more than 25% of the shares or voting rights of a company, either directly or indirectly, through another company or trust. Failure to comply with this is a criminal offence, not only for the company but also for the officers of the company. In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the U.K. has expanded its register to apply to land ownership to give the government the ability to require identity verification for people who manage, control or just set up companies.

There are uniquely Canadian challenges that we will need to face as we build our own beneficial ownership registry. Unlike the U.K., Canada is a federal system where provinces and territories have jurisdiction over real property and for federally incorporated entities. This covers an enormous number of the entities that we need to have transparency on, so we will need to work with such partners to ensure that we have a national system that works. We have a national registry for money services businesses, regardless of where in Canada they are registered. This system was also created to combat money laundering and is centrally administered by FINTRAC.

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There are many forms that this system could take, but what is most important is that the data is standardized to make it easier for law enforcement to analyze, for simplifying regulatory compliance and to minimize the regulatory burden on companies that operate in multiple jurisdictions in Canada. What is most important is that this registry be publicly accessible and free to access. This is important because we know that law enforcement has a limited capacity to monitor the millions of corporate structures in Canada. The public, particularly the press, has the ability to play a role to connect the dots and uncover wrongdoing that can assist in uncovering illegal actions as well.

To give an example of why this is important, I note that B.C.'s land ownership registry was not able to find any property owned by a sanctioned individual. It was only due to leaks that were involved in the Paradise papers that we were able to find a single piece of land in British Columbia, in the riding of the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, connected to a sanctioned individual. That really shows the value of investigative reporting.

I would like to end by saying the following. We know the impact of financial crime is deep and far-reaching. It is clear that we need to act decisively and think big to mitigate the negative effects of money laundering and tax evasion, and to catch those who are using Canadian property and corporations to transfer, hide and launder their money in Canada. Now is the time to take lessons learned from jurisdictions around the world, calibrate them to the Canadian context and develop a system that will make Canada a leader in preventing financial crime.

Budget 2022 contains the building blocks for a financial system that has more integrity, and I look forward to working with my colleagues from all parties in the House to pass this bill as a first step in getting dirty money out of Canada.

• (1735)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have been talking for a very long time about the need for action on money laundering. It is a regular concern I hear from Canadians. It is a particular concern I hear from Canadians from diaspora communities, actually. They raise the fact that money in other countries is taken by corrupt dictatorial regimes and then brought to and used in Canada.

In that vein, I want to ask a question that has been specifically brought to me regularly by people in the Iranian community in Canada. They are concerned about this issue. They are also concerned about the IRGC, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The House of Commons voted to sanction the IRGC to list it as a terrorist entity, yet the government has not acted, despite the Liberals voting in favour of that listing motion three years ago. If we are not willing to identify terrorist organizations like the IRGC and list them under the Anti-terrorism Act, then we are missing out on a critical tool for combatting the kind of activities in which they might engage in Canada.

I wonder if the member has a comment specifically on the listing of the IRGC and whether that is something the government plans to do as part of a broader suite of measures. Also, why is there a delay?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I think my hon. colleague's question speaks directly to the reasons why we need to move ahead on some of these measures. It is one thing to have a list of sanctions and individuals we are going to be sanctioning, but if we do not actually have the tools in place to ensure that we are able to go after the assets in Canada, those sanctions are not going to have significant effect.

In this budget implementation act, we have a number of measures that are going to allow us to do just that on beneficial ownership of companies. We have actions that are happening right across the country, in British Columbia and Manitoba and now Ontario as well. I would encourage the member opposite to talk to some of his colleagues in the provincial government in Alberta to see if they can start moving ahead with some of the measures that we need to have so we can move ahead with the measures that we need to bring in for sanctioned individuals.

• (1740)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke a lot about investigations into money laundering and recovering money. We agree with all that.

However, there is something that really bothers me. How does my colleague explain the fact that his government is not doing anything at all about tax havens? They are perfectly legal and everyone is aware of them. It is estimated that the government is losing at least \$7 billion a year to tax havens.

Also, is the member not the least bit embarrassed that his government is creating uncertainty about the coming into force of the farm succession act, on the pretext that our farmers are fraudsters rather than honest people who put food on our tables? I think that is completely shameful, and I encourage him to put pressure on the government from the inside to quickly dispel this uncertainty.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I disagree with what the member said about the government not investigating tax havens.

[English]

We are going against some of the tax havens that we have here. There are new measures in the budget this year that do just that, including ways in which individuals are using international companies to get around paying taxes in Canada.

There is much more that we need to do. There are ways we can simplify our tax code to do that. Some of the measures I am talking about today will allow us to increase the amount of tax revenue that we can receive by going after some of the ways money is laundered, as well as the ways people are evading taxes through some of these anonymous organizations.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my neighbour for his interesting speech. I did not really see a profound investment in immigration. In my riding, we are having hundreds of calls day after day from people trying to figure out their status. They have done all of their paperwork and they have done everything they should. They are already living in Canada. We have people on worker visas who have done everything right and now cannot work. They are losing their homes. It is becoming a mess.

I am wondering if the member could talk about his government's responsibility and how long it is going to take to actually address these really important issues.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I absolutely agree. In this budget, there is over \$2 billion going to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to be able to deal with the backlogs. The idea is that by the end of this year, with these investments, we will get back to a normal service standard, as well as introducing new programs, such as an expedited temporary foreign worker program, which I know would be a game changer for some of the hardest-hit sectors where there are major labour shortages, such as tourism in my riding.

There is a lot here on immigration. Because of the backlogs related to COVID, we have a lot we need to do. With these investments and some of the changes that are being made to expedite the processes, we are going to be able to deal with some of the backlogs that are causing major issues.

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to be in the House and to speak on behalf of the people of Calgary Midnapore, and here I am today addressing the BIA.

I will start with an anecdote. Last Friday, when my husband picked me up at the Calgary airport, we were making the left-hand turn we usually do in an effort to merge onto Deerfoot Trail. Halfway through our turn, the light turned yellow and my husband stopped in the middle of the intersection. I turned to him and said, "James, what the bleep are you doing here?" Well, that is what I have to say: What are we doing here? What is the government doing here?

When I arrived here in 2017, there was the same sentiment that existed in 2015 when the Liberal government came into place. Among Canadians, although we were disappointed as Conservatives and sorry to see the departure of former prime minister Stephen Harper, I think there was a feeling of hope and enthusiasm across the country. We often think of sunny ways at that time, when the Prime Minister and the Liberal government came in. Those same sentiments existed when I arrived here in 2017. I was just outside those doors getting ready to be walked into the House of Commons for the first time, and there was still that same feeling of excitement and of sunny ways.

I have to say, that is not there anymore, and this budget reflects it. This budget is a mishmash and a patchwork of legislation. Any individual reading through this content could not determine the goals, aspirations and theme of the government. Is that not what leadership really is? What are we doing here?

When I reflect upon the reasons for the lack of direction we now see from the government, I would attribute it to three things. Number one is now the failure to implement any vision the government to the Prime Minister might have once had. The second would be an unuseful and impractical adherence to ideology. The third would be ignoring the real problems affecting Canadians. I will take some time now to expand on each of those.

When I talk about the failure to implement the vision, I am talking about the sunny ways and hope and enthusiasm the Prime Min-

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ister and the government arrived here with. Unfortunately, when they have tried to execute these sunny ways and implement them in Canada and Canadian culture, it has been nothing but an absolute failure. We saw that with the attempts for democracy reform. We saw it when the attempt was made to go to proportional representation, which was a 2015 election promise. It was failed upon by the previous minister for democratic institutions, who is no longer in the House. That is one example of the failure of the implementation of vision we have seen from the government.

We saw this with the climate plan. We saw this with the Paris climate accord. I sat back there in my second week, having to vote on the Paris climate accord. The fear and division it created in the House, which I will expand upon, was for no reason. These targets that we voted upon and that divided us were never actually achieved by the government, so what is the point?

It is the same thing we saw with the Liberals' grand idea of planting two billion trees. As I look around this room, I see nary a tree. They have failed on these climate initiatives as well.

The third is unity, and I will speak to this from two perspectives. The first is regional. Liberals have pitted region against region in this country, needlessly creating division at a time even before the pandemic descended upon us. Of course, with the pandemic, it was the Prime Minister who used inflammatory language, name-called and attacked Canadians who had valid concerns about the mandates. He actually rejected a Conservative motion to create a plan to roll back the mandates, which could have lowered the temperature, and he then of course invoked the Emergencies Act for the first time in Canada's history. We, on this side of the House, are still reviewing that to this day. It created terrible disunity not only in the House, but among Canadians.

● (1745)

The second is an unuseful adherence to ideology. We have seen this in two places in particular. The first was the killing of the natural resources sector. As an Albertan, I take personal offence to this. How has the current government done this? It has done this by not providing support for Line 5. My colleague, the member for Calgary Centre, has talked and encouraged ad nauseam about this. Of course, at this moment in history, while Ukraine faces its most difficult time, the most difficult time we have seen in recent history, the government failed to pass a motion to get natural gas to Europe. At a time when our natural resources could be used for good in this world, the government turned its back against it. It brought in Bill C-48, the tanker moratorium, and who can forget Bill C-69, the new pipelines bill, which again showed an unuseful adherence to ideology.

We also saw that with the mandates, the mandates that still rest with us today. I can tell members of the House that the parliamentary precinct, and frankly airports and airplanes, are the only places now where I am required to wear a mask. The government should lift the mandates on that and stop using this unuseful adherence to ideology. It is not helpful for Canadians at all.

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What I think is most important here is that, if we look at the ways the government has failed and how this budget reflects that, it shows an ignorance of the real problems that affect Canadians. What are they? I will list a couple.

At the industry committee we saw a rejection to support the lithium mine, which would have been very important for semiconductors, something that is becoming increasingly important as we evaluate supply chains going into the future. In addition, we saw a government that was useless and unwilling to take a stand until the very last moment on the CP Rail strike, which would have had devastating impacts on not only western Canada, but also all of Canada.

We have seen this lack of action in labour shortages. The CFIB's recent report "Labour shortages are back with a vengeance" found that 55% of businesses could not find the staff they needed. Food and Beverage Canada said that it lacked 300,000 workers within its industry and has companies with vacancy rates of over 20%. The government throwing money at this is not helping. It needs to address the backlogs it has within its immigration processes.

We hear about housing endlessly here, with the average price of a home now reaching \$874,100, a jolting 27.1% increase over the last year. The initiatives of the government, such as the first-time homebuyer incentive and the shared equity mortgage fund, are failing terribly.

I can talk about the failures of the government and how this budget and the budget implementation act do not address the cost of living and inflation. For the first time in 31 years, prices are up 6.7% compared to a year ago. Families are spending nearly \$1,000 more a year on groceries and gas. Gas and home heating are costing more, and housing prices have doubled since the Prime Minister became the Prime Minister. More than half of Canadians are \$200 or less away from not being able to pay their bills or rent, with three in 10 already falling behind at the end of the month.

In conclusion, the government has run its course. It has received a minority not once, but twice now. It just had to buy a mandate until 2025. When it was elected in 2015, there was a sense of hope, optimism and possibility. That is gone now. This budget reflects it, and the budget implementation act reflects it. What are we doing here?

• (1750)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am not too sure what the Conservative Party is doing here if we look at what their performance has been like in the past number of weeks. I can assure the member that the Government of Canada, in particular our Prime Minister and cabinet members and in fact all Liberal members of Parliament, are here because we want to be able to serve Canadians.

We are doing that in good part by budgetary measures that are going to have a profoundly positive impact on every Canadian from coast to coast to coast. Whether it is programs such as the first-ever national universal child care program, which is going to enable the workforce to expand, or investments in infrastructure, there are so many gold nuggets inside the budget to ensure that we continue to

provide hope for Canadians. The sun will continue to shine as we continue to move forward.

The member seems to be of the opinion that Ottawa is the only one with mandates left. If she crosses the river into Quebec, she will find that there are mandates for mask wearing. Would she maybe address that issue?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will tell my colleague that the sun has indeed set. He talks a lot about, for example, day care. I wish the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development had been focused on Service Canada and the delivery of passports. I think that is just another example of how the government has lost its way. Liberals have been so focused on their own ideology that they have forgotten about the needs of Canadians and delivering to Canadians, and they should remember that.

• (1755)

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to my Conservative colleague's passionate speech. I found it interesting and stirring, so to speak.

When we talk about Bill C-19, we are also talking about the budget that the government tabled not too long ago. What I really did not like about that budget was the lack of action on climate change. With the approval of the Bay du Nord project, we see that the government is continuing to get more deeply involved in oil.

Could the member who just gave that wonderful speech tell us more about what the government should do to combat climate change and get away from oil?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, in fact, two people are disappointed. The first is the member who just asked the question, because, as I stated in my speech, this government has taken no action on climate change. The second is me, because, as I stated in my speech, nothing has been done for the natural resources sector.

Even though I agree with my Bloc colleague, I want to say that we must also take action for the natural resources sector, which is being neglected at present. Therefore, I agree with my colleague, but I am disappointed for another reason.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member and I work together on the disability inclusion file. I want to ask some questions about the Canada disability benefit.

Could the member for Calgary Midnapore comment around the missing Canada disability benefit in the budget?

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think we need to look at the sincerity and the intentions of the government. I believe that the member would agree with me on this. The government tabled that bill in the last week before we left for the seasonal break, when there was an election about to be called. What does that say about the Liberals' sincerity and about their will in implementing the act?

As strongly as we may feel about this, as much as we need to see something done for Canadians with disabilities, it really starts with the government. The fact that Liberals tabled this in the final week before we left with an election potentially looming, and the fact that they have not brought it back in the recent budget of 2022, speaks volumes.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to join today's debate on Bill C-19, the budget implementation act. Let me begin by stating something that I have mentioned before about this budget. This is a fiscally prudent budget that is also focused on economic growth. If we are looking for a theme and a direction, here is the theme and here is the direction.

We were able to shift this budget's focus onto these elements because of how well we have done in recovering from a global pandemic that has exhausted economies around the world.

Starting with jobs, we have recovered 115% of the jobs lost since April 2020, which is equivalent to three million jobs. Just this past Friday, on May 6, Canada's job numbers were released, and they showed that the labour market has gained over 15,000 jobs in April alone, bringing our unemployment rate to 5.2%, the lowest since 1976. These numbers are not to be taken lightly. They represent the resilience and strength of real people and real Canadians who made effective use of the supports and programs rolled out by our federal government. They worked hard to get back on their feet, stronger than ever.

However, there is more to be done, and that is exactly what the measures in budget 2022, implemented by Bill C-19, set out to do. The budget builds on the progress we have already made, by investing in workers, small businesses, our supply chain and more.

We also need to acknowledge that every success has its ups and downs. Canadians know that our recovery from COVID-19, along with our continued fight against it, has come at a very high price. This global pandemic has had not only health consequences, but also economic ones, as the international phenomenon of inflation has made things more expensive, both in other countries and right here in Canada.

We acknowledge the higher prices of groceries. We acknowledge the high and rising costs of homes, and we also acknowledge that the impacted supply chain has already deeply hurt the pockets of everyday consumers at the checkout counter. We know that the causes can be sourced to the pandemic and the current international conflicts, but we have to do something about it right here at home.

With budget 2022 and Bill C-19, our government is advancing and introducing measures that will address these concerns and help mitigate the rising costs of living for Canadians. The budget is grounded by a focus on housing, the climate, jobs and growth, and

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affordability, but one key common element in all of these pillars is people.

Our people are the backbone to a strong and growing country, and Bill C-19 ensures that we continue to have their backs through measures for affordable housing, clean and good jobs, and a safe place to live.

Before we get into those overarching categories, let us quickly review the key ways in which the budget implementation act will help Canadians.

On housing, Bill C-19 doubles the maximum for the home accessibility tax credit, and also proposes a two-year ban on foreign investment in Canadian housing that will make housing more affordable.

On health, Bill C-19 proposes \$2 billion for the provinces and territories, to reduce backlogs in surgeries and procedures.

On the labour shortage, Bill C-19 introduces a labour mobility deduction that will make travel easier for tradespeople, who will be able to fill the gaps in important projects.

On a cleaner economy that is fuelled by our small businesses, Bill C-19 proposes a reduction by half to the corporate and small business tax rates for businesses that manufacture zero-emissions technologies.

Now that we have gone through some of this overview, let us get into some of the big themes, starting with the most pressing concern in our local communities and in my riding of Richmond Hill, which is housing.

● (1800)

We have never had such an ambitious plan as we do in budget 2022 to address the fundamental issue of housing affordability. Through Bill C-19, we can implement measures that would make housing not only more affordable for our first-time homebuyers, but also more accessible for all.

We know that gaps in supply are leading to increases in costs, which is why budget 2022 indicates our government's commitment to doubling the number of new homes built over the next 10 years. This budget also includes measures to reduce the barriers for first-time homebuyers who work so hard to save up for a place to call their own. Bill C-19 would prevent foreign investors and commercial enterprises from parking their money in Canada and driving up costs to the point that young buyers can barely afford to enter the housing market.

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We talked about youth, but what about seniors or persons with disabilities? They have made significant contributions to Canadian society and deserve homes that are accessible to them and continue to fit their needs. However, renovations can be pricey, and with the rising cost of living, such home improvements are far out of reach for seniors and persons with disabilities.

That is why Bill C-19 proposes to double the home accessibility tax credit's annual limit to \$20,000 to help make significant alterations and renovations more affordable. This would mean an additional \$1,500 in tax support, which will in turn make alterations such as the installation of wheelchair ramps, walkers or non-slip flooring more affordable. For members of Richmond Hill's community council on seniors, who are concerned about the costs associated with customizing their homes to their current needs, I know this is going to be a significant aid in helping them age well in the houses they know and love.

We dived into housing affordability, but we know that to be able to purchase or maintain homes, people need good jobs, which is why investing in jobs and growth is a key pillar of budget 2022. Primarily, let us talk about the jobs that need support.

Currently, our economy can absorb nearly one million jobs, 300,000 of which could be fulfilled by the construction trades. Workers in the construction trades often travel to take on temporary jobs, frequently in rural and remote communities, but their associated expenses do not always qualify for existing tax relief. To ensure that we can get the workers where they are needed and address labour shortages in an equitable way, we need to support the mobility of workers within Canada. If they can travel without worrying about associated costs, we will have more workers and more projects will be completed, even some potentially in housing, which will indirectly increase our supply.

Through the labour mobility deduction for tradespeople, Bill C-19 proposes to provide tax relief on eligible travel and temporary relocation expenses. However, it is not just tradespersons who need the support in getting to work.

Lastly, Bill C-19 has measures that will make Canada a cleaner and safer place to live. We are committing to smart climate investments today that will not only be good for the planet, but good for the Canadian economy. Whether it is through the \$15-billion investment in the Canada growth fund, the creation of the Canada water agency, the \$1.7-billion incentive for zero-emission vehicles or the expansion of the low-carbon economy fund with \$2.2 billion over seven years, this budget implementation act will bring to fruition Canada's global efforts in fighting climate change in a way that is not only planet friendly, but economically friendly.

In closing, I ask all members of the House to join me in supporting this bill.

• (1805)

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Madam Speaker, in March 2020, the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions reduced the domestic stability barrier to 1%, thus freeing up an additional \$300 billion in capital. The government at the time said that it expected the banks to lend it out, and the banks did loan it out. Mortgage credit has exploded over

the last two years of the pandemic, from \$1.7 trillion to \$2 trillion today.

Should the government have put in place measures to ensure that this additional \$300 billion in credit did not all go into the residential mortgage market, thus fuelling the explosion in house prices and the skyrocketing housing prices we have seen over the last 24 months?

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, the \$300 billion was an investment in Canadians, from all aspects, whether it was directly to individuals or to businesses in various sectors, and as I said in my speech, the result is evident now. We are back with 115% job recovery; we are back with over three million jobs. We have shortages of one million jobs, and we have the potential to do much better. As we roll out various programs in Bill C-19, not only will we address the labour shortage, but we will also make sure that people have an affordable place to live and that we can also welcome new Canadians to Canada.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I listened with interest to the member for Richmond Hill's speech, and I noticed he did mention, in addition to seniors, people with disabilities.

In the heart of the pandemic, the member for Elmwood—Transcona and I wrote to the minister, asking for the creation of a federal disability benefit to help lift all people with disabilities out of poverty, as a first step toward a guaranteed livable basic income. I wonder what is happening on the government side when it comes to providing that necessary income support for people with disabilities.

• (1810)

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, that is a very important question. I have many stakeholders in my riding who are dealing with disabilities. One of the challenges we have is that there are also provincial programs that are being rolled out in conjunction with what we are planning in the federal government. As members know, there is nothing more important than working with provinces and territories to ensure that the programs that are being rolled out are complementary, and that takes some time. We are working very hard to ensure not only that we address the needs of those with disabilities, but also that the funding being given addresses the needs in a very complementary way.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech earlier on Bill C-19, the member across the way did not mention anything about a topic I very much wanted to hear him talk about. That may be because it is not in the budget either. I am talking about the word "health".

Almost every province, including Quebec, asked for health transfers. I have been a member of Parliament since 2015, while the Bloc Québécois has been in the House for I do not even know how long, and I cannot recall one year or one week when the Bloc did not talk about the fact that health transfers need to be increased. The federal government's response has been insulting, namely that the government will talk about it once we become more efficient.

On the one hand, who is the federal government to tell the provinces how to run their affairs?

On the other hand, since this is a unanimous request that keeps coming up, how are we unable to come to an agreement on this fundamental need?

[English]

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, I expected that, coming from one of the Bloc members, who always ask us to transfer more funds without any accountability. I am part of the HESA committee, and through a lot of witnesses and through my community councils I have always heard about the fact that we need to make sure that the funds that are being transferred to provinces come with some strings attached, and the strings attached are basically to make sure it is transparent, accountable and delivering the results we are delivering.

I will close with the fact that we are second in the OECD countries in the amount of money we are spending on health, and we will also increase this year's payment by about \$4.5 billion, yet on the delivery we are 27th in the world. I would like to ask the member what explains the difference between being second in the amount of help we are sending to the provinces and being 27th in delivering those results.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-19, the budget implementation act. I will be honest. I found the title of this year's budget quite misleading. The NDP-Liberal government titled this year's budget, "A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable". If the government really wanted to grow our economy and make life more affordable, it would have looked at Canadian agriculture. Unfortunately, when I looked for Canadian agriculture in the budget, I noticed that not one page was fully dedicated to agri-food or agriculture. The blatant lack of priority for Canadian agriculture would be concerning in any budget, but even more concerning in budget 2022.

We are in a food crisis. There is a global food shortage, and the Canadian government is nowhere to be found. I am going to quote Dr. Sylvain Charlebois, a professor and researcher of food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University, who has been sounding the alarm on this crisis. He stated, "We need to be clear on the fact that by fall more than 100 million people will experience either famine or severe hunger." Let us let that statistic sink in: By fall, more than 100 million people will experience either famine or extreme hunger.

Corn and wheat make up 30% of the calories consumed on earth, yet the region responsible for 25% of these exports is at war. That means that the poorer countries will lose access to their food supply and developed countries will pay higher prices to secure their food.

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Where in the budget was there anything to ramp up the production of export capacity of these commodities? I sure did not find it.

When I read the budget implementation act, I saw things like new taxes on luxury goods and vaping products. These are the types of things that the government has prioritized over Canadian agriculture. This reminds me of Maslow's hierarchy of needs: one of the best-known theories in human motivation. This hierarchy is modelled in the shape of a pyramid. At the top of the pyramid is the need for self-actualization. Beneath that are the need for esteem, the need for love and belonging and the need for safety. At the bottom of the pyramid are the foundational psychological needs, including food, for example. Society does not care about the higher levels of needs if the foundational needs are not met. At a time when the world is in a food crisis, the NDP-Liberal government is more focused on some higher ideological need than on the foundational need of food security.

I am shocked that the government is not focused on replacing the global reduction in food from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Not only could Canada feed the world, but we could also create wealth and jobs for our rural communities. We are one of the few remaining agriculture-exporting nations on earth. I believe we have a role to play in feeding the world. However, when I read the budget, I do not see any priority given to this by the current government.

The government has the mentality that western Canada should be limited to simply producing, harvesting and exporting raw commodities. This means that even if Canadians produced a record crop, we would still have to rely on other countries to process our commodities. This is the wrong mentality. We can do so much more. The government should create the right business environment so industry can create more value in Canadian agriculture products. When we turn our raw commodities into high-quality products such as canola oil, flour and starch products, we not only grow our economy but we also meet the demands of the world.

It was the current government that commissioned the Barton Report. In that report, agriculture was identified as a sector where Canada has the potential for substantial growth and export improvement. The report mentioned global population growth, a rising protein demand in Asia and the need for trusted markets. Canada could and should meet these new global demands, if only the government would let it.

Production and processing capacity is not the only bottleneck in the agriculture value food chain. We must also improve the resilience and reliability of our transportation system. There is no mention of investing in transportation to export our agri-food products faster and more efficiently. I think all members of the House would agree with the notion that our country is too reliant on a few transportation systems.

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• (1815)

We saw this last year when the flooding in B.C. completely landlocked our ability to export product. Imagine the drastic consequences of not being able to feed the world because we could not get our agri-food products to tidewater.

I am noticing a consistent theme with this Liberal government. It is more focused on the farming of the past than on the farming of the future. The Liberals try to be visionaries in many areas, but never in agriculture. The lack of thinking is limiting our nation's potential and starving the world. If the Liberals want to grow our economy, I can tell members how: It is through agriculture.

Not only does the budget fail to prioritize increased food production, but it also fails to address the restrictions and regulations that are preventing Canada from becoming an agriculture superpower. We know that this government's carbon tax is restricting our ag industry's competitiveness and driving up the cost of food from the day it is planted until the day it is consumed.

APAS reported that the government's carbon tax would add an additional \$12.50 of input costs per acre on wheat by 2030. At the same time, when the world is desperate for wheat, it is absurd that this government is actually making it more expensive to produce such an essential commodity.

The government also appears to be drafting regulations that would restrict fertilizer usage for Canadian farmers in the name of the climate agenda. Any plan to meet fertilizer emissions reductions should not be at the cost of production. Is the government aware that there is a global fertilizer shortage? The less fertilizer that is available, the less food we can grow.

MNP reported that reducing Canadian fertilizer use to achieve 30% emissions reduction would result in yield losses. Corn, for example, would see losses of over 67 bushels per acre per year, which is about 40%.

Where is the investment in creating a more competitive fertilizer industry? Where is the focus on exporting Canadian fertilizer? I did not see that in the budget.

I also learned last week that Health Canada has yet to release its regulations on gene editing. This innovative plant science technology is an important tool in helping Canadian farmers be more productive and efficient. Plant science innovations have been responsible for a 50% increase in crop productivity over the past century. Without these innovations, prices would be 45% higher, on average, for many food staples.

The government should create an investment environment that fuels plant science research and development. There is no reason why Canada cannot have the fastest and most responsible regulatory process in the world. Where was this investment in the budget? I did not see it.

The world is facing a food crisis. Food is becoming unaffordable for millions of people and, for some, food is becoming unavailable. Millions will starve if Canada does not step up to the plate. Instead of focusing on fulfilling the basic needs of society, this government continues to focus on a political agenda. This government's disregard for the food crisis before us is deeply disturbing.

Not one page in the budget is focused on agriculture and agri-food. That should concern every single member of the House. It is time to focus on the future of farming. It is time to make Canada an agricultural superpower, and it is time for Canada to feed the world when the world needs us most.

• (1820)

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I sit on the agriculture committee, and all parties work together. We are doing a lot of the things that the member actually said that we were not. I would hope that he would speak to his colleagues, and he is always invited to come and speak to us.

We have programs such as the natural climate solutions fund, the nature smart climate solutions fund, the agricultural climate solutions program, the on-farm climate action fund and the agricultural clean technology program.

Can the member opposite comment on some of those programs, and add his opinion about them?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, the problem with all of these programs and all of these things is that they are all based off of the carbon tax, which is a foundational problem for all of us in rural Canada. It is disproportionately applied. As I said in my speech, it is increasing costs by up to \$12 an acre for farmers. This Liberal government's approach to this is just basically not acceptable.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, there are a lot of problems with the budget, but it also contains measures designed to help people.

Thanks to the agreement that the NDP negotiated with the Liberal minority government, we are going to be able to give the poor and the middle class access to dental care.

Does my colleague not think that it is a positive development for the people in his riding, including children, youth and seniors, to have the opportunity to go to the dentist?

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, it is a matter of priorities. As a farmer, if I were in eastern Canada, knowing that my government has put a 35% tariff on the fertilizer I need to buy to put in this crop, I would be absolutely horrified and so frustrated. There is no one in the House, except the Conservatives, standing up for farmers across this country.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I could not agree with my hon. colleague more about the importance of focusing more on agriculture. It is important, as farmers are definitely in a position to take a lot of leadership in changing agricultural practices, not only for soil conservation and carbon sequestration in soils, but also for local food security. We learned a lot during COVID about the importance of supply chains and being able to be food secure within Canada. I would like more of the member's comments on that question.

• (1825)

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, the main concern is the total lack of focus or even mention of this in the budget. That should be very concerning for us. We are in a very pivotal time in our country and in the world. Countries are at war, and 25% of our food supply is in jeopardy. The government is doing absolutely nothing, and I find that just terrible.

Ms. Raquel Dancho (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member outlined that the Liberal government is going to be forcing farmers to reduce their fertilizer use. In light of his comments, 100 million people may starve to death this fall because of the impacts on agriculture in Ukraine. Now we are hearing from the Liberal government that it is going to force us to reduce our fertilizer use, but we know farmers do not use more fertilizer than they need. The reason they use fertilizer is to increase the food that they create per acre.

If the member could comment on the importance of fertilizer, how it helps Canada feed the world and how detrimental this policy would be to those around the world who depend on Canadian food, I would greatly appreciate it.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for the great work she does in her riding.

Fertilizer is the game changer for modern-day agriculture. If we did not have nitrogen fertilizer, we would not be feeding the people we are right now on the landscape. If the Canadian government, especially the Liberal government, decides to take that tool away from us, it will have detrimental impacts on not only this year's crop, but also future crops to come.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the chance to share some reflections with respect to the budget and the implementation act, Bill C-19.

I want to start by talking about housing. In my view, the extent to which all levels of government work together to address the skyrocketing cost of housing will define my community over the coming years. I am sure this is true for the communities of many other members in this place as well.

Last year, as I have shared before, there was a 35% increase in the cost of housing in Kitchener. What does that mean? It means we have seen, by the last point-in-time count, a tripling in the number of folks who are living unsheltered. We are seeing encampments continue to grow, where folks are resorting to living in tents. We are seeing students who are unable to move out of their parents' homes and unable to afford rent, as well as seniors on fixed incomes whose anxiety continues to rise as they see their rent rising too. I often think of the health care workers I met this past summer, who shared with me that they were planning on leaving and head-

ing further west because they, too, could not afford the soaring cost of rent.

As I have done here before, I want to start by sharing what I appreciate about what is in the budget, and that is some early signs that the federal government may be finally beginning to take some meaningful action when it comes to addressing the cost of housing.

A specific example is that there is significant investment in this budget with respect to co-op housing. Back in the eighties, in 1982, there were 6,500 units built that year alone of deeply affordable, dignified co-op housing. I have personally had the experience of living in co-op housing. I can attest to how important co-ops are and ensuring that units remain affordable in perpetuity. In this budget, there is a commitment to build 6,000 units. Now, that is not in one year but over several years, but it is significantly more than the 477 that were built in 2020. It is a \$1.5-billion investment. Those are the kinds of investments I would like to see more of.

There is also a commitment to reinvest more funding in the rapid housing initiative, a program that has been oversubscribed. What does that mean? It means that great organizations like Indwell, which is looking to repurpose faith communities to build affordable housing, have not been able to get funds in the past. My hope is that, with a renewed commitment to the rapid housing initiative funding, which has \$1.5 billion allocated to it, more organizations like Indwell will be successful in securing funds to build more affordable units.

There is also a commitment to end the blind bidding process, which we know would only allow for more information to be shared that could also address the crisis we are in.

I want to mention two items that were in the budget but are not in Bill C-19. One is removing the preferential tax treatment currently given to house flippers. I hope the government will ensure that this is in future legislation. It was committed to in the budget, as well as the housing bill of rights. It would ensure the requirement of a home inspection, which is one of the things that would help address the overheated market.

Of course, we do need more investments from both the federal and the provincial governments in non-market housing and other ways to reduce the commodification of housing.

There are several items I remain deeply concerned about. I will start with climate, because no doubt we need to be honest. If we want even a 50% chance of keeping global average temperature increases below 1.5°C, which is what is required for a livable planet, and we do our fair share of the global carbon budget, it means 86% of our known fossil fuel reserves in this country need to remain unextracted. To do so means that we will need to invest in workers, in their upskilling and retraining, to ensure they have access to the economy of the future.

Government Orders

There are organizations like Iron & Earth, a worker-led not-for-profit that has been calling for \$10 billion to go to workers for a prosperous transition, to ensure they have access to the support they need. Instead, what is in the budget is \$7.2 billion directed toward carbon capture and storage, a new fossil fuel subsidy, at a time when we are being told these would be phased out. That is exactly what we need to be doing. We need to be phasing out these subsidies and prioritizing those funds to workers and to proven climate solutions.

• (1830)

When it comes to health care, this pandemic has exacerbated existing gaps, so I want to pause to reflect on a few other significant gaps that I would encourage the governing party to move forward on.

The first is with respect to mental health. Many parliamentarians will say the words “mental health is health”, and I am glad that more folks are saying those words, but we need to treat it that way. Mental health advocates across the country have been calling for a new Canada mental health transfer to provinces. While the budget mentions an intention to engage in this, the only commitment is to a wellness portal. While I am sure this is a worthy investment, we need to be mindful of the significant dollars that are required from the federal government to move toward parity in mental health funding so that it is true that mental health is health and we can eliminate the wait times we see across the country, and certainly in Waterloo-Wellington. I am hearing that this remains the case in our community as well.

When it comes to long-term care, I had the chance to ask the Prime Minister directly last week about the safe long-term care act, which has been talked about in the supply and confidence agreement between the Liberals and the NDP, and when there will be plans to introduce that act. There is no mention of that in Bill C-19 or in the budget. In fact, the only mention of long-term care in the budget was the money that was allocated in 2021.

Just a few days ago, I was speaking with a woman who was reflecting about her mom, who is waiting for a bed in long-term care. With tears in her eyes, she shared that she did not know whether her mom would make it out of hospital and into long-term care. I think of the personal support workers I have spoken with, who have shared that they do not get to give four hours of care. They are lucky if they do four minutes of care a day. We know there is more that the federal government can and should be doing to put standards in place when it comes to investing in long-term care. I would encourage the governing party to prioritize doing so.

Last, I will pause to reflect on following through with promises made to Canadians with disabilities. It is actually one of the areas that I have been encouraged by in my time in this place. We now have 100 MPs from all parties, including four colleagues in the Waterloo region, who have all said that it is time to follow through.

We know that Canadians with disabilities are disproportionately living in poverty across the country. About 40% of those living in poverty are Canadians with disabilities, and it is 1.5 million people across the country. The governing party has promised to introduce substantial legislation for the Canada disability benefit, a guaranteed income for every Canadian with a disability across the country.

In this place, I have had the chance to share stories of folks in my community about what it means to them not to have access to this and what it means to be living in poverty as a result of not getting appropriate supports.

I continue to encourage the governing party to introduce substantial legislation for the Canada disability benefit. I will pass my thanks again to the 103 MPs from all political parties who have come together to say we can do better and we must.

Some might say, “Well, wait a second. This all sounds well and good, but can we afford these things?” I want to close by sharing some of the ways we can afford these significant and important investments, and we do not need to do it simply by increasing debt.

We can and should stop gifting oil and gas companies, which are making record-breaking profits, billions of dollars and should reinvest it. We have had a lot of promises about taxing the rich, but the budget reduced the campaign promise for a 3% surtax on some of the largest companies, whose profits soared in the pandemic, down to 1.5%. It avoids any talk of an inheritance or a wealth tax. Even the vacancy tax, as I have shared in this place before, in Bill C-8 was down to 1%, and it exempts every Canadian and every corporation in the country. In Vancouver it is up to 5%, and in doing so, they have been able to reinvest millions of dollars in affordable housing. Of course, there is no talk of closing corporate tax loopholes, which we know is a measure we need to do.

With that, I will close and welcome questions.

• (1835)

Mr. Tim Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech and for his advocacy. We share a region and a city. I know he mentioned an organization called Indwell, which supports affordable housing. We have met with them, and we are all advocating together.

I wonder if the member could explain the importance of housing programs, and the benefits of federal programs such as the rapid housing initiative, with the understanding that the federal government can and will do more. Also, could the member explain the importance of wraparound services? We cannot have housing without supports and we cannot have supports without housing. Then, could the member explain how provinces, and in our case the Province of Ontario, need to step up with more health supports for affordable housing?

Government Orders

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, let me share what a joy it is to be working alongside the member for Kitchener—Conestoga. He brings a tone to this place that I think we need more of: It is a more collegial tone: one of actually working together to get things done.

When it comes to the rapid housing initiative, I could not agree more. Indwell is a great example of an organization that we hope, through new investments in the rapid housing initiative, has that much better of a chance of building exactly the kinds of investments that we know we need. When it comes to wraparound investments, this is a great chance to talk about shelter care.

In our community, the organization House of Friendship has learned exactly what it takes to not only provide housing but to ensure that those who are living in shelter have access to the mental health and addiction support services they need on site. With him, I am so proud to continue to let others across the country know about the success that House of Friendship has had in our community. It could be replicated in other organizations across the country.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, one thing the member spoke about was mental health. That is something that I have seen that is absent from the budget.

Sixty-two per cent of Canadian parents are saying that they have seen the mental health of their children get worse. The Canadian Paediatric Society is seeing more self-harm. When it comes to things like self-harm and eating disorders, they are two to three times higher.

I am looking for the member's thoughts. What should we be doing for mental health, and how should the government be helping out more?

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, I thank the member in particular for her leadership on the status of women committee. We need to recognize how having women chairing committees like that changes the substance of the conversation in really productive ways.

When it comes to mental health, we need to only be looking to what mental health advocates across the country have been calling for, and that is parity in funding. There is a significant funding gap. Specifically, what they have been calling for is 12% of health funding to go towards mental health. We need to be honest with ourselves. That is the kind of investment that is both significant and necessary if we are going to eliminate the wait times that are plaguing areas across the country.

• (1840)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, when the budget was presented on April 7, the government was talking about sending infrastructure transfers to the provinces as long as the federal government approved of the provinces' plans for the money.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that. Does he think that transfers for infrastructure or anything else should be contingent on whether the federal government approves of what Quebec and the provinces intend to do with the money?

Mr. Mike Morrice: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Repentigny for her question.

[English]

If I am honest, it is something I continue to learn about in this place. I spoke to the mental health transfer, for example. This is an example where funds would be allocated to provinces within their jurisdiction to spend appropriately.

When it comes to infrastructure, I would be glad to sit down with the member to better understand what she thinks the best way to approach it would be, and to have that conversation with her.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I really want to bring to the discussion some of the key things that are happening in Elgin—Middlesex—London. These are the key things that we are still waiting for an answer from the government on.

As a girl from a rural community, I think we need to talk about fertilizer. We need to make a plan. I was happy enough to sit on the agriculture committee the other day, just seeing some of the fine work that was being done there, but we know that we have people in Elgin—Middlesex—London who are seeding right now. Fertilizer has a 35% tariff applied regardless of whether one bought it prior to March 2 or not.

We know that boats have continued to sit at sea. We know that there continues to be issues, but we need to have a plan. The farmers need to know what is going to happen next. They start buying, and they start preparing even for next season, for 2023, and they will be preparing in October through December. We need to know what is going on and the government needs to come up with a plan.

Is it going to be helping out? Are they going to get 35% of this back from the coffers that are sitting there taking in these tariffs right now, or is that 35% tariff going to be applied to the food and to everything else that Canadians are consuming? I wanted to bring up fertilizer and ask the government to please come up with an answer. We are waiting.

I want to talk about passport services. Golly gee, we have heard a lot about passport services, but I just want to remind the government that 10-year passports are due. That means that they are going to be there, so it needs to come up with a plan. We are just waiting. We have people who are being told, as I heard earlier today, to come at 1 a.m. to line up.

Back in 2007, I believe it was, when we knew the U.S. government was putting in this plan, I can tell members, as I was a constituency assistant, the government was prepared. We had lineups that were eight and nine hours long, but the government was prepared, and within eight weeks, people were still able to get their passports. We know that with this government right now, it is the same situation, but there is no passport service. Please, get the services back to being Service Canada.

Adjournment Proceedings

I also want to talk about the cost of living. This is just really simple. I want to just make sure I read this one to members. A constituent wrote to me, “Good morning. Yesterday, I went to put gas in my car and my heart sank when I saw how much I had to pay for a litre. Right now, I work three jobs, so that my wife can stay home and home-school our kids. How many more jobs do you want one person to work?”

I think that is the question. He already has three. They home-school their children. I am sure they are very frugal, like many families are, but what is the government going to do when it comes to the cost of living?

This morning, my husband filled up for \$1.99 in the city of St. Thomas. Last year at this time, we know it was closer to two-thirds of that cost.

I am asking the government to do some work, to start thinking about what it is like to be a regular Canadian who has to pay these bills, who has to feed their children and who has to buy food and clothes and shelter. I am just asking for some compassion, and I am hoping that the government will get to work.

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It being 6:45 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill now before the House.

[Translation]

The question is on the amendment to the amendment.

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

[English]

The member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I request that the vote be adopted on division.

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded vote.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, May 10, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to see the clock at 7:00 p.m.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am honoured to represent the riding of Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan in this place. Two things in particular about my riding are that it is very involved in the energy sector and it has a large Ukrainian community. People in this riding are asking me what we can do to support Ukraine in the midst of this horrific invasion by Russia. I think they understand just how critical energy supply and security are in combatting the Russian invasion and allowing Europe to impose the kinds of sanctions that will effectively starve Putin’s war machine.

So much of the Russian economy is dependent on the export of gas and other energy-related projects, so Canada’s critical contribution could be to supply the vital energy resources to Europe and to other parts of the world, to displace their dependence on Russian gas. We have been asking these questions as the opposition. We have been calling on the government for years to recognize the economic opportunities associated with our oil and gas sector and to do more to support the construction of pipelines. We have also called on it, particularly in the context of the Russian invasion that we are seeing, to recognize that building the energy infrastructure we need to displace Russian gas in Europe is not just about the economy. It is also about security. It is about doing our part to support Ukrainians who are resisting by saying we want to give our European friends, allies and other nations around the world an alternative to buying oil and gas from Russia.

It has been interesting that since we have been raising this question, the government is more willing to broadly say that it buys into the idea. There is some language in the G7 communiqué that speaks about working together to phase out dependency on Russian energy, so it is encouraging to see that. The government is starting to talk the talk in response to some of these opposition questions, but what we do not see from the government is a willingness to step up and take action and walk the walk, to recognize that if we are going to displace Russian gas in Europe, if we are going to do our part to be able to supply energy resources to Europe, it is going to mean that we build up that infrastructure and make legislative and policy changes that allow us to move quickly to get those energy resources to where they need to go as quickly as possible, recognizing that the world is in a war.

We are in this very acute security situation, and doing our part should mean re-examining the antienergy policies the government has put in place in the past. It would be good for our economy to do these things, and these are things the Conservatives have been calling for for years, but recognizing the particulars of the situation we are in. Now is the time to be thinking about, for instance, repealing Bill C-69, which makes it very difficult for us to build pipeline infrastructure. We need to have a faster, smoother process for getting infrastructure approved so that we can support Europe in being able to impose energy-related sanctions on Russia and end its dependence on Russian oil and gas. It is not going to be good enough to just talk the talk, to just say the words of solidarity, and to say that we stand with Ukraine, but then to actually fail to make the legislative and policy changes that are going to help achieve that result.

If Canada believes this G7 communiqué it has signed on to and the words that ministers are now starting to say about sanctioning Russia, about having the kind of debilitating sanctions that will stop Putin's tanks in their tracks, and if the government is serious about these things, then it has to think about the kinds of changes we can make that are going to support the development of our energy sector and the export of those energy products, in particular to Europe.

Therefore, I want to ask the government if it is really serious about this. Are these just words, or are we going to see concrete action with respect to Canada playing a greater role and contributing to global energy security?

• (1850)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the ongoing tragedy unfolding before our eyes in Europe is one that I know everyone is concerned about. Regardless of political persuasion, we are all sickened by what Russia is doing to its neighbour, so it is no surprise that this is one of those issues before Parliament where opposing parties sometimes will largely agree.

For one thing, we share the view that this war represents a defining challenge for the democratic world. We also agree that Canada must work with allies to provide equipment to help Ukraine's brave soldiers fight off this unprovoked aggression. All parties support the democratic world's punishment sanctions: a package that includes a Canadian ban on imports of oil, gas and other petroleum products from Russia. Furthermore, we are united in doing everything we can to deal with this humanitarian disaster.

We also share the member opposite's belief in the critical importance of energy security, and the need for Europe and the world to reduce and eventually eliminate its dependency on Russian oil and gas. There is nothing here that he needs to convince us of. It is clear that the world must stand up to Russian aggression, and that is what we are doing. We are taking all the measures I have just cited, and are working closely with our allies to help Europe wean itself off of this dependency.

I would invite the member to consider our government's work with industry and provincial governments. The Government of Canada has identified Canadian industry capacity that can increase production by up to 200,000 barrels of oil and the equivalent of 100,000 barrels of natural gas. These exports will give America,

now the world's largest LNG exporter, more leeway to export its petroleum products to Europe and other markets.

I would agree that this alone is a relatively small proportion of the amount of Russian oil and gas that we have to displace, but solidarity matters. The U.S., Brazil and other nations are also stepping up. We would once again urge members opposite to consider the International Energy Agency's 10-point plan to end its dependency on Russian gas. It includes moving Europe more aggressively toward alternatives, such as increased imports of LNG, renewables and hydrogen, and that is exactly what we are doing with our climate plan. It is one that includes a strategy to build a Canadian hydrogen industry that could help fill this void. On that note, I am pleased to say that Germany's ambassador recently referred to Canada as a potential hydrogen superpower.

What I just outlined really illustrates why it would be the worst time to abandon Canada's clean energy transition. We all have a job to do here. We all need to step up to protect the interests of Canadians, but also the interests of allies around the world.

• (1855)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, respectfully, the parliamentary secretary framed her comments as if there was sort of wide agreement in the House on this issue. Certainly there is wide agreement on some aspects of our response to the horrific invasion of Ukraine, but there are clear differences in that the government does not seem to support the development of the critical infrastructure that is necessary to actually achieve the objective that the parliamentary secretary is talking about; that is, to end Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas.

This is particularly clear in the fact that on March 3 in this place, my colleague for Wellington—Halton Hills put forward a motion that was about the invasion. It had a number of points that I think members all agreed on, but then it said:

...call on the Government of Canada to undertake measures to ensure new natural gas pipelines can be approved and built to Atlantic tidewater, recognizing energy as vital to Canadian and European defence and security, allowing Canadian natural gas to displace Russian natural gas in Europe, and being consistent with environmental goals in the transition to non-emitting sources of energy.

That motion was opposed by the government. Conservatives put forward a motion supporting Ukraine with that specific language around energy, and the government opposed that motion. Why?

Adjournment Proceedings

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, our government recognized our role in global energy security long before this tragedy started to unfold and long before the member opposite stood in the House of Commons. In fact, energy security was front and centre for the Prime Minister and President Biden back when they met in February of last year. It was put forward in writing in the accord that was struck, called the “Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership”. The member opposite knows this.

The member also knows that our government has endorsed projects that advance security, including the Line 3 replacement, LNG Canada and the TMX pipeline expansion. We are the government that has been moving these projects forward because we know they are critically important. We are also—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to rise virtually in this place to raise issues I originally put forward in a question that was responded to by the same parliamentary secretary on the subject of the Baffinland mine in Nunavut.

I want to start by thanking the hon. member of Parliament for Nunavut for her leadership and guidance on this issue. I reflect, as I look at issues relating to the Arctic, that is Nunavut, Northwest Territories and Yukon, on how out of it southern Canadians are and how easy it is to ignore the leadership of the Inuit on issues in Nunavut. Canadians probably know more about the Amazon than we know about the Arctic, and it is ironic that the concentrated urban populations of Brazil, such as Rio de Janeiro, are as far from the Amazon, and as unlikely to ever visit it, as Canadians in Toronto are to visit Nunavut. In both cases, it is a 3,000-kilometre distance, but I think Canadians are unaware of how critical our Arctic is to our global climate system. In the same way, the Amazon and the Arctic are both major global influencers on climate while they are also major victims of the climate crisis.

The context in which I asked the question about the Baffinland mine was this. It is a mine that has been operating in sending iron ore to Europe. It ships the ore out from the Milne Inlet port. It is called a Canadian mining company if we look it up online, but it is owned by a European company based in Luxembourg, ArcelorMittal, and by a Texas-based company from Houston. It is now applying to double production to 12 million tonnes a year and build a 110-kilometre railway from the mine site to the port site. This is a major expansion.

The hon. parliamentary secretary, when she answered my question, seemed to think I was asking for a prejudgment of the decision of the Nunavut Impact Review Board. I was not. I was pointing out in my question that satellite imagery, plus eyewitness accounts from Inuit hunters on the ground, show that the company has already started its expansion before it received a permit, which raises really large issues, and this is quite typical of projects right across Canada.

Who is watching to make sure that conditions attached to permits are actually observed? What do Inuit hunters, in particular, do when they think a large transnational corporation is deciding to jump the

gun and not waiting to see if its project actually gets approved? We know from CBC News that in 2017 the Baffinland mine had already signed contracts with contractors to assist in the building of the railway, not waiting for approvals.

The iron ore mining company has already influenced and contaminated food supplies, including Arctic char and throughout the food chain. There are deep concerns. As a matter of fact, that is how I first learned about this project. There was a brave blockade in mid-winter, in the land of no sun whatsoever and deep frigid temperatures. In February 2021, the blockade by Inuit hunters from Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay is what made me wonder what on earth was going on that people would be so brave as to sit down and block the Mary River airstrip in protest against what they saw happening, the contamination and the increased shipping threatened by phase 2 of this project, and what it would mean for the narwhals.

When we look at it, and the more I ask this, the more I am deeply concerned that the Inuit leadership—

• (1900)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources.

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for raising the issue. I want to say, from the outset, that I understand her question completely but I also know that she understands that there is a process. During that process that the government is taking with Baffinland, she knows that we should not be interfering politically. I want to be clear from the outset that our government supports a strong resource development sector in the north, one that is sustainable and that creates opportunities for indigenous and all northerners but respects the environment and respects the interests of the people who live there.

I want to assure members, from the outset, that the review of this proposed development has been led by northerners from day one. It has followed the environmental review process that is outlined in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, and this process is guided by the Nunavut Planning and Project Assessment Act. Through this process, the Nunavut Impact Review Board, or NIRB, has been ensuring that Inuit and other indigenous partners have been consulted. NIRB has also worked very hard to balance public health during COVID-19 and other issues throughout the review while also ensuring that the Inuit voices have been heard. As part of the review process, members of potentially impacted communities in the Baffin region, some of whom I have talked to myself, have had the opportunity to make their views known.

Public hearings that have been held by NIRB began in November 2019. The process has been ongoing since that time. While the pandemic delayed the process and some meetings had to be rescheduled, NIRB completed its hearings in January of this year. The board is now preparing its final recommendations, which will be presented to the minister and the department very shortly.

Throughout that whole process, however, residents have been able to both learn about the proposed project and give their feedback and input into the project, and NIRB has gone to great lengths to ensure that Nunavummiut have had the chance to participate in or watch the proceedings. In addition to that, many federal officials have participated in every step of the review, including the final public hearings and a community round table, which was completed last fall.

Once the NIRB report and the final report's recommendations are presented to the government, the responsible ministers will make the decisions that they are requested to make using due diligence and a very comprehensive decision framework. The member knows that the process is very clear, very defined and very transparent. We will not prejudice the outcome or the process and we look forward to receiving the board's report.

• (1905)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I am not asking about prejudging the process. I am asking, is anyone going to hold this foreign multinational to account for proceeding to begin building a project before it has a permit? That is illegal. Someone should step up. The double standard here is one that really worries me and bothers me. Do members think that an indigenous person, an Inuit person, under court orders in a criminal justice proceeding could avoid the restrictions in the way a foreign corporation can avoid restrictions on its activities until it has a permit? This is a double standard and it should bother the parliamentary secretary as much as it bothers me. What is available to hold Baffinland to account for building and contracting for a second phase, and even thinking about a third phase, when it does not have a permit?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, the member knows that this is an active mine. It is an ongoing mine. If she has particular information, that should be provided to the minister and to the government. If Inuit in that area have particular concerns and documentation of something that is being done outside of the process, then they should make us aware of that. What I do know at this stage is that it is an ongoing process with NIRB. They have made an application. They are following the regulations. Government is being responsible in the work that we do in allowing a fair, open and transparent process for that application. Until the recommendations are presented to the appropriate ministers, no decision will be made with regard to the future expansion of the mine.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier this year I asked the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship about the unprecedented backlog of immigration applications. The system is struggling to recover from two years of the pandemic due to a lack of planning and crisis management, as well as poor leadership. If the approach is not changed, it will take years to catch up on the millions of applications in the queue.

Adjournment Proceedings

Shockingly, according to data from the IRCC, the backlogs have increased to more than two million applications across all categories. For over two years, the department has closed almost all in-person interviews. Interviews, tests, citizenship ceremonies and other appointments have been cancelled and offices shifted to working on a rotating basis. While most Canadians transitioned to online work with minimal trouble, that is not the case with the IRCC and the government.

Instead of identifying the problem that we, as Conservatives, have been flagging along the way and fixing it at the very beginning, the government ignored it. It had more than a year to do so, but then the first crisis hit. In September 2021, the Afghan government collapsed. Canada introduced special programs to resettle the refugees, but with the government's broken immigration system, during the most pressuring six months, the government was able to help only 4,000 Afghans, or 10% of its campaign commitment.

Then the second crisis hit. In February of this year, the Russian Federation launched an unprovoked attack and genocide against the Ukrainian people. Instead of implementing visa-free travel from Ukraine to Canada, which Conservatives called for from day one, the government introduced the authorization for emergency travel, allowing Ukrainians to arrive in Canada on temporary resident visas. Ukrainian passport holders can travel visa-free to the European Union, the U.K., Switzerland, Israel and many other countries. None of them have any concerns about the made-up excuses by the Liberal minister. The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration voted in favour of visa-free travel for Ukrainians; the Liberals voted against it. The members of this House also voted and passed a similar motion, but again, the members voted against it.

To give colleagues a perspective on why this is important, the minister of immigration claimed that that sort of change would require 12 to 14 weeks of work to implement, because the department's IT systems would need certain renovations. Here we are, almost 11 weeks since the beginning of the war, and the system could have been already working, but the government failed to listen and act accordingly. To date, we have heard that more than 140,000 applications have been submitted by Ukrainians. That is how many fewer applications there might have been in the queue if the Liberals had followed our advice and eliminated all visa requirements.

Adjournment Proceedings

If that was not enough, we now have a third crisis across this country. Canadians are desperately trying to renew their passports, and while improvements were supposed to have come in to alleviate the backlog, little change has occurred. Nearly 500,000 applications were received in March and April of this year. Streams of constituents are calling, writing to me and coming into my office about the issue. The government had years to plan ahead to tackle the passport issue before it began. The government should have had that in mind before the pandemic hit, that the 10th anniversary of the 10-year passport was coming.

We literally have a trifecta of burning issues in our immigration and citizenship systems, all of which were avoidable and all of which were preventable.

• (1910)

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member opposite presents a picture that is entirely out of step with reality. As the hon. member is fully aware, the world has been in a global pandemic for two years. Borders were forced to close worldwide and, for obvious reasons, this resulted in some processing delays in our immigration system.

In spite of the pandemic's many challenges, Canada admitted a record 405,000 permanent residents last year. This surpasses the previous record from 1913, making it the most newcomers admitted to Canada in a single year in our entire history.

Since the start of the pandemic, IRCC has worked to improve processing for all permanent residence applications, and our work to date has produced results. As part of the 2021 economic and fiscal update, our government announced an investment of \$85 million to further build on our progress to date. This will enable us to further reduce processing times and process more permanent and temporary resident applications. Most importantly, we will get back to our processing service standards in various programs by the end of this year, including study permits, work permits and permanent resident card renewals. We are also working to reduce processing times for visitor visas and proof of citizenship.

As the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship announced on January 31, the government has implemented a number of additional measures to further improve the client experience and modernize the immigration system. These measures are part of a broader process to address key challenges faced by our clients and to achieve the more predictable processing times that our clients expect and deserve.

Canadian businesses are in need of support, and our government knows that we have a role to play in increasing the available workforce. On April 22, the minister addressed the decision made last fall to temporarily pause invitations to apply under the federal high-skilled stream, including the Canadian experience class, federal skilled worker class and federal skilled trades class. He announced, in July of this year, that we will end this temporary pause and resume inviting qualified candidates to apply for permanent residence. We anticipate that the vast majority of new applicants will be processed within the six-month service standard.

At the same time, the minister announced that beginning in mid-June, Canada will extend post-graduation work permits for recent international graduates. Those whose permits have already expired or will expire this year will be eligible for an additional open work permit of 18 months. In addition, as of April 25, nearly 35,000 agricultural workers have already arrived in Canada for the 2022 season, and this represents a 10% increase over the number of agricultural workers that had arrived by this time last year. As members can see, we are doing our utmost to ensure that employers have the workers they need.

Moving forward, we are going to continue to support those who wish to live in Canada. I was pleased to learn that IRCC has surpassed its goal to make 147,000 permanent residence final decisions in the first quarter of 2022. From January 1 to March 31, 2022, there have been over 156,000 final decisions on permanent resident applications. This is a doubling of the number of final decisions in the same time period in 2021.

This is an encouraging example of progress, but our work is not yet finished. We are moving forward to ensure that Canada's proud history of immigration is matched by a modern immigration system that supports our economic recovery, improves client experience and strengthens our communities.

• (1915)

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, we have just listened to a great collection of talking points that Canadians and parliamentarians are hearing over and over again.

Will the parliamentary secretary acknowledge this failure and all the problems that his government caused to Canadians and other nationals who will become future Canadians? Is the government willing to consider any compensation for the delays, cancelled trips, personal traumas and lost opportunities of those nationals? When will this immigration system be reformed, transformed and upgraded and start working efficiently?

These are the questions that must be answered by the parliamentary secretary on behalf of his Liberal government. Enough with the talking points.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his questions and comments, but as he is fully aware, the world has been in a global pandemic for two years. In spite of this, we landed over 405,000 immigrants last year, which is an all-time record, to help with our economic recovery.

As the Minister of Immigration announced on January 31, the government has implemented a number of measures to further improve client experience and modernize the immigration system. We have also committed an investment of \$85 million to further reduce processing times and build on our progress to date. Most importantly, we will get back to our processing service standards in various programs by the end of this year.

We are taking a whole-of-government approach to address labour shortages across our country. We have taken major steps toward this by processing more than 100,000 work permit applications in

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the first quarter of 2022, nearly doubling the number processed over the same period in 2021.

As I mentioned—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:17 p.m.)

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