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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 6, 2022

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayer

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

• (1105)

[*English*]

CONSTITUTION ACT, 2022 (REPRESENTATION OF QUEBEC)

The House resumed from March 24 consideration of the motion that Bill C-246, An Act to amend the Constitution Act, 1867 (representation in the House of Commons), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to speak today to Bill C-246.

I would like to draw attention to the introduction of Bill C-14 and note my support of the government's proposal to update the grandfather clause in the seat allocation formula. This will ensure that no province will ever have fewer seats in the House of Commons than it did in 2021.

This updated clause speaks to the heart of the concerns in Bill C-246, as it would ensure that all provinces continue to have a strong voice in the House of Commons. Specifically, it would ensure that Quebec does not lose a seat, keeps all existing protections in place and continues to allow for incremental seat increases among provinces with growing populations, and all this without disruption to the redistribution of the federal electoral districts in Canada.

As many of us know, the formal process of redrawing the electoral boundaries, a process required under law to take place every 10 years, has begun. I would like to take this opportunity to speak to members about one important aspect of this very detailed and considered process, that is, the independent and non-partisan commissions that are responsible for undertaking this very important work.

For nearly 60 years, independent non-partisan electoral boundary commissions have been responsible for redrawing our electoral maps. These commissions were established in 1964, when Parlia-

ment passed the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. The act sets out the roles, responsibilities, process and criteria that these commissions must follow when redrawing our federal electoral boundaries. This independent approach was introduced by design to eliminate the risk of political interference in the process and maintain integrity and transparency in our democratic systems and institutions.

Prior to 1964, the House of Commons itself was responsible for fixing the boundaries of electoral districts through a committee appointed especially for that purpose. However, Parliament realized that gerrymandering, a term used to describe the manipulation of riding boundaries to benefit members of the governing party, was a significant risk to the integrity of our system. That was and remains unacceptable. The introduction of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act was a critical measure put in place to solve that problem.

As outlined in the act, a three-member commission must be established for each province. These commissions are composed of one chairperson and two commissioners. Because this process occurs every 10 years, I would like to remind the hon. members that the government does not recommend or appoint members to these provincial commissions. To be clear, they are independently appointed. In fact, the government's role in the entire process is extremely limited.

For example, the minister is responsible for receiving census data from the chief statistician, for being notified of the appointment of new commissioners and for receiving the final reports from the commission. The minister is also responsible for facilitating the orders in council that are required to proclaim the establishment of the commissions and, similarly, to proclaim the new electoral boundaries as set out by the commission at the conclusion of the process.

It is important to note that, once again, the government does not have any decision-making role or influence when it comes to how electoral boundaries are drawn. This is entirely at the discretion of the independent provincial commissions. The chief justices in each province are responsible for appointing a chairperson for each commission. In addition, the Speaker is responsible for appointing the two other members of the commissions. The chairperson of each commission is a sitting judge or, on a rare occasion, a retired judge. All members set aside their normal work and business to dedicate themselves to this democratic endeavour, and I would like to thank them for their service.

Private Members' Business

For the commissioners, the act stipulates that they must reside in the province for which they are appointed. The act is also very clear when specifying eligibility:

No person is eligible to be a member of a commission while that person is a member of the Senate or House of Commons or is a member of a legislative assembly or legislative council of a province.

The independence of these commissions is further reinforced through this provision. In practice, the commissioners typically have a background in academia, law or non-elected public service. This knowledge and expertise allow these individuals to undertake this complicated but very important work.

On this 2021 decennial, as required under the act, 10 independent, non-partisan electoral boundary commissions, one for each province, were established on November 1, 2021. With the release of the final census 2021 data on February 9, 2022, the commissions began their review of the boundaries. As necessary, based on population changes and movements within each province, they will develop proposals to redraw electoral districts within each province.

Under the government's proposal, this work will continue uninterrupted. For the Quebec commission, the legislation would ensure that it has the time it needs, as prescribed under the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, to reconsider its boundaries proposal in progress based on the updated grandfather amendment.

Over the last 10 years, Canada's population has grown by 3.5 million people, from just over 33 million in 2011 to almost 37 million people today. It is essential that these citizens be factored into Canada's federal electoral districts. However, while they will endeavour to reflect changes in population against a province's seat count, the commissions must take into consideration other factors, such as respecting communities of interest and historical patterns. They must also ensure electoral districts maintain a manageable geographic size, including for those ridings that are in rural or northern regions of any province.

Considering these factors is no small feat. Our country is vast. Our communities are diverse and are rich in culture and history. From coast to coast to coast, they form the basis of our identities and our connections.

That is why the act contains provisions to ensure these communities of interest are considered when it comes to determining reasonable electoral boundaries. Respecting communities of interest is not just about preserving the differences between provinces or regions, or between rural and urban settings. It can mean recognizing the difference from one side of a small town to the other.

Canada's history has shown us that redistribution is not just about balancing changes in population. It is also about balancing community history and community geography. It is a delicate balance. It is a balance of multiple and sometimes competing priorities.

Nevertheless, these complex considerations are precisely why these commissions are independent and non-partisan. It is essential that these decisions are made outside of party lines. That way, boundary lines and ridings are established to best serve Canadians, not political parties.

Over the coming months, the commissions will hold public hearings open to the Canadian public, including members of Parliament. We are fortunate, along with all other Canadians, to have the opportunity to engage in a non-partisan, arm's-length process. While the commissions will consider the input they receive, they retain the responsibility to make all final decisions about where the new boundaries will be.

The decisions they will come to over the next several months will be carefully considered. Ultimately, some electoral districts in some provinces may look a little different than they do today. We can rest assured that the decisions will be informed decisions, ones taken by qualified experts and made independently of government.

I would reiterate that this independence is the foundation of our redistribution process. It has served us well for the past 60 years, and no doubt it will continue to do so moving forward. The importance of redistribution is well known to all members of Parliament. The results of these efforts will form the basis of representation in the House of Commons for the next 10 years.

Every Canadian deserves effective representation. Canadians also deserve public institutions that serve their interests, first and foremost. Under the government's proposal and based on the process in place, I am confident that these independent, non-partisan commissions will do just that in the coming months.

In closing, I hope my hon. colleagues will join me in thanking these commissions for undertaking this very important work.

● (1110)

[Translation]

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are talking today about Bill C-246, which provides that the total number of members from the province of Quebec can never be less than 25% of the total number of members in the House of Commons, regardless of whether Quebec's population decreases.

However, if Quebec's population increases and its percentage of representation exceeds 25% of the total number of members in the House, no limits will be imposed on Quebec under this bill.

If Quebec continues to be part of the Canadian federation, which I hope it will, it will have to adhere to the principles under which the federation was created in 1867. These principles were the subject of a month-long debate in the Parliament of the Province of Canada in 1866, when the broad strokes of what would become the Constitution Act, 1867, were debated and approved.

The biggest compromise that was made at that time was an agreement under which the three parts of the country that existed at the time, namely, Quebec, Ontario and the maritime provinces, would have equal representation in the upper chamber or Senate and would be represented by population in the lower chamber or House of Commons.

It is hard to overstate the importance of what the founders considered to be inseparable twin principles. The expression “representation by population” was used 186 times in the debates on Confederation in the legislative council and assembly of the Province of Canada. If this agreement had not been reached, then Confederation never would have happened.

• (1115)

[English]

To make this point, I am now going to turn to a few quotes from the time. This is in a volume of *The Confederation Debates*, which I played a role in editing, the first edition published since the 1860s. It is an English-language edition.

I am quoting first from George Brown, who stated:

Our Lower Canadian friends have agreed to give us representation by population in the Lower House on the express condition that they could have equality in the Upper House. On no other condition could we have advanced a step; and, for my part, I am quite willing they should have it.

This goes back and forth in French and English. I am not sure if it was originally in French, but I am going to quote it in English because that is what I have in front of me.

George-Étienne Cartier stated:

In 1858 I first saw that representation by population, though unsuited for application as a governing principle as between the two provinces, [Upper and Lower Canada], would not involve the same objection if other partners were drawn in by a federation. In a struggle between two—one a weak, and the other a strong party—the weaker could not but be overcome; but if three parties were concerned, the stronger would not have the same advantage; as when it was seen by the third that there was too much strength on one side, the third would club with the weaker combatant to resist the big fighter.

This was greeted with cheers, apparently. I note that he was prescient. Alberta and Quebec have worked closely together throughout the history of the 20th and 21st centuries of this country.

He goes on to say, “I did not entertain the slightest apprehension that Lower Canada’s rights were in the least jeopardized by the provision that in the General Legislature”, by which he means the House of Commons, “the French Canadians of Lower Canada would have a smaller number of representatives than all the other origins combined.”

Finally, I turn to John A. Macdonald. In the same speech in which he refers to the Senate as the chamber of sober second thought, he said, “To the Upper House is to be confided the protection of sectional interests; therefore is it that the three great divisions are there equally represented, for the purpose of defending such interests against the combinations of majorities in the Assembly.”

He goes on to say:

In the formation of the House of Commons, the principle of representation by population has been provided for in a manner equally ingenious and simple. The introduction of this principle presented at first the apparent difficulty of a constantly

increasing body until, with the increasing population, it would become inconveniently and expensively large. But by adopting the representation of Lower Canada as a fixed standard—

That is, 65 seats for lower Canada or Quebec, and then the rest based on equally sized ridings.

—as the pivot on which the whole would turn—that province being the best suited for the purpose, on account of the comparatively permanent character of its population, and from its having neither the largest nor least number of inhabitants—we have been enabled to overcome the difficulty I have mentioned.

All of them were in favour of representation by population in the lower House.

[Translation]

The proposal at the time was that Quebec would hold 65 of the 181 seats in the House of Commons, or 36% of the total. This accurately reflected its share of the population. Quebec held 24 of the 72 seats in the Senate, only 33%. This means that Quebec was slightly under-represented in the upper house.

However, the relative population of the provinces has, over time, changed in ways that Sir John A. Macdonald and the other authors of the Constitution did not anticipate. Quebec’s population grew considerably, but not as fast as some of the other provinces, including the six that had not yet joined Confederation at that time.

As a result, various amendments were made to section 51 of the Constitution Act, 1867, where our electoral formula is set out. The formula was adjusted in 1915; otherwise, Prince Edward Island’s number of seats would have dropped below four in 1946, then again in 1952, 1975, 1985 and 2012. This year, it is being adjusted again so that Quebec will not lose a seat.

The end result is that Quebec is now represented in the Senate by the exact number of senators that its population would warrant, which is 24 senators out of 105, or 22.9% of the senators for a province with 22.9% of the Canadian population. That seems entirely appropriate to me.

Quebec will never have fewer seats than the number to which its population is entitled. In fact, in the event that Quebec’s population dips below 22% of the Canadian total, it would become overrepresented in the Senate, where the numbers would never change regardless of any change to the populations in the provinces. Here, in the House of Commons, we have exactly the same situation, thanks to the anticipated changes to the Constitution, which I hope will be adopted.

There are many other aspects to Canada’s seat distribution formula that I find problematic, but in at least one province, Quebec, the initial agreement still works as it should.

• (1120)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to Bill C-246.

Since the NDP has already introduced a similar bill in the House of Commons, it will be supporting Bill C-246.

I will talk about what Bill C-246 does and does not do. For my 10 minutes of speaking time, I hope to cover the entire file.

Private Members' Business

As we know, for a long time now, since adopting the Sherbrooke declaration under our former leader, Jack Layton, the NDP has always taken steps to ensure that Quebecers are represented in the House of Commons and that Quebec's weight is not reduced. In fact, that is part of the traditions of our Confederation. There has long been a floor on the provinces' representation. For instance, each of the territories is allocated one member, even if its population does not necessarily justify this level of representation. In the Canadian Confederation, we have always been able to balance size and representation in the House of Commons. We have to ensure that the territories are represented. It is an important principle that has existed since the founding of our country.

There is also a floor for each of the Atlantic provinces. As everyone knows, Prince Edward Island has four seats in the House of Commons even though the province's population justifies maybe half that many.

The idea is to ensure a minimum level of representation in the House of Commons. Nobody is saying that is bad. Prince Edward Island's population is slightly higher than my riding's, but we are operating on the principle that representation cannot be lower than in the Senate. Some people might think that Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador are overrepresented, but if we look at the number of constituents per MP, that representation principle, the existing floor, is maintained. The same goes for Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Obviously, if we compare representation in British Columbia, in a riding like mine with 130,000 residents, to representation in other provinces, such as Saskatchewan and Manitoba, the number of voters per MP is much lower than in mine.

If we look at Quebec, representation for the Quebec nation is about 108,000 people per MP. By comparison, in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, it is between 76,000 and 80,000 people.

This has been a long-standing principle of our Confederation, and so has the flexibility it allows in terms of representation, which is why the NDP supports Bill C-246. It is precisely so that Quebec and the Quebec nation can be assured of a minimum of representation in the House of Commons. It just makes sense. There is nothing unusual about this, and the NDP has been advocating for it since we adopted the Sherbrooke declaration. We have even introduced bills to that effect and have always supported similar bills, even when they come from another party. We support this principle. That covers what is in Bill C-246.

Now I want to talk about what is not in the bill, specifically the whole question of proportional representation. As everyone knows, the NDP has been fighting for proportional representation for quite some time. Yes, we can talk about a certain number of seats for the Quebec nation, the provinces and the territories, but we also really need to look at how these members will be elected.

• (1125)

As we all know, the House of Commons is not elected by proportional representation, and it is unfortunate that Bill C-246 does not include this crucial element. Consequently, not every vote counts.

Because there is no proportional representation, the NDP has been under-represented in Quebec since the last federal election. We should have seven additional members. In other words, based on how Quebecers voted, they should be represented in the House by eight NDP members. With proportional representation, we would have had eight members from Quebec elected to the House. Other parties would have had fewer. For example, the Bloc Québécois would have had seven fewer members. Without proportional representation in the House, the Bloc is overrepresented, but the NDP is under-represented.

The NDP will of course continue to advocate for this important model. We know that the Liberals, the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois will not support proportional representation because each of those parties benefits from the current electoral system and from the fact that every vote does not necessarily count. For a long time, these parties have always pushed for maintaining the current electoral system even though it is detrimental to voters. I would say that it is particularly detrimental to Quebecers, as they see that certain parties are overrepresented and the NDP is under-represented.

We went through this in 2015. The Prime Minister rose to say that it was the last time we would have an election with the existing electoral system and that it would be replaced with a proportional voting system. We know very well that it was one of the many Liberal Party promises that he soon forgot about.

Proportional representation is a key element that is not in Bill C-246, but it is something we must consider if we want to make our institutions more democratic and more effective. The principle that each vote should count is important, no matter whether it is the vote of someone in Shawinigan or in Sherbrooke. I certainly hope that one day, we will have a House of Commons where the number of votes the NDP wins in Quebec is reflected in the number of NDP MPs here in the House.

If we were to implement proportional representation, there were certainly be fewer representatives from the other parties in the House, either from Quebec or from elsewhere in Canada. Furthermore, this voting system would promote co-operation among the parties. We need a system in which all parties can collaborate and work together. Other countries that use a proportional representation system often find that this kind of collaboration creates an environment that fosters innovation, leading to more social services and the adoption of more innovative policies and bills.

• (1130)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased and somewhat excited to rise on this beautiful Monday morning in June to speak to Bill C-246, which was introduced by my valiant colleague from Drummond. This bill would provide that the total number of members from Quebec could not be less than 25% of the total number of members in the House of Commons.

I first want to clarify one thing, since we have heard quite a lot about the idea of representation by population. As a history buff, I have read a lot about these issues. In my humble opinion, it was quite deceitful, back when it all started in 1867, to shift from equal representation between the two so-called founding peoples to proportional representation just as French-Canadians were being outnumbered. I should mention that the notion of founding peoples is, in itself, highly controversial, given that this country and this regime were founded on subjugation. Proportional representation was certainly never considered when the proportion of French-Canadians was higher. I would call this a historical scam.

I have no problem saying that this so-called Confederation, with its two so-called founding peoples, is a historical scam. Canadian Confederation was brought in through the back door. After that, the only natural path to take was to slowly but steadily reduce the Quebec nation to a minority. That minority is now getting smaller and smaller, which will give us an increasingly smaller voice in decision-making in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, we are on our way to becoming a minority that will no longer command respect or consideration.

As everyone knows, the Bloc Québécois wants to see Quebec become an independent country. However, we are also here to stop our decline. We are here to fight, to make gains, but also to stop our decline, and this bill does that. As long as we are in this system, we have to find ways to stop this decline. We have to cope with our losses, unfortunately.

I want to remind members of one very important detail. Last March, the House adopted a Bloc motion with an overwhelming majority of 261 to 66. The motion stated that “any scenario for redrawing the federal electoral map that would result in Quebec losing one or more electoral districts or that would reduce Quebec’s political weight in the House of Commons must be rejected”. The part about not reducing our political weight in the House is the important part, but it is also the part that seems to be forgotten. That is what our motion said. It is not only about the number of seats, but also about the political weight.

Bill C-14, which is also under debate, is being presented to us as a win, a success. We have heard in the House that the bill in question would not reduce the number of members. However, the number of members means absolutely nothing if the relative weight drops. If Quebec keeps the same number of seats but more seats are added in the House, that means that Quebec’s weight is being reduced. That is not hard to figure out. In the end, the exact number of seats is far less important than the relative weight.

We are asking for 25% because, as a so-called founding people and nation recognized as distinct, it does not seem unreasonable to ask for a quarter of the seats. Given Quebec’s needs and its distinct interests and values, this does not seem unreasonable. Twenty-five per cent is also what was negotiated as part of the Charlottetown accord in 1992, based on the fact that Quebec is a distinct society. Although the accord never came into force, the text itself was approved by the House of Commons. That agreement was not without problems, however. The Bloc, which was newly created at the time, was against it. The sovereigntist movement was against it.

Private Members' Business

Far from being perfect and satisfactory, the 25% was actually not so bad given the context. We were not upset about the objective. This agreement was proposed by Mulroney’s Progressive Conservative Party, even though the Reform Party of the time was opposed. It was also supported by John Turner’s Liberal Party, although rejected by the centralist wing of the Liberal Party of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The NDP also supported this protection for Quebec’s political weight. As the previous speaker reminded us, the NDP member for Compton—Stanstead proposed a rather similar bill in 2011. However, the bar was set a little lower, at 23.9%, representing Quebec’s weight at the time.

● (1135)

In 2006, Stephen Harper’s government passed a motion making Quebec a nation within a united Canada. This motion was somewhat questionable, as it was assumed that Quebec was not a nation outside of Quebec. Furthermore, the English wording differed from the French wording. However, the motion was a form of recognition of the existence of a Quebec nation.

In June 2021, the House of Commons overwhelmingly recognized Quebec as a French nation. Our national status must have concrete political implications, not just symbolic ones. In particular, there must be consideration for Quebec’s difference, its interests and its values in Ottawa’s approach, legislation and policies.

We need assurance that Quebec will have the representation it needs to ensure that its interests and values are heard. However, Quebec’s weight has been in steady decline, with its demographic share falling from 36% in 1867 to 28.6% in 1947, 26.6% in 1976, 24.9% in 1999 and 23.1% in 2015. The most recent proposal of the Chief Electoral Officer amounts to 22.5%, which makes no sense. We responded with our motion a few months ago. As our demographic weight decreases, it is obvious that our weight in the House will decrease as a result of the legacy of this destructive system known as the 1867 Confederation.

We also know that the government has announced plans to dramatically increase the total number of immigrants. Quebec cannot bring in twice as many immigrants. It is already doing its part, and francization is, for the most part, not up to par as it is, so it is not like we can magically increase Quebec’s demographic weight from one day to the next.

Let us remember that Quebec’s culture is unique. Ours is the only jurisdiction in North America whose official common language is French. Our origins as a nation go back to the days of New France, to the coureurs des bois. We are a self-made people with a unique social model that reflects our own values. We must have the opportunity to exist as a political entity, not just an insignificant symbolic entity. If Quebec declines, both the French language and our unique culture will decline as well.

Private Members' Business

Recognizing our distinct character means protecting the Quebec nation's weight, not just by ensuring Quebec does not lose any seats, but also by making sure that, whenever seats are added, Quebec gets some too. I am well aware that some people think this is unfair. That is what they said when we were debating our motion a few months ago. People said those whiny Quebecers were demanding special treatment yet again.

I want to take a moment here to point out that there are specific provisions in the Constitution Act that protect the provinces without anyone taking exception. The senatorial clause, for example, ensures that no province has fewer members of Parliament than senators. This guarantees four seats for Prince Edward Island, even though, by population, it should have just one. The grandfather clause ensures that no province will have fewer members of Parliament after an electoral redistribution than it had in 1985. This protects the number of seats of the maritime provinces and Saskatchewan. There is also a provision that guarantees one member of Parliament for each of the territories, even though the population would warrant just one member for all the territories.

Some observers have said that the addition of a clause to protect Quebec's weight would require constitutional talks and would have to be passed by seven provinces representing 50% of the population. That is incorrect. In 1987, the Campbell decision recognized that there were some legitimate exceptions to ensure effective representation and that Parliament had the power to adopt such exceptions. That is why I believe this bill is both necessary and urgent.

• (1140)

There are real consequences to the loss of political power, in particular the list of competing interests or, at the very least, priority interests for Quebec. Quebec has its National Assembly, which is the only parliament where Quebec has 100% of the seats. There have been innumerable unanimous motions, which I will not go into here.

The nation that had—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I must inform the hon. member that his time has expired. He was given a little more time, and I know that everyone was very interested in his speech.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Drummond.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot for his eloquence and his knowledge, which he always very generously shares with us. I would have liked to listen to him for a few more minutes, but the time has come to close the debate on this bill, which I had the honour of introducing on behalf of the Bloc Québécois.

Throughout the debates, we saw that there were two different understandings of Bill C-246. In good or bad faith, and I would tend to say more often in bad faith, people have pretended they do not understand what is at stake. They ignore or dismiss the fact that what Quebec is asking for is not a whim or anything outlandish; it is also not intended to pick a fight, but rather to ensure appropriate representation in the House of Commons based on recognition of the Quebec nation. I would remind you that this recognition comes

with obligations on both sides. It comes with obligations for Quebec, and it comes with obligations for the federal government.

I heard many of my colleagues cite the maritime provinces or Saskatchewan in the discussion on fair representation in the House of Commons. It is true, appropriate and correct. There are mechanisms in place to maintain a minimum number of MPs in parts of Canada that would otherwise be inadequately represented. I am thinking for example of Prince Edward Island and the territories.

What differs from the measures in place for some Canadian provinces and territories is that Quebec is a nation. I am not making this up: It was unanimously recognized by the House of Commons more than once and in more than one way. The federal government recognized the Quebec nation in 2006. It was a motion introduced by Stephen Harper, not the Bloc Québécois. In 1995, Jean Chrétien, the most Liberal of prime ministers, recognized the concept of distinct society. In particular, and this is a very important difference, he said that the House of Commons must take this fact into account in all of its decisions. That is important.

In June 2021, in response to a Bloc Québécois motion, the House of Commons recognized French as the only official language and the common language of the Quebec nation. My point is that recognizing Quebec's status as a nation comes with political obligations, and others as well. For example, Quebec's autonomy must be respected when it comes to development-related decisions. The government must also respect the fact that, on occasion, asymmetrical agreements must be signed based on Quebec's specificity. Quebec's distinctiveness and Quebec society's interests must also be taken into account by the federal government when developing legislation. This is somewhat related to what I was saying earlier with regard to the idea put forward by the Liberal Prime Minister at the time, Jean Chrétien.

It is quite understandable that, this year, the Bloc Québécois is determined to defend Quebec's interests. I repeat, Quebec must have appropriate representation, in keeping with its status as a nation.

Last fall, when the Chief Electoral Officer announced that the new distribution of seats for the House of Commons would result in Quebec losing a seat and falling to 77 seats instead of 78, the Bloc Québécois swiftly opposed that outcome. I will acknowledge that the other parties also recognized that it did not make sense. On March 2, on our opposition day, we moved a motion calling not only for the number of seats not to be reduced, but also for the protection of Quebec's political weight with a 25% threshold. With 266 members of the House voting in favour, the motion was adopted with a very strong majority. Then the Liberals show up with Bill C-14, which is a half measure that only protects the number of seats.

That is not enough. To protect the Quebec nation, its uniqueness, its identity and francophone culture, which is in decline in North America, not just in Canada and not just in Quebec, we need something stronger, and we need to protect Quebec's political weight. That is why I invite all of my colleagues to vote in favour of Bill C-246.

Government Orders

● (1145)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The question is on the motion.

[English]

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.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Madam Speaker, we request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Pursuant to order made Thursday, November 25, 2021, the recorded division on the motion stands deferred until Wednesday, June 8, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

SITTING SUSPENDED

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The House will now be suspended to the call of the Chair.

(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:49 a.m.)

SITTING RESUMED

(The House resumed at 12:03 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1200)

[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 of the report stage and not more than one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the third reading stage of the said bill; and

That fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at report stage and on the day allotted to the consideration at the third 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 stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

● (1205)

[Translation]

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

[English]

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.

The official opposition House leader has the floor.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, well, it is no surprise, commensurate to what is a decline in democracy in this country, we are actually seeing in lockstep a decline in the amount of time that debate happens in this place, despite the fact millions of people voted for an opposition party to hold the government to account and make it transparent and accountable with pieces of legislation.

It is not surprising we are moving to time allocation. In this Parliament alone, more time allocation has been called than in the previous Parliament. We are just eight months into this one, and we were a year and a half into the previous Parliament. Of course, we would be hard pressed to find any opposition party that would have supported time allocation in the manner it has been proposed by the government more so than the coalition partners of the NDP, who used to rail against time allocation as being anti-democratic and anti-institution, but here we are. No doubt NDP members will be rising to support the government.

Bill C-19, through committee stage, went through significant motions. It went through significant amendments. There are perhaps, as it comes back to report stage, more amendments in the debate that could happen here, but we have had one hour of debate on this important piece of legislation.

I am wondering how the minister can justify to Canadians this further decline in democracy we are witnessing. The public faith in our institutions is in decline as well.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, budget 2022 does three main things. It invests in economic growth and innovation. It invests in people, and it invests in the green economy. All three of these things are about creating jobs and building the economy, but they will also help make life more affordable.

Bill C-19 is so critical to making sure the government is able to implement our budget. Some of the things in the budget implementation act include a two-year ban on foreign investments in Canadian housing; \$2 billion for provinces to boost their health care investments for Canadians to get rid of the backlog in surgeries and procedures; a labour mobility deduction for tradespeople, which is something people in my own riding of Edmonton Centre asked for; a luxury tax on new luxury cars, planes and boats; and a reduction by half to the corporate and small business tax rates for businesses to manufacture zero-emission vehicles.

The Conservatives proposed an amendment at second reading that would not even allow the BIA to be scrutinized. They are playing games; we are moving forward.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, this feels like a bad movie. It is déjà vu all over again. Quebecers and Canadians elected a minority government in the hope it would have to negotiate each and every one of its bills, which would result in good, well-thought-out bills and allow democracy to function.

However, the smaller opposition party hitched its wagon to the government. That reminds me of the fable of the frog and the ox. The frog wanted to be as big as the ox, so it swelled and swelled. That is what the NDP has been doing for years. It has been puffing itself up and trying to be as big as the ox.

In the fable, though, the frog ends up bursting. Having decided it might be better not to burst like the frog, the NDP decided to be swallowed up by the ox. The New Democrats allowed themselves to be consumed by the ox. They sold their soul to the devil. Now what? They think they can win by constantly gagging the House of Commons, which is the only power available to them as the government's lap dog.

The frog will not burst at this point, but I hope that, come the next election, it will be squelched by Quebec and Canadian democracy.

My question is simple and is directed at the two parties that are constantly voting to invoke closure. Are you not embarrassed about what you are doing to democracy?

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind hon. members to direct their questions and comments through the Chair. I am sure that question was not meant for me.

The hon. Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I will be sure to address my comments through you in this august chamber.

Facts really matter in this debate. We heard from 80 people at second reading of Bill C-19, budget implementation act, 2022, No. 1, for a total of 42 hours of debate, including 15 hours at second reading and 27 hours in committee.

Despite all this meticulous work by parliamentarians, the Conservatives' response was to throw it all away by presenting 62 amendments with the sole aim of blocking the process. As for our Bloc colleagues, they also had the right to present amendments in committee, which were debated for hours and voted down by a majority. That is the normal process.

Today, we want to move this bill forward.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, with the Conservatives blocking absolutely every single bill coming through the House, we know that we really have two bloc parties sitting in the House of Commons: the Bloc Québécois and the “block everything” party. The Conservatives have blocked every single initiative.

Because of the NDP initiative and hard NDP negotiating, we have a national dental care program that would be rolling out its

first phase for children under 12 who do not have access to dental care otherwise. Whether we are talking about Quebec, Saskatchewan or British Columbia, children would finally have access to dental care. The housing program that the NDP has negotiated would have enormous implications for Canadians from coast to coast to coast who are struggling to find affordable housing.

There is a crisis going on, and the Conservatives saying they are going to block absolutely everything, even if it would benefit Canadians. My question to my hon. colleague is simply this: Why are Conservatives blocking everything when Canadians need these supports?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, the answer to my colleague's question is that the Conservatives are hard-wired to oppose, and they cannot stand that we are actually making life more affordable for Canadians.

I will build on what my hon. colleague had to say. Our budget, and by extension, the BIA, includes \$4 billion to accelerate work in closing gaps in indigenous housing. It also has the dental program, which is extremely important for lower-income Canadians, and a one-time \$500 payment to those facing housing affordability challenges.

Let us put on the record exactly what the “block everything” party done has done. There were 80 speakers at second reading, and that was not enough. There were 42 hours of debate, yet that was not enough. Parliamentarians have done meticulous work at committee. What was the response of the Conservative Party? It was to throw all of that away and move 62 motions to obstruct.

That is not what Canadians have asked us to do in the House. We will do what Canadians expect of us and get the work done. We will pass Bill C-19.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have to say to the hon. minister that I am very disappointed that we are once again seeing time allocation in this place. In the days of the previous Parliament from 2011 to 2015, when the Conservatives had a majority, we began to see time allocation used in a routine fashion and we knew at that time, as did the Liberals, who were then in opposition, and I, as the Green Party leader in opposition, that the constant use of time allocation for limiting debate was wrong, wrong in principle and wrong for parliamentary democracy. I do not doubt for one second the frustration, and legitimate frustration, on the government side at delays in legislation, but this place, *Parlement, c'est pour parler*, to be able to debate. This is an enormous bill. Now we are at report stage and we should have time to debate and discuss it.

I ask the hon. parliamentary secretary and minister to please consider that there are other ways to make sure that bills are dealt with expeditiously in this place without constantly using this *bâillon*, this guillotine, on debate. I urge the government party to rethink this.

I will definitely be voting against time allocation on Bill C-19.

● (1215)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, we have had robust debate in this chamber. We have had robust debate at committee. There have been many amendments and subamendments, and the voting process has taken place.

What I can say, just for the record, is that the Conservatives proposed an amendment at second reading that would not have allowed the BIA even to be scrutinized, which is an integral role of the parliamentary process. They used motions of concurrence in two committee reports to delay and obstruct debate in this House at second reading. They have done this again now at report stage. They attempted to use multiple unanimous consent motions to delay debate, but the Speaker ruled that they had not appropriately consulted parties, and now we are seeing them move 62 amendments at report stage.

Bill C-19 is about making life more affordable for Canadians. It is a prudent fiscal plan to get the economy to continue to grow and it is the right thing to do. We have had lots of time to debate this motion and it is time to move on for Canadians.

Mr. Han Dong (Don Valley North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, lately I have been spending a lot of time talking to my constituents, and it seems to me that there is a common theme: affordability.

I have seniors from Peanut Plaza telling me how expensive their groceries are. I have young couples from Henry Farm telling me how expensive it is to raise their kids. I have new grads coming out of Parkway Forest telling me how expensive it is to get a place to raise a family, and then there are individuals from Bayview Village Association telling me how important it is to pay attention to the environment and how important it is to reach our emission targets.

I tell them why I think all of these affordability problems are happening. What they say to me is this: "I don't care, Han. I want to know what you are going to do about it." I start talking about all the details in the latest budget introduced here in this House, and they say, "Well, that all sounds good, and we can be supportive of it, but when is it going to come?"

Can the Minister of Tourism explain to this House how important it is for budget implementation to happen as soon as possible and how that is going to provide affordability to Canadian homes?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for responding to the needs of his constituents, as we are doing for Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Making life more affordable is a central focus of our government and is one of the pillars of budget 2022. We have a short-term inflationary cycle. We know that it is pinching Canadians and hurting Canadians at the grocery store. The illegal war in Ukraine is contributing to it, and the China zero-COVID policy is also gumming up supply chains.

In the BIA and in budget 2022, what we are doing is making sure that we make life more affordable. The sooner we can get this legislation passed, the sooner we can respond to the concerns of the constituents of my hon. colleague. The budget includes \$5.3 billion over five years for dental care for families making less

Government Orders

than \$90,000, doubling the support of the first-time homebuyer's tax credit, a multi-generational home renovation tax credit and \$475 million to give Canadians \$500 if they are having housing pressures.

These are real measures and real affordability. We need to get Bill C-19 passed.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would say this move today is hypocritical of the government, but I am not surprised, because we have a Liberal-NDP group that does not want to talk about the economy. The Liberals and New Democrats do not want to talk about inflation and they do not want to talk about the cost of living. They surely do not want to talk about the carbon tax and the price of gas that they are backtalking to their constituents every day, so it is not a surprise that they are trying to ram this budget through.

No, we have not had adequate time. At report stage on Friday, we heard from one member from the Conservatives and one member from the Liberals, the member for Winnipeg North, who I always enjoy hearing from, but Liberals do not even want to get up and talk about their own budget. They try to shut the debate down. I do not blame them, given how things are going and how their plan is not working.

I want to ask a specific question of the minister about the budget. I will use what the Auditor General agreed with me on in the public accounts committee last week, when she said that this government is spending more and getting less when it comes to results, particularly on customer service levels, particularly when it relates to the timely Auditor General's reports last week. Service levels are absolutely collapsing at airports, Passport Canada, CRA, immigration and Veterans Affairs. NEXUS cards are an absolute disaster. They say they are spending x dollars of more money. We want to know specifically what and when Canadians can expect in getting proper customer service levels back and why we cannot have more time to debate those issues and frustrations that Canadians have.

● (1220)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I will talk about the state of the Canadian economy all day long, and we will continue to do so once we get Bill C-19 passed.

Government Orders

Our economy grew at a rate of 3.1% annualized in quarter one of this year. The IMF has predicted that Canada will have the highest growth rate in the G7 this year and next year. Canada posted the fastest growth among G7 economies in Q1. Building upon our results in the last quarter, our AAA credit rating is intact, and 115% of the three million jobs lost during the pandemic have been recovered, faster than in the U.S. economy. Our unemployment rate is 5.2%, the lowest it has been since I was six years old in 1976. Our balance of international trade is a \$5-billion trade surplus. Bankruptcies are lower than before the pandemic.

The Conservatives are doom and gloom. They want to obstruct Bill C-19, but we know the facts, and so do Canadians. The economy is doing well, and Bill C-19 will help make life more affordable.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, under the Standing Orders, the government can use time allocation, but there is a difference between using it and abusing it.

Bill C-19 is not a small inconsequential bill. It is over 430 pages long and makes a lot of changes to existing legislation. We need some time to study it.

We know that the Standing Committee on Finance was rushed. We had time to present amendments, which were debated. They were good amendments. Were it not for the work of the committee, the bill could have been passed without any improvements, when that is the whole point of committee work. The Standing Committee on Finance worked extremely hard.

I challenge any party in the House to say that the Bloc Québécois is filibustering. We have not filibustered in committee or in the House. On the contrary, we worked hard to improve Bill C-19, which is a massive bill that amends a number of important laws. I think it should be known that we did not have time to review it properly, even if there were 80 speeches on the subject.

My question is quite simple. Does the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance not agree that we should have had more time to further improve this bill so that it would better respond to the needs of Canadians and businesses?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the position my colleague across the way has taken. I agree that robust debates in the House and committee are necessary, and we have had those debates. For example, there have been 81 speakers, 42 hours of debate in the House and 27 hours in committee.

We realize that this is a large bill, but that is the norm for budget implementation bills.

Canadians need the measures that are in this budget. We want to address affordability. We have had robust debates and now we must move forward.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, the Conservatives have said that they are blocking this bill just as they are blocking other bills as well. We are coming up to the parliamentary recess on June 23. The NDP has forced, obliged and negotiated with this government

to put in place national dental care and a national housing initiative that finally starts to address the crisis in affordable housing in this country, along with all of those measures that Canadians critically need to be delivered as soon as possible, but now we have Conservatives saying, “No, we want to delay it for literally months of time.”

To the hon. member, what are the implications of the Conservatives' blocking absolutely every piece of legislation, delaying for months, and even more, the ability to start making investments in affordable housing, to start making investments in the national dental plan and to start making investments that will make a difference in Canadians' lives?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, as the hon. colleague knows, people in his riding, people in my riding and people in the ridings of all members in this House need social and affordable housing now. We need the measures in the budget implementation act now. That is why we have to have the right balance, with scrutiny and robust debate on the one hand and getting on with the work for Canadians on the other.

I will build on what the hon. member put on the table and talk about what is put at risk by the Conservatives in opposing and blocking the advancement of this legislation. It is in the health care sector, with a \$2-billion further top-up on health care in addition to the \$86.7 billion already on the table.

Our residents in our ridings want surgeries and procedures to come back, and that is what the BIA would do.

● (1225)

Mr. Han Dong: Madam Speaker, we are in June. For a lot of agencies and government departments, the fiscal year begins in March and April, and they start to plan for the rest of the year. However, we are in June already, and a lot of agencies, organizations and support groups in our community are looking for clear direction. They want to see this funding approved. All of the government programs that we are talking about in the budget have to be approved by the House ASAP so that these crucial supports through organizations, through government agencies, to individual Canadian families can happen as soon as possible.

Earlier I heard members across the floor talking about how important it is to have debate. I am all for debate and I agree with that, but my constituents are asking when these supports are coming.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, once we are able to get through this motion today and move on with the business of the people through Bill C-19, we can make sure that the supports that are in the BIA get to the people. It is thanks to the obstructionist techniques and tactics of the Conservatives that we are where we are today.

Again, let me go through what is at risk here: \$2 billion for provinces and territories to reduce backlogs in surgeries and procedures; a labour mobility deduction for tradespeople, which is critically needed at this time; a doubling of the maximum amount of the home accessibility tax credit; a reduction, by half, for the corporate small business tax rates for businesses that manufacture zero-emission technologies; and more measures that matter to our residents from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is obvious that this government has become extremely afraid of scrutiny, of accountability, and it is becoming even more evident with this latest backroom partnership with the NDP.

One hour of debate on 440 pages of a bill is hardly what Canadians deserve for scrutiny and accountability of the government. Not even the backbench Liberal MPs have been able to speak on any parts of this budget that may benefit their ridings. I have not had a chance to debate the possible \$2 billion in lost sales in the auto, aerospace and marine sectors. The implementation of this budget, which is projecting a \$53-billion deficit, needs more than the one hour of debate that this government has allowed.

We have not even talked about inflation. The minister earlier spoke about temporary inflation; it has recently been in the news that this inflation is now entrenched in Canada. This deserves debate, and I am strongly opposed to this time allocation motion.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, let us look at the facts.

There were 80 speakers at second reading alone, and 42 hours of debate, with 15 hours at second reading and 27 hours in committee. The Conservatives could have supported us to debate until midnight, but instead they had dilatory motions left, right and centre, preventing us from doing the work that Canadians expect us to do.

What is the Conservatives' response after claiming that somehow they did not have enough with 42 hours of debate? It is to throw away all of the work that parliamentarians in this House did and to propose 62 motions in amendment to simply gut the BIA.

What is at stake? It is the entire luxury tax that we have put into this budget, changes to the Competition Act, the expansion of the health care rebate for clients and taxation of assignment sales, among many other measures.

The Conservatives are opposing. We are moving forward.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, the government called a snap election last fall, and Canadians and Quebecers voted to keep the government to a minority. That means the government cannot act as though it has a majority. Voters sent a message that we need to work together, to collaborate, in full transparency. They did not ask

Government Orders

to be left in the dark. We should not be ramming through legislation, especially such an important bill.

Does a bill that is so big, so lengthy, and that has such far-reaching implications, not deserve an in-depth debate and study, instead of being rammed through under a gag order?

● (1230)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for giving me the opportunity to remind the House that there have been 80 speakers and 42 hours of debate, including 15 hours here in the House and 27 in committee.

The fact is that Canadians and Quebecers need the measures set out in the budget. We are talking about the entire luxury tax, important changes to the Competition Act to protect Canadian businesses, workers and consumers, and the expansion of health care rebates for charitable organizations.

We have had a thorough debate. It is time to move forward for Canadians, and that is exactly what we will do.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that there are critical needs right now for wild Pacific salmon. This is in the budget, as well as really important investments for child care and for co-op housing. We have had a vacancy in investments for co-op housing. Both Conservatives and Liberals have abandoned non-market housing, and now we are finally seeing a step forward. It is not exactly what the NDP would like, but these are critical investments that are good for people and good for the economy. They are absolutely essential right now for people in our country today.

The Conservatives are not just trying to block this bill; they are trying to block everything. Maybe my colleague, the minister, could speak about how important it is to get these investments through the House so that we can start helping people who need help today, especially critical investments for our environment like those on wild Pacific salmon.

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, making sure that my hon. colleague and his constituents and the whole ecosystem for Pacific salmon are addressed is a critical component of this budget implementation act.

Government Orders

I think the Conservatives might be taking inspiration from colleagues to the south of the border, where gridlock seems to be the flavour of the day. In this place, Canadians sent us here to work together. I heard it very clearly, right in Edmonton, where the hon. member for Edmonton West was also elected from. They said, “We will vote for you now, but we do not want to see you back here in two years, so make sure you make that place work.” That is exactly what we are doing.

There is \$4 billion on the table for a housing accelerator fund, as well as a tax-free first home savings account, a home builders' bill of rights and banning foreign buyers from owning property. The list goes on, including labour mobility and a deduction for tradespeople to grow our cities and towns. That is what we are doing. We need to get Bill C-19 passed.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it mind-boggling and ironic that the minister talks about Conservatives bringing in U.S. problems, when the current government's whole modus operandi is to import U.S. culture wars.

I want to give an example of why it is so important that we continue debate. We heard the exact same response from the government over Bill C-8, Bill C-10 and the supplementary estimates (C), where there was \$4 billion in Bill C-8 and Bill C-10 for rapid testing, and then a duplicate \$4 billion in the supplementary estimates (C) for rapid testing.

We just found out today that the government is sitting on hundreds and hundreds, if not billions, of rapid tests unused, warehoused. This is the reason we need debate on this and other issues, so we do not have a repeat of this incompetence where the government is spending billions of dollars for items that are not even used.

Would the minister perhaps comment on why he wishes to stop any oversight of taxpayer spending and the government's incompetence?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, these are the greatest hits from the Conservative choir: obstructing us at Bill C-8 and trying to delay the work on behalf of Canadians, while we are making sure that we get the work done on behalf of the people of Canada. Once again, the Conservatives proposed an amendment at second reading that would even prevent scrutiny of the bill, so I do not know which the member wants: scrutiny or no scrutiny. His own people said not to look at the bill.

We need Bill C-19 passed. That is why we are here today. We will get the work done on behalf of Canadians.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the minister what he thought of the entire evening the Conservatives devoted to having parliamentarians decide which Conservative faction would speak next. We had repeated votes. We spent the entire evening on this. How does the minister react to that abuse of parliamentary time?

• (1235)

Hon. Randy Boissonnault: Madam Speaker, the work and the time in this chamber are precious. If the Conservatives decide to waste it and slow down the work on behalf of Canadians, Canadians will decide their fate in a future election. They can hold us to account for the work we are doing for them. That is why Bill C-19,

the budget implementation act, is so important. Affordability, growing the economy, making sure that Canadians can make ends meet and making sure we are at the top of the G7 are what the BIA is all about.

[Translation]

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

The question is on the motion.

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. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division.

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

• (1320)

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

(Division No. 121)

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	Carr
Casey	Chagger
Chahal	Champagne
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Collins (Victoria)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Duncan (Etobicoke North)
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier

Government Orders

Fragiskatos
Freeland
Garneau
Gazan
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Jones
Julian
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Mathysen
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sorbara
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Fraser
Gaheer
Garrison
Gerretsen
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jowhari
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
Oliphant
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi — 174

NAYS**Members**

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Benzen
Bergeron
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bergen
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie

Chabot
Champoux
Cooper
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
d'Entremont
Doherty
Dreeshen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Ferrerri
Fortin
Garon
Généreux
Gill
Godin
Gourde
Hallan
Jeneroux
Kitchen
Kram
Kurek
Lantsman
Lehoux
Lewis (Essex)
Liepert
Lobb
Martel
Mazier
McLean
Michaud
Morantz
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley
Small
Steinley
Stewart
Stubbs
Therrien
Tochor
Trudel
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Villemure
Vuong
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Chambers
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Findlay
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kmiec
Kramp-Neuman
Lake
Lawrence
Lemire
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Lloyd
Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Motz
Nater
O'Toole
Paul-Hus
Perkins
Plamondon
Rayes
Reid
Richards
Rood
Savard-Tremblay
Schmale
Shields
Simard
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
Tolmie
Uppal
Vecchio
Vien
Vignola
Vis
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer — 146

PAIRED**Members**

Fast

O'Regan — 2

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I declare the motion carried.

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

Government Orders

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from June 3 consideration of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, when I think of Bill C-19, of course, the government has—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. There was an error on my part. Actually, there were two minutes of questions and comments left on the hon. member's previous speech on this particular matter.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Gatineau.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven MacKinnon (Gatineau, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we know that the Quebec model for child care and funding is now in place across Canada. We are pleased not just with the additional child care spaces in Quebec, but also with the expansion of this program across Canada.

I would like my colleague from Winnipeg North to explain just how his province and all of Canada will benefit from reasonably priced child care centres.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the government whip raising that issue. He is quite right. The national child care benefit program that we have today is there in good part because of the Province of Quebec. The Province of Quebec has clearly demonstrated that we all have so much to learn when it comes to child care. By having this particular program, we are now enabling literally hundreds of thousands of people to be engaged in the workforce and to do many other things. We saw that when Quebec expanded its child care program.

When a province does something well, which the rest of the nation can copy and emulate, we should do that. For the first time in many years we have actually seen the establishment of a national program. Canadian families from coast to coast to coast will directly benefit under this program. Not only is it good for families, but it is also good for the economy. Clearly, it is one of the ways in which the government can spend money for the betterment of our society.

• (1325)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do apologize for not getting to questions and comments right away, but I know that other members would have loved to hear the hon. parliamentary secretary speak for another 10 minutes.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have no doubt that the member for Winnipeg North could have continued speaking for some time. I will make him happy and start with his last statement, which referred to child care. We are pleased that this has now been established in the rest of the country and that Quebec has served as the model. That makes us very proud.

I would invite my colleagues in the House to remember this example when the Bloc asks for the right to opt out of the next few Canada-wide programs with full compensation. The right to opt out was a big factor in making this possible, as was recognition of the fact that Quebec already had a good system. For me, it is a mark of respect.

Not only did the federal government take our model and implement it elsewhere, it gave Quebec its share of the money it was owed without telling it what to do. The phrase “without telling it what to do” will come up a few times in my speech today when I speak about the conditions that are set to be imposed in various areas.

I am pleased to rise to speak to Bill C-19. I will begin by criticizing its huge omnibus format. When the government claims to properly study bills and practise true democracy and freedom of speech, how can it seriously introduce a 500-page bill that amends 37 acts?

Several provisions involving minor amendments to legislation have garnered consensus. However, the bill also proposes other extraordinarily important and complex measures.

For example, there is the employment insurance reform, which, as I have said before, deserves to be studied separately and in depth. The current system helps too few workers in Quebec and Canada, and I find that unacceptable. I do not want to get too deeply into this, but I am not sure that anyone would hire me as an insurance salesman if I tried to sell homeowner's insurance by telling prospective customers that the company would only pay four times out of ten in the case of a loss. This is what we are telling workers with this program, so an in-depth reform is necessary.

This omnibus bill makes it seem like the Liberal government is taking advantage of its deal with the NDP and the so-called majority it gives them to have a pile of legislation passed quickly. Still, we are more or less in favour of this bill, and we will continue to improve it, as we are doing now.

I would like to talk about cider and, especially, mead. Representatives of both these industries approached us to tell us that the reintroduction of the excise tax on July 1 makes no sense. Australia's complaint, which led to the reintroduction of the tax, concerned wine, not cider or mead. These financially sound but more marginal productions are expanding and are the pride of several regions of Quebec. They did not deserve to be taxed. Their representatives were very anxious and approached our members to speak on their behalf.

I would like to publicly congratulate my colleague from Joliette who, with his team, did extraordinary work in committee and succeeded in having cider and mead exempted from the definition. I am very proud, we are happy, and this is one of the improvements I was talking about.

We also raised a few concerns voiced by charities, which feared they would be once again subjected to a mountain of paperwork in the restrictions, although the basis of Bill S-216 was positive. We will be keeping a close watch on that. We are keeping a close watch, and we will follow up.

As for the rest of Bill C-19, there are no measures we find strongly objectionable. For that reason, we are more or less in favour of it. Among other things, there is not much about oil subsidies, which is good. There is not much about nuclear energy. We are aware that that is coming but, for now, we have no opposition on the subject.

• (1330)

The numerous encroachments promised in the Liberal Party's budget, including encroachments on health care with the dental insurance plan, are not yet upon us. This allows us to take a step back and look at what is constructive in the bill. For one thing, it contains urgent measures that we approve of, such as the additional five weeks of EI benefits for seasonal workers. That is a positive measure in our eyes.

The Bloc Québécois offers constructive opposition. When proposals make sense, we are happy and we say so. When they do not make sense, however, we do not say that the government is lousy and that what it is doing makes no sense. We say that we think the government should try looking at the situation from such and such an angle. Quebeckers can count on us to keep doing this.

Obviously, there are the health transfers. We hope to get our way someday, even if it is not looking that way right now. This subject will always remain a bone of contention, but we will take the \$2 billion offered, since it will give us some breathing room. The same goes for the \$750 million for public transit.

There are also some good intentions, but we will need to work to make sure that they are implemented properly. I am thinking, among other things, about the tax treatment of companies that adopt zero-emission manufacturing processes. We will have to watch out for hidden subsidies for fossil fuels. The Bloc believes that we must eliminate the fossil fuel subsidies and begin transitioning to alternative energy sources. With respect to the ridiculous carbon capture projects for oil wells, we have seen the results they yield in other countries and the disasters they cause when they go wrong, because they do go wrong. I do not think we have the right to go down that rabbit hole. Right now, with climate change being what it is, we need to be diligent, but above all cautious. Let us be smart about this and move in the right direction.

We like the proposed amendments to the Competition Act to prevent collusion and abuse of power. At the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, we studied the problems with competition among shipping container companies. During the pandemic, prices jumped from around \$3,000 to more than \$25,000 over the course of a year or a year and a half. That is outrageous. The con-

tainer industry is concentrated in the hands of a few key players, so there is work to be done.

We also need to keep an eye on telecommunications companies' billing practices. I would like to see the hidden fees exposed. I think that that is also something positive.

The important thing is overall consistency. I also think it is good that pension fund managers would be forced to provide details on investments in things like fossil fuels. That is the first step in transitioning to green energy. I encourage anyone who is interested in this to take a look at the Bloc Québécois's platform or to talk to my colleague from Mirabel, who is very familiar with this issue. Our platform contains solutions, and we suggest some approaches that we would like to explore.

The luxury tax is a tricky topic, however. Everyone agrees with the principle of a luxury tax, but we need to be careful about how we proceed. The Bloc Québécois has expressed a number of concerns and reservations about this tax, mainly because we want to protect our aerospace industry. This industry should not have to wait so long for a rebate if it turns out that the tax does not apply.

We need to be smart and consistent here, to ensure that we do not hurt our businesses. I am thinking about the 35% surcharge on Russian fertilizer, for example. Everyone agrees on the principle, but I want to reiterate that when this surcharge is applied to orders placed and paid for in the fall, before the conflict started, it ends up penalizing our producers instead of the Russians. The government does not seem interested in creating an exemption.

• (1335)

If a government wants to impose measures, it needs to make sure they are done right.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a couple of quick points.

I am interested in the member's thoughts with regard to the luxury tax. The principle of a luxury tax is something the Bloc supports. I would like clarity on that particular point.

The second issue that I have is with regard to the Province of Quebec. I do not know if this is still in play today, but it provided a subsidy toward the purchase of electric cars, something that we in government have also provided.

I am wondering if he could provide his thoughts on that. Again, when the provincial and federal governments work together, we can enhance programs, which is good for the consumer. It would be nice to see other provinces follow Quebec's lead on that issue.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, the federal government would do well to follow Quebec's lead in many areas, and pharmaceutical is one of them.

Government Orders

When the Liberals are ready to bring in their own pharmacare plan, I would invite them to follow the model I referred to at the beginning of my speech, namely child care, and let Quebec continue to manage its own affairs, which means giving Quebec its fair share of the funding. I am not talking about the federal government being an ATM, because it is our own money. That part is important.

My colleague mentioned the luxury tax. Perhaps I said it too quickly, but the point I wanted to make is that we obviously agree on the principle. We want to see a luxury tax. However, every precaution must be taken to ensure that it does not affect the aerospace industry, which is mainly concentrated in Montreal. It is one of our flagship industries, and any delays could pose risks.

I will conclude by saying that incentives for electric vehicles are a good idea, especially since these vehicles are currently still a lot more expensive than gas-powered vehicles. These measures must be maintained and managed in a smart way.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I personally knew one of the people who died in the storm a few weeks ago. Given the climate impacts we experienced in Quebec and also here in Ottawa, I would like to ask my colleague what positive impact this budget will have on preventive environmental measures. What is my colleague's opinion?

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my distinguished colleague from Laurentides—Labelle for her fantastic question. I proposed a few solutions earlier.

For example, we talked about green financing. It is quite a challenge to get pension fund managers to give a clear answer about where our money is invested so we can ensure that it is not going into fossil fuels. It can take a long time to find out that information. I recently asked that question, and it was not easy to get an answer. Transparency is one of the solutions.

The Bloc Québécois and Green Party members are not the only ones advocating for environmental protection. So is the general public. That proves that it is important. Instead of subsidizing fossil fuels, let us invest in the transition.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Berthier—Maskinongé.

He spoke about the Quebec model and pharmacare, but Quebec has a hybrid system, one that is both public and private. That means many workers pay a fortune for supplemental coverage.

Does my colleague not agree with the Union des consommateurs du Québec, the FTQ, the CSN and the CSQ that we should have a universal public pharmacare system?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé has a minute to respond.

• (1340)

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, that is certainly not very much time. I thank my colleague for his question. I think he, too, would agree that Quebec is a model to follow in many areas.

I never claimed that Quebec's pharmacare system was perfect. Our day care system is not perfect either. There is a shortage of

spaces and so on. However, it can serve as a base model for reference.

What sets me apart from my colleague is that I respect the jurisdictions of Quebec's national government, the National Assembly, located in Quebec City. Health falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces and Quebec.

We are not against making improvements. However, let us make those improvements while respecting jurisdictions and transferring the money to those who are responsible for managing those jurisdictions.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I begin by acknowledging that I speak today virtually from the traditional territory of the WSANEC nation. I raise my hands, and in the language of the traditional peoples of this land I say *Hych'ka Siem*.

I am speaking today at report stage of Bill C-19. I cannot help but reflect on the debate we just had on the application of time allocation to this bill. I would like to point out to the House and put on the record that, of course, I voted no to ending debate in the fashion that has become entirely too routine under the current government and the Conservative government before it. Having been used routinely under the administration of Stephen Harper and now under the current government, it is unlikely to ever return to what it was before 2011, which is to say that the House will suffer a permanent loss of normal, democratic debate under our standing orders for bill after bill.

In this case, Bill C-19 was tabled for first reading following the April 7 budget. It was tabled for first reading April 28. That is not that long ago in the life of this Parliament. This is not like Bill C-8, the fall economic statement bill. That was tabled in December 2021 and only passed in the last few weeks in this place. Bill C-19 has been dealt with quickly and sharply. It went to committee for reports, and it is already, and this is an important point that I wish to make, in prestudy before the finance committee in the other place.

The question of delay in handling this bill and allowing for proper debate at this stage is rather wrong-footed by the fact that, even though we will finish with it very soon in any case, despite the obstructive activities by the official opposition, there was ample time to get it properly debated at report stage and third reading and sent to the other place, where prestudy has already begun. It is a significant bill. For those who may be observing our deliberations today, let me just point out that this bill is hundreds of pages. It is an omnibus bill. It is not an illegitimate omnibus bill, as it deals with all the measures that were flagged in budget 2022 on April 7. It is not one that has extraneous measures crammed into it, which would make it an illegitimate omnibus bill.

This legislation is lengthy. There are 32 separate divisions, with hundreds of pages and over 502 sections. I cannot propose for a second to think that I could comment on all of them, even those with which I agree. However, the scope is enormous. We deal with everything in this legislation from safe drinking water in first nations communities, which of course nobody would want to have anything but speed apply to, to something called the “lunar gateway” and Criminal Code offences related to an agreement we have with the United States for events that may take place on the moon, as I understand it, to changes in the Criminal Code that raise some civil liberties concerns. They are in division 21 and would extend jail time up to two years for people who are denying the Holocaust, for which there is no defence. It is appalling and will now have a criminal sanction of up to two years in jail.

I think it is worth considering the scope of this bill, because it covers so many different measures, including ones I support, like the application of Magnitsky sanctions and being able to act to further sanction Vladimir Putin's cronies in order to apply pressure so that we get to peace talks as quickly as possible in the horrific and illegal war that is now occurring in Ukraine. However, we have a lot in this bill to discuss, and I put it to the House that the application of time allocation that just occurred in this place is inappropriate.

There are things that I would like to discuss in more detail. I agree with my colleague from the Bloc who spoke ahead of me. The employment insurance regime needs a lot more review. We have some measures in this bill that are good, but we have not begun to get to the work that needs to be done to consider, in particular, people in regions of the country where it is harder to find employment and people in seasonal industries where their employer makes the decision to lay them off seasonally and bring them back. Workers in those categories need to know that they can count on their insurance employment benefits, or what we used to call “unemployment insurance”. It is past time that we do a full review to make sure that unemployment insurance—employment insurance, as it is now known—is available to Canadians who have paid into it and who need it.

● (1345)

I want to turn some attention, in the time I have today, to the luxury tax, and I am thankful that the Liberal Party's allocation of speeches has allowed me to speak to this bill.

I initially liked the sound of a luxury tax. It sounds like we are striking for equity and fairness against the notion that there is the 1% and then the 99%, who are, relatively speaking, less represented and do not use resources to the same extent, obviously, as the 1%. However, I have come to the conclusion, somewhat reluctantly, that the luxury tax is more about pandering in public relations than about really dealing with income inequality in this country.

This luxury tax would not deal with income inequality. What the luxury tax would do is apply a tax on any car or aircraft that costs more than \$100,000 or boats that cost more than \$250,000. It is an additional tax on the cost of buying the luxury items, at the point of sale.

In reflecting on this, I looked at the work the Parliamentary Budget Officer has done. When looking at the luxury tax, we find that it

Government Orders

would bring in \$170 million in 2024-25. That \$170 million is a lot of money, but in the context of the federal budget, it is sort of spilled corn flakes at the morning breakfast table. It would not bring in substantial money. It would take a lot of Finance Canada's time, both in application and at the point of sale. It would also add to a lot of people's transactional costs to even establish this tax.

The PBO also found that while it would bring to the Government of Canada an additional \$170 million, it would reduce the sales in those categories by \$600 million. I do not think it adds up that applying this tax is worth the financial cost to the Government of Canada and the economy of Canada, given that we would lose \$600 million in sales, particularly in the case of boats and airplanes, and luxury cars too if they were made in Canada. They provide Canadian jobs and a positive impact to the Canadian economy and the communities where those luxury items are made.

Far more important would be to adjust the personal income tax rate. At this point in Canada, once a person is making over \$216,511, the personal income tax rate is the same. It is 33%. That is our highest tax bracket. We certainly would do more to address income inequality were we to create a higher personal income tax bracket for people making, say, over \$500,000 a year. I remind colleagues in this place that when the United States experienced its highest levels of economic growth and economic activity post-war, its highest personal income tax bracket was well over 90%.

We should also be looking very immediately at excess corporate profits. A tax on excess corporate profits, as the PBO has found, could bring in \$7.9 billion a year. I contrast that with this so-called luxury tax. It is \$170 million going into our fiscal resources versus a tax on excess corporate profits that would bring in just under \$8 billion. We should not be chasing the spilled corn flakes. We should be going after where the 1% hides their wealth and where the 1% earns so much more than the average working Canadian, who has to hold down several jobs to cover rent and food.

With those final thoughts, I close my remarks on Bill C-19.

● (1350)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am a bit surprised that the former leader of the Green Party would not support the principles of a luxury tax, for two reasons.

Number one, there is financial inequality in the country. We know that; it is around the world. It might be somewhat small, but it is significant. The \$150 million in additional revenue is a significant amount.

Government Orders

Second, if we follow through the logic the member is espousing, one would ultimately be able to say that we should reduce consumption taxes in order to somehow see more production and give a break on people's tax points. I tend to disagree with that logic, believing that a consumption tax is a very effective way of ensuring, especially if there are rebates, that there is a fairer sense of income equality.

I am wondering if the member might want to reflect on why she would oppose a luxury tax when I suspect the vast majority of Canadians would support that.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I am sure that in devising this luxury tax the current government and its political leadership were looking to something they knew most Canadians would support, which is the idea of a luxury tax. What I am saying is that the way this is constructed, it is merely pandering to the idea that the government is tackling income inequality without actually doing it.

I think it is critical, when we talk about \$170 million being a lot of money, as the parliamentary secretary just did, to realize it is not a lot of money compared to the billions the government continues to insist we waste on the climate-killing Trans Mountain pipeline. There are places where we should stop spending money, and supporting fossil fuels is an urgent cancellation. We have to urgently cancel the fossil fuel subsidies, instead of pretending we are dealing with income inequality through a luxury tax.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member is perhaps one of the most experienced in the entire Parliament, which is surprising given her relative youth. Given that experience, would she agree with me that often times it is in lengthy debates that legislation gets improved, that we find issues and make laws better for Canadians.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I am deeply indebted to the member for Northumberland—Peterborough South for suggesting I have relative youth. I turned 68 this week, and I find his comments absolutely charming.

However, I will say that he is right. The purpose of the Parliament of Canada is to study and respectfully debate in a civil and collaborative effort to improve legislation. It is the case that I sympathize with the Liberal House management that some or most legislation is being needlessly obstructed by the official opposition, but in this the member is absolutely correct that the point of debate is to improve legislation.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things the budget does have is its EV vehicle incentive extensions of \$5,000 per vehicle. My concern is that the United States is offering \$7,500, so we are out of sync regarding that type of incentive. This is also at a time when the Liberals had originally left Canadian vehicles off the list. I wonder if she has any thoughts on that.

We want to see that increase so we can do what we normally do in the auto industry, which is to merge the standards and harmonization closer together, because right now Joe Biden is providing more of an incentive to buy Canadian vehicles than our own Prime Minister. What I would rather see is an opening for used vehicles for battery and a lower entry into the market so more people can access this based upon income.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, the member for Windsor West is absolutely right. We are not doing enough to promote electric vehicles. One of the things we should do is regulate to ensure that not too far in the future the purchase of internal combustion engine vehicles becomes illegal, we move sharply to electric vehicles and provide more supports to Canadians who want to buy them.

However, the biggest gap in this area in the federal budget 2022 is the absence of a national goal for a fully integrated electricity grid between Manitoba and Ontario, and between Quebec and the Maritimes. We lack the ability to move renewable energy across borders.

• (1355)

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today on a serious and sober note. I am here to ring the alarm bells. Our future prosperity is at risk. I am expressing this concern not out of some sense of blind partisanship but rather out of a sense of duty to my country, which I love, but which I also fear for.

As has been said by the Prime Minister, the finance minister, the associate finance minister, many members across the aisle and experts across our country, one of the keys to our national prosperity is economic growth.

Economic growth allows parents to pay for their children's education. It allows teenagers to get their first job and buy their first car. It allows single mothers the opportunity to not have three or four jobs but one. It allows workers the opportunity at a promotion. It allows young people to buy a house for the first time. It allows employers to create jobs. It allows hard-working families to pay off their ever-mounting credit card bills.

In short, many of the conditions for the pursuit of happiness are preceded by economic growth. Economic growth gives Canadians hope. In contrast, the economy we are currently experiencing, which may very well go to a seventies-style stagflation, is of lower wages and fewer economic opportunities for families and individuals. It creates mental health issues across our country as people struggle with the financial consequences of declining economic growth. It sows the seeds of division in our society, so instead of uniting, we are dividing, as we have seen from our Prime Minister.

For all of these and many other reasons, it is indisputable that economic growth is absolutely critical to Canada's future. However, I am ringing those proverbial alarm bells because Canada is poised for slow, if not zero, economic growth for many months or even years to come.

Sadly, the reasons are starting to become structural within our economy. One of the key drivers is a struggle to be competitive and a leader in economic productivity. Canada is falling behind the rest of the world. We are increasingly less productive than many of our peers in the G7 and the G20.

We are also struggling with innovation. Although we have brilliant people from coast to coast to coast, we are failing to bring new innovation and products to market. We are struggling as a country to be a leading innovator in the world.

The last issue I will discuss is a little more subjective. We are facing a declining morale and an increasing mental health crisis. We are not seeing a winning attitude going forward, which all starts at the top with the federal leadership of this country.

Let us explore these areas one by one. Productivity has been an issue, unfortunately, that has dogged the Canadian economy for decades. However, the problem has become particularly acute over the last few years. One of the ways economists measure the productivity of a country is in the amount of contribution per worker per hour. Canada is among the lowest in the OECD countries. We are at \$50 per hour per worker. When we contrast that to those of the United States, Switzerland and Ireland, they are all considerably above that number.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, yesterday, in London, I stood with hundreds of my neighbours, friends and community members to remember the lost members of the Afzaal family: Salman, Talat, Madiha and Yumna.

Young Muslim leaders spoke about the change they need to see from us. They are charging us to act. We have become accustomed to memorializing the losses of men killed in prayer, of women killed crossing the street because they are wearing the hijab and of children killed because we refused to let go of our biases, our insecurities and our fears. We have a responsibility to do better. Islamophobia is structural, and we must review the structures that put our community in harm's way to stop the violence, the microaggressions and the hate.

We must take a stand against the dehumanization of Muslims and of all those who are targeted because of their religion, the colour of their skin, what they wear, their culture, their language, their sexuality or their gender. This is our only path forward. This is a time for courage, for human rights and for love. This is a time for action.

* * *

PALESTINE

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, many Canadians are working in support of the human rights of the Palestinian people and for the peaceful resolution of the issues.

Statements by Members

I would like to recognize and thank Burhan Shahrouri, Jamal Hamed, Dr. Habib Khoury and Rula Sharida of Association of Palestinian Arab Canadians; Thomas Woodley of CJPME; Councilor Yousef Barakat of Canada Arab Forum of British Columbia; Rashad Saleh and Nabil Nassar of Arab Palestine Association of Ontario; Corey Balsam of the Independent Jewish Voices Canada; Dr. Mohamad Abu Awad and Dr. Tarek Khalefih of Canadian Palestinian Professional Foundation; and Mousa Zaidan of the Coalition of Canadian Palestinian Organizations.

I once again call for Canada to recognize the sovereign state of Palestine.

* * *

[Translation]

QUEBEC'S DISABILITY AWARENESS WEEK

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight Quebec's disability awareness week, which is being held from June 1 to 7. The theme this year is "Give 100%".

In Quebec, more than one million people have a significant, persistent disability. People with disabilities represent 16% of the population aged 15 and over. These people can and want to give 100% of themselves to society. Whether at school, at work, in the arts, in culture, or elsewhere, there is room for people with disabilities, and they must have the opportunity to develop their full potential. This is why it is important to give them all the tools they need, in order to offer them an accessible and inclusive environment.

I applaud all the organizations, such as Quebec's Regroupement pour la concertation des personnes handicapées, that have been working for years to build a more inclusive world.

* * *

SEVERE THUNDERSTORMS ON MAY 21

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 21, severe thunderstorms caused major damage in several communities in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. I spoke with several families following the storm. Trees fell on homes, roofs were completely destroyed, silos collapsed, and farms that took generations to build were destroyed in less than five minutes, as were businesses. In spite of all this destruction, I want to commend residents for their courage. I want to thank all the people who helped their neighbours.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

That is what it is all about. In times of crisis, neighbours helping neighbours strengthens that sense of community. I thank the first responders, the hydro crews, the volunteers, the farmers who took their neighbours' animals to care for them and everyone who pitched in. Their commitment to their community cannot go unnoticed.

* * *

WEDDING CONGRATULATIONS

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am thrilled to rise today to inform the House that this past Friday, June 3, under an expansive Manitoba sky and with the sun beaming down on family and friends, our colleague and my dear friend, the member for Kenora declared “I do” to Ms. Danaka Howden, a stunning bride and an even more beautiful person. I am also relieved to inform the House that, despite his many obvious flaws, Danaka replied with an “I do” as well.

I was honoured to be asked by the member for Kenora and Danaka to officiate the ceremony, and so it was particularly special and a bit tearful for me when I was able to pronounce these two amazing people husband and wife. At the reception following the ceremony, there were a number of speeches, including remarks delivered by the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengary that left the guests and the happy couple in stitches.

Sheldon and Crystal Howden, and Joe and Charlene Melillo all beamed proudly with joy as they welcomed the couple into their families. It was a wonderful day to launch these two on their life-long adventure, soon to be filled with many little Melillos.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and the House to join me in congratulating two very special people: the member and Mrs. for Kenora.

* * *

● (1405)

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the Afzaal family: Salman, Madiha, Yumna and Talat. Their lives were taken away by a cruel act of terrorism motivated by Islamophobia. The lives of Faye Afzaal, whose parents, sister and grandmother were killed, and the close-knit Muslim community in London, Ontario, were forever changed.

Today, as Canada marks the first anniversary of this tragedy, I want to recognize the relentless work of the National Council of Canadian Muslims on the Hill to advocate for greater action on Islamophobia. It is because of their advocacy that we announced the creation of a special representative on combatting Islamophobia. NCCM is calling on us to do more to address violence and hate motivated by Islamophobia in every corner of Canada.

I want to say to the Muslim community that we are here for them. Let us double down and fight Islamophobia in all of its forms, and work toward a Canada that is fair, inclusive and just for all.

ONTARIO'S BEST BUTTER TART FESTIVAL

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the first printed recipe for butter tarts was published in the cookbook of the women's auxiliary to the Royal Victoria Hospital in 1900 in Barrie, Ontario. Today, there are hundreds of varieties and infinite butter tart possibilities. There are a million and one ways to make and eat a butter tart, but just one truly great place to enjoy them. That is at Ontario's Best Butter Tart Festival in beautiful Simcoe North in the town of Midland, Ontario.

As Canadians get back to their lives, friends and communities, this sugary extravaganza is back on June 11, with more than 200 professional and home-based bakers projected to serve up to 200,000 delicious Canuck delicacies in a single day. The town of Midland comes alive with tens of thousands of people visiting to seek this ultimate butter tart experience.

I wish to invite everyone to Simcoe North, 90 minutes north of the GTA, this Saturday, June 11, to celebrate Ontario's Best Butter Tart Festival with us, the epicentre of Canada's sweetest treasure.

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HONORARY DOCTORATE FOR LABRADORIAN HISTORIAN

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Labrador, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me today to recognize and congratulate an important educator and historian of Labrador, Patty Way, on being awarded an honorary doctorate of laws from Memorial University.

She was born in Labrador, attended Yale School in North West River in the residential school system, and then attended Memorial University, where she received a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts. Patty has been an educator and historian for more than 50 years, establishing the groundwork for comprehensive genealogies for many in southern, central and northern Labrador.

Building on existing knowledge and oral tradition, Patty interviewed hundreds of elders and knowledge holders, pored over archival records, and used any available means to piece together stories previously unknown. She has made it her life's work to help people and communities learn and understand the branches that make up their indigenous and settler family history.

I ask my colleagues today to join me in extending congratulations to now Dr. Patty Way for this recognition, as it is well deserved.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a year ago today, five members of the Afzaal family, out for an evening stroll in London, were struck at high speed, and with deliberate malice, by a pickup truck. Four family members were killed; only the youngest child, then age nine, survived.

As the suspect's trial has not yet taken place, we cannot know with certainty whether he was motivated primarily by racial hatred, by religious hatred or by some combination of the two. Members will notice that I do not name the suspect. Those who commit the worst crimes should not be remembered by name. Depriving them of notoriety is one of the few tools we have to incentivize other individuals who might consider becoming copycats. It is the four members of the Afzaal family, Talat, Salman, Madiha, and 15-year-old Yumna, who must not be forgotten.

This is not the worst act of anti-Muslim violence in Canada. That melancholy label applies to the 2017 shooting at the Centre culturel islamique de Québec. We now know that the events of 2017 were not unique, and therefore we must always remain vigilant, all of us, on behalf of Canada's 1.4 million Muslims.

* * *

● (1410)

FUNERAL HOME IN NEWMARKET

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this month, Roadhouse & Rose Funeral Home, on Main Street South in Newmarket, is celebrating 180 years of business. Locally owned and operated since 1842, Roadhouse & Rose holds the title of the oldest business in Newmarket, and the third-oldest funeral home in Ontario. A staple in our community, Roadhouse & Rose has been an established business since before Confederation and has watched Newmarket grow from a population of just 600 to now 88,000.

I want to acknowledge Glenn, Jackie and Wes Playter for their many years of service. Not only have they provided our community with professional and compassionate service during our darkest hours, but they have been important community partners supporting many initiatives that make Newmarket even better.

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SUSTAINABLE HUNTING AND FISHING

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, no one works harder for conservation than hunters, anglers and trappers. It is their passion and their chosen duty.

Today in Ottawa, I am pleased to be meeting with men and women who have given their time, talent and energy in these pursuits. These amazing stewards of the outdoors are focused on ensuring that the outdoor way of life is here for generations to enjoy. Their goal is a future that includes healthy rivers, lakes and forests, bountiful fish and wildlife, and opportunities for all Canadians to share the passion for sustainable hunting, fishing and conservation. They work tirelessly on wildlife management projects such as habitat restoration and enhancement. They do this with smiles on their faces, because they know the work is important for the health of our fish and wildlife populations.

Statements by Members

I am proud to consider them friends, and I thank them for their work. I will end with this message to them: May their lines always be tight and their aim always true.

* * *

[Translation]

JUNO BEACH CENTRE

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on September 1, 1939, the Régiment de la Chaudière was called up and deployed at the beginning of the Second World War. Nearly five years later, more than 900 members of this legendary regiment landed on the beaches of Normandy to liberate Europe from Nazi oppression. The Régiment de la Chaudière was the only francophone regiment to take part in the landing operation on June 6, 1944.

Every year we pay tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives in Normandy at the sacred site of the Juno Beach Centre, a museum commemorating the victory. As a member of Parliament and former commanding officer of the Régiment de la Chaudière, I rise in the House to ensure that this space for commemoration and remembrance, which highlights Canada's contributions to D-Day, is fully preserved in memory of our fallen soldiers.

A development project is currently threatening the Juno Beach Centre, and the government must intervene. This project is an affront to the memory of our veterans. I am sure the Prime Minister is aware of the importance of the Juno Beach Centre. We have a duty to protect the memory of those who gave their lives for ours on June 6, 1944.

Aere Perennius.

* * *

CHILEAN COMMUNITY

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, after the coup in 1973, thousands of Chileans sought sanctuary in Canada. For the first time, the Canadian government issued ministerial permits to Chileans. After the crisis, the political refugee class was added to the Immigration Act.

This was before social media, but the community figured out how to organize and played an important role in raising the international community's awareness of the political situation.

The Chilean community stayed and is now deeply rooted in Canada. It has built relationships based on co-operation and solidarity and has contributed to our country's vitality every day.

I want to thank that first generation of immigrants, who showed us how much they loved our country, language and culture while fostering our sense of duty, be it political or social.

I would like to welcome President Boric, who is here in Canada today. He was recently elected as the head of a government with a vision for a progressive, feminist and inclusive future.

Statements by Members

• (1415)

[English]

JUNO BEACH

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we remember D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. Just several weeks ago, I stood on Juno Beach, looked out at the sand and the water, and wondered at the incredible bravery of those Canadians who fought. In the museum, I was moved to hear the voices of Canadians, but what made me stop cold was when I stood below a screen that continuously scrolls through the names of the 45,000 Canadians who were killed in the Second World War. If one were to read every single name, one would have to stand in that spot for 13 and a half hours. So many Canadians made the ultimate sacrifice.

This year is particularly poignant for my riding of North Island—Powell River, as we recently lost World War II veteran James Francis “Stocky” Edwards, who would have been 101 yesterday. The day after his 23rd birthday, he flew his Spitfire over the beaches of Normandy on D-Day and was a proud Canadian for the depth of his service.

As Canadians, we must never forget their sacrifice: then, today or ever.

* * *

[Translation]

QUÉBEC CINÉMA GALA

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the 24th Québec Cinéma gala was held yesterday. A host of Iris trophies were awarded to the most deserving artists and artisans who worked in Quebec film this past year.

Let us begin by congratulating the big winner, *Les oiseaux ivres*, on receiving 10 awards, including the Iris for best film for producers Kim McGraw and my old friend Luc Déry, the best screenplay award for Ivan Grbovic and Sara Mishara, who also triumphed respectively for directing and for director of photography, as well as the best actor awards for the magnificent Hélène Florent and Claude Legault.

Other films also stood out, including *Maria Chapdelaine* by Sébastien Pilote, *L'Arracheuse de temps* by Francis Leclerc and the documentary *Comme une vague* by Marie-Julie Dallaire.

Beyond recognizing the winning artists and artisans, we are also celebrating the very existence of Quebec film. This entire industry that is dedicated to telling us stories, both to us and to the entire world, keeps growing and continues to reflect who we are, as well as being a source of inspiration for the future.

Congratulations to the winners and sincere thanks to the entire Quebec film family.

[English]

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise in the House today on the anniversary of the Afzaal family massacre.

On June 6, 2021, Yumna Afzaal, her parents Madiha Salman and Salman Afzaal, and her grandmother Talat Afzaal were out on a Sunday walk when they were killed by a vehicle jumping the curb. One man made a decision to end the lives of four innocent people simply because of their faith. There are not enough words to describe the hateful, deliberate and discriminatory motive behind this attack.

We live in a country that promotes diversity, culture and inclusion, yet Muslims across the country walk the streets of Canadian cities daily afraid that they might be attacked because of their faith.

My thoughts and prayers are with the Afzaal family, the London community and all Muslims in Canada and across the world. Our job is to ensure safety and protection for all. We need concrete solutions that will fight hate and discrimination and ensure that everyone feels safe in our country.

I pledge to do my part.

* * *

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year ago today, Madiha and Salman Afzaal, their daughter Yumna, and her grandmother Talat were brutally murdered in London, Ontario. They were killed for one reason: They were Muslim. Nine-year-old Fayez Afzaal, in the blink of an eye, became an orphan and lost his sister and his grandmother.

Their murder shook us to our core and united Canadians in our grief. For Muslims across Canada, in the Afzaals we saw our own families, because the Afzaals were our family, and they could have been any of us. Many of us asked, “How could this happen in Canada?” We are not immune to the hate of those who fear difference or refuse to see our common humanity. It is up to all of us to keep the promise we made a year ago: to defeat Islamophobia by building a Canada where we all belong.

Today, we remember Salman, Madiha, Yumna and Talat.

Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un.

Indeed, to Allah we belong and to Allah we shall return. May the souls of our London family rest in eternal peace.

ORAL QUESTIONS

• (1420)

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now is not the time to spout off scripted lines meant for the press. The situation in Canada is increasingly worrisome. We have learned that a quarter of Canadians are not eating enough because they cannot afford to buy food. Statistics Canada reports that food prices have risen 10% since last year, the highest increase since 1981.

Why are the Prime Minister and his ministers not doing anything to help Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not true. Our budget includes a range of measures to help reduce the cost of living, such as providing dental care for Canadians, offering a one-time \$500 payment to those facing housing affordability challenges, doubling the first-time homebuyers' tax credit and introducing a multi-generational home renovation tax credit.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot be serious. Her answer was about dental care and the home buyers' tax credit. Is that the Liberals' solution to the crisis food banks are currently facing?

Places like Mégantic—L'Érable have seen a 10% increase in demand over the past few weeks from people who cannot afford to put food on the table. In many other regions, it is as high as 25%. When food bank usage goes up faster than inflation, which has hit a record high, that means Canada has a serious problem.

Would the minister please park her theoretical budget and explain to ORAPE how it is supposed to make ends meet and make sure everyone gets enough to eat?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know all too well that the cost of living is a big issue for Canadian families. That is why we created and indexed the Canada child benefit. A single mom of two can get up to \$13,666. We increased old age security by 10%. We took care of our youth and now students can now save over \$3,000 thanks to our plan.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I cannot get over the answers I am hearing from Canada's Minister of Finance. She does not realize what a tough time people are having paying their bills and putting food on the table. Everything is more expensive.

What the minister is saying is that it may just be single mothers who are having a tough time. In reality, every Canadian and every worker is having a tough time. Some are struggling to pay for gas to get to work. Forty per cent of people earning less than \$50,000 a year are going hungry. That is the reality.

Other governments are taking action, so why are Liberals dragging their feet?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have no lessons to learn from the Conservatives when it comes to helping the most vulnerable Canadians cope with the cost of living.

In 2015, when we formed the government, 5,177,000 Canadians were living in poverty. According to the last year for which we have statistics, that number has dropped to 3,794,000. That is progress.

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the national average gas price was \$2.06 per litre, with expectations it will jump again this week. Canadians are struggling and are looking for help. Conservatives have proposed temporarily cutting the GST at the pumps. The Prime Minister has said that Canadians should just go buy an electric car.

Do the speNDP-Liberals really believe this is a credible answer for commuters who cannot afford to fill their tanks, let alone pay for their grocery bills, or, when it comes to ideas on how to keep life affordable for Canadians, is the government just running on fumes?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, President Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine has driven up gas prices around the world. While Canada's energy supply remains secure, we are working with our international allies to preserve energy value chains and to actually reduce pricing globally. Here in Canada, we have asked the Competition Bureau to monitor the situation to ensure there is no illegal collusion. We are certainly working to ensure we are enhancing affordability through various programs the government has put into place and we are working internationally to stabilize global energy prices.

• (1425)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since I asked about gas prices and leadership last week, the average price of gas has jumped 11¢. Now the Americans, the British and even the Germans have lowered gas prices to protect their consumers. They did not talk; they acted. However, the Prime Minister has lost the plot. Does this actor turned Prime Minister understand that the only leadership he has shown in the G7 is to raise gas prices? Can someone in the Prime Minister's Office recast him in the next act to a reformed Prime Minister who takes action on gas prices, or will he remain true to character and keep making it worse?

Oral Questions

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague is fully aware, the illegal invasion of Ukraine has driven up gas prices around the world. Canada is working with international partners to address the issues around energy security and pricing with respect to hydrocarbon fuels. In fact, we have committed to increasing oil and gas production by—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt the hon. minister. I am trying to hear what he is saying, but it is getting kind of loud and it is early in the session, so I want to remind everyone that the hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola asked a question. I am sure he wants to hear the answer.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that.

Certainly we continue to be focused with our international partners on working to stabilize global energy prices. We have increased production and are in the process of increasing production and supply of 300,000 barrels a day by the end of the year to help to address the global crisis with respect to energy.

Here, with respect to affordability, we are doing enormous work through a range of different programs to put money back in the pockets—

The Speaker: The hon. member for La Prairie.

* * *

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last year, Montreal and Laval smashed the record for false 911 calls reporting shootings. Citizens called 893 times because they thought they heard gunshots. That represents two and a half calls a day. Why?

It is because people are afraid. They might hear a jackhammer or a collision and, instinctively, they are afraid for their family's safety. It has become a scourge.

We do not want to know what is happening with legal weapons. We want to know when the government will do something about illegal weapons and criminal gangs.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague. It is unacceptable that there would be threats like those you mentioned.

That is precisely why we introduced Bill C-21. I hope that the Bloc will work with the government to pass this bill as soon as possible. That is one of the concrete measures we can use to protect our communities.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, here is what Detective-Sergeant André Gélinas had to say on Saturday about everything the minister just said, and I quote, “This bill will not change anything on the ground simply because it does not target the right people”.

Legal gun owners are not the ones doing all the shooting. It is organized crime and gangs. There are two things that the government needs to do to fix this problem: tighten up border controls to thwart gun trafficking and create an organized crime registry. Time is of the essence.

When will the federal government finally stop with the rhetoric and crack down on criminal groups?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-21 cracks down on criminal groups with concrete measures. For example, it imposes harsher penalties for criminals who engage in illegal gun trafficking at the border and gives the police more authority to prevent gun violence.

That is one of the measures that we can take in co-operation with the Bloc, but we need to study this bill, debate it and pass it as quickly as possible.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks the first-year anniversary of the horrific attack in London in which the Afzaal family was killed. This was clearly an act of Islamophobia, and a year later, Muslim community members are wondering what has been done to make them safer in Canada.

A year later there have not been any concrete steps taken by the Liberal government. In fact, there is no law proposed to tackle online hate, there is no special representative named to deal with Islamophobia, and the neo-Nazi group linked with this attack has yet to be dismantled.

When will the Prime Minister take real steps to make sure the Muslim community is safer in Canada?

• (1430)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I hope all members will join today in grieving with the Muslim community in London, who mark this first anniversary of the loss that has been experienced by them. There is no way in which we can sufficiently convey our grief and the sense of anguish and loss that they have had to experience.

Our government is taking concrete steps, but first and foremost, we must begin by condemning Islamophobia in all of its forms. I certainly hope that every single member in this chamber will join me in that, and in taking the concrete steps that my hon. colleague across the way has suggested as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today marks the first year anniversary of the attack in London where the Afzaal family was killed. This was an act of Islamophobia, and a year later, the Liberal government has still not really done anything to make the Muslim community in Canada safer. It has not proposed any legislation to tackle online hate, and the neo-Nazi group linked to this attack has yet to be dismantled.

When will this government take real steps to address Islamophobia?

[English]

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have taken a number of important steps in collaboration and conjunction with the Muslim community in Canada, including holding the first-ever national summit on Islamophobia and dedicating January 29 as the National Day of Remembrance and Action Against Islamophobia.

We have committed as a government to appoint a special representative to combat Islamophobia and we are the first government to put together a national action plan to combat hate as part of our broader anti-racism strategy, but most importantly, it also means working with Muslim Canadians and funding those on the ground and who are fighting Islamophobia every single day.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what do the Federal Reserve, President Biden, treasury secretary Yellen and the Bank of Canada all have in common? They have all taken responsibility for underestimating inflation. Secretary Yellen said she was wrong about inflation and President Biden released a plan to fight inflation just last week.

Where is the government's plan to provide immediate relief to Canadians and combat inflation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do we know what all of those countries have in common? In all of those countries, the rate of inflation is higher than it is in Canada.

In Canada, the latest inflation number is 6.8%. In the U.S., it is 8.3%. In the U.K., it is 9%, and in Germany, 8.7%. The OECD average is 8.8%. That is what they have in common and that is how they are different from us.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all of those countries measure inflation differently, and perhaps it would not hurt the government to admit just a little bit of humility instead of being blinded by ideology, and recognize that the facts on the ground have changed and that it needs to change course to provide immediate relief to Canadians.

We have heard time and time again that the government is providing zero relief and is actually defending high gas prices. Despite a windfall of revenues, the government refuses to take immediate action.

Why?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, do we know who should have a little bit of humility when talking about central banks? A member of a party in which a candidate for the highest office has impugned the independence of the central bank, which is one of the key institutions in Canada, and Canada's strong institutional—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Oral Questions

The Speaker: I am going to have to interrupt the hon. Deputy Prime Minister. I am having a hard time hearing today. Maybe it is my age, but I think it is more the voices in this place that are really getting echoey and quite loud. It is almost like a murmur that has a crescendo to it.

I am not trying to direct an orchestra here. Please keep it down.

The hon. Deputy Prime Minister, please proceed.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, we were talking about humility, and I was pointing out that a member of a party in which a leading voice is impugning the independence of the Bank of Canada precisely at the moment when our economy needs a strong, independent and well-respected central bank is a person who should demonstrate some humility.

● (1435)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, gas prices in my riding are \$2.35 per litre. Drivers and transport of goods and services are all hurting. Huge diesel costs mean that it costs more for stores to get products and that already desperate Canadians pay more and more for groceries and essentials.

We are elected to serve and support Canadians, not make life so impossible that their already fragile mental health may collapse. There are common sense answers that this government ignores. When will the Prime Minister give Canadians a break and get rid of ever-rising carbon taxes?

Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, certainly, the issue of energy security and energy affordability are top of mind for Canadians and for people in many countries around the world.

We are working in partnership with the United States, Europe and others to ensure that we are increasing production to address the supply issue that is confronting the world right now. We are doing so in a manner that will help us to stabilize energy prices for the long term. That is the commitment we have made to Canadians, and it is a commitment we are going to deliver on.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, inflation, stagnation, frustration: these are common, everyday, kitchen table words now in Canada.

Inflation means higher costs of production for all food. For farmers and producers, as their costs go up, they cannot continue to absorb these losses. Consumers are stressed. Everyone loses. Food banks are overwhelmed. One out of five Canadians reports going hungry at night.

When is the government going to get serious, help Canadians and get Canada-created inflation under control?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians understand very well that inflation is a global phenomenon driven today very much by Vladimir Putin's illegal war in Ukraine.

Our government understands that the cost of living is a challenge for Canadians, and that is why we are taking concrete steps. Let me name a few of them: a \$500 payment to those facing housing affordability challenges, dental care for Canadian families, doubling support provided through the first-time homebuyers' tax credit and a multi-generational home renovation tax credit.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, pain at the pumps is a reality across Canada, including in my riding.

As Canadian gas prices soar to record highs, Putin fuels his war by selling Russian energy to the democratic west, yet the Liberal Prime Minister and the New Brunswick Liberal MPs are doubling down on a failed climate agenda that has not met a single emission target.

Will the Prime Minister admit the carbon tax has failed and give Canadians a break at the pumps?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, eight out of 10 Canadians are better off with carbon pricing. They receive more money from carbon pricing, and emissions are going down. He should look at the 2019 inventory and the 2020 inventory. Emissions are going down.

Our plan to fight climate change is working.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Scale the wall, my friend.

Mr. Speaker, without pulling up to a pump and paying for the gas himself, the Prime Minister is utterly out of touch with the struggles Canadians are faced with. With the affluent means available to him, the Prime Minister truly does not understand that struggling mothers are having to choose between nutritious food or fuelling the family vehicle to get to work.

Will the Prime Minister finally admit today that his economic policies are what is driving up the cost of fuel and food across this country?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member knows very well that in his province of New Brunswick, we have now reduced child care fees by 50%. In fact, that leaves hundreds of dollars each month in the pockets of the mothers he is talking about.

When it comes to the Canada child benefit, for a single mom, that could mean almost \$7,000 a year. That is real money for families that need it when it comes to the high cost of living.

We have been there since 2015, and we will continue to be there for them every step of the way.

[Translation]

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we now know that the 300 million barrels of oil that the minister said would be extracted from Bay du Nord was an incorrect number. That was the number given to calm the waters, but the developers never planned to stop at 300 million barrels. They are now talking about increasing that number to at least 500 million. What is worse, the environmental assessment used by the Minister of the Environment did not account for the quantity of oil that the project is meant to produce.

Did the minister know that Bay du Nord would produce much more than the 300 million barrels that were announced?

• (1440)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question and for her advocacy on this important issue.

The Bay du Nord project was subject to an independent environmental assessment by experts over the course of more than four years, and these experts gave it a favourable recommendation. There are 137 conditions on this project. For the first time in history, a project will have to be net-zero by 2050. The project will also be required to come under the greenhouse gas emissions target that we will set. The project will have to be net-zero by 2050, regardless of whether it produces 300 million or 500 million barrels of oil.

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the quantity of oil does not seem to matter to the Department of the Environment. Is it even a secondary factor in the minister's decision-making, or a negligible factor in the amount of greenhouse gas emissions?

Just as the IPCC warned that we are heading for a climate crisis, Canada approved the extraction of one billion barrels of oil. Let us stop pretending that it will be anything less, because we will not be taken for fools. How could the minister, who still claims to be an environmental activist, approve such a project?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how could approve that?

The same day we gave the green light to the Bay du Nord project, we rejected an oil sands project that would have emitted 10 times more greenhouse gases per barrel. We have put a cap on methane emissions. We will reduce methane emissions by 40% to 45% by 2025, and by 75% by 2030. No other country in the world has brought in such significant measures.

We took the fight for carbon pricing all the way to the Supreme Court, and that was against several provinces, including Quebec, unfortunately.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, environmental groups are outraged and with good reason. Greenpeace says that it is completely ludicrous to go ahead with a project without having any real idea of how catastrophic it will be. The Sierra Club adds that the estimates are alarming for the climate and show the futility of the environmental assessment.

However, it is not the environmental groups that the minister is abandoning, it is the planet. He knows that the more barrels of oil are extracted from Bay du Nord, the more greenhouse gases are produced. Knowing all this, why did he say yes to Bay du Nord?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that the inventories in 2019, well before the pandemic, show that oil production in Canada increased by 700,000 barrels that year, the equivalent of one and a half times the Bay du Nord project.

However, greenhouse gas emissions dropped in 2019 compared to 2018. Why? Because our plan tackles pollution, independently of what happens with oil production. It is working. The electricity sector is taking great strides to reduce its reliance on coal, as are several other sectors.

That is how we are going to meet our 2030 and 2050 goals.

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[English]

JUSTICE

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today marks the one-year anniversary of a deadly attack on a Muslim family in London. Four members of the Afzaal family were deliberately hit and killed by a truck during an innocent evening walk. A spokesperson for the family rightly criticized the federal government for its lack of action and hollow promises to prevent similar attacks in the future.

This is a serious offence. Will the Prime Minister ensure that this murderer receives a serious sentence?

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, serious offences in this country are always punished with serious sentences. That is why we are moving forward to increase penalties for certain gun infractions, as Bill C-21 proposes.

We also are making sure that we attack systemic discrimination within our criminal justice system so that indigenous Canadians and Black Canadians are not overrepresented in that system.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, those are more words and no action.

Oral Questions

Contrary to the government's claim, Bill C-21 is not about getting tough on crime and it is not targeted at the gang members who are shooting up our streets. On the one hand, the Liberals try to increase the maximum penalty, yet they push eliminating mandatory minimum sentences for a number of serious gun crimes under Bill C-5. Also, let us not forget that last year they voted down the Conservatives' bill that proposed making the punishment harder for criminals using smuggled guns. It is shameful.

When will the Prime Minister put the rights of victims first and commit to ending his soft-on-crime agenda?

• (1445)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I genuinely hope that my hon. colleague and all Conservatives will read very carefully Bill C-21, which takes organized crime head-on by raising maximum sentences against organized criminals who are trafficking guns across our borders, and by giving police additional wiretap authorities to prevent gun crime from occurring in the first place.

I would encourage my hon. colleague to vote for Bill C-21. By the way, he should also vote for fighting against Islamophobia the next time there is a motion on the floor of the House of Commons. That is the kind of solidarity we need to show for the Muslim community, especially today.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well that Bill C-21 does nothing to tackle gangs and organized crime. It is no surprise, because the Liberal government always fails to get tough on hardened criminals.

Under Bill C-5, they are removing mandatory minimum sentences for violent crimes committed with firearms. In a recent access to information response, it was revealed that the Liberal government cut funding to combat gun and gang violence by more than half, failing to spend over \$150 million targeted to fight crime.

Why is the government reducing sentences for violent criminals and slashing funding for fighting crime?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is the height of irony to hear an hon. colleague representing the Conservative Party of Canada talk about law and order when Conservatives put forward an agenda that has been repeatedly struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada in failed MMPs, when they cut nearly \$1 billion from front-line RCMP officers and CBSA, which we had to put back, and we did, to protect our communities.

I hope that colleague will look at Bill C-21 and vote for it. That is how we will protect communities.

Oral Questions

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling to afford housing in cities across Canada, but the government is still allowing illicit foreign funds to make things even worse. For eight years, Chinese property developer Runkai Chen used wire transfers to launder tens of millions of dollars into Canadian banks. Canada has a broken system for tracking money laundering. The lack of action from the government only brings more hardship for everyday Canadians.

When will the government help Canadians by cracking down on money laundering?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for shining a light on the need to make sure we are putting resources into law enforcement so we can root out money laundering and so we can make sure Canadians are not being exploited in new non-conventional platforms. That is precisely what we are doing in budget 2022, where, among other things, we are going to advance the important work being led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and my department when it comes to the creation of the Canada financial agency. We will make sure Canadians are protected in the financial sector by taking these steps.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling to pay their bills. Rising costs are making it nearly impossible for them to put food on their tables. A recent survey found that people are struggling to afford basic groceries, things like bread and pasta. Over the weekend, gas costs went through the roof again. While big box stores and oil and gas companies are making record profits, the government is not responding urgently to Canadians.

Will the government help by doubling the GST tax credit and the child benefit to get hundreds of dollars back in Canadians' pockets?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely understands that affordability is a challenge for Canadian families. That is why this budget includes some very strong measures to help Canadians: a \$500 payment for Canadians who are facing challenges with housing affordability, dental care.

I am glad the member spoke about the CCB, which is indexed to inflation. Thanks to that, a single mother with two children will receive up to \$13,666. When it comes to seniors, the OAS is going up by 10%.

* * *

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown how crucial access to high-speed Internet is as we live in an increasingly digital world. Canadians across the country need reliable high-speed Internet to access services, supports and opportunities.

Can the Minister of Rural Economic Development update the House on the work being done to connect more rural households like mine in my riding of Madawaska—Restigouche?

• (1450)

[Translation]

Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Madawaska—Restigouche for his question, as well as for his commitment and leadership on this issue.

[English]

While visiting the beautiful area of Miramichi this past week, I was pleased to announce a federal investment of \$55 million to connect 11,000 underserved households in New Brunswick to high-speed, affordable Internet.

We are well on our way to connect 98% of Canada by 2026. We know the future of rural Canada lies in affordable, reliable high-speed Internet and we are well on our way.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, would the minister responsible please explain the mandate rule for unvaccinated travellers who wish to access federally regulated ferries such as Marine Atlantic?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand and answer the question from my colleague, who has been great to collaborate with on the health committee.

I do not have any data in front of me with respect to ferries, but I am happy to look it up for him. I would also like to say that right now Nova Scotians are 65.7% triple vaccinated, so there is still room for improvement. I hope my colleagues opposite will continue to consider encouraging their constituents to get a third dose, because that is the best way to protect us and our communities from COVID-19.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should sit on that side as a minister, because the rules are very easy to find. They say that for essential travel under 24 hours on a Marine Atlantic ferry, unvaccinated people can access ferries. Why air travel is different from marine ferry travel I do not know. There are no 24-hour flights inside of Canada, nor indeed around the world. Sadly, this indicates clearly that the ongoing mandates for air travel are only vindictive political punishment.

When will the Prime Minister allow Canadians to return to prepandemic normal?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, the travel vaccine mandates have been changing over the last seven or eight months. They change regularly. They are constantly reviewed and are all subject to looking at various considerations.

I have to say that in the last month alone, 1,700 Canadians died from COVID-19. It is important to recognize that as much as we want COVID-19 to be over, it is not there yet.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been months and the fiasco at our airports continues. Believe it or not, it is getting worse. There are more cancelled flights, longer lineups, more delays and lost economic activity, and our international reputation is in jeopardy. The minister blames travellers and is telling us that things are just as bad in other countries. Despite all the chaos, experts are saying that dropping the restrictions and mandates must happen to clear the backlogs.

The government is keeping these unjustified federal mandates in place until June 30. If experts are already telling it to drop the virtue signalling, what happens on July 1?

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is right about one thing: We are seeing delays at airports across the entire world. We are seeing an increased demand and appetite for people who want to travel, and the supply is trying to catch up. However, we are not resting until we fix these delays. We have increased resources at CATSA, CBSA and airports. We are working with airports, airlines and all stakeholders and will do everything we can to ensure that travellers have a smooth experience.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister is playing catch-up by hiring a fraction of those who were fired because of these mandates. The information disclosed by the government revealed that it failed to spend nearly a quarter of CATSA's budget last year, despite record lineups, delays and staffing shortages at our airports.

We know that the Liberal vaccine mandate is keeping millions from flying. Are domestic travel restrictions being kept in place because the government does not want to deal with additional travellers, or is it just a way of punishing Canadians who do not agree with it?

• (1455)

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are going through an identity crisis. They do not know what policies they support and what policies they oppose. The only thing they know is they want to inflame anger and frustration. They have no idea how to address the current challenges we have.

Our government is a responsible government. We are working with stakeholders, airports, airlines, CATSA and the CBSA, and are offering real, concrete solutions to address these issues. Our government is on the job while all the Conservatives can do is yell and scream with no ideas.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

PASSPORTS

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, people are outraged about having to wait so long to get their passports.

Even for emergency services, they are waiting in line for hours, only to be sent home. People are even camping out in front of the passport offices to make sure they get a place in line.

Passports are not concert tickets. This is a public service paid for by tax dollars. Will the government at least open its points of service on weekends to deal with urgent cases at no extra cost?

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

As we know, this is an unprecedented time, when many Canadians want to travel at the same time. Many passports expired over the past two years, and we are in the process of ensuring that Canadians can travel because we know that is what they want to do.

As I have already mentioned in the House, many offices across the country are open in the evening and on Saturdays. We are doing what we can to provide this service to Canadians.

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the number of passport applications is definitely high. There was a travel ban for two years. Anyone could have seen this increase coming, except for this government. Once again the government is not proactive; it is reactive.

This crisis could have been avoided, but it is too late. Will the government fix this mess by temporarily opening offices on the weekends, free of charge, for people leaving the country within 48 hours?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really reassuring to hear the Bloc talk about Canadian passports. We are in the process of hiring more employees. Since January, 600 employees have been hired. We are now hiring another 600, and 600 Service Canada employees are being redeployed to ensure that we can better respond to Canadians' needs.

We will continue to change the process because we know that it is important for all Canadians across the country to have access to their passports.

* * *

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Parliamentary Budget Officer tabled a study on the estimated cost of implementing Bill C-13 on official languages.

Oral Questions

Treasury Board, Canadian Heritage and IRCC refused to provide the PBO with their planned expenditures for implementing this bill.

This is public money. It is money given to us by our citizens. This is a question of transparency and integrity.

What are they trying to hide?

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. I also want to thank the Parliamentary Budget Officer for his work.

Our modernization of the Official Languages Act is still being debated in Parliament, and it is customary to wait until a bill is officially passed before drafting any accompanying regulations. That is particularly important in a minority Parliament.

We look forward to passing the bill as soon as possible. Once again, we hope that all opposition parties will work with us to ensure that it receives royal assent soon.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I assure my colleague that the Conservatives will work in support of the French language.

Not a week goes by without us hearing a story about this government's contempt for official languages. Last Thursday, the Parliamentary Budget Officer revealed that, in response to his inquiries, three departments refused to disclose their planned expenditures pertaining to the modernization of official languages. This was the first time that this officer of the House of Commons has not gotten a response.

What excuse does the Prime Minister have this time?

• (1500)

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

As I said, Bill C-13 is now before the House of Commons and committee. Committees have important work to do.

Before the bill receives royal assent, we need to do all the work to ensure that it receives royal assent. Afterwards, we can implement the bill, absolutely.

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the question is simple. They are not answering a question about a dollar amount included in the budget. In the budget, the Liberals set out \$16 million to modernize the Official Languages Act. The Parliamentary Budget Officer is asking them questions. He is an impartial officer here, in the House of Commons, and the government is incapable of answering him.

What is the government hiding?

Hon. Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is simple. We have absolutely nothing to hide on this side of the House. We want to do everything we can to protect and promote the beautiful French lan-

guage. That is why we are moving forward with an ambitious bill that has more bite.

I hope that my hon. colleague and all the parties in the House will work with us to get this bill passed as quickly as possible.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Viviane Lapointe (Sudbury, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no relationship is more important to our government than the relationship with indigenous peoples. Over the past few years, our government has settled many land claims with indigenous communities in order to renew nation-to-nation relationships founded on community priorities and to right past wrongs. These settlements are a crucial part of our reconciliation process.

Would the minister please tell the House about our government's recent settlement with the Siksika First Nation?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 1910, the Siksika Nation has been deprived of half of its lands and its fair share of the resources on those lands. Its claim is one of the largest in the country, and the community has waited over 112 years for Canada to address this historic injustice.

That is why, today, we are celebrating the signing of a \$1.3-billion land claim settlement with the Siksika Nation. This settlement cannot erase the past, but we will continue to work with the Siksika Nation to build a better future for generations to come.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of International Trade needs to explain how a close personal friend wound up \$17,000 dollars richer after giving the minister a couple of days of media training. Documents tabled in the House show that in April 2020, the minister hired a PR firm run by Liberal insider and CBC pundit Amanda Alvaro just a month after the COVID-19 pandemic began, at a time when many Canadian small businesses were struggling just to survive.

The minister needs to come clean. Why did she award a lucrative contract to someone who describes her as a “dear friend”?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, here are the facts. This contract was proactively disclosed to the public over two years ago. I was not involved in the decision to award it, and this contract was thoroughly reviewed by departmental civil servants to comply with all procurement rules.

Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC): Mr. Speaker, where I come from, wrong is still wrong. A good business pays well but being a “dear friend” to a Liberal minister seems to pay even better. The latest example of this is the Minister of International Trade, who awarded her close personal friend a \$17,000 media contract. It is unacceptable that well-connected Liberal insiders continue to get sweetheart deals as everyday Canadians continue to struggle with the ever-rising cost of living, with no end in sight and no help from the NDP-Liberal government.

When did the minister start taking after the Prime Minister in thinking she is above the law? Wrong is wrong, is it not?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, all information related to this communications contract was proactively disclosed to the public over two years ago in a transparent manner. At the height of the pandemic, it was critical for small businesses, for workers and for families to know what support was available to them. The results speak for themselves. Over five million jobs were saved as a result of the wage subsidy. Over 900,000 small businesses received a loan through a CEBA loan.

• (1505)

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the trade minister really needs to brush up on her ethics rules. I would like to remind her that ministers are forbidden from advancing the interests of their close personal friends. This contract is not in dispute. The problem is that the minister awarded \$17,000 to Amanda Alvaro, who describes the minister as a “dear friend” and who also ran the minister's election campaign in 2017.

Will the minister admit she broke ethics rules, and will she co-operate fully with the Ethics Commissioner's investigation?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate again that I was not involved in the decision to award the contract, and this contract was thoroughly reviewed by departmental civil servants to comply with all procurement rules. Of course, I will always collaborate and co-operate as required.

* * *

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last year, in the community of London, Ontario, a heinous Islamophobic attack took the lives of four members of the Afzaal family and left a young son orphaned. Canadian Muslims are no strangers to acts of violence and hate: the Centre culturel islamique de Québec, the IMO mosque in Etobicoke as well as London. Hate and bigotry have no place in Canada.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

We must all contribute to building an inclusive society.

[English]

Can the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion tell this House how our government is fighting Islamophobia following last year's national summit?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his really important advocacy for this really important work.

As we commemorate the one-year anniversary of the London attack and the five-year anniversary of the Quebec mosque shooting, we know that Islamophobia is a troubling and real fact for far too many Canadian Muslims in Canada. That is why our government is creating the new position of special representative on combatting Islamophobia. Just this morning, I announced on behalf of our government that the call for applications for this really important role is now open. Through this step, we are combatting hate and building a more inclusive society.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the national inquiry's final report on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls came out three years ago, and indigenous leaders and survivors are calling the government's failure to act a national shame. Every call for justice that the government ignores is costing lives. For three years, my community has proposed a low-barrier, 24-7 safe space. In the last month alone, lives could have been saved if the government had listened.

Will the government immediately fund a 24-7, low-barrier safe space in Winnipeg?

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, clearly, as a country, we continue to fail indigenous women, children and LGBTQ people. The one-year anniversary is not something to look back on, despite our investments of billions of dollars into addressing this national strategy, and pat ourselves on the back; this is something we have to address as an entirety in society. Whether it is us, the provinces or cities, we all have our part to do to invest and make sure people are safe in this country. We will continue to do it.

On the federal side, we will continue to work across the country to do exactly what the report asked, which is to have a systemic approach to this ongoing national tragedy.

*Oral Questions***INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I recently met with the secretary general of the Polish Red Cross. She indicated that their need right now is for money or food. They can no longer help Afghan refugees destined for Canada. There is also a global food shortage on the horizon, a product of Russia's blocking of Ukrainian grain exports. Chad has announced it is facing catastrophe, and other African nations will soon follow.

Does the government have any plan to assist Poland and address the emerging food crisis? Will it move to increase the availability of Canadian wheat, or as with Afghanistan, is the government's head buried in the sand while people are facing death?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has stepped up when it comes to food security crises around the world. The impact that Putin's war in Ukraine has had on the food security crisis in the world is very troubling. That is why Canada has stepped up. We have announced approximately over \$70 million to help. We have also announced funding for Afghanistan, Syria and the Horn of Africa. In fact, I just visited three nations in Africa to talk about the food security crisis, and this was one of the main topics we discussed at the G7. We will have more to say about this later.

• (1510)

The Speaker: That is all the time we have today for questions.

* * *

AFZAAL FAMILY

The Speaker: Following discussions among representatives of all parties in the House, I understand there is an agreement to observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the attack in London, Ontario, that happened a year ago.

I now invite the hon. members to rise.

[A moment of silence observed]

* * *

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN BILL C-243 AND BILL S-211

The Speaker: I would like to make a statement concerning similarities between two bills that are currently before the House.

Bill C-243, An Act respecting the elimination of the use of forced labour and child labour in supply chains, standing in the name of the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, received first reading on February 8 last and was added to the order of precedence on February 9, 2022.

As for Bill S-211, An Act to enact the Fighting Against Forced Labour and Child Labour in Supply Chains Act and to amend the Customs Tariff, standing in the name of the member for Scarborough—Guildwood, a message from the Senate was received on April 29, 2022, informing the House of its adoption. It then received first reading and was added to the order of precedence on May 3, 2022.

[Translation]

These two bills have the same objective, to require certain entities, including federal institutions, to report on the measures that they take to prevent and reduce the risk of using forced labour or child labour in the production of goods or in their supply chains.

The case before the House involves an unusual set of circumstances. Normally, in the case of private members' bills, the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business would designate as non-votable a bill that is essentially the same as one higher up on the order of precedence. However, as it states at page 1144 of the third edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*:

In the case of a private Member's public bill originating in the Senate, the only ground on which such a bill can be designated non-votable is its similarity to a bill voted on by the House in the same Parliament.

[English]

Since Bill C-243 had not been voted on when the Subcommittee on Private Members' Business reviewed Bill S-211, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, on the recommendation of its subcommittee, designated the bill votable in its report to the House of May 11, 2022. Thus, two similar items are listed on the order of precedence for Private Members' Business.

Since Bill S-211 was adopted on June 1 at second reading and referred to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, the House now finds itself in a situation in which a decision has been made with respect to one of two bills containing similar provisions and seeking the same objective.

[Translation]

There is a long-standing practice that prohibits the same question from being decided twice by the House during the same session. In adopting Bill S-211 at second reading, the House agreed to the principle of that bill and, thus, has also made a decision on the principle of Bill C-243.

[English]

On May 11, 2022, in a ruling found at page 5,125 of Debates, the Chair considered a similar situation concerning two other similar bills. At that time, it was determined that the House should not find itself in a situation in which it was called on to decide on the same question twice in a single session.

Standing Order 94(1) grants the Speaker the authority to make all arrangements necessary to ensure the orderly conduct of Private Members' Business. In accordance with this authority, the Chair is ordering that the status of Bill C-243 remain pending and that it not be considered. This leaves open the possibility that Bill C-243 may be reinstated in the next session, pursuant to Standing Order 86.1, should by any chance Bill S-211 fail to be enacted in this session.

I thank all members for their attention.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1515)

[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 five petitions. These responses will be tabled in an electronic format.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present, in both official languages, two reports of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association.

The first concerns its participation at the 2022 extraordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held by video conference from March 14 to March 15, 2022.

The second concerns its participation at the second part of the 2022 ordinary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, held by video conference from April 25 to April 28, 2022.

I have the reports here.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Etobicoke North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Science and Research, entitled "Successes, Challenges and Opportunities for Science in Canada".

This is an inaugural committee, and I would like to thank all members and witnesses who participated in the study.

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

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PETITIONS

VACCINES

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to table e-petition 3871, initiated by my constituent Mr. Aaron Stuart from Vernon, British Columbia.

Mr. Stuart and 15,490 signatories of this petition call on the Government of Canada to, among other things, establish an independent investigation into the Government of Canada's use of vaccine mandates, the patented Canadian LNP technology, and agreements used by the government for procuring vaccines, and to determine

Routine Proceedings

whether any government body or officials benefited financially from sales of vaccines licensed to use the LNP technology.

• (1520)

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I am presenting a petition to the House that was brought to my attention by Rosemary Abell and others with the St. Peter's Catholic Church in Cornwall. It has been signed and supported by 129 constituents of mine.

This petition highlights the need for Canadian-based companies to better protect individuals who are subject to human rights abuses along the supply chain through global operations. Although our country is a strong advocate for human rights, we can and should do more by requiring our workforce to be protected, both abroad and at home.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to, one, require Canadian-based companies to do their due diligence and prevent adverse human rights abuses; two, establish meaningful consequences for Canadian companies that do not take those measures; and three, establish a legal right for people who have been harmed by such abuses to seek justice in our Canadian courts.

I am pleased to table and support the petition on their behalf.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I table this petition on behalf of several constituents of Edmonton West and people across the country who are greatly concerned with the Liberals' platform pledge to go after charities that have values different from their own.

Attacking such charities will affect their ability to deliver to disadvantaged and under-privileged Canadians.

JUNO BEACH

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I have the honour of presenting a petition that was started by a young woman of my community named Quincy Ross, whose grandfather fought in the Canadian campaign on Juno Beach.

The petition calls upon the Government of Canada to oppose the proposed condo development at the Juno Beach D-Day site and intervene in the development by the French property developer by contacting the French government on a diplomatic level.

VACCINES

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I pleased to present e-petition 3824 with 617 signatures.

The petition states:

Whereas:

The vaccine injury support program (VISIP) is open to individuals who have experienced a serious or permanent injury as a result of receiving a Health Canada authorized vaccine, administered in Canada, on or after December 8, 2020;

Routine Proceedings

Vaccine injuries have occurred before December 8, 2020, and the mental, physical and financial toll of a vaccine injury is overwhelming, exhausting, time-consuming and cumbersome; and

As vaccine injuries are extremely rare, all vaccine injuries should be supported by the government of Canada.

We, the undersigned, citizens of Canada, call upon the Government of Canada to support and compensate all Canadians who have had a vaccine injury from a Health Canada approved vaccine, not just those who have had one on December 8, 2020, and afterwards.

TAXATION

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I pleased to present two petitions today.

The first petition is from Single Seniors for Tax Fairness. They recognize that the current income tax system for seniors gives couples numerous ways to lower their taxes while singles get none. They note that senior couples can split their pension income and that senior singles have no such benefit. They pay higher taxes, and they often forfeit the age amount tax credit and endure OAS claw-backs.

Therefore, the petitioners are calling upon the Government of Canada to offer tax benefits to single seniors that are equal to those now in place for senior couples, which would include offering a reduction of 30% on their income to be taxed and allowing single seniors to transfer their RRSP, RRIF and TFSA to a beneficiary of their choice.

• (1525)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners are calling upon the government to address the climate emergency by having the Government of Canada enact just transition legislation. They want this legislation to do the following: reduce emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030, wind down the fossil fuel industry and make strong investments in clean energy infrastructure, create new public institutions, create good green jobs and drive an inclusive workforce development.

The petitioners are hoping the Government of Canada will include these measures and others in just transition legislation.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions today.

The first one is from Canadians who acknowledge that the development of Canada's natural resources is essential to the national economy as a whole. They want to see the government respect the development of pipelines in the oil and gas industry even further, since they realize this helps promote healthy and vibrant communities, particularly in small-town rural Canada.

VACCINES

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the second petition, the petitioners are concerned with the federal government's decision to implement a policy that had public administration employees choosing between a personal health decision and having their jobs. They are asking that the government reinstate the federal public servants who have been removed from their positions without sufficient justification, many of

whom are experts in their respective fields, and to ensure that freedom to participate and work within the Government of Canada is not contingent upon a certain type of vaccination status.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition that is based on the values test. Canada is a landscape that has diverse views and the government has, according to the petitioners, sought to emphasize some views over others when it comes to charitable status and the values test with respect to the Canada summer jobs grant. The petitioners seek to reverse that policy.

JUSTICE

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the residents of my riding and many across the country are rightly concerned about the dangers that Bill C-5 would cause to our communities. As we know, the bill would eliminate a number of mandatory minimum penalties for significant, serious, violent gun offences and drug offences. It would also eliminate mandatory minimums for dangerous fentanyl dealers. Canadians are afraid that those who commit criminal harassment, sex assault, kidnapping and human trafficking will be under house arrest instead of traditional jail time, meaning they will be back in our neighbourhoods.

Sharing their concerns, I am presenting a petition that calls on the government to immediately withdraw Bill C-5 and stop favouring criminals at the expense of law-abiding Canadians.

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am presenting this petition from my constituents and Canadians across the country who want to see an end to the federal vaccine mandates, especially for domestic travel. These petitioners note that the vaccine mandates imposed on Canadians taking domestic flights, trains and ferries are an unreasonable infringement of their rights and freedoms. They ask the government to abolish the mandates.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition signed by a number of my constituents. They are looking to see more action be done on the issue of our environment, specifically the climate emergency. They are looking for the government and the Prime Minister to enact just transition legislation. They have a number of progressive ideas within the petition. It is a pleasure to table it today on their behalf.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are suffering from inflation and the government's carbon tax. Petitioners state that several facts about the carbon tax drive up everyday essentials, including gas, groceries and heating, making life more expensive for everybody.

The petitioners are calling on the government to remove the carbon tax from farm fuels and all other fuels, as well as the GST. They are calling for the government to control its spending and reduce inflation. Finally, they want to see pipelines and other projects approved, especially LNG pipelines, which get clean, ethical energy to tidewater and to international markets, displacing fuel that is provided by authoritarian regimes and dictators.

• (1530)

VACCINE MANDATES

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting today is from people from across Canada who want to review the National Advisory Committee on Immunization's finding that there was no transmission of COVID-19 on airplanes. According to WestJet's chief medical officer, Tammy McKnight, on April 23, 2021, "there have been no known cases of COVID-19 transmission onboard...aircraft."

Therefore, the undersigned citizens of Canada are calling on the Minister of Transport and the Government of Canada to abolish the vaccine requirements for folks flying, both Canadians citizens and permanent residents, on domestic flights and all federally regulated industries and the COVID-19 mandates.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I have to present is on behalf of Canadians who are concerned that certain charities could be targeted based on their views. The petitioners are calling on MPs to ensure that charities that hold views different from those of the government do not lose their charitable status.

PROTECTION OF HUMAN LIFE

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the final petition I have today is from Canadians from across the country. They are calling on the government to protect human life at every stage of human development. Petitioners are calling on the government to support measures that protect human life and, as they note, all human life should be protected from the moment human life begins, which is at conception.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today we have on the Hill with us Mr. Enes Kanter Freedom, who is an NBA player and a well-known human

Routine Proceedings

rights activist. In the process of welcoming him, I am pleased to present this first petition, which is calling on the House to formally recognize that Uighurs and other Turkic Muslims in China have been and are being subjected to an ongoing genocide.

Petitioners note the various forms in which this genocide is taking place, including forced sterilization, forced abortion and other acts of violence, such as arbitrary detention, separation of children from families, invasive surveillance, putting people in concentration camps and forced organ harvesting.

In addition to asking the government to recognize the Uighur genocide, petitioners want to see the government use the Justice for Victims of Corrupt Foreign Officials Act, the Magnitsky act, to sanction those responsible for the heinous crimes being committed against the Uighur people.

The second petition I am tabling is also in relation to Uighur human rights. In particular, it highlights the case of Mr. Huseyin Celil, who is a Canadian citizen of Uighur ethnic origin. He is currently detained in China. He faces arbitrary detention. He has been there for over a decade and a half. Petitioners were pleased to see the release of the two Michaels. They want to see the Government of Canada make similar efforts with respect to seeking the release of Mr. Celil, who is in a similar situation, facing ongoing arbitrary detention by the Chinese Communist Party.

In particular, the petitioners want the government to demand that the Chinese government recognize Mr. Celil's Canadian citizenship and provide him with consular and legal services in accordance with international law; formally state that the release of Mr. Celil from detainment and return to Canada is a priority for the Canadian government, of concern equal to the unjust detention of the two Michaels; appoint a special envoy to work on securing Mr. Celil's release; and seek the assistance of the Biden administration and other allies around the world in obtaining Mr. Celil's release.

TAXATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition that I am tabling is on an important domestic economic matter. It highlights how the government's system of carbon taxation and the GST being applied amounts to double taxation on essential goods and services and additional costs for consumers. Particularly at this time when so many Canadians are struggling with affordability challenges as a result of high gas prices, petitioners want to see the Government of Canada eliminate the GST on the federal carbon tax levies and other additional costs that the newly announced charges create.

S. O. 52

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the next petition I am tabling highlights the human rights abuses targeting Falun Gong practitioners in China. In particular, petitioners want to see the government apply sanctions to those involved in the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the last petition I will table is in support of the bill currently before the House on forced organ harvesting and trafficking. This bill has been adopted unanimously at second reading and is now before a committee of Parliament. Petitioners hope that this is the Parliament that finally successfully passes legislation to prohibit Canadian complicity in forced organ harvesting and trafficking.

* * *

• (1535)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

* * *

REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY DEBATE

IMPACT OF WAR IN UKRAINE ON GLOBAL FOOD SUPPLY

The Speaker: There is a request for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to request an emergency debate on the impacts of the war on Ukraine on the global food crisis. Over the weekend, Russia destroyed a major grain export terminal in Ukraine. This terminal plays a crucial role in international food security. The attack on this grain terminal is not only an attack on Ukraine, but it is an attack on millions of people around the world who are dependent on Ukrainian grain.

The war in Ukraine has exacerbated food insecurity that was already at record highs due to COVID-19 and climate change. Crop failures, food shortages and skyrocketing prices on basic supplies have led humanitarian and development organizations to sound the alarm. The World Food Programme has warned the war in Ukraine is disrupting the global wheat trade, impacting food prices and food security globally. Currently, half of the wheat that the World Food Programme needs is stuck inside silos and ships blocked in the port of Odessa, while millions of hungry people in places like Lebanon, Yemen, Ethiopia, Syria and Afghanistan are suffering the consequences of the blockade.

Just last week, The Globe and Mail reported that Canada has been asked to join a proposed effort to restart grain shipments from the port of Odessa. Parliamentarians should be debating this request with urgency.

I would like to suggest that the foreign affairs committee study this urgent issue. In fact, I know that my colleague, the MP for Montarville, has suggested such a study. Unfortunately, the Conservative foreign affairs critic, the MP for Wellington—Halton Hills, and the international development critic, the MP for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, have filibustered the foreign affairs committee for close to 18 hours. They have denied committee members the opportunity to show our solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

When as parliamentarians we are prevented from undertaking vital work within committee, it is urgent that the work be done within the House. This issue is too important. It affects too many people and it is too urgent to wait. The next G7 meeting will be held in Germany in only a few weeks' time and the NATO summit in Madrid will take place at the end of June. These are crucial meetings and the Government of Canada must ensure the impact of the war on Ukraine on the global food crisis is debated within the House.

I thank you for your consideration, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, although I am actually supportive of the idea behind this, I do want to have clarified if the member's inaccurately characterizing events at the foreign affairs committee is consistent with what is supposed to happen under the rubric of requests for emergency debate. The member made a number of comments that are just wholly inaccurate. Conservatives have sought to adjourn the existing debate at the foreign affairs meeting—

The Speaker: I am afraid we are getting into debate. What we are trying to determine is whether there is urgency for the House taking this into an emergency debate right now.

I will put that aside for now and we will go to the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, who has a point of order.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to put on the record my support for the proposal for an emergency debate from the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona and that the urgency is—

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: We are into debate again, so I am going to rule. Although this is an important issue, and I want to thank the hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona for her intervention, I am not satisfied that her request meets the requirements of the Standing Orders at this time.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2022, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-19, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on April 7, 2022 and other measures, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, *bentornato*. Welcome back. It is great to have you back in the chair.

When I left off, I was talking about a challenge that faces our Canadian economy and really puts all of our prosperity at risk, and that is our failure to be a leader in productivity across the world. That noted right-wing commentator, Bill Morneau, actually commented that we are, as he correctly points out, number 25 out of 36 countries in the OECD when it comes to productivity.

That might not mean a lot to Canadians sitting at home or that Canadian who is sitting at home watching CPAC today, but productivity has a tremendous impact on our lives. When we are less productive, that means with every stroke of a pen, we get paid less. That means with every swing of the hammer, we get paid less. With every wire that we fix and with every brick that we lay, Canadians are getting paid less because we are failing on the productivity network. It means there is less opportunity for our children, that there are fewer promotions, and that there are less opportunities for our businesses and many more failures.

While Canada is less productive than many of the G7 and G20 nations, like many other countries, and, in fact, probably more so, we have well-educated and motivated citizens that are ready and willing to work and to lead the world in productivity. The one differentiating factor that Canada has that is separating us from many other G7 countries is our government. Our government has extremely high rates of taxation and regulation that are limiting our ability to be competitive. We are failing as a country to lead the world in productivity because of a self-inflicted wound of excess government, excess taxation and excess regulation.

As we switch from productivity now to innovation, this is another challenge. We are currently sixth out of the G7 in innovation. Once again, we have an amazing populace, are blessed with many natural resources and have a great education system, but we are continuing to fail when it comes to innovation. We have a growing innovation culture out there, including many incubators, such as Venture13 in my own riding, which is doing a terrific job, but we have a challenge.

Once again, it goes back to the government. Our system of legislation and taxation is antiquated, uncompetitive and fails to promote innovation. Our legislative framework fails to protect and to promote the commercialization of intellectual property. Our taxation system fails to reward those who are taking risks with regard to innovation. Other countries around the world are renewing their innovation frameworks, because they know that the first to innovate will be the first to win in the global economy of the 21st century. Unfortunately, Canada is failing to keep pace.

Government Orders

The next area is admittedly more subjective. The human spirit is perhaps the most indomitable force in the universe. My father used to say to me, "If you believe you can, you are right, and if you believe you can't, you are also right." This is a country that built a railroad across mountains, over and past waterways in the 1800s, an engineering feat that would be impressive today, a feat of political will that would be impressive today, but for a new country starting out in the world, it was almost unthinkable.

We as a country need to focus again on accomplishing great things. We need to not be afraid to win but to be bold and brave and to go after that victory. We need to celebrate those who are winning, because when we undermine those achievers, we are undermining those who very much underpin our communities, our societies and our economies. We must celebrate our job creators, our successful business owners and, indeed, our innovators. As I said, when we demonize our achievers, we undermine those individuals and institutions who are the drivers of our shared prosperity.

While it is incredibly important to be equitable and to make sure there is a fair distribution of a society's wealth, we must not also lose sight of the fact that when we expand the pie, we help everyone, but when that pie shrinks, it is often the most vulnerable who suffer the most. We are a nation capable of great deeds. I believe that the 21st century can belong to Canada.

● (1540)

Our job as the official opposition is not just to criticize, so because time is brief, I will go through three quick proposals that could radically improve our country. First is a complete comprehensive review of the Income Tax Act. Second is a national economic development plan. Third is the construction of an energy corridor.

If we are able to harness all of the great individual wisdom and abilities in our country, there is no doubt we will have a successful next 100 years.

● (1545)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member spent some time talking about the importance of innovation, so I would think he would be more inclined to be sympathetic to supporting the budget. We have seen record amounts of money being allocated to things such as the research councils at the many different universities, which are there to encourage innovation. We have seen huge investments. We all recognize the importance of innovation, not just with respect to the public sector. There is also joint co-operation with many of our private industry stakeholders we have to incorporate, such as post-secondary institutions, along with private sector and public sector involvement.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on those three sectors coming together to ensure Canada does not fall behind on the issue of innovation.

Government Orders

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, that is the difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives. The Liberals measure success by the amount of money spent. The Conservatives measure it in results.

Clearly, we are losing when it comes to innovation and productivity. An expensive failure is still a failure.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his interesting speech. I really liked the part when he said that it is important to be ambitious. I think that is how he started his speech.

Maybe my colleague did not notice that in the recent budget, there was a line about infrastructure. For example, regarding infrastructure spending for which the money is often transferred to the provinces, they no longer have until March 31, 2025, to submit their plans. They now have until March 31, 2023. The government took away two years even though it had signed agreements with the provinces. There is Quebec's signature on one side and the federal government's signature on the other side. It is the same thing for the other provinces. Now we find out from a budget that the federal government is not going to honour those agreements.

What does that say about the government's ambition when it comes to the future of our provinces?

[English]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I want to say a quick word of thanks to all of the interpreters. They are doing an amazing job. I understand that CBC had a story about their contributions to the workplace, and I thank them for all that they do. They are doing great, but I did not quite catch all of that. However, I think I understood the basics of it.

We need to empower our provinces to be ambitious as the Liberal government continues to attempt to take more power and control from them. We need to empower our provinces, Quebec included, to be the best they can possibly be.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I have a question for him about productivity, since we cannot keep producing fossil fuel energy forever. An agreement was signed in Paris on protecting our planet.

Does my colleague agree with me that in order to boost innovation and productivity, the government should invest in workforce training so that people can get jobs in the energy sector of the future?

[English]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, this is part of what I am talking about when I say we need a national economic development plan. Part of that will be more traditionally Conservative ideas, such as reducing regulation and taxation, but part of it is also more traditionally the space of the NDP, I might say, which is funding the areas of education that are in demand. Right now we have a disconnect between the education system and what the private sector needs. We need to bring that together, so I would agree.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague and I served at the public accounts committee together for a while. The Auditor General concluded that the government is spending more money but getting less service for it. We saw it recently with the report tabled last week on services for veterans' disabilities.

I would like him to comment, from his time at public accounts, about the frustrations. It is one thing to spend money; it is another thing to manage it properly, which the government is not doing.

● (1550)

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Madam Speaker, I enjoyed serving with the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

I agree with what the Auditor General said. In my year and a half at the public accounts committee, I became increasingly frustrated that government departments, and indeed the Liberal government, were measuring success not on the results they achieved but on the money they spent. To repeat, an expensive failure is still a failure.

[Translation]

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always, it is a privilege to rise in the House on behalf of my constituents in Vaudreuil—Soulanges to speak to Bill C-19 concerning the 2022-23 federal budget tabled by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

This budget reflects the difficult times in which Canadians find themselves. It is a prudent, responsible and considered budget. We must invest in the future of this incredible country that we are fortunate to call home and in the well-being of the citizens and workers, and their families waiting at home. We must invest in the green transition and in the cleaner and more prosperous economy of the future.

This budget comes after two years of great upheaval and uncertainty both here in Canada and abroad. Since March 2020, we have worked relentlessly to help families, small businesses and seniors get by and get better and move forward together as a country despite the unprecedented challenges of this pandemic.

For the members of my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges and for individuals and families across Canada, this budget is the next step towards a better future in which more Canadians can realize their dream of owning a home, finding a job and living in an environment with better protection that will be enjoyed by future generations.

I would like to thank all those who made budget 2022 possible, especially the constituents I represent in my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges. Hundreds of them contributed to this budget by sharing their priorities with me by telephone, email or during meetings with my team and me. This budget is their budget, because it is based on the comments I have received to date, and these people see their contributions reflected in this document.

As the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance noted in her speech, “the strength of a country comes from the strength of its people”. Over the past two years, Canadians have proven that they are resilient.

[English]

Everyone deserves the security of a roof over their head, and since 2015, we have worked diligently and consistently to ensure that more Canadians have access to a safe and affordable place to call home. Through record investments in the national housing strategy, we are on track to deliver more than \$72 billion in financial support by 2027-28.

The magnitude of the challenges faced in the housing sector necessitate the record investments we are making, and I see and understand the importance of them in my community. In 2021, the median price of a single-family home in Vaudreuil—Soulanges was \$520,000, an increase of 25% within the span of a single year. Similar numbers reflect the challenges faced by those in my community who are in the rental market. This is why we have made housing a priority in this budget. In fact, it is the very first chapter of the budget.

In addition to the record investments in the national housing strategy, we are tackling this challenge on multiple fronts.

First, we are looking to double housing construction over the next decade through federal investments. Budget 2022 will provide \$1.5 billion over two years, starting in 2022-23, to extend the rapid housing initiative, representing thousands of new affordable housing units, of which at least 25% will focus on women's housing projects.

To ensure an efficient and rapid construction of more housing supply, we also need to address the systems that are preventing more homes from being built. Budget 2022 seeks \$4 billion to launch a new housing accelerator fund. With its flexible structure, it will be able to provide cities and communities with annual per-door incentives or upfront funding for municipal housing plans and delivery processes that fit their unique needs.

Another exciting initiative is the introduction of the multi-generational home renovation tax credit. This will provide up to \$7,500 in support for constructing a secondary suite for a senior or an adult with a disability, starting in 2023, making it easier for members of my community, who wish to do so, to conduct the necessary work to welcome their aging parent or parents into their home.

The second pillar of our housing strategy focuses on savings. We know that for far too many Canadians, especially young Canadians, owning a home has become seemingly out of reach. To facilitate their entry into the market, we are introducing a tax-free first home savings account that will allow first-time home buyers to save up

Government Orders

to \$40,000. Contributions would be tax-deductible and withdrawals to purchase a first home would be non-taxable.

● (1555)

On top of this, we are seeking to double the first-time homebuyers' tax credit amount to \$10,000. This would provide up to \$1,500 more in direct support to homebuyers, applying to homes purchased on or after January 21, 2022.

Finally, we are ensuring Canadians are front and centre in their own market. This means implementing fair and full tax measures on the profits gathered from flipping properties and banning foreign investments for a predetermined period of time.

[Translation]

In my community, Vaudreuil—Soulanges, we are big supporters of both a healthy economy and a prosperous environment. I am extremely proud of the work we have done to enhance environmental protection measures and of the way our government continues to fight climate change.

Budget 2022 follows up on the promise we made to Canadians to build a greener Canada. We have made great strides, in particular in the transportation sector, which accounts for just under 25% of our greenhouse gas emissions. Bold measures include sales obligations to ensure that at least 20% of new vehicles sold will be zero-emission vehicles by 2026, at least 60% by 2030 and 100% by 2035.

Planning for this transition is important, but it is even more important for us to ensure that it happens by investing in the zero-emission vehicle industry to make vehicles more affordable and accessible. To do so, we allocated an additional \$1.7 billion in budget 2022 to extend the incentives for zero-emission vehicles program until March 2025 and to help build the plants and infrastructure these vehicles will require.

Canadians want to continue being at the centre of the fight against climate change. Our government is doing just that by providing more funding for programs like the federal incentives for zero-emission vehicles program. We are helping Canadians reach our net-zero target by 2050.

*Government Orders**[English]*

Finally, and I am quite encouraged by this, we are taking even more actions to eliminate plastic waste. I had the honour of working alongside the former minister of environment, the member of Parliament for North Vancouver, as his parliamentary secretary to put forward a ban on certain harmful single-use plastics in 2021. Budget 2022 continues on this legacy by investing \$183.1 million over five years to continue to reduce plastic waste and increase plastic circularity.

Our actions, past, present and future, will dictate the outcome of our planet and the countless millions of species all around the world we share this beautiful planet's ecosystem with. This is not the time to be idle or complacent. It is a time to be purposeful, and the circumstances demand nothing less.

Finally, I want to speak briefly to budget 2022's commitment to Canadian families. My community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges is one of the fastest-growing in the country, and most of that growth is being fuelled by young families.

[Translation]

That is why I am extremely proud of budget 2022's ongoing commitment to them in two key areas.

First, as all members of the House will recall, our Liberal government made a historic, transformative \$30-billion investment over five years for affordable child care. This additional support will help create thousands of new affordable child care spaces, and the qualified early childhood educators we so desperately need will be hired.

Access to high-quality care is wonderful for our children, and making it affordable gives moms and dads equal access to the job market if they want it.

[English]

For those reasons and so many more, including the incredible initiative we have put forward to provide all Canadians with dental care within the next several years, on behalf of my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges, I wholeheartedly support the adoption of Bill C-19, and I encourage all fellow members of the House to support it alongside me.

• (1600)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, my colleague from Vaudreuil—Soulanges talked about electric vehicles and targets.

The problem at this point is that automakers are exerting a lot of pressure by saying they cannot hit those targets. That is funny because, in places like Europe, the United States, Quebec and British Columbia, which have zero-emission laws, automakers have no choice but to build them. They seem capable of making them wherever there are zero-emission laws.

Does my colleague agree with me on that? This is something that the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development studied last year, a federal zero-emission law that forces automakers to manufacture electric cars.

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, who has been working very closely with me and several other MPs on this file.

I agree with her. We must always do more. We have to invest in charging stations. We have to subsidize electric vehicles. We have to create the infrastructure to support the transition to electric vehicles. We also have to pass a bill that forces electric vehicle makers to produce guaranteed minimums every year.

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the big issues we talk about in the budget, as I am hearing, is gas prices. The member's riding is just on the other side of the provincial border, across from mine in eastern Ontario, and I know that commuters are having a very difficult time with rising gas prices.

Can the member confirm that the budget reaffirms the commitment to a carbon tax that adds to the cost of fuel every single year for the foreseeable future? Would he not agree with me that perhaps a gas tax relief holiday on the GST and the carbon tax would keep more money in people's pockets? As the cost of living, groceries and everything goes up, would that not be the better way to help the constituents in his riding?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, the first thing I would say, from living in Quebec, is that we have had a price on carbon pollution for over a decade. It has existed for a very long time and has helped Quebecers like me make the transition to electric vehicles. I now own one.

With regard to the affordability of life, I am very proud of the initiatives we put forward to help families get by. The Canada child benefit has been a game-changer. Hundreds of thousands of children have been lifted out of poverty, making life more affordable. It is indexed to inflation so that as the cost of goods goes up, these families will receive more. We cut taxes for middle-class families too, which was the very first thing we did when we came into power, putting hundreds of dollars more into the pockets of families, while increasing taxes on the richest 1%, those who do not need help.

We are continually looking for ways to make life more affordable for families and we are going to deliver on that.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, we were talking about sustainable transportation, and I heard the member's remarks about zero-emission vehicles. One thing that the Liberals promised during the election was to create incentives for the purchase of second-hand zero-emission vehicles so that the benefits, such as the operating cost savings, can be experienced by lower-income folks who might struggle with the upfront cost of purchasing the vehicles. However, we do not see anything in the budget to that effect and have not seen any action on the creation of those specific incentives.

Could the member perhaps tell the House when we can expect to see incentives for second-hand zero-emission vehicles?

Mr. Peter Schiefke: Madam Speaker, I would very much like to see that in a future budget. I just sold one of my electric vehicles and would have probably benefited from such an initiative.

However, I will say that I have the utmost confidence in the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Environment to come together and work out the priorities. We have invested tens of billions of dollars in green public transportation. We have invested billions of dollars in transitioning our buses to electric. I believe the Speaker's riding has benefited from this and I am hopeful that mine will as well. We have also invested hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies for electric vehicles and have invested billions of dollars in a national infrastructure program to provide more charging stations.

Those are the priorities that the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Environment have put forward now, and I am hopeful that I will see in a future budget the rebates and incentives for the sale of second-hand electric vehicles.

• (1605)

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is nice to be here in the House of Commons. It is also nice to hear about all of these electric vehicles.

The funny thing is that in my constituency, I think we have two places to plug in, maybe three, and my constituency is the size of Prince Edward Island times four. Another interesting fact about electric cars is that, for anybody who is ordering one, it takes about 20 months to get it, and then there is no place to plug it in, so it is a really great option if one lives in rural Canada.

I rise today to speak to the difficult times Canadians are having, which includes the constituents in my home electoral district of Miramichi—Grand Lake. Food, fuel and every aspect of their daily lives are becoming unaffordable, yet the government puts out a budget that would only exacerbate an already bad situation.

I recall that back in September of last year, the government was blaming inflation predominantly on the global pandemic. Sometimes inflation would be blamed on other global phenomena. Recently, the blame seems more pointed towards the war in Ukraine. There is lots of blame to go around, although the war has been with us only for a short time compared to the pandemic itself. Nobody is looking in the mirror. No members on the government side of the floor are willing to look at themselves to see how they could have been adding to this inflation. The pandemic was primarily blamed for supply chain issues, shortages and inflation, and now the war is

Government Orders

blamed for those. All the while, economists' warnings fell on deaf ears with the government opposite in the House.

Now, with the most recent budget, the government is yet again asleep at the wheel, with a pile of new spending and no revenue to compensate for that. The ill-conceived attempts at revenue generation, like the luxury tax and the excise tax, only serve to devastate the very industries and the very sectors being targeted, causing reduced economic development and job losses.

Claiming that inflation is a global phenomenon is truly a cop-out, because we had high inflation long before the war in Ukraine, and it is not all just supply-side issues or caused by the pandemic. The cause of high inflation is monetary, and we know that the current government does not have a monetary policy. It does not even plan for it. Liberals do not agree with it, do not support it, and rarely speak of it, but the cause of high inflation, as we know, continues to be monetary, plain and simple. The government is printing more and more money, driving up the cost of everything. If we couple that with large fiscal deficits, which again get monetized by the central bank, the cash gets shoved out into the system, and what do we have? We have more inflation, more Liberal-induced inflation.

To most Canadians, it seems like there is a level of complacency in the government with respect to inflation. The government seems oblivious to the struggles of average Canadians, yet continuously regurgitates all that it is doing to make Canadians' lives more affordable. All the while, it is Canadian citizens making the hard choices between nutritious food in the fridge and gas in their cars to get to work with.

Where I live, there are not a lot of electric cars, and the folks who want them, God love them, are waiting a long period of time to get the cars. Then, when they get them, there is no place to plug them in. It is a great idea maybe, and I can imagine that a couple of decades down the road we will all be driving electric cars, but we are nowhere near that level in this country, so it borders on outright hypocrisy that, every day, we have to learn about this agenda, which is not working for my riding. It is not because I am a Conservative member of the House. It is because I live in an area that does not support this concept. It will take many years to have the infrastructure to support such a concept.

Government Orders

The government's failed economic policy further drives the divide between the rural and the urban. I witness this in Miramichi—Grand Lake, which, as I said, is very rural. I think my riding is a couple of times the size of P.E.I. It could be three or four times the size, but I usually say it is four, because it is quite a lengthy area to drive around on the weekend. Most people travel a long distance to their jobs, which takes costly fuel, and that fuel is hurting their pocketbooks badly now. It is so bad that they are making choices about whether they can keep their children in sports, which creates a healthy lifestyle, or whether they can take a family vacation, or worse yet, whether the family can eat healthy food or not.

● (1610)

These are not the choices that any government should want Canadian citizens to make, but a Liberal member opposite said the high gas prices are positive as more people will buy an electric car or ride a bicycle. Wow. That has to be the statement of the century. Maybe that member should come to Miramichi—Grand Lake and bike some of the distances that people must drive to work. Maybe that member could take a bike from Escuminac to McGivney or from Minto over to Sunny Corner or from Neguac up to Boiestown, and enjoy that ride. It is definitely going to take the member a little while to get there. Trust me when I say that the member had better be in good shape, because I doubt he will make the distance needed, especially on a bicycle.

To the member's point on electric cars, as I said earlier, we have very few options for plugging in electric cars. There is one in Doaktown at Tim Hortons. There is one at the McDonald's parking lot in Douglastown. I believe there is one more, although the location is eluding me. I doubt we would have half a dozen options within a driving radius of five or six hours, maybe more. I am trying to picture it. There are three in my head. Could we have a few more outside of that? It is possible. However, charging locations for the public are not great options where I live, or trying to afford an electric car. In my riding, in Northumberland County, for the most part the median income is \$34,500 per year. With the cost of electric vehicles, even with subsidies, they remain out of reach for most people.

Inflation is one thing. If we add it to the carbon tax, we have the perfect storm to punish Canadians for just trying to live, work and look after their family. The families that I know really cannot make ends meet. Families on fixed incomes or low incomes simply cannot pay their rent or buy food, so we are actually in a real crisis in this country. Even as an opposition member, I am still surprised and very much disappointed that the government does not seem to be more concerned about this and does not immediately move to suspend the carbon tax to give Canadians relief at the pumps. Suspending the carbon tax would give relief across the board and reduce fuel prices for everyone, including transportation costs. We would see the reduction in the costs of goods and services and the reduction in the cost of food.

I feel the government is doubling down on the tax right now. Considering that the Liberals have not met any climate change emission targets, doing so shows not only that they are out of touch with their own project, but that they are out of touch with Canadians. Hitting an emission target is something they should have

achieved if the country is going to pay this much for it when nobody can afford it.

I wanted to be a member Parliament to help the people in Miramichi—Grand Lake. It is my belief that each member in this House is here to do the same. Therefore, I call on all members, including those in the sitting government, to remember why they are here and put partisanship and ideologies aside. There are big differences between rural and urban in this country. We have to recognize those differences, regardless of who is in power, and fight to make the changes urgently needed to help Canadians today. The future of the country depends on it.

I will not be supporting the budget.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member spent a great deal of his time talking about inflation, but there is something he does not tell people who might be following the debate. Yes, we do have inflation, and no one is denying that, but what the Conservatives fail to say is that we need to compare Canada's inflation to what is happening around the world. The pandemic and the war that is taking place in Europe are very real. Inflation is not affecting only Canada; it is affecting the world. In fact, if we compare Canada's inflation rate to that of other countries, whether the United States or the average of the European Union, Canada is doing reasonably well. Ours is actually lower than theirs.

Yes, we need to look at policies, including for our seniors. That is one of the reasons why there is a 10% increase for OAS for people over the age of 75. Government is taking action. The child care program is reducing costs, which enables more people to get engaged. I wonder if the member can provide his thoughts as to why the Conservatives put a spin that tries to—

● (1615)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to give the hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake the opportunity to answer.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, what the member opposite fails to realize is that when the government stalls an offshore oil project in Newfoundland, the third-largest oil reserve in the country, it is actually trying to stifle the very energy sector that fuels the entirety of the country.

The problem here is that the Liberals are so out of touch with the rest of Canada. They drank so much Kool-Aid that they believe their own bullet points now. That is part of the problem. We have inflation in this country because they printed too much money and spent too much money. They did not develop energy at the rate they should have. They left immigrants trying to get in here for months on end.

They have literally ruined this country. Everybody in rural Canada knows it, everybody on this side of the floor knows it, and even their constituents know it.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, since my colleague spoke about electric cars, I will jump in on the topic as well.

When he says that there is a lack of vehicles, he is right. There are none in Canada. Strangely enough, inventory exists everywhere else. I was in Sweden last week, and 50% of the new vehicles sold there are electric. Sweden has vehicles, yet they are not available here. Fortunately, we heard earlier that the federal government is going to pass a federal law to pressure manufacturers. That is good news.

He says there are no charging stations, which brings us to the question of the chicken or the egg. We need charging stations to use electric cars, but to buy electric cars, we need to have charging stations. Interestingly enough, in Quebec, it is now possible to drive around the province, from the Gaspé to the north shore, in a fully electric car, with no concerns.

He thinks they are too expensive. However, the top sellers right now are Ford F-150s and Dodge RAMs, in the compact, light-duty truck category, which cost about \$40,000. That is about the same price as an electric car. These vehicles, however, use gasoline, which, by the way, is very expensive these days.

I would like to ask my colleague what he would do to start. Nothing? What would he have put in the budget? Would he have included something for electric cars?

[English]

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, as I said, I am pretty certain that driving an electric car will be a good idea in the future, deep into the future. I heard, not too long ago, that a Tesla car probably takes more fossil fuels to build than the Hyundai I drive in my riding.

Of course, we have to protect the environment, but we still have to develop our industries. If we are incentivizing Canadians to buy vehicles that they have no capability to receive or to plug in, then what is the point of it? What about all the rural areas that do not have that capability? What is the government saying to the people in my riding? What are they supposed to do? We have rural, rugged terrain and rural people travelling long distances on bad roads with no places to plug in. There is no way to sell that product.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member talked a lot about the idea of revenue versus spending. We have seen the Conservative Party vote against all of the common-sense tax reform efforts that we have brought forward. We have seen them vote for 2% spending for defence spending, for NATO.

I would love to hear just one idea from the member on a revenue stream that the Conservatives are supportive of, that they would be looking at to deal with the revenue side of our equation.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I am really thankful that it was an NDP member who asked this great question. The NDP

Government Orders

members were busy selling their soul to join the Liberal Party of Canada. Here are some examples: offshore oil in Newfoundland, build pipelines, develop gas, develop oil, sell gas to the west, and cut Putin off from selling his energy over to the western countries. Canada would make more money and eventually the price of gas would go down—

• (1620)

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

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to contribute to today's debate on Bill C-19, the budget implementation act, and to highlight some of the measures in budget 2022 that contribute to a healthy environment.

We know that to protect our planet and to build a stronger economy, we must do even more on climate action. Canada can be in the vanguard and on the leading edge, or we can be left behind. That is, of course, no choice at all, which is why our government is investing urgently in this transition.

Achieving net zero is not going to be easy. That is for sure. It will require all of us, at every level and across every industry. Families and members of the general public are going to have to shift our lifestyles, and that is going to be painful at times.

Our plan is driven by our national price on pollution, which is the smartest and most effective incentive for climate action. In budget 2022, we also have the Canada growth fund, which I am very excited about because it will attract billions of dollars in private capital. We need to transform our economy at speed and at the scale we truly need to meet the magnitude of the challenge of climate change.

For our children, this will mean cleaner air and cleaner water for tomorrow, and it will mean good jobs for Canadians today and into the future.

We know pollution has a cost and that the dangers of climate change are real. Despite what the Conservatives may tell us, climate change is real. Putting a price on carbon pollution is the most effective and efficient way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with climate change. We have seen examples of it in other countries around the world, such as Sweden, the U.K., Denmark, Finland, Norway, Switzerland, Portugal, Slovenia, France, Japan, Chile and more.

That is why the government introduced a price on carbon pollution in 2019: to protect Canadians from the dangers and costs presented by climate change, to ensure that Canada continues to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions and to put us on a path to reach net-zero emissions by 2050.

Under the federal carbon pollution pricing system, the government applies a price on pollution in jurisdictions that request the federal system and in jurisdictions that do not have a system of their own that meets the federal standard, those being Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. All carbon pollution pricing proceeds—and I do mean all—are returned to the jurisdictions of origin.

Government Orders

In the provinces where the federal fuel charge applies, the federal government returns approximately 90% of the direct proceeds from the federal fuel charge to residents of those provinces through the climate action incentive payments and the other 10% goes to projects to reduce GHG emissions, so despite what the Conservatives keep telling the House, which is that the government is somehow profiteering off the carbon price, in fact it is not true, since 90% goes back to families and households and the other 10% is invested into projects.

Today's legislation, the budget implementation act, proposes to change the delivery of the CAI payments, the climate action incentive payments, from a refundable credit claimed annually on personal income tax returns to quarterly payments made through the benefits system. I supported this change wholeheartedly and I was very glad to see it in the budget implementation act.

For Canadians, this would mean cheques would be delivered more frequently. Payments would start in July 2022—around July 15, in fact—with a double-up payment. This payment would return proceeds from the first two quarters of the 2022-23 fuel charge year and then follow on a quarterly basis after that. Going forward, payments would be received before families had to pay for the fuel charge.

I also want to mention the rate reduction for zero-emission technology manufacturers.

Technology, globalization and a historic effort to fight climate change are also creating new industries and new jobs. It is quite obvious to see how the global economy is changing. We can be leaders in the economy of today and tomorrow, and Canadians can benefit from the good jobs and economic growth that will come with it, but to be leaders in tomorrow's economy, we need to make smart decisions today. We need to attract more investment in the industries that are creating good middle-class jobs for Canadians. We need to make our economy more innovative and more productive, and we need to make it easier for businesses, big and small, to invest, grow and create jobs in Canada, while also reducing their emissions.

• (1625)

Canada is already home to some of the fastest-growing markets for high-tech jobs in North America. Toronto, not Silicon Valley, led high-tech job growth from 2019 into 2020, and Vancouver outpaced New York City.

To maintain that growth and make Canada a more attractive destination for business investment in the clean technology sector, Bill C-19 proposes to reduce by 50% the general corporate and small business income tax rates for businesses that manufacture zero-emission technologies. That is significant.

Specifically, taxpayers would be able to apply reduced tax rates on income from specified zero-emission technology manufacturing or processing activities. It would be 7.5% where that income would otherwise be taxed at the 15% general corporate tax rate and 4.5% where that income would otherwise be taxed at the 9% small business tax rate.

For example, eligible zero-emission technology manufacturing would include manufacturing of wind turbines, solar panels, equipment used in hydroelectric facilities, geothermal energy systems, zero-emission vehicles, electric vehicle charging systems and energy storage equipment.

It would also include the production of biofuels from waste and the production of hydrogen by electrolysis of water. The reduced tax rates would apply to taxation years that begin after 2021 and would be gradually phased out, starting in taxation years that begin in 2029 and being fully phased out for taxation years that begin after 2031.

This proposed rate reduction should encourage businesses to make short- and medium-term investments in the manufacturing of zero-emission technologies and help Canada reach net zero by 2050.

Building on investments to encourage businesses to create clean technology, Bill C-19 would also make it easier and more affordable for Canadians and Canadian businesses to adopt clean technologies.

Canada's capital cost allowance, the CCA system, determines the deductions that a business may claim each year for income tax purposes in respect of the capital cost of its depreciable property. With some exceptions, depreciable property is divided into CCA classes, and a CCA rate for each class of property is prescribed in Schedule II to the Income Tax Regulations. Accelerated CCA rates of 30% and 50% are available for investments in specified clean energy generation and energy conservation equipment. Further, such investments are currently eligible for immediate expensing.

Today's legislation expands the list of eligible equipment to include equipment used in pumped hydroelectric energy storage, renewable fuel production, hydrogen production by electrolysis of water and hydrogen refuelling. The measure would apply to equipment that was acquired and became available for use on or after April 19, 2021.

Expanding the CCA will encourage investment in a wider array of clean technologies that can reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and support reaching Canada's 2030 target and net-zero emissions by 2050.

In addition to this, Canada's budget 2022 makes many other suggestions and proposes to make strategic investments to help Canadians switch to zero-emission vehicles by making them more affordable. First, there is a new purchase incentive that proposes \$1.7 billion over five years to extend the incentives for zero-emission vehicles program until March 2025. It will ensure the eligibility would be broadened to support the purchase of more vehicles, including vans, trucks and SUVs.

We have also allocated \$500 million to charging infrastructure through the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and \$400 million over five years through Natural Resources Canada for charging infrastructure in suburban and remote communities as well.

We have also made strategic investments that are left over from budget 2021 that are still rolling out to help transform and decarbonize our industries. Many of those investments have helped with the manufacturing of electric vehicles here in Canada.

I would note one in Oshawa, just next door to my riding. GM Canada has announced a massive transformation that will use \$259 million from the federal government to create a \$2-billion transformation to help produce electric vehicles here in Canada. That will increase supply. I have heard other members talk about how they have been waiting a while for their electric vehicle.

• (1630)

These many investments are helping us fight climate change while building a stronger economy, which is 100% the way forward, and I am sure that they will also help to alleviate the pressures on Canadians today with the cost of living increases that we have seen.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member seems like quite a decent fellow, but I will just say that his comments and the Liberals are just out of touch.

His comment was that we would have to shift our lifestyle and that it is going to be painful. Right now in the Vancouver area, gas is \$2.35 a litre. It is 40% to 50% higher than it is right across the line in the United States. People are struggling. They are struggling with making ends meet. They are struggling at the pump.

Is the hon. member quite fine with the pain that Canadians are feeling at the grocery stores and at the gas pump from the Liberals' initiatives, including the carbon tax?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite both for acknowledging that I am a decent person and also for his good question. I do appreciate it.

I would say that the pains that we are experiencing today are the direct result of about 30 years or more of inaction when it came to climate change. We have known that this was coming. It has gotten so bad that it is reaching our doorsteps today, and our government has a comprehensive plan for tackling climate change while building a stronger economy and making life more affordable for Canadians. There will be short-term pains, but there will be long-term gains, and that is what we are working toward: a long-term vision that sees a cleaner future for our children and grandchildren.

Government Orders

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

I want to pick up on something he said. To admit that we have seen 30 years of climate inaction is to admit that this government is responsible for a large part of that. I have a question that I think deserves very clear answers.

We have heard a lot about investing in the transition, but the latest report from the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development was quite critical of the transition. The commissioner said that “the federal government was not prepared to support a just transition to a low-carbon economy”. He also said that the government was not up to the task of ensuring a fair transition for workers, citing the coal industry in particular.

If they close one door, they have to open another, unless of course, they do not really plan on closing the first door. That is my question.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I appreciated the work that the hon. member and I had the opportunity to do together in the last Parliament when we were on the same committee for a period of time.

I think that a just transition and having equitable opportunities for workers who are transitioning from one part of the economy to another and supporting their re-skilling and transition to the new clean technology industries is vital.

We are leveraging private capital. We put a price on pollution. We are cutting taxes on clean tech. We have helped businesses switch to zero-emission vehicles. We have changed the capital cost allowance to increase investment. We are making it easier to drive a zero-emission vehicle. We are supporting sustainable agriculture. We are investing in nature-based solutions. We are greening procurement and we are building a cleaner electricity grid. I do not know how many more fronts we could fight climate change on.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know the hon. member spoke about how well his government is doing fighting the climate emergency. However, this view certainly has not been shared by environmental groups, which have called the Liberal climate plan magical thinking. For example, Keith Brooks indicated that our pledge in terms of Canada “is weaker than most major European pledges, and weaker than that of the U.S.”.

This is from Keith Brooks, who is responsible for Environmental Defence programs. He went on to say that “Canada’s Emissions Reduction Plan is the most detailed climate plan this country has ever had, and yet it indulges in magical thinking in proposing that oil production can increase”—

Government Orders

● (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member to give the member for Whitby an opportunity to answer.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member opposite always asks good questions. I also appreciate the work of Environmental Defence, which is an organization that I had the opportunity to work with many years ago. It does incredible work and is constantly providing a critical edge to the work of our government.

No doubt, we can constantly increase our ambition, but I believe that we have the most comprehensive climate action plan that Canada has ever seen. I am happy that we are moving forward aggressively on many different fronts to fight climate change and build a stronger economy. That is what we need to do. It is the task ahead of us, and we are making those—

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

It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Brantford—Brant, Public Safety; and the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock, Foreign Affairs.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this afternoon's debate on Bill C-19, which affects public finances, of course. I will have the opportunity to come back to that in a few seconds.

Today being June 6, I would like to begin by honouring the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944, to liberate all of humanity from the Nazi menace. We owe them our eternal gratitude.

Let us turn to the topic that has been affecting all Canadians for far too long now: inflation. Unfortunately, this problem will not go away overnight. Inflation is affecting everyone to varying degrees, from humble workers to retirees, students and business people. Unfortunately, as economic studies from top universities have found, it is having more of an impact on the least fortunate citizens.

Inflation is currently hovering around 8% in Canada. We would have to go back 30 years to find such a high inflation rate. As I was saying earlier, it is the least fortunate citizens who are the primary victims. No one will accuse members of the House of being the least fortunate, to say the least, considering how much we earn a year. If anyone has a problem with that, they should know that there will be 338 positions available in three years. We have to keep the least fortunate citizens in mind, and the government has a duty and a responsibility to do something to soften the blow for many Canadians and Canadian families.

The member for Mégantic—L'Érable, the deputy leader of the official opposition, kicked off today's question period brilliantly with the sad fact that according to media reports, 20% of families have chosen to eat less in order to save money because of inflation. This is a G7 country with an abundance of natural resources ready to be developed wisely. We also have an active, intelligent, articu-

late and healthy population that should be able to curb this inflation. Unfortunately, we are living in the shadow of this government, which is slow to act and curb inflation.

Let us not forget that this government got elected in 2015 by saying it would run three small deficits and achieve a zero deficit by 2019. However, during its first mandate, each deficit was more staggering than the last. Then the pandemic started, and it was party time. The chequebook was wide open, and no one was paying attention to how much was being spent.

Why am I bringing this up? It is because, in times of economic prosperity like we experienced in 2015, when the budget is balanced, it is the perfect time to set aside any surplus. Canada was in an enviable position. We recovered from the global crisis of 2008, which was the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression, better and faster than any other G7 country. Our country had the best debt-to-GDP ratio because our economy was strong.

The Liberals were elected because they promised to run small deficits, but their deficits were massive. Now we are paying the price. When the government spends freely and operates at a deficit, sooner or later, the piper must be paid. The government injected too much money into the economy, and that sowed the seeds of inflation.

When the pandemic struck, we all understood that extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. It was a crisis, and we agreed with providing immediate help, lots of help, just like every other country. Nevertheless, we were aware that, when a government prints a lot of money, that money has to be paid back eventually.

That is why we constantly reminded the government that what it needed to do was help business owners, businesses and especially families and workers, but that it also had to control spending. That is not even close to what happened. Two years ago, during the first summer of the pandemic, we sounded the alarm about the fact that too much money was being given to people who could have worked. People got \$2,000 a month to stay home and do nothing rather than work.

● (1640)

During the summer, hardly a day went by when I was not hassled, and rightly so, by entrepreneurs, restaurant owners and people who needed workers, but who were told by young people in their twenties that they had enjoyed working from home the previous summer and did not see why they should go back to work this time when they could get \$2,000 and still stay at home.

When a government spends too much money, sooner or later it is sowing the seeds of inflation. Now we are paying the price. When the first seeds began to grow in this inflationary soil, we were the first to sound the alarm a year ago. However, the government did not listen to us, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance took far too soft a tone, saying that it was temporary and everything would be okay. Even U.S. President Joe Biden has admitted that he was not quick enough to curb inflation when the first signs appeared. Now Canada is paying the price.

Was anyone surprised when, in the midst of the fourth wave of the pandemic, in the middle of an election that Prime Minister had said he would not call, he announced that he did not think about monetary policy?

I understand that each of us has our own area of expertise. Even though a prime minister may not necessarily be an expert in every field, he should at least be interested in everything. We cannot help but notice that the Prime Minister's interest was not where we needed it to be today.

One of the factors contributing to the brutal rise in inflation is the price of gas. It affects everyone. We need to stop thinking of gas purely as something we put in cars. It is much more than that. Every time we need food, which is an essential good if ever there was one, it does not fall from the sky. Someone grew the plant or fed the animal that ends up on our plate. Genies do not exist. We cannot simply blink our eyes and fold our arms and have food appear. Someone, somewhere had to transport it, probably in a gas-powered vehicle. That is today's reality when it comes to the price of gas.

I know that some people are very keen environmentalists, and I commend them for it and have no problem with that. However, not everyone can get around by only using public transit. As my colleague said so well earlier, there are regions where there is no public transit. If people want to get from point A to point B, they have to go by car, which might very well consume gas. This has consequences for everyone.

A week ago, this government's former finance minister, the Hon. Bill Morneau, took an indirect shot at his former colleagues when he stated that he was worried about the economy. He believes that the future of the economy is worse now than it was in 2015. This is fitting, because we thought the same thing when he was the finance minister.

He believes that the current government has no long-term vision for Canada's economy and is more interested in sharing wealth than acquiring it. Everyone agrees with sharing wealth, provided there is some. The more we have, the better, because we will be able to distribute more.

It was fitting that the former Liberal finance minister said that, because that is essentially what we were saying when he was minister. I had the great privilege of being his counterpart as my party's shadow minister for finance under our former leader, the Hon. Rona Ambrose. I touched on how a Bay Street fat cat came to invest in the House of Commons, which I would consider a positive for Canada as a whole, had he proposed the kinds of measures that made him successful on Bay Street, but he did not. To make matters

even worse, Mr. Morneau said that Canada's lack of competitiveness was setting us up for difficult decisions in the future.

Before I take questions from my colleagues, I want to officially say that Canada's number one priority right now is inflation. The best way that the government can deal with inflation is to limit spending. It must also reduce taxes, not increase them.

• (1645)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the former minister of finance also said that it was not very advisable for the member for Carleton, the wannabe leader of the Conservative Party, to be critical of the Bank of Canada and the Governor of the Bank of Canada. Even some of his caucus colleagues said this, even though one of them received a demotion for speaking out against the member for Carleton's policies on the Bank of Canada.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on that. I realize he could be putting his political future in jeopardy if he says the wrong thing, but does he not agree with the member for Abbotsford that maybe the Conservatives should be a bit more considerate in their criticisms of the Bank of Canada and the bank's governor?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would like to remind the hon. members that partisan politics are not the business of the House.

The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, with respect, my future is not in the hands of my colleague from Winnipeg North, nor in those of any member of the House or the former premier of Quebec. My future is in the hands of the people of Louis-Saint-Laurent, and I want them to decide what they want. I am pleased to serve them if they want me to, but this is not my choice; it is their choice.

Speaking of the Governor of the Bank of Canada, I am quite sure that the hon. member will remember well that his former leader, the Right Hon. Jean Chrétien, was very severe and very tough on the governor at the time.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to my colleague's speech. Earlier, he heard me put a question to one of his colleagues about what I think is a very important topic, a major detail, in the budget implementation bill.

The Government of Quebec was allocated \$7 billion fund for infrastructure, and it had three years to submit projects. Now it has less than a year left, just 10 months, and \$4 billion of the \$7 billion could be in jeopardy because of this recent decision.

Government Orders

I have not heard the Conservatives talk about this, which is unfortunate. I do not think that the federal government is a reliable partner to Quebec if it is going to unilaterally break bilateral agreements. I would like to hear what my colleague, the ultra-federalist, thinks about that.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, my colleague need not be so effusive in his praise. I do not have all those qualities, as he so aptly put it earlier when he used the word “ultra”. The point being raised by the hon. member, whom I imagine is an ultra-sovereignist, is interesting.

This government was elected in 2015 and promised to create wealth by making significant investments in infrastructure, which took years. Now that it is happening, the government is not living up to its agreements. It is a sensitive topic.

From a political perspective, I would remind the House and my hon. colleague that in 1983 a provincial government that committed to giving certain amounts of money to its public servants unfortunately reneged on its promise and paid a high price.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the constituents of Louis-Saint-Laurent for their choice of MP. He is brilliant.

We heard from the Standing Committee on Finance that the government was going to make major changes to the Competition Act. Can the member explain the perspective of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology? This is important to many Canadian businesses.

• (1650)

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating my colleague from British Columbia on his appointment as our finance critic.

I also want to commend him on the quality of his French. I am sure that all his friends in Quebec are thrilled to see that when someone puts in the necessary effort, they can speak more than respectable French. I would like to thank him and congratulate him from the bottom of my heart.

It is clear to us Conservatives that industry is the backbone of wealth creation in Canada, and everything must be done to encourage it.

[English]

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to contribute to the debate on Bill C-19, the budget implementation bill, and to highlight some of the measures in budget 2022 that would build on the workforce that Canada needs.

The past two years have created an enormous stress on our economy, but workers in Canada have shown remarkable resilience. We have seen Canadians pivot to working from home while juggling child care. We have seen them restructure entire businesses to manufacture personal protective equipment, and we have witnessed the strength of Canadians who headed to their frontline jobs in the middle of a lockdown.

The determination and ingenuity of Canada’s workforce has kept our economy moving during an unprecedented and challenging time. Since the start of the pandemic, the federal government has introduced significant economic supports to help them through. Those investments worked. Canada’s economy has recovered 115% of the jobs lost at the outset of the pandemic.

Job creation is remarkably strong, and even our hardest-hit sectors are starting to get back up and running. However, this strong recovery is posing its own challenges, as some businesses are struggling to find workers. At the same time, we know that a strong and prosperous economy requires a diverse, talented and consistently growing workforce. However, too many Canadians are facing barriers to finding meaningful and well-paid work. This includes women with young children, new graduates, newcomers, Black and racialized Canadians, indigenous peoples, and persons with disabilities.

With budget 2022, our government is proposing important measures that will help address those issues and meet the needs of our workers, businesses and the Canadian economy so we can keep growing stronger for years to come.

Structural shifts in the global economy will require some workers in some sectors across Canada to develop new skills and adjust the way they work. The transition to a new career can be a difficult and stressful time. As our economy changes, Canada’s jobs and skills plan must be tailored to the needs of those workers to help them to meet the needs of growing businesses and different sectors.

In recent years, the federal government has made significant investments to give Canadians the skills they need to succeed in an evolving economy and connect workers to jobs. The measures in Bill C-19, the budget implementation bill, would build on these past investments. These measures include working with provincial and territorial partners on improving how skills training could be provided.

Canada is growing, and that means that more homes, roads and important infrastructure projects will need to be built. Skilled trades workers are essential to Canada’s success, and we need them to be able to get to the job site, no matter where it is.

Our government is aware that 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. We are looking to bridge this gap. Improving labour mobility for workers in the construction trades can help to address labour shortages and ensure that important projects, such as housing, can be completed across the country.

That is why Bill C-19, the budget implementation bill is proposing to introduce a labour mobility deduction. This measure would provide tax recognition of up to \$4,000 per year in eligible travel and temporary relocation expenses to eligible tradespeople and apprentices. This measure would apply to the 2022 and subsequent taxation years. We believe that this action, in addition to several other measures proposed in budget 2022, would help address barriers to mobility for tradespeople so they can take on additional important projects and complete them.

● (1655)

We also know that immigration is vital to meeting our labour market needs and supporting our economy, our communities and our national identity. Canada has long been a country that is diverse and welcoming to everyone. Throughout the pandemic, many newcomers have been on the front lines working in key sectors such as health care, transportation, the service sector and manufacturing. Without them, Canada's economy would not have overcome the challenges of the last two years.

In the decades to come, our economy will continue to rely on the talents of people from all over the world, just as we have in the past decade. Our future economic growth will be bolstered by immigration, and Canada will remain a leader in welcoming newcomers fleeing violence and persecution. Therefore, in budget 2022, we are proposing investments to enhance our capacity to meet immigration demands for our growing economy to create opportunities for all newcomers and to maintain Canada's world-class immigration system.

Canada welcomed more than 405,000 new permanent residents in 2021, and that is more than any other year in Canadian history. To meet the demands of our growing economy, the federal government's 2022-24 immigration levels plan, tabled in February 2022, sets an even higher target of 451,000 permanent residents by 2024, the majority of whom will be skilled workers who will help address the persistent labour shortages. This higher target, along with the government's 2021 economic and fiscal update investments to resolve backlogs in processing, and the new investments proposed in this budget, will help make our immigration system more responsive to Canada's economic needs and humanitarian commitments.

The immigration levels plan helps reunite families with their loved ones and allows us to continue to benefit from the talents of those already in Canada by granting permanent status to temporary residents, including essential workers and international students. As announced in budget 2021, our government also intends to amend the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to improve Canada's ability to select applicants who match its changing and diverse economic and labour force needs. These people will be from among a growing pool of candidates seeking to become permanent residents through the express entry system, and we will make sure that we help them choose Canada, to get here and to contribute to our economy and our society.

By taking action to improve labour and mobility, and to attract the best and the brightest from around the world to meet Canada's labour needs, Bill C-19 will be a key part of implementing these measures in budget 2022. I encourage my fellow parliamentarians to support this bill.

Government Orders

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have a question for my colleague.

You mentioned the workforce, and you mentioned immigration, which I think is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I did not mention anything. The hon. member has to speak through the Speaker to address the hon. member.

● (1700)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Madam Speaker, I apologize. I would like to know about the comments the member made about immigration and housing.

We do need a workforce and we do need immigration, but we have a lack of housing and a lack of affordability. How will the member's government ensure that we have enough housing supply and affordability to accommodate the immigration that will be coming to our country to help our workforce?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, I am proud to say that I am part of the HUMA committee, and part of our investigations, discussions and recommendations to the government for the housing accelerator program addresses exactly the point that the member opposite is raising.

We understand how urgent, important and critical appropriate housing is. With a wide variety of mixed housing and a wide variety of support for housing, I am confident, as we go through the recommendations of the committee and the government's deliberation, that the \$4-billion housing accelerator program will be a big part of our solution.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, the member for Newmarket—Aurora talked a lot about labour shortages from various perspectives. I would like to ask him about a proposal made by the Bloc Québécois to offer a tax credit to early retired or retired workers aged 65 and over after a certain number of hours or years of work. This could help keep a skilled, efficient and reliable workforce active in our businesses. I hear about this all the time from many SMEs, and I look forward to seeing such a measure brought in.

While we are on the topic of seniors, I would also like to ask him about seniors' pensions. Is my colleague prepared to lobby from within to increase seniors' pension cheques?

*Government Orders**[English]*

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, in terms of engaging, if many people in the workforce decide to and are willing and able to continue to work after retirement, that is a good suggestion. In fact, I have retired twice now, and I am still part of the workforce.

With respect to tax incentives, I am sure that they would be given due consideration as the recommendations come forward.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about immigration and the needs of our workforce. A lot of our communities and, indeed, our country rely heavily on the temporary foreign worker program. We know that these temporary foreign workers are not given the same protections as other workers in our economy. They are vulnerable to exploitation. We have evidence from the Auditor General that federal inspections of temporary foreign worker programs are showing that problems are getting worse, not better, despite the government's promise back in 2020 to address this.

Does the member not agree that it is time to look at replacing the temporary foreign worker program with a permanent residency program so every worker in our country would be able to negotiate livable wages and good working conditions throughout our economy and across all employers?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, I agree with the member that temporary foreign workers are a critical component of the success of many of our businesses. I also agree that the Canadian standards and values of being fair to workers is an important value that we need to continue and support. Programs that take us in that direction, in my mind, would certainly be welcome, and I appreciate the benefit of his perspective.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to debate Bill C-19. Members probably heard me at the start of the day speaking against closure on this bill because, it must be said, Bill C-19 is very long and contains many clauses to be studied. We are talking about 432 pages full of amendments to existing bills and little time to learn more about the implications of their application.

That takes hard work, and I sincerely want to pay tribute to our finance critic, the member for Joliette, who spent many hours, together with his assistant Guillaume, listening to witnesses and determining what is in the best interests of Quebec, Quebec businesses and Quebecers in Bill C-19, to point out what he believes to be flawed or incomplete and requiring improvement. That is what people need to know: When the opposition analyzes a bill, the goal is to improve it. Ultimately, it is about addressing the flaws. There were some in Bill C-19. I would like to bring to the attention of the House certain elements, especially the amendment that would exempt meaderies and apple cideries from paying the excise tax on alcohol.

The Bloc Québécois presented this amendment and invited witnesses to testify before the Standing Committee on Finance about a small clause in a big bill because Bloc Québécois members listen to their constituents, to producers and artisans, and they want to improve bills to ensure they are successful.

In this case, it was a win for the Bloc Québécois but, more importantly, a win for all apple cider and honey mead producers in Quebec and Canada. There are 50 meaderies in Canada, half of which are in Quebec.

There is one in my riding, called Miel Nature, led by Ali Agougou, a Quebecer—

• (1705)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can we ask the people outside the chamber to keep quiet? It is very disruptive.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You interrupted my flow.

I was thanking Ali Agougou and encouraging him to keep up the demanding, top-quality work. He is the vice-president of an association representing Quebec honey wine producers. He called my office to tell us that it makes no sense, that these producers are small local operations that do not make enough to export and should therefore not be taxed. Since they should continue to be exempt, he asked us whether the Bloc Québécois could do something.

I immediately contacted our agriculture critic, the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, who is Quebec's farming sector's staunchest defender. I also contacted the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, who is an international trade expert. I contacted other MPs, including our finance critic, to hear what they had to say. We realized that this was very serious for producers. If Bill C-19 was not amended, it would have a major economic impact on their sector.

We worked hard, and the producers shared their experience. After that, the committee looked at it. The finance critic really convinced the committee members that this was a good thing, not just for Quebec producers, but for Canadian producers as well. Apple cider and honey wine were exempted from the excise tax through an amendment to Bill C-19.

When I rise in the House, I say that I speak for the people who elected me. I do this work for Cidrerie du Minot, Frier Orchards, Capsule Temporelle, Cidrerie Hinchinbrooke, Ferme Black Creek—which I see every Wednesday at the farmer's market in Huntingdon—Cidrerie Entre Terre & Pierre, Domaine des Salamandres and Verger Hemmingford.

I am so pleased that I was able to help draw attention to their problem and that, in the end, we are working together to unanimously change Bill C-19 to their benefit and ours. I am sure that we all like apple cider and honey wine from Quebec. Everyone loves that. That is what people say, and the member for Jonquière agrees with me too, which means I am right.

A member of our caucus discovered other things in this bill, including a change to a provision governing the Social Security Tribunal of Canada. The member could not understand how this change ended up in this omnibus bill since the provision had nothing to do with the budget. In fact, it responded more to a long-standing request from some unions.

Our critic, the member for Thérèse-De Blainville pushed the minister for a timeline for the comprehensive employment insurance reform, which this change was supposed to be part of. We know that the minister has been putting off this reform almost indefinitely, but our member did not give up. She fought and argued at the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities to convince her colleagues that this change was inappropriate, that we should leave it out of the bill and instead take the time to study the matter.

I was once a minister's chief of staff. When drafting a bill, it is important to go out and consult your base to confirm whether what you are presenting makes sense. In this case, it was so absurd that all the unions opposed what was written in the bill. I saw our critic, the member for Thérèse-De Blainville, in committee. She was passionate and thorough. She used to be the president of a major union in Quebec, and she vigorously defended the importance of removing this from the bill, so that all parliamentarians would have time to properly study and improve the EI reform, for the benefit of workers and unions, but also the government.

These contributions and gains are based on rigour, and the members of the Bloc Québécois are certainly rigorous. I heard false accusations this morning about how our party is blocking and obstructing work. That is totally false, as anyone will tell you. Anyone who works directly or indirectly with members of the Bloc Québécois knows that we work to achieve gains, make compromises and get positive results for the well-being of the people we represent in Quebec.

• (1710)

I would like to commend the member for Thérèse-De Blainville for her perseverance and determination. She managed to convince the government, even before the motion was adopted in committee, to remove this from Bill C-19.

I have two minutes left to explain to the House that there is a small amendment that we would have liked to discuss. It has to do with the luxury tax. It must be said that the Bloc Québécois truly agrees with the principle of a luxury tax. However, when we began talking to witnesses and to people in Quebec, we realized that, because of the way it was worded, this clause was going to have major repercussions for the aerospace industry and was expected to cause major problems.

We asked that the luxury tax clause be changed and rewritten. Since we did not want to delay the passage of Bill C-19, we suggested that the clause be removed rather than kept so that we could take the time to carefully listen to the pros and cons of the luxury tax. Unfortunately, that was not possible. The NDP and the Liberals adopted the clause as written anyway, even though it will really penalize part of Quebec's aerospace industry, which is mainly concentrated in Montreal.

Government Orders

In summary, Bill C-19 is a big bill. The Bloc Québécois worked very hard and achieved gains for Quebec and Quebecers. We are very pleased about that. We will soon hear from my colleague, the member for Jonquière, who will tell us more about that. The Bloc Québécois is a political party that is hard-working, thorough, persistent and determined, and we want people to understand that we are here, in the House, to make advances for Quebec and Quebec businesses.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, earlier I posed the question of whether the Bloc members support the principles of a luxury tax, and the response was that yes, they support the principle of having a luxury tax. My understanding is that this would include the impact it would have on the aerospace industry, but there are some timing concerns they have in regard to the possible credits or issues of this nature.

Could the member provide clarification? Does the Bloc support the principle of a luxury tax as stipulated in the bill itself?

• (1715)

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, who always asks such pertinent questions.

Yes, we support the principle of a luxury tax. However, we are calling on the government to rework this tax and amend it. If the government wanted to be thorough, it would have removed this clause from Bill C-19, much like how clause 32 was removed, so that it could be studied more closely. It is still possible to do so. The government can amend the bill to bring it in line with what the aerospace industry is calling for.

The government can count on us to help find wording that will address the problems we have with the existing clause.

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from the Bloc and I are actually neighbours. Our ridings are side-by-side on either side of the provincial lines.

I would like her to comment on the rising gas prices, which is something I know is impacting both Ontario and Quebec residents. We both have a lot of commuters who rely on driving to go to work, to access general services, to see their families and for their basic day-to-day needs. They do not have the option in any part of our ridings of a subway or LRT.

The Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Liberals all support a carbon tax and the escalation of it year-by-year. In contrast, we are proposing a gas tax break. Would she not agree with me that it would help our constituents keep money in their pockets, as the cost of living is skyrocketing in this country?

Government Orders

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my neighbour. I call him that because his riding neighbours mine, on the Ontario side.

I would say that we in the Bloc Québécois are concerned with the profit margins of our refineries. I think there is a way to address this issue. We must ask ourselves who is benefiting from the rising cost of gasoline right now. The oil companies are making a lot of money while retailers, on the other hand, are getting very little.

There is a problem in this profit chain, and I think the government could work to reduce the profit margins of the refineries. Let us be honest: None of today's oil companies are on the verge of bankruptcy.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the intervention by my colleague from the Bloc was very interesting. I always want to stand up when a member of the Bloc speaks to let the Bloc know there are Albertans in this place who are deeply worried about the climate emergency.

She talked about where the support goes, how it will go to making sure that workers are protected and that the transition is where investment is needed. We did not see near enough investment in this particular budget implementation bill in Alberta workers to help them transition from the fossil fuel sector to greener technologies.

I wonder if she could comment on how she would have liked to see the government invest more in workers and less in big business in this budget implementation bill.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague's question.

We have repeatedly heard the leader of the Bloc Québécois say loud and clear that we are in favour of providing financial support for the energy transition for workers in Alberta and western Canada, so that they can diversify, so that the economy can diversify and become greener. We were hoping to see concrete measures in the budget to support these workers.

If this were ever to appear in a document or a proposal of any type, the Bloc Québécois would certainly support it.

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-19 today and to talk about how the policies, procedures and investments that we are making are affecting so many people across Canada. Most importantly, I want to talk about how it is having an impact on the people I represent in the House of Commons, the people from Newfoundland and Labrador, and from Labrador in Canada's north.

Over the last number of weeks, we have talked not only about Bill C-19, but also about the budget itself and what the impact is on Canadians. The one thing I always find in the House of Commons is that we hear members say that we have to be more conservative

in our spending, but in the very next sentence there is an ask for more money and more allocation in a different area. It is funny how that happens. I am sure it happened when we were in opposition just like it is happening with the members who are in opposition today.

What is important to note is that we put in place investments that will really help address the issues that Canadians are facing on a day-to-day basis and in the times they are facing them. Being able to do that and still continue to grow the economy and keep it stronger for many years to come is not an easy task no matter who is in the government.

I want to talk about some of the highlights in the budget and in Bill C-19 and where our government is creating new opportunity and new direction for people in the country.

First of all, I have a remote riding in Labrador. It is large and vast in geography. It is small in population. It has very distinct cultures. It is isolated on many fronts. Therefore, the challenges are very unique. They are not more unique than any other region of northern Canada, but they are certainly very unique when we compare them to those in urban centres and larger cities across the country. The infrastructure is different. The needs are different.

Like everyone else in the country, we hear a lot about affordability. Today, I think affordability is on the minds of all Canadians, simply because of the time and place we are in. We are coming out of COVID-19. We have seen many businesses shut down for months. We have seen workers out of a job, some of them for 18 months, before being able to go back to their regular jobs with regular salaries. This has had a huge impact. We add to that the Russian invasion of Ukraine and how that has affected the flow of goods around the world, the supply chain that we all depend upon and also how it impacts major commodities worldwide. It is not just Canada that is feeling the brunt of affordability today. It is being felt all throughout North America and right across the world.

Is there a reason for us to be concerned? There is always a reason, absolutely. Our concern is with the people of Canada. Our concern is with families today who are waking up and understanding how the invasion of Ukraine has affected their lives at home. They are waking up to understand how the outcome of COVID-19 is having an impact on them and their children and their everyday lives. They are looking for solutions. I think we are all looking for how we can do more to help them.

Our government has been very creative in rising to the affordability demands of Canadians. First of all, we can look at the fact that we are focused on connecting more and more Canadians through high-speed Internet, no matter where they live. Some may say that is an old story, that they do not have a problem with Internet. They should try living in rural Canada or try living in northern Canada, where one is feeling not only the pressure of affordability but being cut off from the rest of the world.

When we see investments in that kind of infrastructure, it does make a difference. It does help with issues around affordability.

● (1720)

Let us look at child care. Building on the child care agreements is something our government has focused on with every province and territory in Canada, with its \$625-million fund for early learning and child care infrastructure. These additional child care investments, including the building of new facilities, are making affordability closer to becoming a reality for a lot of families.

Regardless of where Canadians live, it is a process. Negotiating child care at \$10 a day is a process. Getting there is a process. The fact is that we are stepping up to make those investments so that families can work and can put their children in child care facilities and programs where they are safe. Being able to afford to do so would be huge for many families.

Does it mean that we have to grow the spaces? Absolutely, that is what it means. It means that we will have to grow the workforce around early childhood education. We will have to ensure there are appropriate salaries attached to the jobs. We will have to ensure there are spaces available and that new facilities are a part of that.

We are getting there on early learning and child care reform. It is a huge part of affordability for many families.

The Liberal government has done things around labour mobility that have helped with affordability.

One of the things that I like more than anything around Bill C-19 and our budget is the investments in health care. I live in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and represent the riding of Labrador. Health care is always a priority. It is never easily accessed, and it is never affordable to access. People have identified huge concerns around health care in my riding. They have talked about it very openly. They need to be able to access doctors, specialists and more health care professionals. They need the ability to get services that they have not had access to in the past.

This is what I like about what we are doing on health care. The government is investing over \$45 billion in support to provinces and territories through the Canada health transfer, which is an increase of almost 5% over the 2021-22 baseline budget. That money is there to help provinces, like Newfoundland and Labrador, deliver better services to residents, like those I represent.

We have also increased the Canada health transfer by \$2 billion to help with the backlogs of surgeries and procedures. We are seeing this right across Canada, including here in Ontario, across the border in Quebec, and at home in Newfoundland and Labrador. People are going on wait-lists. There are backlogs for surgeries and procedures. As a government, we are stepping up to help our provinces and territories deal with this problem, because Canadians need to have those procedures and surgeries in order to maintain good health. We know how important that is.

There are also the investments the government is making in dental care. For so long we have seen so many people go without appropriate dental care because they could not afford to see a dentist. This is a program that would allow seniors to get the dental health care they need, and to be able to afford that dental health care. It

Government Orders

would allow families with incomes of less than \$90,000 a year to access dental health care. These are good investments that would make life affordable for people across the country and would help in areas, like the one I represent in Labrador, with health care needs.

We are investing to recruit more doctors and nurses for rural and northern regions. This would allow us to have better services at our hospitals in places like Labrador City and Wabush, like Happy Valley-Goose Bay, like remote clinics in Labrador and across northern communities. This investment is allocated for the recruitment of doctors and nurses, but it is allocated to improve the health care and access to health care for so many Canadians who need it.

I am definitely supporting this bill, simply because this bill would allow people to access good child care for their kids, and be able to afford to live a better life in Canada.

● (1725)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is on the point the member was just speaking about, the issue of dental care. People pay taxes to the government and then the government decides how to fund dental care. Presumably that is the policy objective of the government.

Why does the government not simply cut taxes or provide additional financing directly to low-income individuals who are identified as vulnerable and let them choose how to spend their own money as they wish, whether it is on dental care or other things that are priorities for them? Why not give people more control over their own lives and their own money by targeting support to the most vulnerable?

Why is it necessary for the government to create a new program to control how it would spend those resources for people?

● (1730)

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, we already have a basic tax exemption in the country. That is standard and it applies across the board to all people.

Government Orders

What I have experienced is that too many people in this country are suffering through ill health because they are unable to deal with their dental health. A lady told me she thought she was to have back surgery because she had so many back problems. When they narrowed it down to a final diagnosis, it was all related to her dental health. In fixing her dental care and providing her access to dental care, it provided her a better, healthy outcome overall.

There are particular people in our country who cannot afford the services that are critical to them. I support making sure they have access to them.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree with my hon. colleague that it is getting hard for people, but their government seems to be more interested in padding the pockets of their corporate friends, including big oil.

For example, Suncor made a net profit of \$4.1 billion and paid out \$3.9 billion to its shareholders: \$1.6 billion in dividends and \$2.3 billion in share buy-backs. The government still provided \$2.9 billion for fossil fuel subsidies, yet it provided no increase for health care transfers, something my colleague spoke of as being important, nothing for long-term care, nothing for mental health, and no new funding on a just transition for workers.

Would my hon. colleague agree that what is needed are investments in people rather than in big, wealthy corporations?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, the member knows we have increased the health transfers to provinces and territories in this budget by nearly 5%. We have added more money under the health care transfer fund to be able to do more recruitment around doctors and nurses. We have reduced the backlog of surgeries. We have signed agreements to bring the cost of child care down for every family in Canada that needs that service. We have invested heavily in housing programs for both indigenous and non-indigenous regions. We have established the first housing strategy ever in Canada. When it comes to labour mobility and the transition of labour, we are at the table with every union and every group in Canada that will be affected. They are leading the way on energy transition and they are leading the way for new jobs, high-paying jobs and jobs that will be sustainable for the future.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, the member can go ahead and insist that they increased health transfers, but the truth is that the provinces and Quebec unanimously called on the federal government to increase health transfers to 35% of health spending. Her government ignored them and refused to do it.

Here is my question. Will she commit to working on the inside to enable the government that has jurisdiction and knows how the system works to provide more health transfers? By that, I mean the government of Quebec.

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Madam Speaker, there are no deaf ears when the Government of Canada increases its health transfer by almost 5%, when it puts more money out there for provinces and territories to deal with the backlog of surgeries, or when it puts more money

into recruiting more doctors and nurses. We were prepared to step up and pay for dental care for those Canadians who cannot afford it.

That is not a deaf ear. That is responding to the health care demands that Canadians have.

● (1735)

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always an honour to rise in this place to speak to the issues that impact Canadians. Today, that issue is Bill C-19, the budget implementation act. To reference the speech by my colleague across the way and the comment she made, and with no disrespect to people having health issues, my back is sore from carrying my share of the national debt that the Liberal government has accumulated over the last seven years.

The budget implementation act, in short, is the way the Minister of Finance plans to carry out the promises made in her budget. However, maybe we should start with a brief examination of what the budget really is.

I think when the minister first decided to draft the budget, she got a couple of definitions confused. Investopedia has a pretty layman's-terms approach to what a budget is. It says:

To manage your...expenses, prepare for life's unpredictable events, and be able to afford big-ticket items without going into debt, budgeting is important. Keeping track of how much you earn and spend doesn't have to be drudgery, doesn't require you to be good at math—

Clearly, we know that.

—and doesn't mean you can't buy the things you want. It just means that you'll know where your money goes, you'll have greater control over your finances.

It mentions preparing for unexpected events, affording big-ticket items and knowing where our money goes. Wow. None of that sounds anything like the Liberal budget, does it? The Conservatives and Canadians have not forgotten that this very Liberal minister has yet to account for \$600 billion in public spending from the 2020-21 fiscal year.

The definition of “rhetoric”, on the other hand, is “the art of persuasion, of using language—both written and oral—to convince others of one's point of view.” However, many perceive such convincing as dangerous, especially in democracies, where individual voices actually matter. The line between persuasion and manipulation is not always clear, and the effects of crossing it can be incredibly corrosive. That sounds like the document the finance minister presented to the House.

The finance minister, in her budget implementation act speech, took special note to discuss the existential threat of climate change. She went on to say that it is why she was focusing on growing the economy and making life more affordable for Canadians. That is laughable. May 3 must have been backwards day, because the finance minister's unveiled attack on the Canadian economy and on affordability for Canadians was directly her doing. The budget did nothing to deal with the skyrocketing cost of living or the inflation crisis, which, by the way, is now at the highest rate in 30 years with no signs of slowing down at all. I would argue that this is the single largest existential threat to Canada and Canadian families.

The Minister of Finance was unwavering against the pleas of Canadians and the Conservatives to stop the carbon tax escalator, even now as the price of gasoline and diesel are well over two dollars a litre. Workers and commuters have to pay that new higher price just to get to work. Farmers have to pay more to put their crops in, take them out and get those goods to market, and the price of groceries, dining and household necessities are all driven up exponentially as a result. She calls climate change an existential threat, but for Canadians, the finance minister, her policies and her government's poor financial management are the real existential threat that most Canadians face.

When I talk to constituents about what they wanted from this budget, not one of them said they wanted more rhetoric about how the government was helping them. In reality, the government continues to be the single largest problem in Canadians' day-to-day lives.

• (1740)

The government acts like it is fighting for the little guy while it taxes the rich. The finance minister made a big to-do about taxing the sale of new luxury cars and aircraft with a retail price of over \$100,000. This tax would also apply to the sale of boats that cost more than \$250,000. Canadians see through that. This is not a tax revenue generator, nor a deterrent to those who would buy a car worth over \$100,000, much like the silver Mercedes 300 SL the Prime Minister has. This would also not have an impact on those who would buy a private plane to be whisked away for a day or weekend in the sun at a vacation island. The Prime Minister knows this because he has been there.

This tax is nothing more than an attempt to persuade voters, while the Liberals are trying to do something with rhetoric to address an issue. It really just muddies the water with additional rhetoric aimed toward Canadians, who now find themselves having to work longer shifts to afford the new inflated price of everything from gasoline to groceries. This affects families. They can no longer afford to sign up their children for recreational or educational activities because thanks to the inflationary actions of the government, they now have no money left for such activities. However, Canadians can be comforted to know that the Prime Minister and his friends, with their private aircraft and \$100,000 vehicles, will have to pay a couple cents more on the dollar in taxes.

The government is so disconnected from reality that it is unbelievable. The reality is that for more and more Canadians, the government's incompetent policies have driven up inflation to the point that it now consumes their entire paycheques. There is little to no

Government Orders

money left at the end of each month. There always seems to be more month left at the end of the money. For many, paycheques are purely going to subsistence living and in many cases do not even cover that.

With that reality, it becomes even more laughable that the government praises itself for subsidizing the price of zero-emission vehicles. It is like the finance minister and the Liberal cabinet have only ever met urban downtown Toronto socialites. She thinks that new cars are in the budgets of average working Canadians. Even if those same Canadians scrimped and saved to remotely afford such a vehicle, they would be plagued with backlogs, delays and chip shortages.

Maybe in the finance minister's world of social elites, the government decided to just scrap their barely used cars and buy new ones. However, the majority of Canadians, like the hard-working constituents of Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, work hard, budget carefully, buy quality vehicles and maintain them because they rely on them to last. They simply do not throw the baby out with the bathwater. To put it in the language of the Liberal cabinet for it to better understand, they do not throw out the champagne with the cork. Speaking of champagne, the Liberals have a tax on that too, with an automatic escalator annually. They want to ensure that no matter what Canadians do and how they live their lives, there will always be a tax creating price inflation.

The budget has missed the mark and the budget implementation act has therefore also missed the mark. This is not good for Canadian families. It is simply the Liberal elites' manifesto of what they think the world should look like: more debt, more spending and higher costs for everything. The supports the government brags about, such as reducing the cost of new zero-emission cars, only benefit the rich and those who can afford them. This is not the implementation of a budget; it is "the art of persuasion, of using language—both written and oral—to convince others of one's point of view." Simply put, it is just rhetoric that, in reality, will continue to destroy the economic and social stability of this country.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting that the member makes reference to oil. It was not that many years ago that the Conservatives were criticizing the government because the price was too low. When it was selling at 88¢ a litre, we were being accused of crashing the Alberta economy, according to many of the Conservatives. Now they are saying that the price of oil is too high.

The Government of Canada carries some influence; there is no doubt about that, but the member needs recognize that there is a world economy and that the world sets the price of oil. Does he really believe that the Government of Canada can dictate to the world what the price of oil should be?

Government Orders

● (1745)

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to answer my colleague's question. In every speech he always asks one.

I never mentioned oil in my intervention; I mentioned the price of gasoline. I think it would be very naive of the member to suggest that the price of gasoline has not been impacted by the taxes put on it by the government, such as the carbon tax and excise tax. The fact is that we still continue to import millions of barrels of oil. This is shameful given we have the third-largest resource in our backyard. In fact, the government pushes an agenda, an ideology, that we need oil but do not have to buy Canadian oil.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I just want to tell my colleagues that repeating a falsehood does not make it true.

One reason the price of gas is skyrocketing today is refining margins. Big oil producers have boosted their refining margins significantly. Suggesting that the government should cut taxes to give big oil more room to manoeuvre when these greedy corporations are siphoning off what little money the Canadian middle class has is a little rich, in my opinion.

I do not know if my colleague is aware of what refining margins are for oil companies.

[English]

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, I do know that repeating a lie does not make it true. Unfortunately, this is something that maybe the Liberal government should implement for themselves, rather than the rhetoric they want to flog on Canadians.

Do I know that oil companies are making money? Yes, I do. Do I know the extent of the margins they have? I have not looked at them recently, but I do know the extent that we are taxed on our oil and gas. The fact is that we do not develop our own oil and gas, and the government has put a moratorium on that and wants to kill the industry. If we think the price of fuel is expensive now, wait until the government, if it stays in power for another term, has its way with Canada's oil and gas sector. We are doomed.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, oil companies are making record profits on the backs of motorists, and banks are making record profits on the backs of consumers.

What does my colleague think of the idea of imposing a special tax on them, and using that money to increase the goods and services tax credit, which would help the poor and the middle class directly?

[English]

Mr. Glen Motz: Madam Speaker, let us look at the Canadian tax scheme. We always hear from the NDP-Liberal coalition that those corporations do not pay their fair share of taxes, but people should look at what they actually pay to the government in taxes. I hope we would want to do everything we can to eliminate the excess taxes the government charges on oil and gas, on fuel, and support the

industry we have in this country to ensure that we have a viable and sustainable future in the oil and gas industry.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to stand as the representative for Edmonton Strathcona today to speak about the budget implementation act, Bill C-19.

I thought I would start today with some of the parts of the budget implementation act that I like and am very supportive of. I know many people think politicians only oppose, but I have to say there are things in this budget implementation act that I really like, and that I am really proud of. I thought that was where I would start, and then I am going to dig down to a few of the things in this budget implementation act that cause me a lot of concern and a lot of problems.

However, the first thing I want to say is that I am absolutely delighted to see the first step taken to recognize the desperate need for dental care for children in this country, and I am so proud to be part of the New Democratic Party that made that happen in this budget implementation act.

The previous member for St. John's East was just here today. I just had an opportunity to speak to him earlier today, and I can say his name now. Last year, in the previous Parliament, Mr. Jack Harris brought forward the exact bill to make sure dental care was available for children, and the Conservatives and the Liberals voted against it.

That is how we know that what we are seeing in this budget implementation act is clearly the work of the New Democratic Party. This is something we have been able to provide for Canadians, and as somebody who is part of that caucus, I am so proud. The biggest change and increase in health care for Canadians in decades is happening with this government and this budget implementation act.

I wanted to start with dental care. The single biggest reason children end up in the emergency room is that they do not have access to dental care. I have told the House before that I have two children, and I am very lucky I have a dental plan that comes with my employment, so when both my children required braces, we were able to do that. However, for so many children in this country, that is not possible, so I am very excited about that change.

I am very excited about some of the investments in housing. The joke we always hear in here is that the NDP's response will always be, "It is not enough." I am going to say that many times today, but I am happy there have been investments in housing and that there is an additional investment of \$1.5 billion to build new affordable homes and make changes so Canadians can save hundreds of dollars a month in rent.

I am happy to see there is a ban on foreign homebuyers for the next two years. I am happy to see an additional investment of \$4.3 billion in indigenous housing. Everybody in this place should know that this is insufficient for the need, and it is insufficient for the demand, but I am happy to see it in the budget implementation act.

I am happy to see some of the actions taken on tax fairness. I have stood up in the House time and time again and demanded we do more to ensure our tax system is equitable and fair. Canadians are paying more and more for groceries, for rent, for gas and for all of the things they need, but their salaries have not gone up. If things are costing more, and the people who are making money are not making any more money, I wonder where all of those dollars are going. I have to say, they are going to the ultrawealthy.

We do need to do more to make taxes fairer, so while I am excited to see there is a tax on financial institutions, it is not what was promised, and while I am excited to see a luxury tax, it is not enough. We did not see the excess profit tax we wanted to see, so we will keep pushing for some of those things.

There are a few things I certainly could go into more detail with, and I am aware I am going to run out of time, so I want to talk a bit about some of the things I have concerns about. One is a very small thing, and I know I may be one of the only people in this place who is deeply concerned about this. However, in this budget implementation act, it would become illegal for Canadians to break Canadian laws in space. It would become illegal for Canadian companies to break Canadian laws on the moon.

• (1750)

Members may wonder why this matters to the member of Parliament for Edmonton Strathcona, and I am going to tell them why. I have spent 20 years pushing for Canada to do more to ensure that we have corporate responsibility for our corporations when they work abroad. Right now, this budget implementation act says that people cannot break the law if they are on the moon, but the way the government works right now is that if someone is in Guatemala raping and murdering indigenous people, it is no problem. If someone is in Papua New Guinea causing environmental destruction that will never be recovered, it is no problem, or in Zambia, Namibia, Nicaragua or Ecuador.

Last week, two indigenous leaders from the Amazon pointed out to us that the lungs of our planet are being attacked by Canadian mining companies and we are not holding them to account. We are not doing what we need to do to protect them. It is too bad those Canadian mining companies are not working on the moon, because that is when the government cares. It does not give us a core ombudsperson who can do the job, but it is happy to make sure that the moon is safe. That is where we are at the moment.

The other thing I will talk about, which members have heard me say many times, is that there is not nearly enough in this budget implementation act to deal with the scale and scope of a just transition for workers in Alberta. It is workers across the country, of course, but we know the impacts will be felt in Alberta more than they will be felt anywhere else in this country. Our economy has more invested in the oil and gas sector, and as the economy shifts, we will need more and more investment in the transition.

Government Orders

We should be investing in post-secondary education, making sure it is more accessible, more affordable and easier to access so that people can retrain for different jobs. We should be thinking of massive projects we can do that will employ workers, unionized workers, to build electrical grids and other infrastructure projects that we are going to need as we go forward into the new economy, and we are not seeing that investment here.

One day a few weeks ago, I asked a member of the government what they were planning to do for Alberta, and basically I was told that they are really excited to invest in the auto sector in Ontario. That is great and I am happy to see that, as it is important, but how exactly is that helping with the just transition for Alberta? We need to see a clean jobs training centre. We need to see just transition legislation. My colleague, Linda Duncan, who represented my riding before me, worked so hard on that. She worked on it for 11 years. We still do not have those supports for Alberta workers.

Another thing I want to talk a bit about is the direction and control aspect of this. I have worked very closely with some of my colleagues. The member for Northumberland—Peterborough South and I have worked very closely to move forward the work on a just transition. I was really happy to see that the member for Elmwood—Transcona was able to get some modifications to what was in the BIA on direction and control. This is something that protects charities. My goodness, of all the things we should be working toward, it is making sure that the charitable sector is able to do its job effectively and well.

I realize that I am running out of time. I could talk about a whole bunch of other aspects of the BIA, but I will say that I am disappointed that there is not nearly enough on just transition. I am disappointed that we have no actual increase in health transfers, despite what we hear from the government. I am disappointed that there is nothing for long-term care in this budget implementation act and, of course, I am disappointed there is nothing for mental health. Finally, we really wanted and expected to see something on the disability benefit, and we have not seen that yet. That is a shame, because this is something that has been promised to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, so it is disappointing that it is not in the budget.

I am proud of the victories we have been able to win with this budget implementation act. I am proud of what we see in it, but this is not a budget that a New Democrat would have brought forward. We will continue to fight. We will continue to push, and we will continue to get wins for Canadians.

Government Orders

• (1755)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there are a number of things the member said that are just not true. She says there are no investments in long-term care or mental health, when we have invested record amounts of money designated for those categories. She tries to give the impression that there are no increases in health transfers, when that is just not the case. She tries to give the impression that the Government of Canada has not been there in a very real and tangible way for the province of Alberta in a just transition. She should talk to some of the ministers and she will get a list of things that we have done. We have spent record amounts of dollars on infrastructure in the province of Alberta. We had worked with the former NDP premier and now the current Conservative premier to ensure that the federal government is there in a real and tangible way for Alberta.

How does she reconcile the reality versus what she just finished saying about Alberta?

• (1800)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind the hon. member that he is not to say indirectly what he cannot say directly, so I would hope that he would retract that.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would retract the “reality” comment.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, I am grateful that the member did retract that statement, because that was inappropriate and unparliamentary language for this place.

First of all, many of the things that I mentioned I can reiterate, but I will just point to one thing. If the member were to come to Alberta and talk to workers in Alberta, which I do an awful lot, he would understand that there is zero faith that the current government and, sharing the blame equally, the previous government have done anything to support workers in transitioning.

We have written to the current government time and again and said to tie strings to the dollars that are going to the private sector and tie strings to the dollars that are going to these big projects so that the money goes to workers. It has never happened.

The well cleanup was the perfect example. Nothing got cleaned up. Workers did not get jobs and big business got tons of money. It is a typical Liberal story.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have to question the member for Edmonton Strathcona. She was speaking about many of the things promised in this budget and the items that she wants to see followed through on. We have seen how the current Liberal government continually makes promises and then does not deliver. Since 1997, the Liberals have promised pharmacare. That is 25 years ago.

It is very hypocritical of this member to state that she is concerned about the government following through and to give the impression that the New Democrats will hold the government accountable, when they have signed a backroom deal. How can this member say that she will hold the government accountable when we know very well that the New Democrats have made an agree-

ment that they will not call a confidence vote on the current government?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, first of all I would say that if the member listened to my speech, he would know I said that one of the things we got was dental care. This budget was not what we wanted to see, but we were able to get some things.

The member also talked about the fact that we cannot hold the government to account. In fact, we have a very transparent, clear agreement, and if the government does not fulfill its side of the equation, then we do not support it. It is very simple.

Maybe the opposition members are very upset because they have not been able to show that they have gotten a single thing for Canadians during this Parliament.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to ask members who have questions to please wait until I call for questions and comments. Otherwise, they should not be speaking out.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I agree with much of what we heard from the member for Edmonton Strathcona, in particular coming from Alberta and talking about the need to invest in a prosperous transition for workers and the concerns with not seeing any emergency funds for Canadians with disabilities.

In particular, though, the member brings a lot of experience and expertise to this place with respect to corporate accountability abroad, and in fact she has a private member's bill on this topic. I wonder if the member would share more with this House in terms of what she is proposing with that bill.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Madam Speaker, my colleague's interventions in this House are always very helpful, and I love the opportunity to speak about my bill, Bill C-263.

Basically, it is to do what the government had promised to do initially, which is to give us a CORE ombudsperson who has the ability to compel testimony and compel documents. It is basically to give the CORE ombudsperson the teeth necessary to do the job that was promised in the first place.

Right now, we have an ombudsperson who was put in place in 2018 and has investigated an entire zero cases of misbehaviour by Canadian companies, despite over 40 complaints by people around the world.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to Bill C-19, especially since it might give me a chance to reconcile with the member for Winnipeg North. We had a bit of a discussion about Quebec's political weight this week. I am soft at heart and did not want to offend him, so I thought to myself, why not try to be optimistic for 10 minutes?

I will start by saying that there is a pretty big rumour going around, fuelled by the Minister of Canadian Heritage, that the Bloc Québécois is looking for a fight. First of all, the very definition of politics involves parties with opposing views that challenge one another, which inevitably leads to some fighting. However, that is not all. The Bloc Québécois is a party of proposals, and we demonstrated this in the context of programs related to COVID-19. Consider, for example, commercial rents. The Bloc Québécois has proven that it is ready to work to improve government bills.

For example, there is my colleague from Joliette, also known as “handsome Gaby”, and what he has done for the meaderies. In my riding, there is the Walkyrie meadery in the small municipality of Lamarche. The owner, Pierrot Lessard, came to meet with me with one of my former students. That struck me, because shifting from political science to making mead is quite something, even though politics leads to all things. They told me that if an excise tax were ever imposed, they would no longer be competitive and could not sell their bottles of mead. They were truly distraught. We managed to talk about it with my colleague from international trade and the member for Joliette, and I think it was a good collaboration. This may be what brings us closer together, the member for Winnipeg North and me.

I simply and quickly want to say that lifting the excise tax in the context of the agreement with Australia is a big deal for Quebec. Microbreweries are developing and expanding. We are seeing that quite a bit in Quebec, but we are also seeing that with the meaderies and the cider mills. The volume of cider production has gone from 3.2 million litres in 2005 to 5.1 million litres in 2021. That is not nothing. That is 60% growth in five years. The sector is clearly booming. An estimated 11% of all apples grown in Quebec are turned into cider, a volume that is trending upward. I can imagine what the imposition of the excise tax might have meant; it would have disrupted not only the development of the cideries sector, but also that of the apple growers. We know that the excise tax would have considerably reduced the farmers' net margin. Lifting the tax is a good thing. This collaboration is something the member for Winnipeg North could keep in mind when we talk about this again later.

The other fairly interesting aspect of Bill C-19 is the work of my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville, whose nickname is “sweet Loulou”. The Bloc Québécois demonstrated that Bill C-19 contained a significant flaw concerning the social security tribunals. I remember them because I had some dealings with groups of unemployed workers when the Harper government decided to carry out its unfortunate reform of EI in 2013. I am not going to make my Conservative colleagues' ears burn, but the government replaced the administrative tribunals with a single-window decision body. Many unemployed workers ended up being very poorly served. My colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville, who is a former trade unionist, which shows that no one is perfect, raised this with the support of former colleagues, and the government reconsidered its position. This change had been proposed by KPMG. My colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville argued this point very capably, with the result that we were able to move Bill C-19 in a direction that may serve the interests of unemployed workers better. I want to thank her for that.

Government Orders

● (1805)

I said that I wanted to be optimistic, but bad habits are hard to shake.

There are some aspects of Bill C-19 that are not quite as good. My colleagues know that I am a fan of the Minister of Finance. I have been in Parliament since 2019, and I have found the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to be amenable and open to discussion. I will always remember how much she helped by getting aluminum recognized in CUSMA. Through our discussions with her, we were able to come to an acceptable compromise.

I do get the impression that she has been weighed down a bit because of the conflict in Ukraine, which must be taking up a lot of her time. I want to be charitable because that is not her fault. However, there is something that the government did not manage to address in Bill C-19, and that is the harmful effects of the luxury tax on the aerospace industry. This issue could have been addressed relatively easily, since we are in favour of the luxury tax in principle. The only problem we have is that this tax also applies to exports.

My colleagues know that the aerospace industry is located primarily in Quebec. This tax weakens that industry. In simple terms, Bombardier estimates that this tax could impact its cash flow by as much as \$50 million to \$150 million per quarter. There should have been an opportunity to work on this as a team, which would have been very welcome.

I do see a way out. As we emerge from the crisis, the public treasury will have to get back on its feet. Our country's fat cats must be asked to contribute in order to have worthwhile public services. Why not go after the greediest ones? On this point, I agree with my NDP colleagues. Right now, the fattest cats are the oil and gas sectors, which are reaping profits the likes of which have not been seen in 30 years. It is completely outrageous that every big oil and gas company is pocketing middle-class wealth while ordinary people are forced to continue buying gas while waiting for transportation electrification. That said, I do see a solution, namely, slightly more aggressive taxation and an end to the generous subsidies that the oil and gas sectors receive.

We as a society will pay for these much-vaunted carbon capture and sequestration strategies. The budget earmarks \$2.6 billion to support greedy oil companies, which I find kind of hard to swallow given that I am still waiting for the federal government to support the aerospace industry, a pretty crucial sector for Quebec's future.

I am a good sport, and I hope to connect with Ms. Freeland after the battle. Maybe we will manage to—

● (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I would remind the hon. member not to use ministers' first or last names. I encourage him to be more careful. He has one and a half minutes left.

Government Orders

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, my most sincere apologies. How rude of me. I got carried away, and I apologize.

I cannot finish without speaking about what is missing from Bill C-19. This bill provides \$2 billion for health, but this is a one-time, non-recurring payment. Has a nurse ever been hired on a non-recurring basis? We cannot say that we need a nurse or medical specialist for the year 2022-23 but will no longer need them in 2024.

The major missing piece in Bill C-19 is funding for health care. All of the provinces are asking for \$28 billion to increase the federal share of funding from 22% to 35% of the total cost of health care. Everyone knows that, year after year, Quebec allocates between 46% and 48% of its total budget to health care.

How much is left for primary, secondary and post-secondary education? How much is left for all the other government responsibilities? Not much. This is work we could do together with the government. A sustainable health care system requires transfers. I am certain that we will manage to discuss this issue with our Liberal colleagues.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there were wonderful references and the attempt in the speech. What the member does demonstrate is that, in the last federal election, there was a very clear indication that Canadians in all regions of our country want a higher sense of co-operation, and we can provide that.

I am going to pick up on the member's last comments on the importance of health care transfers. We all recognize how important that issue is, and I have always thought maybe it is something we should have some ongoing debates on, whether it would be with an opposition motion or in a standing committee. It would be very interesting to get a better sense of exactly where we are and what the future might hold in terms of long-term investments into health care. In order to appreciate that, we also have to appreciate the history of health care transfers. Could I get the members thoughts on that aspect?

• (1815)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I want to correct my colleague.

It is true that there was an indication from Canadians during the election campaign. That does not stop at the end of the campaign, however. The government needs to listen to what civil society is saying now.

Not too long ago, we showed up with representatives from all health care sector unions. All of these big unions called for health transfers to be increased to 35%. All provincial premiers and the Council of the Federation have said the same thing.

Collaboration requires that the government listen to civil society, but I do not think that is happening. Sometimes, the government appears to be using its new alliance with the NDP as an excuse not to listen. This is not a judgment, but something I have observed.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague noted the tax on luxury goods, which is included in Bill C-19. While this is something we certainly support the direction of, I cannot help but note the theme where the government makes symbolic but largely insignificant moves on things like wealth inequality or housing affordability, yet it refuses to pull the larger levers that would make an actual difference on these important issues.

Does my colleague agree this is a troubling theme we see from the government?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, yes, absolutely.

However, my main concern is that all this public money is going to the oil and gas sector, which is making money hand over fist. I cannot understand why any public decision-maker would decide to financially support an industry that is currently reaping eye-watering profits, an industry that also contributes to putting us all at risk, since it is the industry that produces the most greenhouse gases.

When people look back and analyze this situation in 20 or 30 years' time, I can guarantee that no one will believe the kind of rationale the government is using to try to justify supporting the oil and gas industry.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Jonquière for his speech.

To be clear, the budget proposes to invest a total of \$7.1 billion, until 2030, in a new subsidy for the oil and gas sector in the form of a carbon capture and storage tax credit, which academics across the country have called a false climate solution.

I know my colleague shares my disappointment in that regard. Can he elaborate on how that money could be provided to workers to support a successful transition?

Mr. Mario Simard: Madam Speaker, I totally agree with my colleague, especially given that the Minister of Environment told us that he was going to end the fossil fuel subsidies since they are inefficient. I now have the impression that all this talk of inefficient subsidies is nothing but rhetoric.

What the government is trying to say today is that the oil and gas sector is synonymous with green development, which is a complete contradiction. Far more things, constructive things, could be done by investing in clean energy sectors. However, that is not happening.

I will close by saying that it is a 1:14 ratio. The government is investing \$1 billion in clean energy while investing \$14 billion in the oil and gas sector.

• (1820)

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to rise and speak this afternoon to the budget implementation bill at report stage. The bill seeks to implement certain measures found in budget 2022.

It was encouraging to see the opposition parties work together to improve this bill at committee. However, I believe that more amendments are needed.

I also want to recognize the hard work of my colleague, the member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, in his role as the shadow minister of finance.

Through these deliberations, parliamentarians will decide the direction of our country for the next year and beyond. These decisions will have long-lasting effects. That is why it is very important for all members in this place to have the opportunity to speak to this legislation. Regrettably, the government, with the support of the NDP, has once again stifled debate on legislation by imposing time allocation.

An issue that remains top of mind for millions of Canadians, and many in my riding, is health care. If the pandemic highlighted anything, it is the importance of having a strong health care system in place, one that can respond effectively and efficiently in a crisis. While health care falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces, I had hoped that, given our system was nearly driven to the breaking point, the government would have supported them in addressing their respective needs.

The first ministers were clear. They asked for an increase to health transfer payments to deal with the remaining effects of the pandemic. However, once again, the Liberals, supported by the NDP, decided to disregard the requests of the provinces and not provide any additional support to them.

With respect to the cost of living, the pattern set by the government over the years is a complete disregard for the needs of Canadians and an inability to properly manage Canada's finances. In 2015, the government inherited a balanced budget, which was made possible by the careful management of Canada's finances through the 2010 financial crisis and the years that followed. While the Liberals continue to claim that the pandemic caused inflation, we know that high deficits pre-2020 were already setting the stage for inflation. The reckless spending in the five years that preceded the pandemic put Canada in a more precarious position than we needed to be. This is having dire consequences on the ability of Canadians to manage their finances.

Record government spending has caused the cost of living to rise dramatically, with inflation at a 31-year high, reflected in rising food and gas prices and astronomically high home prices. This has been devastating to many Canadians across the country. While the NDP-Liberal government brags about the amount of money it has spent, it fails to recognize that its programs inevitably end up costing more with little to no results. Now, with this budget, it is doubling down on many of the same failed policies.

Government Orders

Over the past seven years, the Liberal government has hampered Saskatchewan's growth by implementing job-killing policies, increasing regulations, increasing taxes and scaring away investment.

Having said that, in budget 2022, the government is finally following the leadership of my home province of Saskatchewan with respect to the development of small modular reactors. In March of this year, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and New Brunswick came to an agreement for the construction of these reactors. This was great news for the respective provincial economies, as well as the environment.

Conservatives have long been proponents of nuclear energy and have pointed out numerous times that the development of nuclear energy would greatly improve our domestic energy sector, as well as assist in the reduction of emissions. Rather than attacking our oil and gas sector, which is among the safest and cleanest in the world, the federal government could have been more proactive in promoting nuclear energy as a way for Canada to reduce carbon emissions.

• (1825)

I am sure the agreement between the provinces went a long way in convincing the federal government to jump on board with the good work being done by the provinces.

Staying on the topic of energy and failed Liberal-NDP policies, the climate action incentive payment resulting from the skyrocketing costs of the carbon tax is desperately hurting my constituents. The PBO has reported that households in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario will face carbon taxes which exceed the climate action incentive payments.

In a rural riding such as mine, the carbon tax is particularly hard-hitting. During the long, cold winters on the prairies, heating bills increase significantly, which is only further exasperated by the carbon tax. Add to this the large geographic regions and the lack of public transportation in many rural areas, which mean people must drive everywhere they need to go. The rising carbon tax is doing nothing but putting more pressure on my constituents.

That same failed approach is true for the agricultural industry, which is also very important across Saskatchewan and indeed to the whole country. Here was an opportunity for this NDP-Liberal government to demonstrate that it understands and values this industry. However, it let the opportunity slip through its fingers.

With the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, world food security has become a major area of concern, and our ability to feed the world is now more critical than ever. It would have been prudent for the government to focus on supporting our agriculture sector and the complimentary infrastructure farmers need to get their products to market.

Government Orders

Listening to our producers, who are being hit hard by the carbon tax, inflation and higher input costs would have been a welcome change of pace for the government. Instead of listening to the pleas of our farmers, ranchers and other workers in the agricultural sector, and getting behind the Conservative initiative to exempt farmers from the carbon tax, the government hiked it once again.

Budget 2022 also includes an increase in defence spending for which there is broad support. Increased NORAD funding is a good start to improve our ability to protect the integrity of our national borders.

With the complete disregard Russia has shown for international law through its invasion of Ukraine, the need to ensure the integrity of our land in the Arctic has been intensified by the territorial claims put forward by it, which encroach on our northern borders. The promise of an additional \$8 billion of funding over the next five years looks good on its face, however, the funding plan that has been put forward has been woefully underwhelming.

A PBO report shows that from the 2017-18 fiscal year to the 2020-21 fiscal year, there was \$10 billion in lapsed funding. Setting aside the lapsed funding, the additional funding amounts to little more than a top up.

Due to the inflation crisis, which the government has treated with callousness, the impact of increased defence spending will be significantly lessened. Further, the NDP voted against a Conservative motion to increase defence spending to meet our NATO obligations. How can we trust the government to take the funding of our armed forces seriously when it has allied itself with a party that has made clear its lack of support for military spending? Perhaps this is the reason that the announced funding does not bring us up to the requirements of our NATO obligations.

In closing, Saskatchewanians and all Canadians needed a budget that would address the issues facing our energy and agriculture sectors, the cost of living, and our failing health care system. Instead, the Prime Minister chose to buy the NDP's support so that he can continue to govern rather than earn back the trust of Canadians. This budget is symbolic of broken promises and the Liberal track record of leaving Canadians behind.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was going to bring up the Minister of Agriculture coming to Manitoba to meet with cattle producers and talk about providing direct drought relief, which was exceptionally well received in the Prairies, as just one of many examples, and/or the huge increases we have seen in the Department of Agriculture, but my question is in regard to the member's statement on the NATO commitment of 2%.

Does the member not realize that during Stephen Harper's era, it just got to the 1% mark? We have seen dramatic increases under this administration in support of our allied countries. Could the member provide her thoughts on whether she has any regrets that Stephen Harper did not have that same sort of commitment that she seems to have today in terms of supporting NATO?

• (1830)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, what I will say is that the budget makes it very clear that the NDP-Liberal government has no plan to increase defence spending to reach the target of 2% of GDP, which Canada committed to as a NATO member. Despite promising to invest \$6 billion in the Canadian Armed Forces, there is no plan to ensure that the NDP-Liberal government will follow through on any of its commitments.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, but I do need to share some concerns. I might encourage her to dial back some of the things she said.

She said western oil is among the cleanest in the world, but we need to acknowledge that, empirically, tar sands oil is extremely polluting. I would like her to clarify what she meant and tell us what oil she was talking about. Given this problem, does she not think it is about time the west undertook an economic and environmental transition?

The Bloc Québécois has said time and time again that it is prepared to commit whatever money is being spent on fossil fuel every year to supporting the region's energy transition, which would be a huge help to my colleague's constituents.

I would like her to comment on that.

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, the simple answer is no, I do not agree with that member. I believe that we should be developing our resources here in Canada to meet the needs of not only our country but the world, when it comes to ethically produced and developed oil.

From the beginning, the Liberal government has been anti-energy. Its policies have been destructive to the energy sector in my home province of Saskatchewan and the west.

I would urge this colleague to reconsider his stance on the ethically produced oil within our own country.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, just weeks ago, the Conservatives were in the House arguing on an opposition day that we need to increase the defence budget in a way that, according to the PBO, would cost more than \$30 billion, but then they oppose dental care and they oppose investments in child care.

If the hon. member had a choice, which programs would the Conservatives cut first? They are certainly not standing up for people. Would they cut dental care, child care or the \$8-billion increase to military spending?

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, one of the important things to note in this debate is that after two years, the Liberal government has still not demonstrated any national leadership. This has caused provincial governments to have to spend more on health care. I truly do believe that, with the dental care program that the Liberals negotiated with their NDP counterparts to put into the budget, they are attempting to infringe on provincial jurisdiction. Provinces have been bearing the brunt of dealing with COVID and now the government is repaying them by trying to infringe on their jurisdiction.

I would encourage that member to continue to hold those members to account for the decisions they are making.

• (1835)

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to rise to talk about budget 2022, or what the Liberals are calling “A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable”. I thought I would put that audacious claim to the test against reality on the ground.

Inflation is at a generational high. House prices are out of reach for most first-time buyers. The price of gas is soaring, at \$2.36 a litre in my home in the Lower Mainland. Now interest rates are creeping up, with the promise of more to come as the Bank of Canada seeks to fight inflation. This is hardly a formula for making life more affordable.

We are going to hear in a minute about what the current Minister of Finance says, but I want to draw attention to what the former minister of finance has said now that he is no longer tethered to the talking points of the Liberal Party. This is what he said about the government of which he used to be a part: “So much time and energy was spent on finding ways to redistribute Canada's wealth that there was little attention given to the importance of increasing our collective prosperity—let alone developing a disciplined way of thinking and acting on the problem.”

There we go. This is what Bill Morneau said recently to the C.D. Howe Institute. The emphasis is on wealth distribution, not on wealth creation. When we talk about dividing the pie, we are not talking about growing the pie. That thinking has led to reduced economic productivity numbers.

Let us compare ourselves with our biggest trading partner, the United States. There, the average worker earns \$67,000 a year. In Canada it is only \$50,000, a 25% lower productivity number. The average American worker pumps \$66 per hour worked into the national GDP. In Canada, it is only \$50, so again, there is a 20% reduction. This lag in productivity is Canada's Achilles heel, and I am so happy that the current Minister of Finance has acknowledged that in her budget report.

I will get to that in a minute, but first I want to talk about housing. We are all happy to hear that the government has finally acknowledged that economic fundamentals are at play, that the free market can help us find solutions and that the federal government can help by leveraging monetary policy in a way that helps private enterprise find solutions. Here is a quote from page vi of the budget report:

Over the next ten years, we will double the number of new homes we build. This must become a great national effort, and it will demand a new spirit of collabora-

tion—provinces and territories; cities and towns; the private sector and non-profits all working together with us to build the homes that Canadians need.

This sounds very optimistic, but again I want to test this against reality on the ground.

My riding of Langley—Aldergrove has been ground zero for Canada's housing affordability crisis, but there is also a housing construction boom going on thanks to the many hard-working men and women in the housing industry who are answering the call to meet the demand for new housing. I want to highlight the work of one company and one man in particular, Mr. Shawn Bouchard, who heads Quadra Homes, one of the bigger builders in the Lower Mainland. He and his business partners stepped up to the Prime Minister's challenge for private enterprise to come up with big ideas to solve the housing affordability crisis.

This is what he and his partners have done. They have taken one of their upcoming for-profit market condo projects and want to convert it into an affordable rental housing project. They put in an application with the Township of Langley and the township agreed with them. It has contributed \$27 million to the project in the form of forgone fees and charges. Now Mr. Bouchard and his partners are looking to the federal government to come to the table too, in the spirit of collaboration that the Minister of Finance likes to talk about. All they are looking for is a guaranteed long-term, low-interest mortgage commitment from CMHC through the rental construction financing initiative. However, they put in a presentation to the Minister of Housing and are being ignored.

I advocated for it. I contacted the minister's office and we are being ignored. I met with Mr. Bouchard on the weekend, and he and his partners have had to make a final investment decision. They are going back to a market condo project. So much for creative thinking; so much for collaboration. Once again, the government gets an A for announcements and an F on delivery.

• (1840)

I want to talk about what the minister has been saying about investing in the green transition. She said that climate change is “an existential challenge. That means it is also an economic [reality].” Well, being from the Fraser Valley, I probably know that better than any member of Parliament, with all the flooding that we had recently.

Government Orders

I, together with some of my colleagues, all Conservative MPs from the area, met with Mayor Braun six or eight weeks before the flooding happened. He pointed out that what was required to beef up the dike systems protecting his area would be about \$1 billion. It sounds like a lot of money, but now that the flooding has happened, and nobody knew it was going to happen or how bad it would be, it is now \$5 billion just to do the repairs. That is what is in the budget, but if the Minister of Emergency Preparedness had been paying attention, he would have known that for \$1 billion, the problem could have been solved. Now we are just going to repair the damage that has been done, but the dikes still need to be seismically upgraded. Again, it is an A for announcement and an F on delivery. That seems to be the practice of this government.

With the couple of minutes I have left, I want to talk about what the Minister of Finance calls Canada's Achilles heel, which is our lagging productivity numbers. Now, we have heard from witnesses in committee that Canada indeed does have a highly educated workforce. We have the best research universities in the country. We have lots of potential to compete with Silicon Valley. However, here is the problem: While we are very good at technology start-up, we are not very good at technology ramping up and scaling up into productive corporations. Investment dollars follow great ideas, and great ideas follow investment dollars. That, unfortunately, is happening in the United States, in the European Union and, sadly, also in China. In an exchange I had with one of the witnesses at committee, I said, "Are you saying that a company like Huawei gives research grants to universities and then walks out the back door with the intellectual property assets?" He said, "Well, there is just one small correction: It walks out the front door with them."

I am very encouraged that the Minister of Finance is now recognizing this as a problem. She said, "This is a well-known Canadian problem—and an insidious one. It is time for Canada to tackle it.... We will encourage small Canadian companies to get bigger. We will help Canadians and Canadian companies to develop new IP—and to turn their new ideas into new businesses and new jobs." Notably, she does not say "in Canada for Canadians". I am assuming that was just an oversight, but perhaps not.

I want to end on a positive note, because I am a positive kind of person. I am hopeful that, with the Minister of Finance now putting in writing her acknowledgement that Canada has a productivity problem, the government is now going to get serious about solving the problem. Then again, given the well-known emphasis on dividing the pie rather than growing it, I am not holding my breath.

I am sorry, but that is as positive as I can be about this budget.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to talk about housing prices and get the member's reflections on this. The free market has allowed people to use homes as investments. Like his riding, my riding has seen a huge boom in construction. However, the people who need housing are not the ones buying it; it is the people who are sinking money into it to make money back.

Would the member and the Conservative Party think about restricting the amount of property that investors can actually own and speculate on?

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, we also need rental properties. A lot of these investors are renting properties out, which is satisfying a market demand, so I am not that worried about it, to be honest.

• (1845)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): 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 report stage of the bill now before the House.

[Translation]

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

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. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I would like a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The recorded division will also apply to Motion No. 2.

The next question is on Motion No. 3. A vote on this motion applies to Motions Nos. 6 to 43. A negative vote on Motion No. 3 requires the question to be put on Motion No. 4.

[Translation]

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. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 6 to 43.

The next question is on Motion No. 44. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 45 to 63.

[English]

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

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded division.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The recorded division will also apply to Motions Nos. 45 to 63.

At this time the House should proceed to the taking of the deferred division at the report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to order made on Thursday, November 25, 2021, the recorded division stands deferred until Tuesday, June 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent at this time to call it seven o'clock, so we could adjourn and go into Adjournment Proceedings.

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

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

[English]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to be one of the members of Parliament who, along with four Senators, are working on the Special Joint Committee on the Declaration of Emergency. This committee is one of very few that requires all its members and staff to take an oath of secrecy in order to allow them to work with sensitive information and secret documents.

After a couple of meetings, the media started reporting that the Liberal government will not reveal what information led it to use the Emergencies Act to end the protests this winter, citing cabinet confidentiality in its response to legal challenges. After discussing this issue during the committee meetings, it became obvious that the Liberal members of the committee were not prepared to permit the release of any government documents either.

My Conservative colleague, the member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, moved a motion that asked to throw light on the security assessments and legal opinions the government relied on when deciding to invoke the Emergencies Act for the first time in Canadian history. Members think that sounds reasonable, right? A committee that has to get to the bottom of the decision chain and find out why the Emergencies Act was invoked and how its powers were used has the right to review all the documents that the government possesses. This is how a democracy works. Unfortunately, not in this country under the rule of the Prime Minister. Most of the witnesses who appeared before our committee did not want to answer our relevant and reasonable questions. They hid behind lawyer-client privilege and cabinet confidentiality.

Adjournment Proceedings

When I brought this issue to the House of Commons chamber and asked the Minister of Emergency Preparedness what the Prime Minister was hiding this time from Canadians, he repeated the same mantra, “there is certain information, such as lawyer-client privilege, which is respected and well established in the law in this country.” Who is the client here?

My constituents email and call my office daily. They share their concerns related to the study of the declaration of emergency committee. The Prime Minister, who promised to run the government open by default, must respect the public will and produce the documents that led him to believe that our police forces were not able to handle the situation without the invocation of the act. The PM and his government have been weakened by the changing narratives.

To date, the RCMP commissioner, OPP commissioner, and the interim and former Ottawa police chiefs have confirmed that they have never asked the government to invoke the act. The mayor of Gatineau also confirmed that neither she nor the Gatineau police requested the use of the act. These statements directly contradict the statements made by the government, which continues to justify the use of overreaching powers.

Ultimately, the question to put to the government is as follows: Now that we have a study that will prove how misinformed the public was by the government when the Prime Minister decided to use the act for his political benefit, what is the government hiding?

• (1850)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the government is hiding nothing. In fact, what we see are Conservatives who have opposed the use of the Emergencies Act and every mechanism they can create in their minds. They want to try to put a Conservative spin on it and say the Emergencies Act was not necessary.

There is no convincing them otherwise. They were biased going into committee. They already know what their own conclusions would be, and that is what they will advocate for. It does not matter what the public inquiry or special committee come up with. I sat in on one of the committees. It is pure politics. We are seeing political gamesmanship from the Conservatives.

They do not understand the harm to our economy, whether it was at the Ontario international border crossing or Manitoba's border crossing. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars every day. They do not care. They want to play political games on this issue. They knew their position prior to going to committee.

Yes, there is a special joint committee because there is an open government. We are following the law that was put into place. What I can say from first-hand experience is that, the day after it was put into place, I saw members of police forces providing information to those who were protesting.

Adjournment Proceedings

We saw a relatively peaceful end because of the legislation. The threat was still there. The member does not take into consideration the harm that was being caused in downtown Ottawa. The invocation of the Emergencies Act had a very positive outcome. That is completely discarded by the Conservatives.

As opposed to being so lopsided and determined to try to say this was wrong, if they opened their collective mind, I suspect we would see more productivity at the special joint committee, which I have had the opportunity to be a part of for one evening. I witnessed the behaviour from the Conservatives at that particular meeting.

The Prime Minister, just like all members of the Liberal caucus, wants to see and is anxious to see the reports that come forward. We understand how important it was to be there to protect our economy and to protect the jobs. The Province of Ontario declared an emergency. The City of Ottawa declared an emergency. The Conservative Party does not care.

The Province of Manitoba, three days prior, did send a letter pleading for assistance. Yes, they did not state something specific, but was begging for Ottawa to get engaged and do something because of the tens of millions of dollars being lost at the Emerson border.

We take the issue seriously. We have from the very beginning, and we will continue to as we review the process of its implementation.

• (1855)

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, listening to my friend, his comments are completely off topic, which is par for the course for him. To take a page from the Liberal government that it ought not to take any lessons from the Conservative members who challenge the Liberal government on a daily basis in question period, perhaps he should listen to his own rhetoric. The bottom line is, if he has nothing to hide, why are Liberals consistently doing things to conceal documents that are relevant to this particular study?

Let us look at the SNC-Lavalin scandal. Let us look at the WE scandal or the Winnipeg labs scandal, where they actually had to sue the Speaker of the House. This is the pattern of the government. It is not about accountability. We want to get to the truth. Canadians want to get to the truth.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. We have actually put in a mechanism that would enable the Conservatives to see what they want in regard to the Winnipeg lab. The mechanism is there. It is the very same mechanism that Stephen Harper brought in. However, giving them what they want is not good enough, because the Conservative Party wants to create scandals where there are no scandals. It is an attitude that the Conservative Party has adopted. Even when we give the Conservatives the things they want, it is not good enough.

I am suggesting that members should start putting Canadians ahead of the partisan politics they have been playing with respect to these very important issues. If they did that, I believe they would get better support, quite frankly.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am rising today to follow up on the question I asked last week in regard to Ukraine and the increase in sex trafficking of women and girls. I pointed out that during the war and conflict, women and youth are often at increased risk of exploitation.

The U.S. “2021 Trafficking in Persons Report” notes that Ukraine has been a long-time source country for human trafficking victims. It states:

[T]he conflict in eastern Ukraine and Russia's occupation of Crimea have displaced more than 1.4 million people, and this population is especially vulnerable to human trafficking throughout the country....Traffickers reportedly kidnap women and girls from conflict-affected areas for sex and labor trafficking in Ukraine and Russia. Traffickers target internally displaced persons and subject some Ukrainians to forced labor on territory not under government control, often via kidnapping, torture, and extortion.

This report was from one year ago, before Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Now that millions of women and youth have fled Ukraine, we know that human traffickers have been targeting them.

I asked the minister what specific steps the government was taking to ensure that Ukrainian women and youth seeking refuge in Canada are not being trafficked or exploited. I appreciate that the Minister of Foreign Affairs agrees with the gravity of the situation, but I was disappointed that the only step she could commit to was raising it further with her G7 counterparts.

Canada is welcoming Ukrainian refugees to Canada. For sure there are traffickers looking to take advantage of this. We know that traffickers have already been trying to recruit women and girls from the refugee camps along the borders of Ukraine.

Further, once in Canada, unaccompanied minors are especially vulnerable to sex trafficking, so as Canada opens its arms to these women and youth seeking shelter, how is it ensuring they are not being lured or forced into sex trafficking? In Poland they receive flyers. Do Ukrainian refugees to Canada receive any sort of information warning them about sex trafficking or exploitation in prostitution when they arrive? Is it in their own language? Where do they go if they know they need help?

Canada's national human trafficking hotline is 1-833-900-1010. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is available in Ukrainian. I am appalled that there does not seem to be any process in place to flag potential cases of sex trafficking.

Adjournment Proceedings

My other great concern when it comes to fighting sex trafficking is that the government ignores one of the most important parts, which is the demand, the sex buyer. Sex trafficking exists only because there is a demand from sex buyers. With the significant number of displaced Ukrainian women and girls, the demand from sex buyers for them has increased. For example, Ireland's largest escort website offers sex buyers the opportunity to live out their "war-inspired fantasies" with Ukrainian women and reports a 250% increase in interest for Ukrainian women.

Valiant Richey, the OSCE special representative and coordinator for combatting trafficking in human beings, warned, "In some countries the spike [in online searches for buying sex from Ukrainian women] was as much as 600 per cent...there was an immediate interest in exploiting them." An example he gave is from a recent operation in Sweden, where of 38 sex buyers who were arrested, 30 were attempting to access Ukrainian women specifically.

However, unlike in Sweden, the Liberal government refuses to tackle the demand from sex buyers. As a result, sex trafficking and gender-based violence increases. Therefore, I ask the government what steps it is taking to ensure that Ukrainian women and girls seeking refuge in Canada are protected from exploitation and sex trafficking.

● (1900)

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I sincerely want to thank the member for Peace River—Westlock for raising this issue, not only in question period recently, but regularly and in an ongoing way. I think he is making a profound difference by raising the issue with gravity and with sincerity, and also by bringing to light the horrendous situation faced by women and girls and others who face the risk of trafficking every day.

Together we deplore Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the vulnerabilities that it has created, with millions of people displaced internally and millions of people who have fled the country and sought refuge in countries all around Europe, with a small number of them coming to Canada. The member is right in his assertion that these people, and women and children particularly, are extremely vulnerable to sex traffickers and other traffickers who would take advantage of their plight.

Should more be done? Yes, but let me talk about a few of the things that we are doing.

We have been in discussions with our G7 partners and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to coordinate actions. In Europe, we have been engaged in exactly the kind of work he was talking about, working at placing protective measures at border crossings, distributing information pamphlets, establishing hotlines and continuing to find ways to decrease the risk for trafficking in persons.

We are, however, concerned that the longer the Russian invasion continues, the more vulnerable refugees will become to exploitation and abuse as they possibly take riskier housing options or transportation routes. We believe that we need to constantly have gender-responsive, victim-centred, trauma-informed and age-appropri-

ate measures and techniques, including protective services, to combat this evil.

To this end, the Government of Canada is supporting initiatives that are aimed at preventing human trafficking at the borders, as well as working with the Government of Ukraine and local NGOs to provide such important information.

As an aside, I was in Chicago on the weekend. I was in a restroom in a restaurant that had a large sign on the mirror, reminding people that if they sensed someone was being trafficked or if they themselves were being forced or exploited in any way, they should call that line. I want more of that in Canada. I think the member has been raising the importance of this issue, and I think the government could continue to do more.

Today I was reading a report from the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence, Pramila Patten, who just today was speaking on the crisis in Europe, which is turning into a human trafficking crisis and, I would say, a nightmare. She called for a coordinated, coherent system of working with other countries, and just as the minister said in question period in response, she said that we need to do more. That needs to happen in Canada. It is happening in Canada as we continue to support hotlines and as we continue to support the human trafficking hotline, which is a national confidential service and which does in fact have interpretation in Ukrainian for anyone who needs it.

These are the kinds of things that we want to do, but we need to heighten the awareness around the world. Every Canadian needs to be vigilant. Everyone who is helping a Ukrainian refugee or visitor come to this country needs to be aware they are vulnerable, and we need to take our place.

Again, I want to thank the member for raising the issue.

● (1905)

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, the government often talks a good game, but getting it done is always a bit more of a challenge.

When it comes to fighting sex trafficking and forced prostitution, the Liberals have a strong anti-feminist policy of supporting sex buyers and decriminalizing them.

Adjournment Proceedings

Sweden is an example of actual feminist policy on sex trafficking. For years, their feminist-led government has effectively reduced sex trafficking and exploitation by tackling the demand for sexual services. France has now joined with Sweden to encourage other countries to adopt this approach, which puts women's equity first by targeting the purchasers of sex and not the sellers.

My question to the minister and the parliamentary secretary is this: Do they support Sweden and France's approach to sex trafficking that puts women's equality first, or will they continue to stand with the men who buy sex and exploit women?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I was so complimentary to the member in my response, so I expected something back in return and I do not want to take a right turn. I actually want to keep the issue on Ukraine. I do not want to get into all the other issues he has raised, because I do not think that is what we are about today. What we are about today is ensuring that women and children—and men and boys—who may be victims of trafficking find protection.

Canada has a program. The member is well aware of it. It is the national strategy to combat human trafficking. We continue to work

with a program of NGOs and partners in Canada and around the world to ensure that we continue to do this.

A broader discussion on sex workers, the sex industry and the sex trade is absolutely necessary, but I do not want to mix apples and oranges at this time. These are different issues, although they may be related. I think it is very important that we tackle the issue of millions of vulnerable Ukrainians who need safety and need our protection, and we will be there.

I look forward to working with the hon. member in that regard.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted.

[*Translation*]

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:07 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Monday, June 6, 2022

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Constitution Act, 2022 (representation of Quebec)	
Bill C-246. Second reading	6109
Mr. Kelloway	6109
Mr. Reid	6110
Mr. Julian	6111
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	6112
Mr. Champoux	6114
Division on motion deferred	6115
Sitting Suspended	
(The sitting of the House was suspended at 11:49 a.m.) ..	6115
Sitting resumed	
(The House resumed at 12:03 p.m.)	6115

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Budget Implementation Act, 2022, No. 1	
Bill C-19—Time Allocation Motion	
Mr. Holland	6115
Motion	6115
Mr. Brassard	6115
Mr. Boissonnault	6115
Mr. Therrien	6116
Mr. Julian	6116
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	6116
Mr. Dong	6117
Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	6117
Mrs. DeBellefeuille	6118
Mr. Arnold	6119
Mr. Savard-Tremblay	6119
Mr. Johns	6119
Mr. McCauley	6120
Motion agreed to	6121
Report Stage	
Bill C-19. Report stage	6122
Mr. Lamoureux	6122
Mr. MacKinnon	6122
Mr. Perron	6122
Mr. Lamoureux	6123
Ms. Gaudreau	6124
Mr. Boulerville	6124
Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	6124
Mr. Lamoureux	6125
Mr. Lawrence	6126
Mr. Masse	6126
Mr. Lawrence	6126

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Islamophobia	
Ms. Mathysen	6127
Palestine	
Mr. Arya	6127
Quebec's Disability Awareness Week	
Ms. Chabot	6127
Severe Thunderstorms on May 21	
Mr. Drouin	6127
Wedding Congratulations	
Mr. Aitchison	6128
Islamophobia	
Mr. Anandasangaree	6128
Ontario's Best Butter Tart Festival	
Mr. Chambers	6128
Honorary Doctorate for Labradorian Historian	
Ms. Jones	6128
Islamophobia	
Mr. Reid	6129
Funeral Home in Newmarket	
Mr. Van Bynen	6129
Sustainable Hunting and Fishing	
Mr. Calkins	6129
Juno Beach Centre	
Mr. Paul-Hus	6129
Chilean Community	
Ms. Martinez Ferrada	6129
Juno Beach	
Ms. Blaney	6130
Québec Cinéma Gala	
Mr. Champoux	6130
Islamophobia	
Mrs. Vecchio	6130
Islamophobia	
Mr. Noormohamed	6130

ORAL QUESTIONS

The Economy	
Mr. Berthold	6131
Ms. Freeland	6131
Mr. Berthold	6131
Ms. Freeland	6131
Mr. Berthold	6131

Ms. Freeland	6131	Mr. van Koeverden	6136
Mr. Albas	6131	Mr. Ellis	6136
Mr. Wilkinson	6131	Mr. van Koeverden	6137
Mr. Albas	6131	Ms. Lantsman	6137
Mr. Wilkinson	6132	Mr. Alghabra	6137
Public Safety		Ms. Lantsman	6137
Mr. Therrien	6132	Mr. Alghabra	6137
Mr. Mendicino	6132	Passports	
Mr. Therrien	6132	Ms. Chabot	6137
Mr. Mendicino	6132	Ms. Gould	6137
Mr. Singh	6132	Ms. Chabot	6137
Mr. Mendicino	6132	Ms. Gould	6137
Mr. Singh	6132	Official Languages	
Mr. Hussen	6133	Mrs. Vien	6137
The Economy		Ms. Petitpas Taylor	6138
Mr. Chambers	6133	Mr. Godin	6138
Ms. Freeland	6133	Ms. Petitpas Taylor	6138
Mr. Chambers	6133	Mr. Godin	6138
Ms. Freeland	6133	Ms. Petitpas Taylor	6138
Ms. Findlay	6133	Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Wilkinson	6133	Ms. Lapointe	6138
Ms. Findlay	6133	Mr. Miller	6138
Ms. Freeland	6134	Ethics	
Mr. Stewart	6134	Mr. Bezan	6138
Mr. Guilbeault	6134	Ms. Ng	6139
Mr. Stewart	6134	Mr. Bragdon	6139
Ms. Gould	6134	Ms. Ng	6139
The Environment		Mr. Bezan	6139
Ms. Pauzé	6134	Ms. Ng	6139
Mr. Guilbeault	6134	Diversity and Inclusion	
Ms. Pauzé	6134	Mr. Zuberi	6139
Mr. Guilbeault	6134	Mr. Hussen	6139
Ms. Michaud	6135	Indigenous Affairs	
Mr. Guilbeault	6135	Ms. Gazan	6139
Justice		Mr. Miller	6139
Mr. Brock	6135	International Development	
Mr. Lametti	6135	Mr. Vuong	6140
Public Safety		Mr. Sajjan	6140
Mr. Brock	6135	Afzaal Family	
Mr. Mendicino	6135	The Speaker	6140
Justice		Similarities Between Bill C-243 and Bill S-211	
Mr. Lloyd	6135	The Speaker	6140
Mr. Mendicino	6135		
Mr. MacGregor	6136		
Mr. Mendicino	6136		
The Economy			
Ms. Blaney	6136		
Ms. Freeland	6136		
Rural Economic Development			
Mr. Arseneault	6136		
Ms. Hutchings	6136		
Health			
Mr. Ellis	6136		
		ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS	
		Government Response to Petitions	
		Mr. Lamoureux	6141
		Interparliamentary Delegations	
		Mr. Sorbara	6141

Committees of the House**Science and Research**

Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North) 6141

Petitions**Vaccines**

Mr. Arnold 6141

Human Rights

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) 6141

Charitable Organizations

Mr. McCauley 6141

Juno Beach

Mr. Schiefke 6141

Vaccines

Mr. Abouttaif 6141

Taxation

Mr. MacGregor 6142

Climate Change

Mr. MacGregor 6142

Natural Resources

Mr. Patzer 6142

Vaccines

Mr. Patzer 6142

Charitable Organizations

Mr. Caputo 6142

Justice

Mr. Brock 6142

Vaccine Mandates

Mr. Muys 6142

Climate Change

Mr. Lamoureux 6143

The Economy

Mr. Viersen 6143

Vaccine Mandates

Mr. Viersen 6143

Charitable Organizations

Mr. Viersen 6143

Protection of Human Life

Mr. Viersen 6143

Human Rights

Mr. Genuis 6143

Taxation

Mr. Genuis 6143

Falun Gong

Mr. Genuis 6144

Human Organ Trafficking

Mr. Genuis 6144

Questions on the Order Paper

Mr. Lamoureux 6144

Request for Emergency Debate**Impact of War in Ukraine on Global Food Supply**

Ms. McPherson 6144

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker 6144

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**Budget Implementation Act, 2022, No. 1**

Bill C-19. Report stage 6145

Mr. Lawrence 6145

Mr. Lamoureux 6145

Mr. Barsalou-Duval 6146

Mr. Boulerville 6146

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) 6146

Mr. Schiefke 6146

Ms. Pauzé 6148

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) 6148

Mr. Bachrach 6149

Mr. Stewart 6149

Mr. Lamoureux 6150

Ms. Pauzé 6151

Ms. McPherson 6151

Mr. Turnbull 6151

Mr. Dalton 6153

Ms. Chabot 6153

Ms. Gazan 6153

Mr. Deltell 6154

Mr. Lamoureux 6155

Mr. Barsalou-Duval 6155

Mr. Albas 6156

Mr. Van Bynen 6156

Mrs. Roberts 6157

Mr. Perron 6157

Mr. Bachrach 6158

Mrs. DeBellefeuille 6158

Mr. Lamoureux 6159

Mr. Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry) 6159

Ms. McPherson 6160

Ms. Jones 6160

Mr. Genuis 6161

Ms. Gazan 6162

Mr. Perron 6162

Mr. Motz 6162

Mr. Lamoureux 6163

Mr. Simard 6164

Mr. Boulerville 6164

Ms. McPherson 6164

Mr. Lamoureux 6166

Mr. Arnold 6166

Mr. Morrice 6166

Mr. Simard 6166

Mr. Lamoureux 6168

Mr. Bachrach 6168

Mr. Morrice 6168

Mrs. Block 6169

Mr. Lamoureux	6170
Mr. Perron	6170
Ms. Gazan	6170
Mr. Van Popta	6171
Mr. Hardie	6172
Division on Motion No. 1 deferred	6172
Division on Motion No. 3 deferred	6172
Division on Motion No. 44 deferred	6173

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

Public Safety

Mr. Brock	6173
Mr. Lamoureux	6173

Foreign Affairs

Mr. Viersen	6174
Mr. Oliphant	6175

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