



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

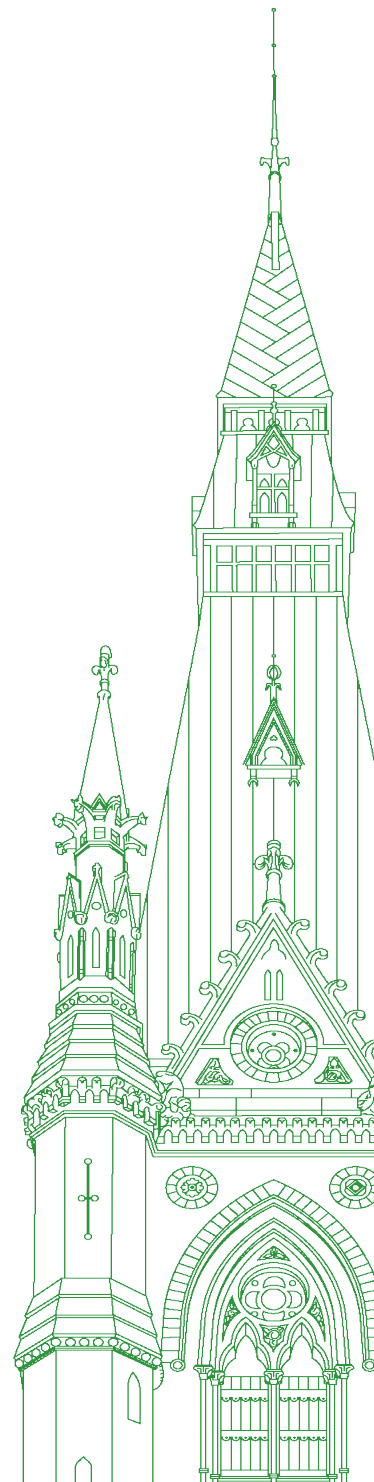
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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, September 27, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)
[English]

PETITIONS

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling two petitions today on behalf of British Colombians.

The first petition is regarding human trafficking. The petitioners call upon the Government of Canada to strengthen the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act to address Canada's significant shortcomings on human trafficking, which were embarrassingly highlighted by the U.S. State Department's 2022 Trafficking in Persons Report. The petitioners also call upon the Government of Canada to remove any references to human trafficking from Bill C-5.

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am presenting today is regarding pregnancy centres. Many Canadian women depend on pregnancy centres for access to counselling, practical prenatal classes and necessities such as food, cribs, strollers, diapers and birth control. Residents are calling on the Government of Canada to protect the charitable tax status of pregnancy centres and to simply leave them alone.

HUMAN ORGAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to table three petitions before the House.

The first petition deals with the issue of forced organ harvesting and trafficking. The petitioners have submitted this petition in support of Bill S-223, a bill that would make it a criminal offence for a person to go abroad to receive an organ taken without consent.

This bill has passed in the Senate three times and has already passed in the House in a previous Parliament in its current form. It

is currently stalled before the foreign affairs committee. I know the petitioners are hoping that this is the petition that gets it done.

• (1005)

CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the second petition I am tabling deals with the issue of a commitment that was made in the Liberal election platform on page 4. The commitment was to revoke charitable status from organizations that take a particular position on a contentious social issue.

The petitioners are concerned that this proposal would have broad implications, such as removing the charitable status of schools, hospitals, refugee support organizations and many other organizations that play an important role in our communities. The petitioners want to see the determination of charitable status continue to be done on a politically and ideologically neutral basis.

The petitioners call on the government to not proceed with the proposed values test that was contained within its platform. They also want to see the government positively reaffirm its commitment to freedom of speech.

FALUN GONG

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the third petition I am tabling is with respect to the persecution of Falun Gong. The petitioners are highlighting the persecution of Falun Gong in the petition I am tabling. They are deeply concerned about it. They want to see the government take measures on it, which include combatting forced organ harvesting and trafficking and using the Magnitsky act to target individuals who have been involved in this persecution.

I commend these petitions to the consideration of hon. members.

* * *

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 ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

*Business of Supply***PRIVILEGE**

ALLEGED THREATS AGAINST A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the question of privilege raised on September 22, 2022, by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan regarding comments made on social media by a member of the parliamentary press gallery.

In raising his question of privilege, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan explained that after he asked a question during oral questions, a journalist tweeted comments that he considered personally threatening. The member asserted that in the current social climate, these comments could incite some people to violence.

[Translation]

The member further stated that the journalist's status as an accredited member of the press gallery gives him special access to the parliamentary precinct. In the member's view, the idea of crossing paths with someone who has threatened him worries him so much that he thinks it would impede his ability to perform his duties.

The House leader of the official opposition and the members for Kildonan—St. Paul and Louis-Saint-Laurent expressed their support for the member's statement, noting that members are increasingly dealing with similar unacceptable situations.

[English]

The Chair takes this situation very seriously. Elected officials are regularly subject to comments on social media that go beyond criticism and political debate. Some comments are sometimes extreme and occasionally even violent.

[Translation]

Parliamentarians, their staff and those who report on parliamentary activities should seek to raise the level of public debate and resist the temptation to trivialize or oversimplify important issues, as it can occur on social media.

[English]

In this instance, the Chair will not address issues of security or the threats experienced by elected officials since the Chair's role, in deliberating on questions of privilege, is limited to determining whether, in light of the facts brought before the House, there is a prima facie breach of privilege and whether this matter should take precedence over all other House business. Therefore, in this case, the Chair will instead seek to determine whether the journalist's comments about the member were designed to intimidate him and infringe on his ability to perform his parliamentary functions.

[Translation]

Regarding cases where members are obstructed, interfered with or intimidated by non-physical means *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, third edition, states the following on page 111: "In ruling on such matters, the Speaker examines the effect the incident or event had on the Member's ability to fulfill his or her parliamentary responsibilities."

• (1010)

[English]

The Chair has reviewed the statement by the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan with these key principles in mind. The facts outlined in the House do not appear to show that the member was impeded in performing his parliamentary functions. Therefore, I cannot find a prima facie question of privilege.

As for the member's second point, the Chair will not interfere with the rules governing the press gallery. The Chair is convinced that press gallery officials will continue to uphold among its members its usual high standards of professionalism.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone who influences public debate that they have a responsibility to consider the consequences of their remarks and to choose their words judiciously and respectfully.

I thank the members for their attention.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC) moved:

That, in the opinion of the House, given that the government's tax increases on gas, home heating and, indirectly, groceries, will fuel inflation, and that the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported the carbon tax costs 60% of households more than they get back, the government must eliminate its plan to triple the carbon tax.

He said: Mr. Speaker, today we are debating the government's decision to break its electoral promise by tripling the carbon tax on gas, home heating, groceries and all other essential items Canadians need to survive.

We have to recognize that this is a tax increase that will apply everywhere in Canada and will increase the prices in every province, even in the provinces where there is no refund from the federal government.

This tax hike comes at a time when inflation is at a 40-year high and nine out of 10 young people who do not already own a home do not think they ever will. It comes at a time when students are living in shelters because they cannot afford rent. It comes at a time when four out of five Canadians have to cut back on food because they cannot afford groceries. It comes at a time when Canadians cannot even fill up their car or truck to go to work. This is exactly the wrong time to raise taxes on paycheques, gas and other things.

[English]

Let us start by talking about fried green tomatoes. The little miracles of Manotick, SunTech tomatoes are from a beautiful little tomato farm about 40 minutes south of here, in the heart of the great Carleton riding, where some entrepreneurial farmers opened a greenhouse to sell beautiful local produce to residents in the area. They are delicious and they are legendary right across the region.

Unfortunately, the farmers learned that the carbon tax from the government would apply to the CO₂ they release into the greenhouse. Now, of course, CO₂ is required to expand growth and increase the produce that comes out of the greenhouse. This CO₂ does not even go into the atmosphere; it goes into the plant life, something the Liberals may have missed in grade 4 science class. The reality is that it makes the tomatoes more expensive.

What is the consequence of the tax on these tomatoes? Well, it is, at times, more expensive to buy a Manotick tomato in Manotick than a Mexican tomato in Manotick. Why? It is because the taxes are lower in Mexico, even though the pollution is higher. What does this price signal do? It tells the customer to buy a tomato from the other side of North America, which has to be trained and trucked all the way up to Canada, burning fossil fuels the whole way there and increasing emissions along the way.

What happened to the local 100-mile diet that environmentalists used to promote? Well, this tax makes that diet more difficult and less affordable, the big logical fallacy of the Liberal carbon tax. It drives up the cost of domestic production and drives that production to foreign, more polluting jurisdictions that then require higher transportation costs and more emissions to bring products back to Canadian consumers here at home.

Our approach should be exactly the opposite. We should bring production home and have our food, our energy and our resources right here in Canada.

Let us look at the three falsehoods of the Liberal carbon tax.

The Liberals said it would help us meet our targets for emissions reduction. They have now been in power for seven years and have not hit a single solitary emissions reduction target. In fact, even in the year 2020, when large parts of our economy and our population were locked down and unable to even drive, they came nowhere close to reaching their targets. Let me tell the House how far they missed them. They missed them by 57 megatonnes. That is equivalent to all of the emissions of the four Atlantic provinces or equivalent to our entire electricity sector.

● (1015)

In other words, if we had turned off all of the electricity in Canada in that year, in addition to having been locked down during COVID, then we would have still fallen just short of meeting the targets the Liberals set for themselves. In other words, the carbon tax did not hit those targets. It did not come anywhere close and, in fact, we expect the emissions will again start rising now that the lockdowns are fortunately behind us. That is the first falsehood.

If the Liberals were really serious about reducing emissions, they had many options. They could have signalled their support for small modular nuclear reactors so that we could use our prodigious

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know-how to supply Canadians with emissions-free nuclear energy. We have the biggest supply of uranium as feedstock right in Saskatchewan and the best nuclear engineers right here in Ontario. We have a need for this electricity in provinces nationwide. We have provinces that have signed on to memoranda of understanding to replace high-emitting sources of electricity with small modular nuclear reactors, but of course our Minister of the Environment has said that he does not even agree with nuclear. I do not know where he expects electricity to come from, but certainly nobody is going to invest in creating these modular reactors if the Minister of the Environment himself is against them.

The Liberals could have backed up carbon capture and storage, of which the Canadian energy industry is leading in the world. It is the industry putting carbon back in the ground where it came from, the carbon trunk, which allows that carbon to go back to geological formations where it can be safely stored. The government was slow to support it and insufficient in that support.

The Liberals could have incentivized industry to further reduce emissions. They could have also used Canada's clean energy production to displace dirty foreign production. We have 1,300 trillion cubic feet of natural gas right here in Canada. With the hydroelectricity in Quebec, Newfoundland and British Columbia, we can liquefy that natural gas without any emissions at all. In fact, we have the shortest shipping distances from North America to both Asia and Europe, allowing us to reduce the cost and the emissions necessary to get that energy to those markets. That clean Canadian natural gas could displace dirty coal-fired electricity around the world.

Liberals might want to dispute this today, but that was their contention not long ago. The Prime Minister showed up for a photo op to take credit for the previous Conservative government's approval of the LNG Canada project in northern British Columbia. He said at the time, "We know LNG produces...half the amount of carbon emissions as coal." He then said that this project would have the effect of reducing global emissions by displacing dirtier sources of electricity in Asia. This is the quote: "So by sending Canadian LNG to markets that are today powered by coal, we will help those jurisdictions transition away from this energy source."

According to Rob Seeley, president of E3Merge Consulting, "for every unit of GHGs that British Columbia produces to get that LNG to market, the overseas production of GHGs goes down by a factor of 10." In other words, by replacing foreign coal-fired with our Canadian energy, we can reduce emissions.

Further, this same expert said:

Shipping LNG at design capacity from Kitimat to displace coal-generated electricity in China would reduce global GHG emissions by 60 to 90 million tonnes annually, equivalent to the annual production of GHGs in all of B.C....

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Would that not be something? What an achievement that would be.

By the way, 60 million to 90 million tonnes of greenhouse gases is exactly what the Liberals promised the carbon tax would eliminate. It did not happen, but this project would have allowed it to. However, projects like this are not able to go ahead because of government gatekeepers standing in the way.

When this Prime Minister took office, there were 15 LNG proposals on the table. Not a single one has been completed, seven years later. Imagine the emissions we could have reduced and the paycheques we could have grown if we had gotten out of the way and allowed these projects to proceed.

● (1020)

We could export more of our civilian-grade uranium, so that foreign jurisdictions could shut down dirty coal and replace it with clean Canadian energy. We could support Quebec and Manitoba as they attempt to export and get better revenues for their hydroelectricity. There are countless ways we can combat the emissions of our country and the world without taxing and punishing our citizens, and if the Liberals had done that, maybe they would not have missed every single target they have set.

The second promise the Liberals made is that the carbon tax would make everyone better off. Everyone would pay this tax, but there would be a cheque in the mail that would compensate them for it. It sounds like one of those scam emails that I get that say, if I just give them my bank card information, they will make a big deposit and I will be rich, and it is always from an uncle on the other side of the world somewhere. It turns out that the cheque bounced.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, and I am looking at the numbers right here on the table he set out, the net cost to Albertans of this carbon tax when it is fully implemented will be \$2,282 per household. In Saskatchewan it will be \$1,464 per household, and in Manitoba, it will be \$1,145 per household. In Ontario it will be \$1,461. That is in net costs, so it is with the rebates the government has promised.

That is, by the way, the least of the problem. For the six provinces that do not get any rebate, they will be far worse off. We must remember that the carbon tax may be provincially administered in British Columbia, Quebec and some other regions of the country. However, it is federally imposed, so even if provinces have their own regimes, they will have to triple their carbon tax in order to meet the mandate the federal government has put in place, and they will get no rebate at all. Those provinces will be vastly worse off than the cases I just mentioned.

This, at a time when Canadians cannot pay for their groceries, cannot gas their vehicles and are fearing the cost that winter will hit them with in just a few short months. This is exactly the last time we need to raise a tax. Think about it. The Liberals are proposing to bring in a 40¢-a-litre tax on gasoline. How many of the single mothers, of the working farmers, of the welders or of the waitresses can afford to pay another 40¢ a litre in gas taxes. Every party in this House, except the Conservatives, want to hit those working people with those higher taxes. We will stand in the way. We will fight back. We will defend consumers against this tax.

The final falsehood is that the Liberals said this carbon tax would never go above \$50 a tonne. That was it. They said at \$50 a tonne they would be done. That was before the election. After the election they said the tax would have to be tripled. They said it was so ineffective that they needed to make it three times the size in order to do the job, and that is just what we know about. If they are going to triple the tax after just one broken election promise, we can imagine if they were, God forbid, given another mandate. What surprise would we hear the next day after the election? How high would the tax have to go, a dollar a litre in new taxes or tripling home heating bills?

What other costs would the Liberals surprise Canadians with if they got the chance? They have broken their promise on this. They have broken their promise on income taxes, which they said would go down. They have broken their promise on countless other taxes, and we can expect that they will only break more promises, because they need to raise taxes in order to feed their insatiable appetite for spending.

Canadians will not let them. Conservatives will run on a low-tax agenda in the next election, and we will win and deliver that low-tax agenda.

We forget sometimes that it is our small businesses that will be asked to bear a disproportionate burden. They get no rebate at all. Unlike large industrial corporations that get a complete exemption from the carbon tax, small businesses have to pay it on the cost of heating their restaurants, firing up their stoves in order to feed their patrons, transporting their goods and running their factories.

● (1025)

All of them have to pay those taxes, because they are not big enough to get the exemption that the large industrial corporations have received. Therefore, we can expect more small businesses to make up the difference by having to raise prices on consumers or lower wages on their workers, all making Canadians worse off at a time when they can least afford it.

[Translation]

Small and medium-sized businesses do not get an exemption. The tax will cost them more, three times more if the Liberals stay in power thanks to their coalition partners, the New Democrats. That is why we are going to keep standing up for our small and medium-sized businesses, which are creating jobs and providing goods and services to consumers. The Conservatives will always stand up for small and medium-sized businesses by cancelling this tax increase.

[English]

Of course, this tax comes on top of other taxes. The Liberals propose to raise taxes on paycheques. Starting January 1, they will raise EI and CPP payroll taxes, even though they have enough funds at the current rates to fund both of those programs, including with the regular increased benefits that can be expected. They want to jeopardize the paycheques of Canadians to raise taxes and run big surpluses in the EI account, which they then will use to fund overall government spending rather than to provide workers with protection against unemployment. Conservatives believe that EI should not be a cash cow for government. It should be a protection for our workers, and we will not support any increase in the EI payroll tax.

Our theory, our principle, is that a dollar left in the hands of the person who earned it is always better than in the hands of the politician who taxed it. We want this to be once again a country where hard work pays off, where the person who puts in that extra hour, takes that extra shift or earns that extra bonus keeps that money to give their kids a summer camp or to give their family an opportunity for a small camping trip or, God forbid, to upsize their house or move from an apartment into a place of their own. This should be a country of opportunity, of boundless possibility, for anyone who is prepared to put in the work.

It is appalling to me that a single mom of three earning \$55,000 a year who goes out and earns another dollar loses 80¢ in government clawbacks and taxes. That is according to a study by this very finance department of the current government. We are punishing the people who do the work of this nation.

Our workers deserve rewards for their work. Our small business owners who take risks and mortgage their homes to survive and to supply our communities with services and our people with jobs deserve to keep the fruits of their labour. That is why Conservatives will always stand on the side of the people who work hard, who pay their taxes and who play by the rules. We will put Canadians back in control of their money, their lives, right here in Canada, the freest nation on earth.

• (1030)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I very much enjoyed the speech from the new Conservative leader. However, I noticed there was something missing in the centrepiece of his economic policy, relating to the advice he gave to Canadians to invest in cryptocurrency.

The Leader of the Opposition has refused to answer questions on his advice to Canadians to invest in cryptocurrency as a way to opt out of inflation. Does he stand by that advice today?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the centre of my economic plan is to make government affordable so that life is affordable. The reality is that the cost of government has driven up the cost of living. The half-trillion dollars of inflationary deficits have meant more dollars bidding up the price of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. Inflationary taxes have driven up those costs further.

Business of Supply

The Canadian dollar is and will always be our only national currency. It will be the only currency with which we ever do government business, pay taxes or receive benefits from the government. The problem here today is that this government has been ruining the purchasing power of that dollar by printing cash through inflationary deficits. It has given us a 40-year-high in inflation, which I predicted and warned this government would happen. I will make sure it never happens again.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, during the Leader of the Opposition's speech today, we were very quiet on this side of the House. We did not say a word.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry, but the hon. member has a point. There was quiet when the official Leader of the Opposition was speaking, and the same courtesy is expected when other members speak.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am a tad skeptical about what seems to be the greatest hypocrisy in Canadian politics. I cannot believe the Conservatives would use inflation to try to advance the interests of big oil. That is a first. Leave it to the Conservative Party to come up with that. I remind members that when the conflict in Ukraine started, the Conservative Party told us that the solution was more oil and gas. Now we are dealing with inflation and the Conservatives' solution is more gas, more oil, a stop to climate action and an end to the carbon tax. That is some next-level hypocrisy.

If the Conservatives were serious they would commit to stopping funding fossil fuels. Export Development Canada puts \$14 billion a year directly into the pockets of greedy oil and gas tycoons. The Conservative Party is now saying that \$14 billion is not enough.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member from the centralist Bloc for his question.

The Bloc Québécois wants the federal government to tax Quebecers even more. The Bloc Québécois is yet again advocating for a stronger federal government. That is true. It is—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

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

Can we hear the question, please?

The hon. leader of the official opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois wants to give the federal government more power and wants to further centralize powers here in Ottawa. That is the truth.

Business of Supply

Furthermore, the Bloc Québécois is in favour of foreign oil from Saudi Arabia and other countries. It is against clean energy from Canada.

The Conservative Party supports clean energy here in Canada. We do not support oil that funds foreign dictators.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, when catastrophic climate change hits communities like Lytton, B.C. with wildfires, or just last week with Fiona in the Maritimes, the Conservatives offer only thoughts and prayers. In fact, the leader of the official opposition made no mention of climate change.

Canadians deserve to know what their plan is on climate change because, in response to our questions last night, the leader of the official opposition claimed that they would have technology, not taxes.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Matthew Green: Madam Speaker, what technology does the leader of the official opposition have—

● (1035)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Before the hon. member continues, can we wait until the hon. member finishes the question, so that we can hear the question being asked?

Mr. Matthew Green: Madam Speaker, what magic wand of technology does the leader of the official opposition have that would head off the catastrophic climate change crisis that is impacting communities like Fiona did last week?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, let us start with nuclear technology, zero emission nuclear technology, which can supply electricity to Canadians from coast to coast.

Second, we can expand carbon capture and storage, another thing that the NDP is against.

Third, we should be mining lithium, cobalt, nickel and other minerals necessary for electrification, but do it right here in Canada. Of course, the NDP is against that. It is against mining lithium, cobalt and nickel in Canada. The NDP would rather we import it from coal-burning economies on the other side of the planet that fund foreign dictatorships.

I want those jobs to be here for our people. The member wants higher taxes on the working-class constituents he is supposed to be representing.

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, our leader just finished a whirlwind tour. He did 80 town halls across Canada and spoke with 93,000 Canadians.

Can our hon. colleague tell us some of the stories that he heard first-hand from Canadians about how the Liberals' mismanagement and monetary policies are hurting hard-working Canadians?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for inviting me to Prince George, British Columbia.

I met people across this country who told me incredible stories. Some are getting by, most are falling behind, and there are people in this country who are just hanging on by a thread. Working-class

men are taping up their boots because they cannot afford new ones. A miner in northern Ontario could not afford to diesel up his truck to drive to see his dying parents in Thunder Bay one last time. There are countless stories of this kind right across this country.

These people need hope. Conservatives will transform their hurt into the nation's hope, and we will give them back control of their lives.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, the carbon tax, widely regarded by leading economists as the most efficient way to act on the climate crisis, went up by 2.2¢ per litre this past year. Meanwhile, oil and gas wholesale margins, in other words, profits, went up by over 18¢. Therefore, the increased cost at the pumps is nine times higher due to price gouging by the oil and gas industry, rather than carbon pricing. As a result, in just one example, Imperial Oil recently posted a \$2.4-billion profit, a sixfold increase compared to the same three-month period last year.

Why are the Leader of the Opposition and his party not similarly outraged by this?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, I find the question ironic coming from the Green Party, which, along with the Liberals and NDP, has as its stated purpose higher gas prices. The Green Party wants higher gas prices and it simultaneously complains about those prices. That is the obvious contradiction. The irony is that the member is not against oil company profits. He just thinks it should be foreign oil companies that are making those profits.

We believe in turning dollars for dictators into paycheques for our people by bringing back production here to Canada and then having the highest possible environmental standards so that the production in this country is green and clean for real.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would really encourage the opposition leader to reach out to one of his own members, the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, to talk about the incredible work that is going on, the multi-billion dollar plant for producing electric batteries for vehicles, which will be established in her riding right next door to me, if the member is so concerned about importing products and resources for those batteries.

I will go back to the question from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. She asked the member about his position on cryptocurrency and he did not answer. Can he even just get up and say the word “cryptocurrency” and sit down? Is it even in his vocabulary anymore?

• (1040)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the member talks about electrification facilities in his neighbouring riding. The point I made at the outset is that we need to mine the minerals that go into those vehicles in the first place. That cannot happen if we impose seven- to 10-year delays on the approval of those projects in the first place. The reason countries like Chile, China and others are mining and manufacturing these minerals into a ready state in which they can go into batteries and other electrification is that they have faster approvals.

We can protect our environment and go through all the same steps to ensure a pristine future for our kids, but it should not take seven to 10 years to do it. We can do it quickly, and then we can have the cleanest and greenest production on planet earth.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Winnipeg South.

Here we are on the first opposition day. As many commentators and Canadians have noted, the new Conservative leader has no plan to fight climate change and no plan to make life more affordable for Canadians.

He did not mention the climate crisis once during the leadership race, nor did he have any concrete proposals to support people in need. Contrary to what the opposition leader's highly misleading motion suggests, our tax credit for climate action puts more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadian families.

[English]

We know there are people, members opposite, who are trying to block and delay the government from mitigating the impact of inflation on Canadians. The new Leader of the Opposition said just last week that the new proposed—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I ask members to please keep conversations in the back and not in the chamber.

The hon. parliamentary secretary may continue.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: The new Leader of the Opposition said just last week that the proposed investments in our affordability plan, which would double the GST tax credit, get dental care for those who cannot afford it and provide direct payments to Canadians having trouble paying the rent, were all akin to printing cash. I guess that was before members of his own party flip-flopped on their position and finally, albeit reluctantly, decided to support our proposed GST tax rebate, which will support 11 million Canadians.

Let us be absolutely clear. The suite of measures in our affordability plan will support Canadians with the rising cost of living without adding fuel to the fire of inflation. Members do not need to take my word for it. The former deputy parliamentary budget officer, Mr. Askari, the University of Calgary's Lindsay Tedds and Alberta economist Trevor Tombe have all pointed out that this support we have proposed to this House will not have an inflationary effect. Why not? It is because it is specific and targeted.

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[Translation]

Our plan offers targeted and fiscally responsible financial support to the people who need it most, with particular emphasis on lower-income Canadians, who are most exposed to inflation. Obviously, our ability to spend is limited. That was true when interest rates were at a historic low in 2020, and it is certainly true today.

That is why we continue to act with prudence. Today, we have the lowest net debt and the lowest deficit in the G7. We still have a AAA credit rating. Our goal is to balance fiscal responsibility with the government's responsibility to come to the aid of the most vulnerable Canadians. That has always been our approach.

Thanks to the investments our government has made over the past two years, many of the measures in our affordability plan are already in place to help Canadians.

[English]

I would be more than happy to spend the time I have remaining going through the details of our affordability plan and how we will support Canadians through this challenging economic time. However, that is not really what the Conservatives would like to speak about. The Conservative motion, in fact, does not even mention affordability, not once. No, this is a motion against climate action, pure and simple, less than 48 hours after hurricane Fiona touched down in Atlantic Canada.

What the motion from the Leader of the Opposition essentially says is that now is the time to give up in the fight against the climate crisis, although, to be fair, it is not as if my colleagues opposite ever really started. They are still too busy arguing among themselves as to whether climate change is even real.

Climate action is no longer a theoretical political debate; it is an economic necessity. All around the world, governments are investing in a green transition. Our most important trading partners, the United States and the European Union, are all putting serious climate measures into action now.

These are our clients. These are our markets. Without the innovation born out of and encouraged by a robust price on pollution, Canada has no future in the new global economy. Importantly, Canada's national price on pollution does not make life any less affordable for the vast majority of Canadians. It is unfortunate the Conservative Party continues to spin this false narrative about Canada's price on pollution while having actually no plan for themselves to tackle climate change.

[Translation]

Once again, the Conservatives are taking aim at the price on pollution. That is not surprising, coming from a party that is still torn over whether climate change is real. Our government sees what is happening, and we are taking action.

Business of Supply

Clearly, if the Conservatives were in power, there would be no targets and no talk of achieving net zero. Rather, they would be talking about the oil-based economy and ignoring our vulnerable seniors, low-income workers and struggling families. The Conservatives believe that the federal government should not do anything to tackle the climate crisis or to help Canadians face economic challenges.

Despite our Conservative colleagues' indifference, our government is focusing on making life more affordable for Canadians by urgently investing in a just green transition.

• (1045)

[English]

Canadians understand that we must act to stem the climate emergency and reduce our emissions. It is an environmental and economic imperative, and yet the Conservatives continue to attack a policy that is widely recognized as the most efficient means to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and drive innovation at the same time.

In fact, last Thursday, the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes described the federal price on pollution as “some kind of weird Ponzi scheme the government has cooked up.”

For the benefit of my Conservative colleague, I do want to remind the House of the definition of a Ponzi scheme, which is “a fraudulent investing scam promising high rates of return which generates returns for earlier investors with money taken from later investors.”

Putting to one side, for the purposes of this debate, the fact that accusing the government of engaging in fraudulent activities is certainly stretching the boundaries of parliamentary language, that the Conservatives believe that putting a price on pollution is a fraudulent scam is incredibly uninformed and also very telling.

The Conservatives have consistently shirked away from the fight against climate change and this first opposition motion from their new leader shows us that we should just expect more of the same.

Interestingly, though, this motion does not call for an end to the price on pollution, or carbon tax, if members prefer to call it that. The Conservatives now appear to want to keep the carbon tax in place, just not to have it increase.

To be clear, because we have heard a lot of numbers this morning, this price on pollution is going up by 3¢ in April, not tomorrow, not this year but next year.

In fact, this first opposition motion is an attempt to change the channel. It is an attempt to change the channel away from the responsible and the needed affordability plan that we have presented. It is a way to change the channel from the legislation before the House that will provide a tax rebate to Canadians.

The Conservatives are busy lining up speakers on debate. The Conservatives are busy trying to block the passage of our affordability plan, which will put money back into the pockets of Canadians now, not in six months from now, not next year. The affordabil-

ity plan that we have put forward will put money back into pockets of Canadians now and the Conservatives are blocking it.

As the Conservatives come to grips with the debate and the reality of the climate crisis, our government is committed to and focused on supporting Canadians feeling the effects of global inflation. That is our priority.

• (1050)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do feel I need to correct the record, because there are many errors in the speech of the parliamentary secretary

The first is the claim that the Conservatives do not have any targets for climate change and emissions reduction. In fact, the Liberals' targets are Stephen Harper's 2030 targets, so that is not the case.

The member said that we did not have a plan. Our leader outlined technologies such as nuclear, carbon sequestration and carbon capture, and leveraging LNG to other places in the world that would help reduce the footprint by a factor of 10.

Why does the Liberal government keep telling Canadians things that are simply not the case, such as they were only going to pay \$50 a tonne for carbon tax or they were going to get more money back than they invested? Why does the Liberal government continue to do that?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, I find it laughable for the member opposite to suggest that the Conservative Party has a concrete plan to fight the climate crisis. She referenced Stephen Harper's government. Under Stephen Harper, our emissions ran wild.

We have put in place a robust and very ambitious target to get to net zero, and we are committed to getting there.

We hope that the Conservatives will not stand in the way.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was amazed to hear my colleague say that the Liberals' plan for fighting climate change is recognized. Recognized by whom, I wonder? Each year, they pour \$14 billion into direct and indirect investments in fossil fuels. They bought a pipeline. The Bay du Nord project will produce one billion barrels over 30 years. They set targets at 40% or 45% when Canada has never reached a single one of its greenhouse gas reduction targets. I wonder who in the world is recognizing Canada as a leader in the fight against climate change.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, the experts I named in my speech all said that our plan to put a price on pollution was the best way of dealing with the increase in greenhouse gas emissions in Canada.

With respect to our goal of achieving net zero, it is certainly a very ambitious goal, and we are proud of it.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, although the Conservatives are having trouble even accepting the fact that we are in a climate emergency, the Liberal government has not done much better. Instead of investing in a green future, it is spending that money and investing it in fossil fuel subsidies, to which the NDP has called for an end.

We know that oil companies right now are gouging Canadians. They are taking advantage of Canadians at a time of crisis. In fact, Canadians for Tax Fairness said:

External pressures, such as the Russian war on Ukraine, are driving up energy costs. However, oil and gas companies are not just passing along those costs. They are taking advantage of the situation to boost their own profits.

The Conservatives will not go after their oil and gas buddies. The Liberal government has shown the same behaviour. I am wondering if my hon. colleague agrees with me that we immediately need to end fossil fuel subsidies and take that money and invest in the lives of Canadians who are struggling right now.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, the answer to my colleague's question is yes. If she had read our budget, she would know that is absolutely our priority.

I would appreciate hearing the position of the New Democrats on our price on pollution. I believe they support it and I would like to hear, over the course of the day, what their position is on the increase in the price on pollution that we have proposed for next year.

• (1055)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to address this motion concerning carbon pollution pricing.

I will start by stating the obvious. Climate change is real, it is happening now and parts of Canada are warming faster than the global average. The latest science warns that to avoid severe impacts of climate change, greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced significantly and urgently to limit the global average temperature increase to 1.5°C. Canadians want and expect real action on climate change.

The government has a plan, the emissions reduction plan released in March. Canada can meet its climate targets. The economy will continue to grow. This plan is realistic and affordable.

Carbon pricing is central to this plan, because it is the most efficient and lowest-cost way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is based on the principle that it should not be free to pollute. Whoever creates pollution should be responsible for the cost. This is a fair and equitable approach.

Carbon pricing also lets individuals and businesses decide for themselves how best to reduce pollution. It does not dictate or ban anything; it makes certain activities a bit more expensive and rewards those who make cleaner choices.

We have also made affordability central to our approach. It is true that pricing carbon pollution is modestly increasing fuel costs, as my hon. friend from the Green Party said just a few moments ago, by about 2¢ per litre of gasoline this year.

Business of Supply

We know every little bit counts, but carbon pricing has never been about raising revenues. Under our federal system, most households come out ahead, and low-income households particularly do much better. The average household receives more in climate action incentive payments than it faces in direct costs due to carbon pricing. This has been confirmed repeatedly in independent studies.

Outside of cities there are fewer options. People have to drive more. That is why the climate action incentive payment includes a 10% top-up for rural residents. We are not asking people to change their lives overnight. Taking transit or using an electric vehicle will not work for everyone right now. That is why we have the climate action incentive to ensure the policy is affordable for everyone.

Returning proceeds from carbon pollution pricing helps with affordability, but it also maintains the incentive to choose greener options. This is because the climate action incentive payment is not directly tied to a household's fossil fuel consumption. It is basic economics. If something costs more, people buy less of it. That is what carbon pricing does for pollution. Returning the funds does not change the equation.

Here is the real opportunity. Canadians who do make low-carbon changes benefit even more. Fuel efficient vehicles use less gas and therefore incur fewer vehicle costs. We are now increasing the roll-out of electric vehicles. The government provides purchase incentives to bring the cost down. We are investing in more charging stations. The technologies keep improving, with longer range, better batteries and lower costs. Canadians are starting to do the math of rising carbon prices, volatile oil prices and tailpipe pollution versus less maintenance, no oil changes and charging at home. The equation is pretty simple.

We can look at our homes. Most of them are heated with natural gas. Better insulation, plugging leaks or a newer furnace, all use less energy, cut pollution and, importantly, save money. The government is supporting home energy retrofits through the greener homes grant, and this is being positively received by Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

Business of Supply

Canadians want to take action, they want to do their part and they want an approach that is fair and equitable. Carbon pricing is a nudge in that direction, and it is money back in their pockets to help use less and save more.

Let us not be nearsighted. Climate change is a global challenge, and the costs of inaction are high. Canadians want climate change action. The government owes it to them to be responsible and use policies that are the most efficient and cost effective.

Canada is not alone in fighting climate change and pricing carbon pollution. Around the world, markets are changing. Industries are moving away from products and services that create carbon pollution and are turning to cleaner and more sustainable options.

• (1100)

The cost of inaction on climate change is enormous. We are seeing that in Atlantic Canada right now. As emphasized in the most recent IPCC report, the costs of inaction are very high, including more severe floods, forest fires, heat waves and droughts, which all cause environmental and economic damage.

The Canadian Climate Institute's 2020 report "Tip of the Iceberg" confirms that weather-related disasters are costing Canada more each year, rising from tens of millions of dollars to billions of dollars annually in Canada.

Just wrapping up, our climate plan is working. Canadians have been clear about what they want, which is clean air, good jobs, a healthy environment and a strong economy. Our approach ensures that Canadians are well placed to benefit from the opportunities created by the global transition under way. Evidence confirms that putting a price on carbon pollution works. It spurs clean growth, supports jobs and cuts the pollution causing climate change. Pricing carbon pollution and returning proceeds to Canadian families and businesses is an effective and affordable way to combat climate change while supporting the sustainability of Canadian communities.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member discussed how the carbon tax comes back in the form of rebates.

I am a member from British Columbia, and the price of gas as I was leaving was \$2.33 a litre. There is no federal rebate. Provincially, only a very small minority of people get a rebate. People are struggling. They are struggling to fill their tanks. There is less disposable income. The costs are only going to get higher under this Liberal-NDP government.

Would the hon. member have any comments for British Columbians who are struggling to make ends meet?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, British Columbia has been very much on our minds. We are working very closely with the B.C. government, which believes in a price on pollution and was, in fact, the first in Canada to implement one.

I would remind the hon. member that last year, floods, droughts and wild fires caused \$7.5 billion of damage. We are working the Province of British Columbia to rebuild, but the costs of climate change are real. I wish the hon. member would acknowledge that.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to the speech, which was mainly about the carbon tax. I am not going to talk about that. I do not think it is a good idea to reduce or cancel it. However, I would like to ask my colleague a question.

We know that inflation is a concern for most Quebec households and workers. Does my colleague believe that it is time to acknowledge that the people most affected by it are those on fixed incomes who cannot count on wage increases to make up for what is happening? Would my colleague and his government be ready to change their minds and increase, for example, old age security for people aged 65 and up?

A whole segment of retirees who only have pension income is being abandoned, and the government decided to only increase the pensions of those aged 75 and up.

I believe that there is something that could be done. Why did they not do it?

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, under the leadership of our Minister of Seniors, we are doing a lot for seniors, including a 10% increase in the OAS for people over 75.

Getting back to the topic of the day, the price of pollution, eight out of 10 families would be better off and would see an increase in what they receive back, and that includes seniors, who we know are stretched in these difficult times. Our government is there to help them, and our seniors minister is on the job doing exactly that.

• (1105)

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the reality is that the oil and gas companies are making record profits. In fact, in the last quarter, they have made over \$12 billion. Meanwhile, they are continuing to lobby for more subsidies, and the government is giving them more subsidies. Around the globe, windfall taxes are being put in place. The NDP has been advocating for an excess profit tax.

Will the government finally put in an excess profit tax for the oil and gas companies?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, the hon. member's question gives me the opportunity to say that emissions must come down. I think we agree that the energy sector needs to step up and invest, given that it is doing well right now.

To the question of subsidies, as the hon. member knows, we are putting a cap on oil and gas emissions. We are introducing a clean fuel standard, and very importantly, we are going to be phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. That will be done two years earlier than originally planned, in 2023.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia.

I do not quite know how to start my speech because I am a little discouraged. We are used to the Conservatives saying things that border on populism, and they have a tendency to oversimplify things. They do not seem to have faith in the intelligence of Quebecers and Canadians. Sometimes, we think they must be joking. At one point, the new leader came in and we thought he might put the party in order, but things are even worse now.

Since he came in, the Conservatives appear to be revelling in populism. It feels like they absolutely want Maxime Bernier back. I do not know what is going on.

I taught for 20 years and when I talked about inflation I usually devoted four to six hours to the topic, which is extremely complex and must be approached with a modicum of intelligence. No one can claim to have a magic formula to deal with inflation. That would be too easy, and yet that is what the Conservatives are suggesting. They say that they will solve everything by lowering the tax on petroleum products. That is what they want to do, but it does not work that way.

Usually, in economics—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am going to ask the hon. member to stop there for a few seconds.

[English]

I would ask hon. members to please take their conversations to the lobby.

[Translation]

The hon. member has the floor.

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, usually in economics and the humanities, and even in the pure sciences, if you want to solve a problem, you have to define it first. Then, you need to find the sources of the problem. Lastly, you need to address those sources.

The problem is inflation. Is inflation purely a Quebec or Canadian problem? No, every country in the G7 and the OECD is dealing with inflation. That is the first element. Is it the fault solely of the federal government, then? I do not think so. Did it act appropriately on every aspect of the inflation issue? I am not sure, but it does not bear sole responsibility. That is what I want to say.

Then, we see that inflation was at 7% in August and that it dropped a bit because of the price of oil. That means that it is relatively high. Everyone is affected by inflation. No one is immune, but the most hard hit are people on a fixed income: seniors and people with low incomes. We need to focus on these people and try to find solutions to lessen the impact of inflation on their lives. That is the intelligent approach.

Business of Supply

That is what the Bloc Québécois is doing. We asked ourselves how we could help these people. Once we have determined what the problem is and who is affected by it, we must determine why we have inflation. There are two factors. One, the demand for goods and services has risen sharply. Interest rates have gone down and federal assistance has been astronomical, which has greatly increased the demand for goods and services. That, in turn, has created inflation. Two, the supply side of the equation has shrunk.

Madam Speaker, I listened respectfully to members of the Liberal Party and I would like them to show some mutual respect, if at all possible.

• (1110)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I understand the hon. member.

I will rephrase my request to members.

[English]

I would ask hon. members on the government benches to please take their conversations to the lobby.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I was saying that supply has decreased. This is partly because of broken supply chains, the war in Ukraine and the labour shortage. These are the causes. That means that, if we want to solve our problems, these are the things we must act on.

What are the solutions, then? What should we do? First, we need to help those that are affected by inflation. We need to increase support for seniors. The Bloc Québécois has been saying this for a long time, but it is truer now than ever. Seniors live on a fixed income. They have been hit hard by inflation. We need to help them.

We also need to help low- and middle-income people. They are also suffering from inflation. We need to be prudent in the way we help people. We cannot implement measures across the board. If we try to help everyone, we will just be stoking inflation. We need to target the people who are really in trouble and help them more.

Then, we need to increase the supply of social housing. That is clear. Rents are higher because there is a shortage of housing units. You do not need a doctorate in economics to understand that. When something is in short supply, prices rise. We need to increase the supply of social housing.

We also need to eliminate our dependence on oil. I forgot to mention that the causes of high inflation include the increase in oil prices and the war in Ukraine. We need to transition to renewable, clean energies. That is what we need to do.

Business of Supply

The extremely populist Conservative Party is doing the opposite. Conservatives love oil and they have no qualms about saying so; they eat it on their cereal in the morning. They say that the solution is to stop punishing oil consumers. They want to lower taxes so that people can consume more oil.

Are they helping our seniors? The answer is no. Are they helping people in difficulty because of their income? The answer is no. They are helping Suncor, Imperial Oil and so on. Once again, those who are producing dirty oil will be rewarded by the Conservative Party's immoral policies, and this is just the beginning.

If there is an election in three years, I can only imagine what we will be debating here in the House. What a horror show it will be. It will be the bogeyman all covered in oil. That is what will happen, and it is no laughing matter; it will be appalling. I hope that he will not light up a cigarette.

Then they attack the central bank, the Bank of Canada. That is something else. I taught for a long time. I have a bachelor's and a master's degree in economics. The Bank of Canada often hires the most talented economists. It is internationally known as one of the best banks. In 1991, when it decided to adopt a policy focused on fighting inflation, it was only the second bank in history to do so. For 30 years, it kept inflation within a range of 1% to 3%. It worked.

That no longer works because of the pandemic. This is an exceptional situation. Should we blame the bank? The answer is no. We need to trust it and allow it to remain independent from political power, or the situation could become dangerous. If things go off the rails, people will flock to cryptocurrency, which is not a good idea. When I heard the leader of the Conservative Party extolling the merits of cryptocurrency, I was taken aback. I told friends of mine that I did not understand what he was saying. No one understood, although most of them have a doctorate in economics. I do not think they were the ones who were wrong.

We are getting to the solution. The Bloc Québécois thinks that increasing the GST credits is a good idea, a good solution. The government is on the right track.

Let us look at what the Conservative Party is proposing. The Conservatives claim that, if we reduce that tariff, everyone will benefit. That is false, because any such reductions will be offset by an increase in payments to Canadians who are struggling the most to make ends meet. The ones who will profit from this obscene populism will be the oil producers. Really, now. My colleague from Jonquière asked the leader of the Conservative Party a question, and the leader in question did not even know that there is a carbon exchange in Quebec.

• (1115)

We still have a long way to go. If the Conservatives want votes in Quebec, they will have to learn more about the Quebec nation, what it is and what it wants.

What does the Quebec nation want? It wants less oil and more renewable energies. The Bloc Québécois is here to remind everyone of that.

In Quebec, we believe in the potential of renewable energies. That is how we will be able to protect ourselves from future oil price shocks. Quebec will consume less and less oil, and that is the direction we need to take for the sake of the planet and our future economy.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member addressed the point I was going to bring up.

In his speech, the Leader of the Opposition accused a member of the House from Quebec of wanting to tax Quebecers through carbon pricing. He does not seem to realize that, since 2013, Quebec has had its own carbon pricing and that, as a result, the federal carbon pricing does not apply to the province.

Does my colleague not find it strange that the Leader of the Opposition, who wants to get votes in Quebec, is so disconnected from what is happening in the province?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, that, in a way, sums up what I was getting at. I thank my colleague for the question. It allows me to elaborate a bit.

In politics, as members know, we try to reach people to listen to their problems and to offer them solutions. We then come to the House to represent them and speak on their behalf.

When a party leader comes here but does not even know the reality of the Quebec nation and is incapable of understanding it, how can he possibly represent Quebec in the House of Commons? It is impossible.

I know that the number of Conservative MPs is now nine and is trending downward. I would therefore suggest that the Conservative MPs from Quebec reason with their leader and have him stop talking nonsense about Quebec.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate many of the comments made by the member.

We have two pieces of legislation: Bill C-30 and Bill C-31. Both of those measures fall under what the member is advocating for, with a targeted approach to helping those most in need through the GST rebate and the dental insurance program. Canadians would benefit by them, but it would appear the Conservatives would like to continue to debate the legislation.

Can the member offer any thoughts in regard to how we can assist Canadians by ensuring that this legislation passes in a timely fashion?

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, the two bills seek to help lower-income households deal with inflation. We obviously agree with increasing the GST credit. We have been talking about that for a long time, and we are glad that the government is waking up.

However, there is one thing we do not like as much.

It is a Liberal tradition, one they learned from the NDP. The NDP are Liberals in a hurry. What they want is to have every possible reason to interfere in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the provinces.

They told themselves they were going to help households. Some, wanting to go even further, thought they would help households while sticking their noses in the business of Quebec and the provinces. They thought it would be really cool, because they believe they are smarter than everyone else and know what Quebecers need better than the Quebec government does. They figured they would show up with their nice cheques adorned with a maple leaf and just bypass Quebec's authority. That, however, is not a good idea.

• (1120)

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, who is always very reasonable, on his speech. I really appreciate the fact that he is always so measured.

I was shocked earlier to hear the Leader of the Opposition say that he did not know that Quebec had its own carbon exchange. Seriously? A party leader who wants to become prime minister does not know that Quebec has its own carbon exchange.

Does my colleague think the rest of the opposition leader's speech makes sense if he really did not know that?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, I am still in shock. I would like to thank my colleague for his question, because it gives me a chance to gather my thoughts. In fact, this is all so absurd that I am struggling to make sense of it.

It is important to understand that the leader of the Conservative Party is not crazy, not at all, so we have to ask why he did not know that. The answer is that he does not care. He is switched on to what western Canada wants. He listens to what his cronies in Alberta and Saskatchewan want and caters to their needs.

Then he says he wants to be the prime minister for all Canadians and expects us believe that. What he really wants is to defend the views of western Canada and then try to sell those views to everyone else, including Quebec.

I have to tell my Conservative friends that they will find us, the Bloc Québécois, standing in their way.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is always a bit difficult to speak after the House leader of the Bloc Québécois. He is such a colourful speaker that I cannot hope to outdo him, even when I dress in yellow.

He is an economist, and he explained clearly that a better knowledge of the technical details is necessary before proposing measures that could have major repercussions on the public.

Of course, we all agree that inflation is very real and that it affects everyone, all the people in all the ridings we represent, and we want to propose solutions. However, before rushing to introduce concrete measures, we need to know whether or not it is the right thing to do.

Today feels like Groundhog Day. Back in June, the Conservative Party moved a similar motion with almost identical wording. That

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motion talked about the rising cost of living and proposed, once again, to abolish the carbon tax in order to put money back into the pockets of Quebecers and Canadians. However, I find it a bit odd to hear the Conservative members from Quebec say that this measure will put money back into Quebecers' pockets when the carbon tax does not even apply in Quebec.

As my colleague clearly explained earlier, the carbon market is working very well in Quebec. Unfortunately, the goal of this Conservative measure may not actually be what they say it is. They are proposing a solution to inflation, which is a very real problem. However, instead of helping families, this measure would help the oil companies, which are not currently doing their part. Families are doing their part and getting money in return. It is a system that works quite well, and that is what the Parliamentary Budget Officer has said.

The Conservatives have a gift for twisting people's words. Just yesterday, during the debate on hurricane Fiona, I made a connection between extreme weather events and climate change. In response, the Conservative Party leader said the Bloc Québécois was in favour of importing foreign oil into Canada. That is not it at all. We want to cut fossil fuels out entirely and invest in renewable energy.

They did the same thing with the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report. The Conservatives hand-picked one section and put their own spin on it. What the Parliamentary Budget Officer actually said was that the general consensus among economists is that explicit carbon pricing is the most cost-effective approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I think we can trust the Parliamentary Budget Officer on that. Of course, he did not study Quebec's carbon market, which the Bloc Québécois considers to be the best system. It works very well in Quebec, anyway.

I will not repeat all the causes of inflation, since my House leader did an excellent job of that earlier. However, I would like to emphasize the repercussions that inflation is having on people in my region, eastern Quebec.

The average salary in the Gaspé region is \$52,000 and in the Lower St. Lawrence, it is \$40,000. That is not a lot of money for a whole year. With the rising cost of living, the cost of groceries, the cost of gas and the price of housing, people are already struggling to make ends meet on a daily basis, and have been for many years. They have to count their pennies and stick to their budgets. Now they are really stretched to the limit.

I visited a few farms this summer. With skyrocketing input costs and shortages of parts needed for farm equipment, our farmers' job is getting harder and harder. We are talking about the people who help put food on our tables three times a day. Inflation is having an impact on these people and on the people they feed.

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As I have said before in the House, a protest was organized recently by low-income people in the RCM of La Mitis, in my riding. Their slogan was: "I paid my rent. Now I have a place to starve to death". These people were telling us that they have to choose between paying the rent and buying groceries. They have to choose between food and shelter, both of which are basic needs. We are at a point where people are having to choose between these two basic needs. It is frightening to see what an impact inflation is having on the people in my riding.

• (1125)

Over in the Avignon RCM, in Chaleur Bay, the Gaspé wardens' table offered financial incentives for building housing. Obviously the spike in construction costs has turned off the developers. There are not a lot of people who want to invest, and that is leading to a housing shortage in the region.

The housing investments that the federal government is making are good, but sadly insufficient. Often these big amounts go to large cities, and the regions are overlooked. We are seeing a positive demographic shift in the Gaspé and Lower St. Lawrence for the first time in 20 years, and we would love to welcome more people, but we have nowhere for them to live.

The same goes for the labour shortage. We are eager to bring in workers from other parts of Quebec or Canada and from around the world, but there is nowhere to put them. That is having a direct impact on the people in my region.

Gilles Dufour, executive director of Moisson Mitis, told us that requests for assistance have increased by between 30% and 40%. That is not insignificant. Every holiday season, I like to go and help distribute Christmas baskets to those most in need. We are seeing just how much those numbers are going up. Also, fewer people are available to help out or to donate goods or money because they are dealing with the rising cost of living. It is a vicious cycle and we are having trouble helping each other out.

I believe that we all agree with the first part of the Conservatives' motion. Inflation is very real and we must find solutions. However, I do not believe that scrapping the carbon tax is the magic solution.

As I mentioned, this is the second time they have tried to pass this in the House, but a majority of members rejected it because we know there are other solutions on the table. Of course we have to have these debates and use all means necessary to implement measures quickly. The Bloc Québécois has proposed several measures and I will come back to that. My colleague spoke about solutions that could be implemented.

I think the Conservatives are misrepresenting what the Parliamentary Budget Officer, or PBO, said about the carbon tax. This tax would not cost households 60% more, as the Conservative Party is claiming. Once you dig deeper into the facts and into the technical details, it becomes clear that this claim is incomplete and lacking specifics. As I said earlier, the tax does not apply in Quebec. It applies in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. The government committed to giving the proceeds of the gas tax directly back to individuals and families through climate action incentive payments.

The PBO did his analysis in March 2022. In his report, he said that the federal carbon tax is set to rise by \$15 per year from \$50 per tonne in 2022 to \$170 per tonne in 2030. The Conservatives claim it is 60%, but the PBO based his analysis on the 2030 price per tonne, which is \$170, so that is not the current price, but the Conservatives are muddying the waters. That will not happen until 2030-31, which is when some families might feel the pain.

We know oil companies are not contributing their fair share. They should be paying more. Eliminating the carbon tax will not help us fight climate change and meet our greenhouse gas reduction targets.

Yes, there is room for improvement. Nothing is ever perfect, but for the time being, that is not the solution that will put money back in people's pockets, certainly not for the low-income families that get that tax refunded.

What we need to do is focus on the subsidies being given to oil companies, the money being taken from the wallets of Canadians and Quebecers and given to oil and gas companies.

I am running out of time, but we will have plenty of time to talk about this later.

• (1130)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. It is good to hear the Bloc Québécois praise pollution pricing, the carbon tax, regardless of the fact that the Quebec government went all the way to the Supreme Court to challenge our national plan.

Is the Bloc Québécois ready to admit that we are acting within our jurisdiction and that our carbon tax is a good thing for the provinces that do not have one?

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I am pleased that the federal government did not interfere in this particular Quebec jurisdiction. The carbon market is working very well in conjunction with California's, and we would not have wanted the federal government to proceed as it did in health care, for example, when it talked about hiring nurses, doctors and so forth and wanting to put conditions on the funds it gives to Quebec and the provinces. We would not have wanted it to do that with the carbon tax because we have a system that is already working well.

I may have said a few positive things about what the government is doing, however, much more needs to be done on the environment. The government says it is green. It says it is a champion of the fight against climate change, but that is actually not true. The reality is that we can never reach our greenhouse gas reduction targets. We continue to finance the biggest polluters. The government is implementing a polluter pay system, but we are helping polluters continue to pollute.

More needs to be done and the Liberal government needs to do better at this time.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives think there is a better way to reduce climate change than tripling the price on carbon. As the member said, that better way is technology. Here is a little example. In Vancouver, where I live, we had the AirCare program for about 20 years for people to test their vehicle emissions. Because of technological advances, we no longer need to do that. Clearly, technology can be the solution to pollution.

The cost of living has gone up by 11% in the past year, so why does the Bloc Québécois want Quebecers to suffer yet another blow? This is a tax on people, people who are suffering. The member said people are afraid of starving to death.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, if I may, I would like to correct my colleague. I do not think that abolishing the carbon tax will help Quebecers. The carbon tax does not apply in Quebec. That was what my speech was all about.

We have not heard many speeches from our Conservative friends proposing effective environmental measures. I do not think I have heard any at all, actually. We are hearing more and more about new technologies. Perhaps that is what the hon. member was referring to. For example, carbon capture technology costs millions of dollars, and we do not yet know if it really works. By the time this technology is actually used by most major polluters, our greenhouse gas reduction target dates will have come and gone.

In conclusion, I think we could be doing more on the environment, but what the Conservative Party is proposing here today is certainly not the solution.

• (1135)

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, corporate profits are rising twice as fast as inflation while wages are rising only half as fast. Oil companies are making record profits and their CEOs are making millions of dollars in bonuses. Oil and gas made \$147 billion this year. Imperial Oil made \$2.4 billion.

When workers are hurting, big oil and gas companies are making profit. I hear the Conservatives clapping at that. On the backs of workers, big CEOs are making record profits. We hear them clap.

Does the hon. member side with the New Democrats in providing an excess profit tax on oil and gas companies for profits over \$1 billion in order to reinvest money in solutions that make life fairer and more affordable for families, or does the Bloc take the Conservatives' side with big corporate CEOs?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I liked what my colleague said at first when he was criticizing what the Liberal government is doing. He then asked me if I would prefer to side with the NDP or the Conservative Party.

We know that the NDP is walking hand in hand with the Liberal government, so I prefer to side with the Bloc Québécois, which says that we should take all the money that is currently being given to oil companies to help them pollute less and invest it in renewable

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energy. Let us invest it in wind energy and hydroelectricity as Quebec has done for years. That is what the Bloc Québécois is saying.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

People are struggling with the cost of living. They are struggling with rising inflation. They are struggling to pay for gas, groceries and housing. They are worried about their future and are worried about the future of the planet. They are doing everything right, yet they are struggling to afford basic necessities while billionaires and big corporations are getting richer than ever.

The cost-of-living crisis and rising inflation are being driven by corporate greed. Corporate profits are rising twice as fast as inflation, and as said a number of times today, wages are rising only half as fast. Neither the Conservatives nor the Liberals want to acknowledge the fact that big corporations are benefiting from this crisis and that big corporations are using this crisis as an opportunity to raise prices beyond their increased costs. They are making massive profits while families are hurting.

The Conservatives want to inflame the anger and frustration. They applaud when we talk about Canadians struggling and massive corporations making record profits. Canadians are rightly frustrated and angry, but the Conservatives fail to provide solutions that would actually make a difference in people's lives. They do not want to address the fact that big oil companies are making record profits off the backs of Canadians.

When the New Democrats called for a tax on the excess profits of huge corporations to help make life more affordable, both the Conservatives and the Liberals voted no. The New Democrats believe we need solutions to deal with the cost-of-living crisis that actually support families and workers.

Cutting the price on pollution will not help Canadian families struggling with the cost of living. In fact, the vast majority of Canadians get more money back in rebates than they pay at the pumps. Those with the lowest incomes get the most back, so no, cutting the price on carbon will not help working people. It will only help big oil pad its bottom line and delay climate action.

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With the increasing intensity of extreme weather, climate fires and floods, Canadians know we cannot afford to back down in our fight against the climate crisis. Report after report shows that having mitigation and adaptation now is far less expensive than paying for rebuilding infrastructure that has been destroyed or dealing with the aftermath of climate fires, flooding and hurricanes. More than that, it also saves people's lives.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Conservatives may not believe in fighting the climate crisis, but Canadians know better and expect their government to take action. While the New Democrats support a price on pollution, it is not a silver bullet. The Liberals have not been taking the action that matches the urgency or scale of the crisis we are facing, and they continue to let big polluters off the hook.

Carbon pricing must be fairer. The New Democrats would roll back loopholes the Liberals have given to the biggest polluters and make them pay their fair share. Both the Conservatives and the Liberals need to stop standing up for corporate interests and start standing up for working people.

We are calling for a tax on the excess profits of big oil to help make life more affordable while fighting the climate crisis. Big oil is benefiting while working families are hurting. Canadian oil and gas companies are forecast to rake in a record \$147 billion this year. It is hard to even imagine what that number means. That is \$147 billion just this year, but instead of investing these record profits in promised emissions reductions to clean up their own pollution or even investing to create good jobs for workers in clean energy, oil and gas companies are paying out huge dividends to their rich shareholders.

● (1140)

Amazingly, at the very same time, oil and gas CEOs are lining their pockets and delaying climate action. They have the audacity to tell the government they need more time and more subsidies to meet the Liberals' already weak climate targets. At a time when oil and gas companies are making more money than ever, it is unacceptable that they are not paying to clean up their own mess and are instead begging for more corporate handouts. However, it is not surprising, because the Liberals have been giving billions of dollars each year to these big oil and gas companies. This is nothing more than corporate greed.

The New Democrats have asked and will continue to push the Liberals to do something to take on this corporate greed, but both the Liberals and the Conservatives have said no. They said no to making CEOs pay what they owe. They said no to making sure the wealthiest corporations pay their fair share. They are fine with the ultrarich getting richer and richer while workers continue to struggle to make ends meet.

Solutions to deal with the rising cost of living should not put further burden on the shoulders of families. Big corporations and wealthy CEOs should not be getting away without paying their fair share. The New Democrats support putting a price on pollution, but the Liberals' carbon pricing system continues to let big polluters off the hook. Under their flawed system, Canada's biggest polluters pay the lowest carbon tax rate. Loopholes mean that oil and gas companies only pay a tiny fraction of the cost of their pollution, as 80% to

90% of their emissions are exempt. Suncor only pays one-fourteenth of the full carbon price. These loopholes need to be closed so that big oil pays what it owes for its pollution.

While a price on pollution is important, it is not nearly enough. The Liberals have continued to fail when it comes to meeting the urgency of this crisis. Instead of expecting the carbon tax to be a silver bullet, the Liberals need to make bold investments in clean energy, in energy-efficiency homes and buildings and in public transit. The Liberals need a real plan that supports workers and creates jobs in communities across Canada. They need to stop giving billions in subsidies to oil and gas companies, the same companies that are profiting off the backs of Canadians.

We need solutions to deal with the cost of living that actually support families, that help workers, that make life more affordable and that do not put further burden on the shoulders of families. The Conservatives believe people should be left to fend for themselves while billionaires reap the benefits. Then there are the Liberals, who are so far out of touch with the reality of working families that they need to be forced to act. When it comes to climate change, they like to say all the right things but then fail to do the right things.

We know the support that Canadians are getting right now is not enough. Families are still hurting while oil and gas companies are getting richer and richer. We will continue to call on the Liberals to put in place an excess profits tax on oil and gas companies to provide relief for struggling Canadians.

Last week, the UN Secretary-General called on countries to implement a windfall profits tax on fossil-fuel companies, saying, "Polluters must pay." The Conservative government in the U.K. has already put a 25% windfall tax on oil and gas profits. The EU has announced plans for a tax on windfall profits. Spain, Greece, Italy, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria have all implemented a similar levy. It is shameful that the Liberals have so far refused to make big polluters pay their fair share.

Last week, the Minister of Environment appeared to change his tune, saying he is not against a windfall tax but that he is waiting on oil and gas companies to show their commitment to climate action. It is clear this is a fantasy being sold by the environment minister and the oil and gas lobby. A new report from The Pembina Institute shows that oil and gas companies are paying out huge dividends to their shareholders instead of investing in climate solutions.

While the Liberals and the Conservatives are more interested in helping corporations maximize their profits, the New Democrats will continue to fight for Canadians, workers and communities. We need climate action and we need it now.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. This is, obviously, a motion on combatting inflation. I would like to talk about housing, which is one very important aspect of combatting inflation.

For example, the government claims that Bill C-31 will help the least fortunate households in Canada pay rent and that they will receive a one-time payment to help them pay rent.

Who could be against that? However, this measure is an attempt to make up for the lack of federal investments in housing over the past 30 years. If the federal government had been investing in housing over the past 30 years, there would be more housing units on the market and housing prices would not be this high. The government now wants to spend all kinds of money on this measure to make up for the lack of investment over 30 years.

Would it not have been better to invest that money in concrete and build homes to increase supply and make housing less expensive in the coming years?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his excellent question.

[*English*]

I would say that, absolutely, it is not enough. Five hundred dollars to support 1.8 million Canadians will help the lowest-income Canadians when they are struggling to pay their rent, which is important. However, we also need to be investing in social housing, non-profit housing and co-operative housing. It has been decades, and it was the Liberal government that cut the housing investments.

We used to build co-ops. We used to build housing. This is job creation, and it is providing decent housing. It is treating housing as homes rather than investments. The Liberal government is comfortable letting real estate investment corporations and wealthy investors run rampant in our housing market, which hurts communities and it hurts families.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am a little concerned about misinformation. To give the impression that the federal government is not supporting housing is just not true. We are talking about hundreds of millions of dollars, for example, in the area of housing co-ops. We have had investments, and for the first time we are actually providing funds to encourage the housing co-op industry to grow as a whole.

My question to the member is more specific in regard to subsidies going to oil companies, and this is something that we have been working on. In fact, there is a commitment to end all oil subsidies by the end of 2023. We know that we cannot just kick our heels and make them end, but there is a target to end them by 2023. Could the member provide her thoughts in regard to that?

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• (1150)

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, I think we could ask anyone in my riding of Victoria or in Vancouver or Toronto whether the Liberals have been addressing the housing crisis, and they would say no.

However, on fossil fuel subsidies, there is a commitment to end inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, but I am extremely disappointed that the government refuses to end all fossil fuel subsidies. The government wants to continue to hand out billions of dollars to profitable oil and gas companies under the guise of carbon capture and storage, which means that it is handing over our taxpayer dollars to an unproven technology, one that the IPCC has said is actually years out. Instead of targeting it to companies that are doing the right thing and trying to take carbon out of the air, the government is actually giving it to oil and gas companies to use.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting that the member brought up carbon capture and storage. I would be more than happy for the member to come to my riding, and I would give her a tour of what CCS does. It provides a tremendous amount of work, benefits and jobs throughout our very rural environment.

The member talked about capturing carbon out of the air, and that technology is just a mindset. It has not even been developed to see if it is effective. I am interested to know why the member would comment on something like that, without actually understanding what it is, and not recognize that, by capturing that carbon, it actually reduces the emissions, which in turn allows us to reduce the emissions on a carbon tax.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, report after report has shown that, currently, carbon capture, utilization and storage has resulted in more emissions than it has saved.

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Show me the reports.

Ms. Laurel Collins: I can send the member the report. I would be happy to and—

Mr. Robert Kitchen: Who were they written by?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): This is not a conversation and we do have to resume debate.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Business of Supply

Mr. Alexandre Boulерice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity as I rise in the House to talk about what is happening in another part of the world. It deserves our attention and it is important to note. Since the brutal murder of the young Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini, a widespread grassroots feminist movement has been rising in Iran. These people have the exceptional courage to stand up for freedom and democracy. I want to commend their courage. I am extremely worried about their situation, and I hope that the federal government will use every political and diplomatic tool it has to stand up for human rights, especially the rights of women in Iran.

Today we are discussing a Conservative Party motion. It is the first motion moved by the new Conservative leader during an opposition day. I thought a new leader would bring in new ideas and renewal and that we would finally talk about other things; but no, the new Conservative Party leader wants to talk about the carbon tax. For 10 years that is all the Conservative Party has been talking about, incessantly. They are absolutely obsessed with this. When they do not know what else to do, they talk about the carbon tax. I just want them to know that it is over, case closed.

The carbon tax is a good tool that works. It is not necessarily a cure-all. It will not solve every issue, but it works well in terms of putting pressure on the market so that companies and consumers adapt and change their behaviour to reduce their carbon footprint.

It is rather funny to see the Conservatives today doubling down on this obsession yet again. This is actually a market mechanism, so I do not understand. They love the free market and capitalism, and this tool relies on supply and demand, on prices and costs. However, they do not support it.

The Conservatives are also missing the point by thinking that suspending or cancelling the price on pollution is really going to make a difference in people's lives. There is no doubt that we are currently facing inflation and a rising cost of living. We see it with housing, heating, gasoline and groceries. The prices of some products are going up 12%, 13%, 15%, and sometimes even as high as 30%. The carbon tax is not responsible for that and getting rid of it will not change anything.

As my colleagues pointed out earlier, it makes no difference whatsoever to Quebecers, because the federal carbon tax does not exist in Quebec. Where were the Conservative members from Quebec when their party was planning its opposition day? Maybe they were asleep at the wheel of their gas-powered car, pun intended.

The NDP wants to help people in tangible ways, so it forced the Liberals to take action on a number of fronts that will produce results. Bill C-31, which was introduced when we came back to the House, is proof. The bill includes some very interesting provisions that we have been pushing for for a long time. The NDP caucus secured major gains for people, starting with the \$500 rental housing benefit top-up. No, that will not change the entire housing market overnight, but it will provide some relief and may help people. In Quebec, 580,000 Quebecers will collect that cheque because they are already on the list of people who need the federal housing benefit.

The second measure doubles the GST tax credit. Millions of people in Canada will benefit from that over the next six months. It can range from \$250 to \$500 per person. This is intended for the most vulnerable people in our society, those who need help the most. It is not an inflationary measure, since the proposed measures are not uniform. This is not intended for people who earn \$70,000 or \$100,000 a year; this is for people who are really struggling to pay for groceries or housing right now. The NDP made this happen. The leader of the NDP demanded this for six months, and he finally got it in Bill C-31.

As for dental coverage for children, many people told us during the last election that it would be great if teenagers, seniors and children had access to coverage for essential dental care, which is obviously not aesthetic. We tried to get a real dental care program for this year, but it was too hard to get it up and running in time.

• (1155)

Therefore, as a first step, we are offering a compensation cheque. This is a temporary step, an interim step, but still a significant one. People who do not have supplemental insurance and who wish to take their child to the dentist must keep the bill so they can receive a maximum amount of \$650 for this year, as well as a maximum amount of \$650 for next year. We are then talking about a maximum amount totalling \$1,300 per child.

I think that while waiting for next year, this can provide significant assistance to middle-class families who do not have supplemental insurance. Next year, we will be able to offer a program that will enable people to go to the dentist and to receive immediate payment or get their bill reimbursed. Next year, we will extend the program to include teenagers, people with disabilities and seniors aged 65 years and up in Quebec and across Canada.

Just because the NDP secured this win, it does not mean that it will stop working hard or putting pressure on the government to do more, because a lot more needs to be done. However, we think that the measures being implemented and what we asked of the government are real solutions. The tangible actions we forced the Liberal government to take will provide real benefits to the lives of ordinary Canadians. In contrast, the Conservatives' solution is extremely ideological and, in reality, it will not help all that many people. In fact, it goes against all the efforts we should be making to combat climate change.

They present the carbon tax, which is a price on pollution, as a bad thing. Are the Conservatives saying that polluting should be a right? Are they saying that pollution should not cost anything and be free of consequences? Systematically, year after year, under the Conservative government and, now, under the Liberals, we have missed our greenhouse gas emission targets, which is extremely worrisome. Canada lags behind most other countries. We continue to subsidize oil companies that are currently making record profits. We do not have the spine to tax them more, while the CEOs keep pocketing millions of dollars.

Now the Conservative Party is presenting a 25-year-old idea, one that is outdated. Furthermore, it comes at a very odd time when eastern Quebec, the Magdalen Islands and a good part of the Maritimes have just been devastated by hurricane Fiona.

This motion from the official opposition completely disregards the true urgency of the climate crisis, and that these disasters, hurricanes, droughts, floods and forest fires will occur with greater frequency and intensity. We will be increasingly unable to control the planet's climate and temperature and people will suffer more, infrastructure and homes will be destroyed and villages and roads will have to be moved. That will come at an enormous cost. The Conservatives never talk about the cost of inaction in the face of the climate crisis. Even people who are not what one would call big bad socialists are worried. Insurance companies in Canada are worried because they know it is going to cost tens of billions of dollars in the coming years.

The Conservative Party is completely disconnected from this reality and is suggesting that we get rid of the one measure that sort of works. I will come back to this, but even though this measure more or less works, we should be doing more. The Conservatives' motion is completely irresponsible and shows no regard for future generations or for the people who will suffer and are suffering from climate disturbances and the increase in so-called natural disasters. We must do more.

I now want to talk about what the Liberal government is not doing. Not only does it refuse to eliminate oil subsidies, but it has also failed to develop a plan for a just transition. We need to come up with a strategy to support the industries and the unions that represent all of the workers across Quebec and Canada to ensure that we make this energy transition, not only for the sake of the environment and the climate, but also to save jobs and create new ones in renewable energy or find new ways of working in existing sectors.

This is 2022. In 2019 the government promised to introduce a bill concerning a just green energy transition that respects workers. It has yet to do anything, even though this objective is spelled out in the mandate letters of the Minister of Natural Resources and the Minister of Labour. We are still awaiting such a bill.

• (1200)

I hope it comes soon because we need it. We need it if we want to solve this problem, meet our targets and respect Canada's commitments on the international stage. It is quite unsettling: Canada cannot seem to make good on the promises it makes out there. Canada signed the Paris Agreement and made commitments. The Canadian government signed the COP26 declaration, but it does not act in a consistent way.

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The Liberals are extremely good at patting themselves on the back and bragging about their targets on the world stage, but they are unable to follow through. Now is the time to act.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in terms of what is happening across the country, in general the price on pollution has been well received. If we look at provincial jurisdictions, most provinces in Canada have their own form of price on pollution.

Then we have the federal government, which has a price on pollution in four provinces, where there is a rebate and 80% of residents are receiving more than they are actually paying out.

Does the member believe that if the Conservative Party wants to be consistent in all regions of the country, it should be meeting with the premiers to advocate that they do exactly what it is suggesting the federal government do here in Ottawa?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, my colleague's question highlights the fact that the Conservatives are stirring up a debate and a discussion that are five or ten years out of date. We have moved on.

Actually, we need to go further in the fight against climate change. That is why I am reiterating today that we need a plan for a just transition that includes indigenous communities, workers and unions. There needs to be a broad plan to make this transition towards creating the jobs of tomorrow, towards ongoing training for workers, and towards the portability of their retirement plans and pensions to provide support for them and for our communities. We need a plan that is targeted and regionalized according to people's needs. This has yet to be done, and we need it now.

• (1205)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the carbon tax is not working, but the Liberal government still plans to increase the tax and force Quebec to increase its tax too.

What does my colleague think of that?

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, the federal tax on carbon does not apply to Quebec. Quebec already has its own cap-and-trade system. I think the point is moot.

I would say that taxing pollution, putting a price on pollution, works because it changes people's behaviour and the choices they make. They will make a choice that is cheaper, but also greener at the same time.

Business of Supply

This tax cannot be the only tool. It does part of the job, but it is not enough. We need a comprehensive strategy that is much broader than this simple tax.

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague opposite said that he expected the new Leader of the Opposition to bring in new ideas.

What does the member think about the fact that the new Leader of the Opposition does not know that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec?

In addition, with inflation as it is, all economists are saying that we need targeted measures. In Quebec, however, there are some people whose livelihoods are at risk. Does my colleague support highly targeted programs to help people like farmers, taxi drivers and truckers?

This is something the Bloc Québécois is proposing.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

How can the Conservative Party be unaware that the federal carbon tax does not apply in Quebec? I do not know. Perhaps we should ask the newly appointed Quebec lieutenant of the Conservative Party. I am not sure he has much influence over his leader right now.

As for the second part of his question, yes, our party agrees that we need targeted measures for certain economic sectors or communities. I think targeted measures to combat inflation and the rising cost of living and to facilitate the energy transition would also be worthwhile. For example, I am thinking about the electrification of transportation and public transportation, two subjects the NDP is quite fond of.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his incredible work for workers in Quebec and across Canada.

He mentioned the way workers were being impacted in his home riding. I am hoping he can expand on ways in which a New Democratic plan might provide for a just transition and actually get to the heart of the matter of inflation.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Madam Speaker, I think we need a federal plan to make targeted investments so that we can transition to renewable energy sources, but we also need a plan to train these workers. We need round tables where all three parties, namely the unions representing the workers, the government and the employers, can work together to make strategic decisions for the future that will lead to a better, more just economy for everyone.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, for starters, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Cumberland—Colchester.

Before I get down to business, I just want to say that this is my first speech in the House since my mother passed away this summer. She was my greatest supporter. She tuned in to every single one of my speeches, interventions and television appearances.

I feel a little emotional about speaking today, knowing that she is watching but will not be sharing her thoughts with me afterward. I know she is there, as supportive as always. She was always there throughout my career. Thanks to her, my family, my brothers and I always had enough to eat. She made sure we never went hungry, even in tough times. Cancer took her life this summer. She was sick for just a few months. She was in good shape.

I just want to acknowledge my mother, who is watching us. I am sure I will hear her comments after my speech, which I already know will be excellent, because that is what she always told me. A mother is a mother, after all. Wherever she is right now, I am thinking of her.

Madam Speaker, today we are debating the motion moved by the leader of the official opposition, which reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of the House, given that the government's tax increases on gas, home heating and, indirectly, groceries, will fuel inflation, and that the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported the carbon tax costs 60% of households more than they get back, the government must eliminate its plan to triple the carbon tax.

I would like to begin by setting the record straight on a few points.

I heard my Bloc Québécois and NDP colleagues boasting about the fact that Quebec has its own carbon pricing system. They said that the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec and that the leader of the official opposition should take into account the fact that Quebec has its own system.

However, they seem to be forgetting one very important thing. Unfortunately, not everything we consume in Quebec is produced in Quebec, so Quebecers will inevitably pay more when the Liberal government triples its carbon tax.

Not only will Quebecers pay more because everything will be more expensive, because everything that is transported or passes through another province will be more expensive, but the federal government has made it clear that the provinces will have to adjust and ensure that their carbon pricing system reflects the figures that the Liberals want to put in place.

What does that mean?

That means that the Bloc and the NDP are supporting further federal interference in the system that was established in Quebec, in order to force Quebec to make changes to its laws to meet the federal government's tax objectives.

In other words, the poorest will once again have to pay the price for decisions made by this Liberal federal government and backed by the Bloc Québécois and the NDP. That is the reality.

I do not understand how the Bloc and the NDP can ignore this situation, this clear and specific reality.

• (1210)

They can use words like “hypocrisy” to describe what happened and our leader's position, but what is really hypocritical is what the Bloc Québécois is trying to sell us. They know full well that Quebecers, fathers and workers will end up paying more because of the Liberal government's decision to triple the carbon tax. Ultimately, the government's intention is to force the provinces that are not imposing the carbon tax to increase their system.

The worst part is that the government's carbon tax has successfully demonstrated that its targets do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. The Liberal government failed to meet any greenhouse gas reduction targets with its promise that the carbon tax would be capped at \$50 per tonne. After the election, we learned that the government intends to triple the carbon tax because it was a failure and they were unable to meet their greenhouse gas targets. Now people will have to pay three times as much. They will not be able to use their vehicles because it will cost them more, so they will emit fewer greenhouse gases. Where is the logic in the current Liberal government's attitude, other than making workers and families pay for its policy that fails to reduce greenhouse gases?

That is the reality. At this time, with the carbon tax and the government's desire to make Canadians pay more and more in taxes, with its excessive spending policies and its use of public funds to create new programs, and considering Canada's rising debt levels and record deficits, it is not surprising that everything is more expensive.

Let us imagine a mother who goes to do her grocery shopping. The first thing she sees at the grocery store is how much more fresh fruit and vegetables cost. In the meat section, a small package of chicken that used to cost \$8 now costs \$16. We are told that meat prices have increased by 6.5%, but that is an average of different kinds of meat. The cost of basic meat, the kind we buy to feed our families, has gone up a lot more than 6.5%, according to statistics.

Dairy prices have gone up by 7%. We need to put bread and butter on the table, but the price of bread has risen by 15.4%. In the fresh produce section, prices are up by 13.2%. Many fruits are not grown in Canada. It is expensive to ship them. We cannot produce all fruits, because many do not grow in Canada.

We are feeling the effects of this inflationary crisis. Transportation, which will be hardest hit by the tripling of the carbon tax, is the main reason prices are going up, and things are going to get even worse. The price of sugar is up 11%; fish is up 8.7%. That is what families have to contend with.

People can argue about the effects of the carbon tax, claim it will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and say we all need to do our part, but experience has shown that it does not work. For it to work, people have to pay three times more tax. The government decided it was up to individuals, and only individuals, to make all the sacrifices and go without so that it can move toward meeting its own targets.

I recently witnessed what goes on at grocery stores. This is what happens in times of crisis. Stores put out flyers on Tuesdays or Wednesdays. It used to be that people would wait until the weekend

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to do their shopping because sale items would still be available then. That is no longer the case. Visit a grocery store any Thursday or Friday. The place is packed, and there are lineups everywhere.

• (1215)

People want to be sure they get the products that are on sale that week at the grocery stores so that they can put a bit more food in their cart. That is what we are seeing at the grocery stores today.

I would love for the Prime Minister to go to the grocery store every Tuesday and Thursday for two or three weeks to see what is going on. Then he could go to the store on Saturday and Sunday, and he would see that there is absolutely nothing left on the shelves, no more of the discounted products, because everything sold out quickly since people have no choice.

According to the statistics, 24% of Canadians say they have cut back how much food they buy. That means a quarter of Canadians are buying less food because everything costs more. We are in Canada. Things like that should not be happening here.

I also wanted to tell Mike's story, but I am running out of time.

We cannot allow the Liberals to make people across Canada pay the price for their decision to triple the carbon tax. If this tax hike goes through, things that people cannot afford today will become even more unaffordable tomorrow.

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to share our deepest sympathies on the passing of the member's mother. I would also like to take the opportunity to give a tribute to my mother, who raised five boys just about all by herself. We are very close to my mother. She is 87 years young.

I do not know if the hon. member has followed the B.C. situation, but perhaps he could confer with his colleague sitting next to him. Interestingly enough, the Province of British Columbia was the first to put a price on pollution. It was a Conservative-leaning government. It offset the carbon price with lowering income taxes. It has the lowest income tax, by the way, in the country.

Emissions went down 14%. The economy grew by 26%. Is that not showing the way?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madame Speaker, I would like my colleague, who comes from a large family, to tell me what his parents' reaction would be tomorrow morning if they were told their gas bill was going up by 40¢ a litre.

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Right now, British Columbia is one of the places where people pay the most for the gas they need to get to work or drive their kids to school. The price of a litre of gas in British Columbia is up to \$2.33, according to what I hear lately from people in that province. They are bracing for a further increase of about 40¢, which would bring the price up to nearly \$3 a litre.

Is that really what the member wants for the people of British Columbia? I, for one, do not want that.

• (1220)

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have great respect for my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my condolences to him on the death of his mother. We have but one mother, and she is a significant figure in our lives.

I want to come back to what he said earlier. I did say to the Leader of the Opposition that I thought his motion was hypocritical. The reason I said that is that every time we come up against a problem, the Conservative Party positions itself as a major lobbyist for the oil and gas industry. Some time ago, in the context of the conflict in Ukraine, the Conservatives told us that gas and oil production needed to increase.

Now we are grappling with inflation, which is very complex. The Conservatives' response is a proposal to scrap the carbon tax and offer tax relief to the biggest polluter in Canada, the oil and gas sector. They say that this will miraculously enable people to afford more food. To me, that is the very definition of hypocrisy.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, I could also refer to some of the proposals put forward by the Bloc Québécois, my colleague's party, as a joke, but I will not go that far.

However, it is ironic to see how strongly the Bloc Québécois supports a federal initiative that will take more money out of the pockets of all Canadians, including Quebecers, either directly or indirectly. At this time, I see that the Bloc Québécois is supporting the increase in federal taxes on the price of just about everything. That money will come from the pockets of all Canadians, including Quebecers.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I offer my condolences, as well, for the loss of my colleague's mother over the summer.

I would like to start by saying that I was really shocked when I heard the new leader of the Conservative Party talking about men taping up their boots. I was shocked because he failed to mention women, who also work, but then again, we know the record this current Conservative leader has on upholding the rights of women.

The fact is that, once again, the Conservative Party is talking about oil and gas as their only debate, and they are not calling out the elephant in the room, which is greedy oil and gas companies. They are talking about the price of groceries, but they are not willing to call out Galen Weston of Loblaws, which has earned record profits.

I just want to read, very quickly, a tweet from UN Secretary António Guterres on the fossil fuel industry. He said, "The fossil

fuel industry is feasting on subsidies & windfall profits while household budgets shrink & our planet burns.

"We need to hold the industry and its enablers to account...I call on all developed economies to tax the windfall profits of fossil fuel companies."

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, first, I am very proud of the new Leader of the Opposition, the member for Carleton, who does not hesitate to stand up and defend women who want to provide for their entire families. He has always spoken a great deal about the role of mothers in families. The Leader of the Opposition has nothing to learn from my NDP colleague in that regard.

What we are talking about today is the cost of living for all these families, for those working hard, mothers, women, nurses, doctors, physicians, firefighters, all those people who are working hard and want to have more money in their pockets. That is what the leader of the official opposition wants to fight for, and I support him 100%, as do all my Conservative Party colleagues in this place.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House of Commons on behalf of the good people of Cumberland—Colchester. As we found out last night, we were hit very hard by hurricane Fiona. I think it bears repeating that our thoughts and prayers are with all the folks out there who continue to suffer without power and to dig out from the storm.

Primarily, we need to think of the carbon tax as exactly what it is. It is a tax. It is another tax that businesses and individuals have to pay. We are here now, of course. If other parliamentarians are not aware of this, then they must be living under a rock, but we are at the highest rates of inflation in decades. It harkens back to those days in my life in 1999 when we were coming out of those very high inflation years. Indeed, in 1990, when my wife and I bought our first car, we needed a loan and interest rates were at 18%. My lovely father-in-law was a great accountant and someone who always needed to teach one an interesting lesson. Interestingly enough, he was kind enough to give us a loan for 12%. Those kinds of things are where we are headed to now.

A big concern that I have is the cost of living. If we are talking about raising taxes, we cannot do so without talking about the cost of living. Every day, my constituency assistants receive calls from people who are unable to afford their lives. As we might say, they are being priced out of their own lives. I have spoken in the House previously about people who have had to sell their wedding bands in order to buy food.

We know that where I live, in rural Canada, it is going to be important to understand that winter is coming. I know that is a bit of a cliché from a TV show, but winter comes every year, and it is still coming. I think we need to understand what it costs to fill a barrel of oil now. Many people in rural Canada still live in single-family dwellings with oil heat, especially in Atlantic Canada. It is going to cost about \$1,500 to fill one barrel of oil. Of course, if we get a bad winter it may last six weeks, but it may only last a month. When we are talking about \$1,500, we all know that is a significant amount of money.

We also know that people at the current time cannot feed themselves. We have heard multiple times that the cost of groceries has gone up 10%. On top of that, the carbon tax, of course, will add many more difficulties and much more hardship on the people who live in Cumberland—Colchester. Another thing of interest is that I am very perplexed as to why the government would continue to have only one solution for a complex problem. Why continue to beat Canadians over the head with more taxes, more taxes and more taxes to fund the free-fall spending of the Liberal government? I fail to understand that.

Previously, I was a physician. What we do know is that for complex problems there are often multi-faceted solutions. For instance, when people suffer from cardiovascular disease, we know that people may take medications. We could suggest that they just take their pills, go out, eat whatever they want and live their lives. Is that appropriate? Could it make them live longer? Yes, but does it make people any healthier? I would suggest to the good folks out there that it would not actually make them healthier. How do we help people become healthier? We ask them to exercise more. We ask them to get better sleep. We ask them to help their mental health problems.

The stretch here, of course, is to understand that climate change is real and to question how we will solve that problem. They continue to push tax upon tax to solve a problem. In my mind, and I think in the minds of Conservatives across this great country, people understand that that is a solution based on only one facet of the problem. Clearly, we know it is, given the significant cost-of-living challenges of Canadians at this time and what they are really unable to afford. As, my great colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable pointed out, gasoline it is costing another 40¢ a litre.

In parts of Atlantic Canada, buying a car still poses a great difficulty. There may be many people in larger cities, and perhaps across the aisle, who can afford fancy electric cars for \$60,000, \$70,000 or \$80,000, but we know that in parts of rural Canada there are people who buy cars for \$2,500 or \$3,500 because that is what they can afford. We know now that adding on top of that is going to be difficult.

• (1225)

One of the big concerns I have is that people in Cumberland—Colchester are going to be specifically and proportionally disadvantaged by having to pay more for gasoline. We do not have mass transit. We do not have subways. We do not have those kinds of things. People rely on themselves to get to where they need to go, because that is where we have chosen to live. Therefore, should we

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be disproportionately affected by another 40¢ per litre on gasoline? To me, that is not really a possibility.

One of the other important things to figure out is who is paying this tax? We understand very clearly from the government that large corporations can apply for an exemption from the carbon tax. That does not really make a lot of sense to me, because we know small businesses are not eligible to have an exemption from it. We also know that small businesses are the backbone of Canada; they are the economic drivers. Therefore, small businesses have to pay the tax and large corporations do not.

We also know that individuals will end up paying more. We know that an average household is now paying \$1,400 more annually for the carbon tax.

I always look at this as a shell game, that game where the ball is hidden under shells, then they are moved around and we guess what shell the ball is under. We want to know where that shell is, who is paying the tax and how much is it. These elusive answers make it more difficult to find any type of support for a carbon tax.

We need to look at other technological examples of how to do that. We know that our western partners in the great province of Alberta have the cleanest oil in the world. We also know that there are other technologies, such as carbon capture and storage. We also look to things like small modular reactors to produce pollution-free electricity.

When we look at those kinds of things, it becomes very clear that there are multiple solutions to a problem as opposed to continuing to talk about a carbon tax, which we know very clearly was originally promised at \$50 per tonne and is now set to more than triple to \$170 per tonne.

I would also be remiss if I did not talk about the specific situation in Nova Scotia. We know that it has made significant strides in greening its economy and reducing greenhouse gas. We also know that Premier Tim Houston has sent very pointed letters to the Minister of Environment to help understand better what Nova Scotia's position is.

To quote Premier Houston, he said that his government would outpace federal greenhouse gas reduction targets while costing Nova Scotians less than what they would pay with a federal carbon pricing system. He said, “our path to 2030 is more effective, it's more affordable and it's more visionary than a carbon tax.”

According to provincial documents, Nova Scotia's legislated greenhouse gas reduction target is to be at least 53%t below 2005 levels by 2030. The objective of the federal carbon tax is to be 40% to 45% below 2005 levels.

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The other part of this is that it behooves us to understand that if we are to continue to not allow the provinces to be creative and if we are to continue on with this Ottawa-knows-best approach, this again is absolutely untenable. Why would Canadians believe in this carbon tax when clearly, as I have stated in multiple different ways, there are other ways to reach these targets? Continuing to bash Canadians over the head at a time when inflation is at a 40-year high is really an untenable position.

Canadians are hurting. Our offices hear from them every day. I am absolutely astounded that the members across the aisle are not hearing from their constituents as well to understand how difficult it is to function in today's world from a financial perspective. Therefore, I would suggest that perhaps the members opposite need to listen to their constituents to understand how difficult it is and then, as we might say in the vernacular, axe the tax.

• (1230)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to tackle a couple of things the member for Cumberland—Colchester has said.

The first is around the idea that Nova Scotia put forward a plan. I am a Nova Scotia member of Parliament. I certainly respect the fact that we have a provincial government that does a lot of good things collectively between federal and provincial, but Mr. Houston did not put forward a plan. Just simply saying that we want to get to goals without having a plan on paper is not actually pricing pollution. Therefore, I take notice that it was not really a plan; it was an aspirational document. The provincial government has followed up with something in place and we will see whether that meets the federal test with respect to being able to price pollution.

What I cannot understand is the fact that carbon pricing at its core is a Conservative principle of allowing the market to decide and drive innovation. Why does the member for Cumberland—Colchester want big bossy government programs to dictate how we reduce emissions as opposed to letting the market decide?

• (1235)

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, very clearly, the programs that are being used in Nova Scotia are very effective and are in the best interest of that member's constituents as well. We really should be focused on that. We understand very clearly that we are in a cost of living crisis and that we need to do something for those Canadians. To continue to tax them to death really is not in the best interest of his constituents either. That is a sad reality.

The other thing we need to understand is that we hear the government talk out of both sides of its mouth. It is asking now for technological advances from businesses, while on the other side it is wanting to tax them. Therefore, it is interfering with the free-market economy. Those two things are a really untenable position.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to my colleague's speech.

If there is one thing the Conservatives are very good at, it is creating a diversion. They think that eliminating the carbon tax or the carbon tax increase will solve the whole inflation problem.

The 70% figure quoted by the experts applies to inflation all over the world. To be precise, this means that the increase in inflation is not just due to the carbon tax, but is linked to the pandemic and current economic conditions, including the repercussions of the war in Ukraine.

The Bloc Québécois has proposed concrete solutions, such as targeting certain industries and helping low-income people, including seniors. I have a solution of my own to offer, because we also know that the Conservative Party is the champion of budget efficiency. It cost about \$23 billion to buy Trans Mountain.

Would my colleague be willing to sell the pipeline to help people who are genuinely in need?

[English]

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, one of the things we need to understand clearly is that adding more fuel to the inflationary fire is really not going to make this situation any better for average Canadians. It is also important that we do understand the plight of Canadians and that we understand that our transition away from fossil fuels, and there will be one, will be long and difficult.

When we look at the number of cars that are on the road today, there is no viable way to take an internal combustion engine and turn it into an electric vehicle.

My question would be how we would do that quickly and effectively, and using a carbon tax that has not been proven to reduce emissions at all really seems like a silly way to continue and it is damaging the financial position of Canadians.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, noticeably missing from the debate today is any talk of climate change in the north. In Nunavut, housing investments are missing, tundra is melting and infrastructure is not climate resilient.

Why do the Conservatives continue to stand up for massive profits of corporate oil and gas, rather than support the taxation that is involved and needed to fight climate change?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, it is interesting that large corporations can be exempt from this carbon tax. To me, that really does not make any sense. We know that the cost of living crisis is hitting northern communities particularly hard. Continuing to increase their cost of fuel and the delivery of goods is going to be a significant hardship for those in the north, and we need to put those Canadians first.

[Translation]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to inform you that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Davenport this afternoon.

I am pleased to rise to speak to the Conservative opposition motion before us today. I want to say on the record that I love opposition days, which give us the opportunity to debate and talk at length about policy with our colleagues.

The motion before us today reads, and I quote:

...given that the government's tax increases on gas, home heating and, indirectly, groceries, will fuel inflation, and that the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported the carbon tax costs 60% of households more than they get back, the government must eliminate its plan to triple the carbon tax.

I take exception to the claim that carbon pricing is a tax. Merriam-Webster defines a tax as a compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits, or added to the cost of some goods, services and transactions.

In my view, this is a program designed to set a price on carbon with all proceeds being reinvested, not used for government programs. It is therefore not a tax in the traditional sense of the word.

● (1240)

[English]

It is important, because on this side of the House we talk about pricing pollution and pricing carbon. That is essentially what we are doing. The Conservative Party obviously talks about it as a tax, but a tax, in a general sense, is for the general collection of government revenues. It is not often recognized by my opposition friends that the way in which the federal backstop program actually works is it returns the revenue that is collected.

Yes, that is a collection on a macro level and there can be a differentiation between households and businesses, but that is the whole idea. We are trying to price a negative externality that is associated with GHG emissions, because this is about climate. I know that affordability is a top-of-mind issue. No one on this side of the House would disagree, but at the same time, what I have not heard in the conversations this morning, particularly from His Majesty's loyal opposition, is much conversation about a real plan to reduce emissions. We have to take those two conversations hand in hand.

I did ask in my question for the member for Cumberland—Colchester why the Conservative Party was against a core Conservative principle, and that is that this government takes the view that we want to put a price on carbon, such that there is a market incentive for changed behaviour for businesses and individuals to be able to adjust accordingly. This is what I find ironic about the Conservative position. Notwithstanding that, I have not heard much at all about climate in the couple of weeks since the member for Carleton has become the official opposition leader. Nor have I heard much of an alternative.

It seems like we are going to rely on technology. Therefore, how is the government going to incentivize the private sector to take on that technology? Is it going to be through government subsidies? Is it going to be through a regulatory model? There is not much conversation on what that holds.

At the core of what we are talking about in carbon pricing is setting that price to change behaviour and draw investment from the private sector to make some of those technological innovations, which it seems the Conservative Party perhaps thinks will be done

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out of the goodness of one's heart without an actual economic model to do so.

It is important to recognize that economists and organizations around the world recognize that carbon pricing is the cheapest way to reduce emissions. I recognize that the member for Carleton certainly has a level of distrust against international organizations. We have seen that with the World Economic Forum in the way that he has criticized that organization. I do not know if that extends to the OECD, but the OECD does recognize carbon pricing in this domain. It is yet to be seen what the Conservative Party's take is on that view.

Instead of allowing the market to decide, incentivizing individual households, businesses and the economy, the Conservatives want to have, again as I mentioned in my question, big bossy government programs. They want government, at a large macro level, to intervene as opposed to driving private sector innovation and ingenuity. I have yet to hear a compelling reason as to why the Conservative Party does not understand or believe this is a principle that can be used to reduce emissions.

Again, let us remember why this is being done. It is being done in the context that we have a climate emergency. We have to be able to reduce emissions.

We were in the House last night talking about hurricane Fiona and I was very careful not to make those two connections, because we wanted to ensure the debate was really about providing support to Atlantic Canadians. Although the member for Miramichi—Grand Lake was on record as saying that climate and hurricanes had no connection, which I was appalled to hear as I watched the debate from my hotel room. There is a connection. The frequency of these storms is tied to the work we have to do on climate. The Conservative Party, in one breath, seemed to talk about that yesterday, and then it has comes up with no real tangible solutions in its motion today.

● (1245)

[Translation]

I would also like to challenge the part of the motion on home heating. In my region, Atlantic Canada, there is no carbon tax levied on home heating because the provinces have introduced their own carbon pricing systems. Therefore, this motion would have little effect in Atlantic Canada at this time.

This government recognizes that it is imperative to focus on both affordability and emission reductions at the same time. That is precisely why we have put in place a \$250-million program to help low-income residents move away from using oil to heat their homes. A total of \$120 million from this program will be earmarked for the Atlantic provinces.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

I want to make sure I am on the record saying that I am proud of the way our Atlantic caucus advocated for that specific program. There are a lot of Atlantic Canadians who still use home heating oil to warm their homes, and this money is going to go directly to support their transition in order to make sure we can avoid the volatility of their energy bills, which we have seen in the global market on home heating oil.

I also want to say it is very clear that the Conservatives are taking a complete opposition to carbon pricing. It is very clear for most in this House that there is very little in the way of tangible offerings on what else they would do. I take notice that it is not just carbon pricing that can reduce emissions. I agree that it needs to be a whole, full approach with other elements as well, but we do not hear anything from them. I do not even hear the Conservatives proposing to make amendments.

It has been three years or four years since the government introduced its backstop formula. Instead of having concrete questions on how we could improve and amend that formula, they simply say they do not believe in this, without providing any alternatives. Yes, Canadians are concerned about affordability. We are as well. They also care and want a government that is serious about tackling climate change. It needs to be part of it. It cannot be one or the other; it needs to be both at the same time.

There are two more things. The Conservatives will talk about technology and working with large companies to be able to reduce emissions. That is all well and good. They do not recognize that those policies would come with costs to consumers as well. The entire idea of the federal backstop is to return revenues to households so we can incentivize individuals to make a change.

There is very little recognition from the Conservatives that their vague policy statements or lack of a plan, whatever it may be, would come with its own inherent costs. There is never a recognition from that side.

On affordability, last week this government introduced two different measures I hope all members in this House will support. They are the doubling of the GST rebate, along with dental care and housing affordability. These are measures the government is focused on. We do not want to compromise on reducing emissions. In fact, we want to help people make a transition so we can both reduce emissions and support affordability at the same time.

The Conservatives have a view that it needs to be one or the other. We have a view, on this side, that it needs to be both at the same time. I look forward to taking questions from my hon. colleagues.

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member said he has not heard anything from Conservatives. I would suggest he has not been listening. I commend to him the speech of the leader of His Majesty's loyal opposition this morning, in which he talked very clearly about alternatives to simply tripling the carbon tax.

I want to talk about my own home province of British Columbia, which has had a carbon tax for a number of years. Emissions have continued to go up. It is the least affordable jurisdiction in North

America when it comes to energy prices. The price for gasoline was \$2.40 a litre in British Columbia this week.

People who live in British Columbia will be happy to know that when they involuntarily need to send money to Ottawa and Victoria, that is a pricing pollution mechanism. It is a market incentive for changed behaviour. What changed behaviour does this member have for my rural constituents who need to drive pickups to get to work to serve our communities, and for the farmers who need to drive tractors to produce the food we eat? What market incentive for changed behaviour is he proposing for them?

• (1250)

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague started by saying that the Conservatives had a lot of different options on the table to reduce emissions, and that the member for Carleton had mentioned them, yet he then spoke for the next 45 seconds without providing one single example of what the Conservative Party would actually do.

As it relates to the federal backstop, which is not in play in his home province of British Columbia, and indeed the parliamentary secretary is on record less than an hour ago, talking about the success of carbon pricing in reducing emissions in British Columbia, he might want to take up carbon pricing with the British Columbia government if he has an issue.

On the federal backstop, there is a provision to help support rural residents, recognizing that there are not as many opportunities for them to change behaviour. Whether that 10% is adequate is a conversation that could be had, but I do not even hear him making reasonable arguments on that. He simply says that they have solutions, without proposing any.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about housing affordability as if the government were very active on this front and the measures it is putting in place were working well. However, I would like to remind the House that earlier this year a Scotiabank report stated that 3.5 million units will have to be built in Canada over the next 10 years just to address the current crisis.

According to a report from the National Housing Council, only 35,000 new homes were built and 60,000 were renovated under the national housing strategy launched in 2017. That is roughly 100,000 units over the past five years. There are five years left in this national strategy, but there is a need for 3.5 million housing units in Canada over the next 10 years, including 1.1 million in Quebec alone.

Where are those measures?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I am a bit confused. I understand that housing is a very important issue. If I understood the interpretation correctly, my colleague's question was entirely on housing. However, today, the debate on the opposition motion is on the carbon tax.

The Government of Canada will work with all the provinces and territories, including Quebec and, of course, the members of the sovereignist party. I expect the Government of Quebec will propose some solutions. Why does my hon. colleague think that the federal government has to provide the entire solution?

That is my opinion in answer to his comments.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, corporate profits are rising twice as fast as inflation. Meanwhile, wages for workers are rising only half as quickly. The government insists on saying that it is there for workers, yet it will not impose the excess profit tax on big CEOs who are profiting. Other countries are doing that.

Why will the Liberals not do the same thing and be on the side of workers?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I am a little disappointed in the opposition parties, because today's conversation is about carbon pricing, and members had an opportunity to ask questions in relation to that.

It seems very clear from my position that the NDP is going down the path of corporate profits and complete and total class warfare. We have seen that happen. It is clear that the government expects higher-income Canadians to pay more. We have introduced taxes in that regard. We have introduced taxes on the banking and insurance sector. Perhaps there is more work to be done, but the narrative and tone that is coming from the NDP is not a constructive conversation to be had. It is unfortunate.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as always it is a true pleasure for me to rise in this venerable House to speak to the opposition motion on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport. I would like to state that I agree with neither the premise of the Conservative motion before us today nor the ask of the motion. Our federal government is doing all it can to support our most vulnerable in Canada and those most impacted by inflation and the rising costs of living.

I am also a firm believer in carbon pricing and that the federal government needs to continue to move as urgently as possible to meet its Paris Accord targets and its net-zero target by 2015. Climate change is accelerating faster than has been predicted and it would be the height of irresponsibility for the federal government, indeed any level of government in any province or territory across Canada, to slow down its efforts toward achieving net zero by 2015. If anything, we need to double down on our efforts and be very clear in showing our progress to Canadians.

Let me speak a bit more to the issue of the rising costs of living in Canada. It is indeed a serious concern. As we well know, the pandemic has caused financial challenges and uncertainty for many Canadians. We also know that inflation, a global phenomenon that is a lingering result of the pandemic and exacerbated by worldwide events, is making life harder for a lot of Canadians. The job market is very strong and businesses are doing well, but we also know that despite this, it is harder for a lot of Canadians to pay their bills at the end of the month. That is why the federal government support programs continue to be so important.

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We have an affordability plan that includes many important measures. This is support to the most vulnerable people in our communities, to help them at a time when the cost of living is a real challenge for many Canadians. For example, the enhanced Canada worker benefit puts up to \$2,400 more into the pockets of low-income families, starting this year. This results in more than \$1.7 billion in new support this year alone, and it will make life more affordable for our lowest-paid workers.

We have also increased old age security by 10% for seniors 75 and older, which will provide up to an additional \$800 for more than three million seniors over the first year.

We have signed agreements on early learning and child care with every single province and territory. This is to achieve the goal of an affordable universal system of early learning and child care, so that every mother who wants to go to work has the comfort of knowing that her children are being well cared for and well taught.

Furthermore, benefits including the Canada child benefit, the GST credit, the Canada pension plan, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement are indexed to inflation, as is the federal minimum wage, which we increased to \$15 an hour and indexed to inflation, making it now \$15.55 an hour.

Just last week, the federal government tabled two important pieces of legislation to address commitments we have made. Bill C-30 would double the goods and services tax credit for six months. This would provide 2.5 billion more dollars in additional targeted support to the roughly 11 million individuals and families who already receive the tax credit, including about half of Canadian families with children and more than half of Canadian seniors. Single Canadians without children would receive an extra \$234, and couples with two children would receive an extra \$467 this year alone. Seniors would receive an extra \$225 on average. The proposed extra GST credit amounts would be paid through the existing GST credit system as a one-time lump-sum payment before the end of the year.

Bill C-31 would enact two important measures: the Canada dental benefit and a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit. The Canada dental benefit would be provided to families with income under \$90,000 who do not have access to dental insurance, starting this year. Direct payments totalling up to \$1,300 over the next two years would be provided to cover dental care expenses for each child under 12 years old. This is the first stage of the federal government's plan to deliver dental coverage for families with adjusted net income under \$90,000. It would allow children under 12 to receive the dental care they need while the government works to develop a comprehensive national dental care program.

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• (1255)

The one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit would deliver a \$500 payment to 1.8 million renters who are struggling with the cost of housing. This more than doubles the federal government's budget 2022 commitment, reaching twice as many Canadians as initially promised. The federal benefit will be available to applicants with an adjusted net income below \$35,000 for families or below \$20,000 for individuals who pay at least 30% of their adjusted net income on rent.

These pieces of legislation represent the latest suite of measures to support Canadians with the rising cost of living. I am proud of how our federal government is being thoughtful and deliberate about how we are supporting Canadians who are most in need, while also being very conscious about not unleashing too much new spending so as to worsen current levels of inflation.

Over the weekend, I had the pleasure of attending a number of events in my riding. I heard from many parents who were very anxious to have their day care operators sign on to the federal national day care plan so that they can save 50% of their costs per child by the end of this year. I also heard from low-income seniors who are really happy to hear about the dental care benefit. While this year they will not benefit from it, as it is only available to children in households of \$90,000 or less and if they are under the age of 12, they are very excited about the prospect of being able to access it by the end of next year. It will be a lifeline for many.

On the topic of housing, as it has been said many times in this House, the federal government made a significant commitment in budget 2022 to double the number of new homes that we will build over the next 10 years. The federal government, provinces and territories, cities and towns, the private sector and non-profits are all pulling together to build the homes a growing country needs.

The federal government's affordability plan is delivering targeted and fiscally responsible financial support to the Canadians who need it most, with particular emphasis on addressing the needs of low-income Canadians who are most exposed to inflation. Many of the most vulnerable Canadians are receiving more financial support now than they did last year, and they will continue to receive new support in the weeks and months to come.

I would be remiss to not thank the opposition for bringing up the subject of climate change. Climate action is an economic necessity. The global economy is changing, and the future economic growth will be more and more dependent on clean energy. It is no longer up for debate that a national price on pollution is the most effective market incentive for climate action, and Canada's climate action incentive puts more money into the pockets of eight out of every 10 families in Canada.

Budget 2022 included climate action measures ranging from a new Canada growth fund, which will help attract the investments we need to build a cleaner and more prosperous Canada, to an innovation and investment agency, which will help our traditional industries thrive in a changing global economy and our small businesses continue to grow and create good middle-class jobs.

The federal government understands that many Canadians are struggling with the cost of living. The targeted support programs I

have mentioned offer real help to the most vulnerable, are fiscally responsible and will not further fuel inflation.

In addition, we will continue to put a price on pollution. The federal government will continue to urgently implement the many measures we have announced over the last almost seven years, and we will ensure that we meet our Paris accord targets and our net-zero targets by 2050. Our ability to live, our quality of life, our future depends on us accelerating our fight against climate change and not stopping, as the Conservatives are asking us to do.

• (1300)

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I do not know whether to thank our hon. colleague for her speech or to laugh at it.

It is frustrating because I hear from Canadians and constituents almost every day in my riding who are saying loud and clear that they cannot afford this government any longer, whether it is a farmer who has been hit by the Liberal fertilizer policies, a fisher who has been hit by Liberal fisheries policies or a logger in the natural resource sector, which has been hard hit by this Liberal government. They continue to wage war on Canadians.

What does this member have to say to my constituents who say that they simply cannot afford another term of the current Liberal government?

• (1305)

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, we know it is a tough time for many Canadians. I had the absolute pleasure of attending five events on Saturday, and the vast majority of people who came and spoke to me said they were very thankful for the many measures that our federal government is putting into place. I mentioned two of them already in my speech. That national child care program is going to reduce their cost by 50% by the end of this year. It is a game-changer for them and it will absolutely help them with the rising costs we are seeing today, as well as the dental care program.

I would like to respond to the hon. member with something that one of my colleagues said in a speech recently. In terms of the climate incentive, we do have a federal backstop and it does provide 10% of additional support to rural and small businesses that need to have additional support around the rising costs they are seeing today.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am still taken aback. Since this morning, I have been listening to my Liberal friends brag about their record on fighting climate change. In Quebec, there is a group called Mothers Step. I have met with them several times, since they have a satellite office in my riding, Longueuil—Saint-Hubert. These mothers are worried. I would like to read part of their manifesto to my colleague:

We are mothers, grandmothers and allies who are standing behind the calls made by scientists and echoed by our children for a collective response to the climate emergency.

According to the IPCC, if we want to prevent global warming of 1.5°C or a catastrophic degradation of our climate, we need to cut emissions by a minimum of 45% over 2010 levels by 2030 and to be carbon neutral by 2050. That is why in 2021, the International Energy Agency (IEA) recommended closing the door to all new fossil fuel supply projects.

The government did not do that.

What does my colleague have to say about this demand from Mothers Step In?

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, I truly thank the hon. member for his concern. Before entering politics, I was a climate activist. I can assure members that I very deliberately joined the Liberal team because they were serious about climate action. We have spent over \$100 billion on over 100 actions, trying to reduce our emissions nationally and stepping up to make sure we meet our Paris accord targets and meet our target of net zero by 2050.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations did indicate that our world is in peril. It is paralyzed and we are gridlocked in a colossal global dysfunction. It is important for all of us to share our best ideas on how we can accelerate and make sure that we meet our net-zero target by 2050.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, at the UN General Assembly last week, the UN Secretary-General actually called on the countries to tax the windfall profits of fossil fuel companies. In fact, they are making a record profit as we speak: \$147 billion just this year alone.

Will the member support the call of the UN Secretary-General to impose a windfall tax, as the NDP has been calling on the government to do?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Madam Speaker, we absolutely are increasing and permanently raising the corporate income tax by 1.5% on Canada's largest and most profitable banks and insurance companies. We have also introduced a recovery dividend of 15% on excess profits at these institutions during the COVID pandemic.

We are always looking for the best ideas and I think we always should have additional considerations as we look to provide more incentives to reach our 2050 targets of net zero.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the amazing member for South Shore—St. Margarets.

I have been looking forward to participating in today's debate to prove once again that the Liberal government is so misguided it actually thinks taxation would cause us to fix climate change. Howev-

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er, its own record shows that it continues to drive up emissions while costing Canadians more by raising carbon taxes on everything we do, not just a certain part of our economy but everything we do, whether it is heating our homes, feeding our families or driving our kids to sports.

We need to address how this is hurting us, especially in my province of Manitoba. I can tell the members across the way in the Liberal Party that the net cost to Manitobans, the fiscal and economic impact is \$1,145 per household. If we look at the average cost per household in what we define as the middle class, it actually goes up to \$1,600 per family. That is atrocious. The Liberal government is pickpocketing the middle class to the tune of \$1,600 and making life more unaffordable.

We are talking about a carbon tax that is going to triple from where it is today, more than triple. It is going up to \$170 a tonne. Right now it is at \$50. That would keep driving up the costs of everything we do: the cost of living, our affordability, whether or not we could afford to go out and buy a new car or a new home. Everything would be impacted. I really feel for the people in my riding of Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. We are a rural riding. People have to drive great distances. It is not like the people who live in a city who can just drive across town to take their kids to a hockey game. We often have to drive hours to get to the next-door community arena so the kids can play sports or to go to the school to watch a basketball game that the kids are participating in. Everything continues to add up.

Canadians who are living on fixed incomes, like our seniors, are the most impacted by the Liberal government's failed policies. We know that often in rural areas we have to drive for doctor's appointments, and specialists are always in the big cities like Winnipeg. That means getting in the car, driving down the highway and paying more and more just to go see the doctor, never mind if they have to go to Winnipeg or an urban centre for shopping or to visit family.

This is impacting our seniors. The Canada pension plan index continues to lag way behind what is happening with the cost of living. It has been exacerbated because of the carbon tax. It is falling farther behind.

I do not think the Liberals understand this, but the lifeblood of Canada is diesel. Everything we do is based on diesel, including the food we grow, the crops we transport and the products we ship around the world. The food is farmed with a tractor, and later it goes onto a truck, a train and a ship. We need to make sure that we are protecting the competitive advantage we used to have as Canada. We need to be protecting our food growers in this country. However, the Liberals are trying to put them out of business.

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The Canada trucking industry said that, last year, the carbon tax cost the trucking industry \$528 million. They are expecting that next year it would cost the trucking industry \$1.2 billion in extra carbon taxes, and in 2030 it would go up to over \$3 billion. Those costs are going to be built into the costs of everything we buy. Whether it is shipping clothing across the country, shipping produce in from offshore or shipping our own farm-raised products to markets across this country, it is going to mean higher costs for food for every single Canadian.

I do not know how the Liberals figure they are going to get out of that. Maybe they are going to take more of Canadians' tax dollars to try to buy their votes back, which is a Liberal thing to do, but we are undermining affordability for Canadians. We are undermining the productivity of our industries right across the board with this carbon tax, and we are diminishing our competitive advantage in the world market.

● (1310)

We are an exporting nation. We have to export to create jobs. We have to export to get rid of the surplus goods we produce here, including our agriculture products.

When the carbon tax first came in, it cost an average farmer \$14,000 a year. It has gone up since then, and now the Liberals want to triple the cost of how much people pay in carbon tax to put fuel in their tractors and trucks, and to use natural gas to dry their grain and heat their livestock barns. Whether they have poultry or hogs, they have to be able to heat those facilities, and every time they do that, the government is saying, "Gimme, gimme, gimme. I want my carbon tax." It is not going to change the farmers' habits. It is a necessity of how we raise our food.

This is having a huge impact, and to add insult to injury, the Liberals are charging GST on top of the carbon tax. It is a tax on a tax, and it is something the Liberals love to do. It is not about adding value; it is about adding tax. It is about putting more in government coffers and doing nothing with it to fight climate change.

We should be investing in best practices to fight climate change, such as carbon sequestration, which we can do on farms. Actually, with the fertilizer mandate that is coming forward from the Liberals, where they want nitrogen fertilizer to be reduced by 30% because they think this will reduce emissions, members can guess what happens.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, if the member for Winnipeg North wants to listen, he will actually find out why the Liberals' policies are so misdirected. It is because they are going to force more and more farmers to try to farm more land. However, guess what we cannot produce in this country. We cannot produce more agricultural land. What we are not farming now is not farmable, but what will happen is that crop production is going to push into what is right now marginal land for pastures and grass and supporting our ranching industry, which is very sustainable, from a climate basis. These are carbon sinks, but now we are going to be forced to till them at lower productivity with less fertilizer, which reduces the potential of that land even further.

I know the member for Winnipeg North thinks he can dig in any part of the country out there and is going to grow potatoes, but he cannot. There is only certain land that can produce potatoes or root crops, but especially when it comes down to growing cereals, soybeans, corn, wheat or canola. We have specific land capabilities, and if we are going to farm that marginal land, we are destroying wildlife habitat. If we are going to farm that marginal land, we are removing carbon sinks and being detrimental to the overall climate change policy.

This is very short-sighted on behalf of the Liberals, and it is something that continues to worry me. As the leader of the King's official opposition said this morning, the Liberals brought forward this policy even though they have been promoting, for the seven years they have been in government, to buy local because it would reduce the cost of transportation of the food we eat. Reducing the transportation distances and using less fuel to get it into urban centres will be good for the climate.

What happens with this model of carbon taxing and tripling the carbon tax is that we are putting the local farmer at a huge disadvantage and allowing individuals who are producing in non-regulated countries around the world, such as those in Latin America, those in South America and China, to bring those food products here. That, to me, is unconscionable. It should never be allowed to happen. Our own food security is being undermined by the Liberals and we have to stop it now.

● (1315)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I agreed in part with some of my colleague's remarks, particularly those related to best practices, but I wonder if the hon. member could reflect on the costs of climate change. In our home province of Manitoba, we have had two one-in-300-year floods, costing a billion dollars each, devastating agriculture and devastating first nations. There is only one way to address the climate change issue: reduce emissions. A price on pollution is going to help with that. It is going to drive technological innovation, and it is going to help create clean jobs.

I wonder if the hon. member would provide his reflections on the costs of climate change.

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, the question is, why does the government hate farmers? Why does the government think that taxes are going to fix these climatic natural disasters we have been experiencing? I do not see any correlation between increasing carbon taxes and reducing emissions.

Instead of producing more food and energy here and exporting to nations that are causing all the exposure to CO₂ across the planet, why would the Liberals continue to undermine Canadian jobs, Canadian farmers and our own economy? I believe we have seen an escalation in these dramatic climate change events, such as the flooding we have continued to experience in Manitoba and the drought we have had the last two years, but not this year thankfully, across the eastern Prairies.

I know a tax has not changed one single thing, while emissions continue to rise. If the government wants to get serious, let us invest in the technology that reduces emissions rather than tax Canadians on their hard-earned dollars.

• (1320)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party's ideas never cease to amaze me. Canada's largest greenhouse gas emitter is the oil and gas sector. During an opposition day in March, the Conservative Party proposed temporarily reducing the GST and the QST on gas, ostensibly to give consumers a break, but doing so would just help the oil and gas sector. They like the idea; I see them nodding.

Today's proposal to eliminate the carbon tax is a bid to help the oil and gas sector.

Members are constantly talking about carbon capture and sequestration. The last budget gave the oil and gas sector \$2.6 billion to help with that. There were two carbon sequestration projects in Alberta, and 57% of their \$2.5-billion price tag came from public funds.

Now the Conservatives are saying we need yet another layer, because that is the best way to help people. It makes no sense whatsoever.

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, it is always surprising to listen to Bloc members get up and rail against Canada's oil and gas sector, when their own province is completely dependent on imported oil and gas coming from Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and other places with totalitarian regimes. It is unfortunate that they cannot see the value in producing ethical, environmentally friendly oil and gas right here in Canada, and will instead support their industries by buying from offshore sources.

I do not know where the minds of Bloc members are at, but all their gas-fuelled vehicles, automobiles, tractors, highway trucks and rail system are still based on diesel, and they would rather buy from offshore sources than buy from us in Canada.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am going to try to do something rare in this House. I am going to try to find common ground with my Conservative colleague, whom I know cares about farmers.

We are talking about taxes. Would the hon. member at least agree that with the ballooning costs of orphan wells, at over \$1 billion, from the Prairies all the way to B.C., oil and gas companies have an obligation to pay their fair share of orphan wells so the cost does not get downloaded onto municipalities and the rural farmers he cares so much about?

Mr. James Bezan: Madam Speaker, I will keep it short. I appreciate the question from my friend from the NDP. I can tell him that I agree with him. That should be a cost for corporations that originally mined the land. They are responsible for covering it.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I rise to speak to the first opposition day motion of the fall. It is one that has great significance given the

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cost-of-living crisis that Canadians are currently facing. As we all know, this unprecedented situation is due to record-breaking inflation while wages stay the same. People are working harder and falling further behind.

This 40-year record inflation, not seen since Pierre Trudeau, means life has become more expensive for Canadians trying to pay rent and buy food. Housing is twice as expensive as it was in 2015 when the Prime Minister took office. Food prices are up 10.8% on average. The average family of four is now spending over \$1,200 more a year to put food on the table. However, the government is resorting to one-time rebates and a bunch of platitudes rather than solving the problem. Life is getting more expensive for Canadians.

Last week, I spoke to Bill C-30 and how the current government's spending and money printing have caused record-breaking inflation. However, an equally impactful aspect of inflation has to do with the tax that is being applied to everything. The imposition and tripling of this new tax in Nova Scotia will make fuel cost an extra 40¢ per litre by 2030 for moms taking their kids to hockey and for those forced by the policies of the government, like me, to heat their home with oil from Saudi Arabia. It is a tax that will cost families hundreds of dollars a year when they are trying to make healthy meals. It is a tax that will make home heating more expensive for seniors living through frigid Canadian winters. I am talking, of course, about the carbon tax.

If the Prime Minister was serious about making life more affordable for workers, families and seniors, he would cancel the carbon tax increase immediately. The carbon tax hike is coming at the worst possible time for Canadian families, which are struggling with rising costs. Instead of freezing taxes, the Liberals are raising taxes on people who are struggling to make ends meet. Of course, the Liberals will try to pretend that their cherished carbon tax is the only way to address climate change, but this, of course, is false.

Take my own province of Nova Scotia, for example. The provincial government has some of the most aggressive targets in the country for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. We have more wind power in our power grid mix than eight other Canadian provinces. We surpassed the federal government's 2030 targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions 13 years early. Our electricity generation from coal is down from 76% in 2007 to 52% in 2018 and will be eliminated, as all coal-fired plants will be closed with the creation of the Atlantic Loop. Our clean electricity generation has tripled in the last decade. Energy efficiency programs prevent one million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions each year. Also, a new 2030 goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45% to 50% below 2005 levels has been legislated, and this is more aggressive than the federal targets.

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All of that work is in a small province, the vast majority of which was done with no prompting or pressure from the federal government. Nova Scotians have stepped up to fight climate change. We are punching above our weight, all without imposing a new tax on everything.

While the NDP-Liberals stick to their ineffective high tax, we say this carbon reduction can be done through technology, not taxes. Nova Scotia has shown the way and is the model. The federal government rejected Nova Scotia's common-sense environmental policy, which would tackle climate change without making life more expensive for those who are struggling.

The Liberals have blinders on. All they want is more tax and more money from hard-working Canadians to spend on their woke agenda. Nova Scotians live in the highest taxed jurisdiction in the country. The imposition of this tax makes no sense in a region where climate change has been taken seriously for more than 20 years.

The Liberals think that imposing taxes will actually change the weather. They never met a tax they did not love. We reject the point from the Liberal Party that this tax is revenue-neutral, and so does the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

• (1325)

The common rebuttal by the Liberals is that eight out of 10 families will receive more money in rebate cheques than they pay out. We have yet to see any cheques in Nova Scotia from the federal government. That is magic math. It must be the new math where one plus one equals three.

However, members do not have to just take it from me. They can take it from the independent, non-partisan Parliamentary Budget Officer, who stated, “most households in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario will see a net loss resulting from federal carbon pricing by 2030.” By then the carbon levy will have increased to an incredible \$170 a tonne. As the PBO said, “The moment you decide to decarbonize the economy in a relatively short period of time — and we’re talking here less than 10 years to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions — it’s clear that there is going to be a cost.”

Additionally, the PBO expects that, in the end, Albertans will end up paying \$507 per household on average more than they get back. The PBO has calculated that, by 2030, the net loss on average for households will be \$2,282. The PBO goes on to report, “Most households under the backstop will see a net loss resulting from federal carbon pricing under the HEHE plan in 2030-31.” He continues by stating that household carbon costs, which now include the federal levy and GST paid on top of the carbon tax, lower income and that the amount they paid exceeds the rebate.

Trudeau’s tax is bad for Nova Scotians. It will have no effect on the excellent work Nova Scotians have done and will continue to do to reduce our carbon footprint. There is an alternative to this dogmatic—

• (1330)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is a point of order by the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader

of the Government in the House of Commons. I am pretty sure I know what it is, but I will allow him to proceed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, if the member had perused his notes before he read them, he would see that he made reference to the Prime Minister by name, and he is not allowed to do that.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I suspected that was the point of order the hon. parliamentary secretary was rising on.

I would hope the hon. member for South Shore—St. Margarets will be mindful of what is in his notes.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I do not know how that one slipped by, but I thank the member for Winnipeg North. I will repeat the sentence altered.

The Liberal tax is bad for Nova Scotia. It will have no effect on the excellent work that Nova Scotians have done and will continue to do to reduce the carbon footprint. There is an alternative to the dogmatic approach of Ottawa, which was proposed by Premier Houston. If the Liberal government was serious about tackling climate change, it would encourage innovation and new approaches to the problem. Instead, it has a rigid set of rules that do not allow for programs that go beyond the realm of its tax agenda.

As families across the country struggle to make ends meet, dirty oil continues to be shipped to ports in Atlantic Canada from places like Saudi Arabia. This means human rights-abusing dictators are getting rich on Canada’s oil needs while a single mom in my riding cannot afford nutritious food. There is, of course, a solution to the problem. By unleashing Canada’s natural resource sector and approving good Canadian projects, global emissions will be reduced, which is our goal. That is because we have some of the strictest environmental regulations in the world.

The oil cultivated and extracted in Canada is the cleanest, most efficient energy in the world. On top of that, the emissions produced by shipping oil across the Atlantic Ocean to New Brunswick from the Middle East completely negates any benefit from a carbon tax. Let us green-light Newfoundland and Labrador’s planned increase in oil production, which will allow us to fully replace every single barrel of oil we are importing from abroad to Atlantic Canada within five years. Let us tackle climate change by unleashing Canada’s mining of minerals needed to produce the batteries for electric vehicles. Let us make Canada a place where nuclear and hydroelectricity generation is welcomed and not admonished.

The carbon tax does not work, and it is time for it to go. Canadians just cannot afford the government.

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Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I could be wrong, but I thought I heard the member say in his speech that Nova Scotia does not have its own system in place and, as a result, it is subject to the federal regime, but that is actually not the case.

In Nova Scotia, if one goes to Canada.ca, it shows that it has its own cap and trade system, so Nova Scotia is not subject to the federal regime as it relates to the price on pollution. As a matter of fact, Nova Scotia, at least according to the government's own website, is doing a very good job and, therefore, does not need federal government intervention.

I am wondering if the member would help export from that province the system Nova Scotia is using to encourage other provinces and territories throughout the country to use it, so they will not have to rely on that. Finally, I want to congratulate the member from Nova Scotia for having it.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, the member for Kingston and the Islands is right. We do have a cap and trade system in Nova Scotia that adds 1¢ a litre to gas. The federal government wants that to triple, which would immediately add 14¢ more a litre to gas in Nova Scotia, and it would build that to 40¢ a litre by 2030.

That is the plan of the federal government, to push up the cap and trade system and costing Nova Scotians more, and that is what we reject. We reject that approach when all these other methods, which I have outlined in my speech, show how we can get there with technology and not taxes.

• (1335)

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, if there is one aspect of my colleague's speech that I agree with, it is this: When it comes to fighting climate change, we need to focus on new technologies. However, money does not grow on trees.

Quebec is truly a leader in that regard. Not only do we manufacture electric batteries but we also recycle them. We are manufacturing electric buses. A factory in Shawinigan is even producing electric snowmobiles. That is significant.

Money does not grow on trees, and yet the government is handing the oil industry \$12 billion. If the government took that money and invested it in new technologies, that would help speed up the transition to new technologies.

Does my colleague agree?

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, the hon. member is always a very entertaining member in the House.

I can say what we really need, and I applaud the innovation that is happening in Quebec. We have innovation happening in Nova Scotia too, but the federal government is ignoring that innovation. It thinks there is only one way to deal with this issue, which is a tax that is not working. The government has had this in place for almost seven years, and it has missed its carbon target every single

year. That is the proof. British Columbia has had the tax even longer, and it has missed all its targets. Therefore, I would ask the government to take the blinders off and look at alternatives that work.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party members are talking a lot about how families are struggling, often including the current new leader of the Conservative Party's mentioning cryptocurrencies as a way out of inflation, and they often mention single moms needing help. I actually was a single mom. When I was a single mom, I needed dental care and universal child care, and I needed parties like the Conservative Party to go after big CEOs from big corporations, such as Galen Weston from Loblaw's, who makes \$5,100 per hour.

Would my colleague agree with me that the Conservatives' failure to support dental care and universal child care, and to go after the root of the problem, such as leaders of big grocery chains, is actually hurting families more? Will he actually name the elephant in the room?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, Nancy in my riding is a single mother living on disability near Bridgewater. She makes \$875 a month. In the winter, she has to heat her home with oil from Saudi Arabia. That costs \$700 a month. The government wants to increase the cost of that by 40¢ a litre. Why is it that members of the NDP–Liberal coalition do not care about people like Nancy in my riding?

The dental care program proposed by the NDP–Liberal government, one-time payments to duplicate what provincial governments already provide, is ridiculous.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to remind members that, when an hon. member has the floor, it is not their opportunity to ask questions or make comments. I would ask members to hold off until they are recognized during the questions and comments period.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country has the floor.

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

Today feels like Groundhog Day because, once again, we are here talking about the price on pollution. It could almost be 2015, which was one of the first times this topic was brought up in a federal election, but there have been three federal elections since then where putting a price on pollution was one of the main items at the ballot box. It almost feels as though, for the last five years, we have not been having discussions with the premiers across the country about whether or not the federal government had a constitutional ability to bring in a price on pollution. It is almost as though we did not have a Supreme Court of Canada case affirm that Canada does indeed have the ability to do this, and that Canada does indeed have to act on a problem that is this fundamental to our country and to the entire world.

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I also find it somewhat tone deaf that we are having this discussion today, in the wake of seeing the devastation that has happened in Atlantic Canada, where hurricane Fiona swept through and caused immeasurable damage to communities, including loss of life. We know that this event was only made possible because of climate change and warming sea currents. In the past, these types of hurricanes would have died down over colder water, but now, with warming ocean currents, we are seeing much more severe weather events, such as the hurricanes that are now hitting our shores.

I also find it tone deaf given the devastation we saw in my province of British Columbia last year, where we saw temperatures reach nearly 50°C, with heat domes boiling billions of organisms alive. We saw devastating forest fires, and we saw the atmospheric river, which was the most devastating weather event in our country's history.

I find it particularly tone deaf because not only is this motion the first Conservative motion being put forward, but it is also being put forward without any alternative climate policy at the same time. Therefore, it is clear to me that this motion is not about supporting Canadians with affordability measures. Instead, it is really about blocking climate action.

I find it puzzling that Conservatives portray themselves as being in favour of market-based systems for getting value for money in government spending, but in opposing this policy, they are eschewing what is seen quite widely, including by the IMF, as the most effective and efficient way of reducing pollution. This is pollution that we know is not otherwise accounted for but has a major impact on local human health and on worsening climate change, and I just mentioned some of the major events that we have seen recently. By failing to put a price on pollution, we are allowing this externality to not be properly accounted for, and we know that this particularly impacts the most vulnerable among us.

The Conservatives also portray themselves as the party focused on affordability, but this is going against a policy that we know provides more money in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians families, particularly low-income Canadians, who are most at risk with the rising cost of living. Of course, we know that the less one pollutes, the more one saves when one gets the climate action incentive.

I find it particularly puzzling because the Conservative Party just last year ran on a platform that included putting a price on pollution, albeit the proposal was a very inefficient and convoluted one. However, this is very puzzling to a member from British Columbia, where we have had a price on pollution in place for almost 15 years. This policy was, in fact, brought in by the right of centre party in my province. We have seen that, by bringing in this policy, it has not impacted the economic growth in my province, which has been among the leaders in Canada ever since.

It is also puzzling because we know that the alternatives are no better. Focusing on regulations alone, we know, is highly costly. We know that, by simply investing in technologies, the government would then be forced to pick winners, which is essentially gambling to a certain extent on one of the biggest challenges that our generation is going to face.

● (1340)

It is also reckless that by abdicating responsibility to act and to repeal policies for climate action, the Conservative Party is letting its intransigence and opposition to climate action cause uncertainty for business, which is impacting the types of investments we need to see business make in technologies and measures that are going to mitigate their emissions. It is also impacting the way we can see growth in clean tech, which the Conservative Party has said it wants to support.

Over the course of the last few months, the environment and sustainable development committee has been undergoing a study on clean tech. What we have heard from nearly all the witnesses is that having policy certainty in place and having a predictable climate policy is essential to providing the certainty and confidence that businesses need to see to invest now in programs and make investments that are going to take five to 10 years to be fully put into place.

By opposing climate action, the Conservatives are also completely ignoring the catastrophic financial costs of climate change-fuelled weather events in Canada, which have a direct cost on people.

I mentioned the flooding in B.C. last year, which was the most expensive weather event in Canadian history. The forest fires in Fort McMurray cost almost \$10 billion to rebuild. We know that hurricane Fiona is also going to cost billions. We all pay for these costs through the rising price of goods, taxes and lost productivity, which leads to inflation when it causes supply chain disruptions, which we saw in B.C. last year. It also impacts the price of the food we are buying when we see climate change-fuelled droughts and other wet-weather events disrupting agricultural production.

I will put it in some other language I know the Conservative Party will understand very well. We cannot opt out of inflation by investing in crypto. We opt out of inflation by getting off our reliance on fossil fuels, where we are at the mercy of global markets that can be upset by the actions of a foreign dictator. To reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, we need to incentivize the switch to clean, domestically controlled energy sources that are not at the mercy of outside influences. The best way to do this is by pricing pollution as well as supporting the switch to cleaner alternatives. Whether it would be affordability, national security, economic growth or climate change, pricing pollution is our most important and effective tool.

The solution to affordability is not to make emissions great again. The solution involves targeted solutions like the ones we have brought in over the last seven years and the ones that we propose to bring in through Bill C-30 and Bill C-31. These new measures include the Canada housing benefit, which will deliver an extra \$500 for low-income renters. It includes bringing in the new Canada dental benefit for children under the age of 12 who do not have dental insurance, which will involve payments of up to \$650 per child per year. It involves doubling the goods and services tax credit that will provide \$2.5 billion in total to 11 million recipients.

This, of course, builds on our history of cutting taxes for the middle class by raising taxes on the top 1% and delivering the Canada child benefit, which has raised over 300,000 children out of poverty and puts more money back in the pockets of nine in 10 families. This year, we have cut child care costs in half right across the country and are going to get down to \$10 a day in the next four years.

We know that climate action can be done in a way that saves people money. It is also why we launched the greener homes grant, so people can do home energy retrofits, and the greener homes loan for some of the deeper retrofits that people need to do, so they can save money on their energy bills. It is also why we are supporting Canadians to switch to zero-emission vehicles, with a \$5,000 grant for this type of option.

In my home province of B.C., in the first quarter of 2022, over 15.5% of new vehicle sales have been for zero-emission vehicles. These are Canadians who are going to be saving a significant amount of money on their gas bills.

This is why we have brought in the price on pollution, which is, again, putting more money back into the pockets of eight out of 10 families, and is one of the most cost-efficient and affordable ways of climate action.

• (1345)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member talked about natural resource development and about all the discrepancies of the Conservative Party.

What he failed to outline is that, in 2018, the Prime Minister came to British Columbia and spoke, with great fanfare, about the \$40-billion investment by Shell into LNG export capacity in British Columbia. Part of that project and the reason it went forward and was approved by the federal government was that LNG Canada was not subject to the carbon tax. Therefore, I am sick and tired of hearing the Liberals talk all day long about the benefit of the carbon tax, but when it comes to a major investment, they say that it does not need to pay the carbon tax.

Why the discrepancy?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, when we talk about LNG Canada, one of the main actions the federal government did was to invest in moving that project from gas-powered boilers to electric boilers, which vastly reduces the emissions from that project.

We absolutely need to look at ways where we can continue to strengthen the output-based pricing system. One of the things we need to look at going forward is locking in those prices down the

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road, so we do not have a government come in and roll back that action.

One of the ways we can do that is by bringing in carbon contracts for differences, where those companies know that the price on pollution is going to rise to what we say it is going to, so they do not delay those investments that we need to see taking place to reduce their emissions.

• (1350)

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am going to see if I can go two for two and maybe find some common ground with the Liberal members on the other side.

Earlier, we heard the Conservative member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman agree that big polluters should pay for orphan oil wells that were left all across the west coast and the Prairies. Therefore, I am standing here today to see if we might be able to find concurrence in the House.

Would the hon. member agree with the NDP and the Conservatives that big oil and gas companies, which are downloading a billion dollars of liability onto municipalities, must start paying for their pollution and their orphaned wells?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, absolutely, big companies should be paying the price of the pollution they create. In fact, provinces right across the country need to strengthen the environmental bond system so that they have this money upfront, so we know it is not going to be downloaded onto communities and that they are going to subject to cleaning all of that up. I know important changes have happened throughout the country. One of the key ways we ensured that this was going to take place in Alberta with the energy sector was that part of the deal for the federal investment in cleaning up orphaned and inactive wells was for the Province of Alberta to commit to bringing in stronger environmental bonding and liability rules.

That this is absolutely key, because this should never be falling onto the public purse.

[Translation]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Madam Speaker, since this morning, we have been debating the notorious carbon tax that does not apply in Quebec, but does apply elsewhere in Canada. I have heard many Liberal members, including my colleague across the aisle, say that one solution to help reduce gas and shipping costs is to switch to electric vehicles. We completely support such a transition. I am a huge supporter.

Business of Supply

However, one thing that is frustrating for a lot of people is that when they go to the car dealerships, there are no electric vehicles available. I would like to know whether the government plans to take a stand on this and compel dealerships to make these vehicles available. At this time, clearly, something is not working. People are being forced to continue to use gas-powered cars even though they would like to make the switch.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. We must require dealerships to have electric cars on their lots. Quebec and British Columbia have this requirement.

The Government of Canada is now working towards introducing the requirement that all new vehicles be electric by 2035.

[English]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I entered politics and decided to run for the nomination within my riding because the government of the day's economic record was anemic. We had low growth in Canada, a high unemployment rate and we did not have a plan to move the economy forward. Just as important, there was no plan to deal with the issue at hand, which was climate change and how we would part and parcel work together to create a strong economy and also a healthy environment. They go and in hand.

In the global financial market, I saw the transition that was happening to deal with climate change, with new technologies and industries being created. I worked for over 20 years in New York, London and Toronto, and I saw companies moving toward that.

Our party put forward a plan to grow the middle class, strengthen it and assist those working hard to join the middle class. We created an environment for job creation and investments to raise the standard of living for all Canadians. To deal with the issue of climate change, we put forward a real plan on climate change.

That is what we did as a government. We put forward a plan that, over the long term, would lower emissions and get us to net-zero by 2050. A crucial element of that plan was pricing an externality, as we say in economic terms, and create pricing pollution. We put together that plan with applause from across the spectrum. When I use that term, I mean economist and policy-makers, whether they were on the right, the left or the centre. We were using a market system to price something and use those proceeds—

● (1355)

Mr. Matthew Green: Marx wouldn't say that, by the way.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, my NDP colleague and I stand on opposite sides of most things.

Our plan for pricing pollution is a realistic plan. During that time, Canada and Canadians have created literally millions of jobs. We have lifted hundreds of thousands of families and children out of poverty by implementing a number of measures. We created a strong economy not only for today but going into the future.

When it comes to the issue of affordability, and all members in the House know what their constituents have and are dealing with, we demonstrate empathy all the time in putting forward policy measures that assist Canadians. As a government, we brought for-

ward the Canada child benefit, which is monthly and tax-free. We are not sending cheques to millionaires.

As a government, we returned the age of eligibility for old age security and GIS to 65 from 67. We brought in two tax cuts, one in our first term and the second one raising the basic personal expenditure amount, returning literally billions of dollars to Canadians. It is their money and they work hard for it. We are fiscal managers on that front. We brought in a 10% increase on the guaranteed income supplement.

We brought in a number of measures that assist Canadians currently, but also going into the future. Those measures assist Canadians and create an environment to create good jobs. We put in place an accelerated capital cost depreciation at a moment in time where Canadian companies could invest. We will continue to undertake those measures that create jobs, support investment and create a strong economy, not only for today but for our kids and future generations.

On the affordability front, we are working judiciously to ensure Canadians are assisted during this time where global inflation has taken afoot. We see it across the world. As a government, we have put forward a number of measures such as the Canada workers benefit, for which I argued for many years that we should introduce and strengthen. We strengthened it three times. We are also going to be strengthening it this year. It is there. Working Canadians can earn up to \$2,400 more under the Canada workers benefit.

On day care, which is, for an economist, a great piece of policy, we signed accords with all 10 provinces for it to be introduced. This will be saving Canadian families literally thousands of dollars, before tax, which is a very important. It will save my family—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I apologize for interrupting. I am going to stop the clock. I want to remind members who are coming in for question period that somebody has the floor and is speaking. Therefore, I ask them to keep their voices down as they enter the chamber and have conversations with their colleagues in the House.

The hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge has the floor.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I know everybody is excited to get to question period, but they will first need to listen to this hon. member and then we can get there.

On the affordability front, we introduced a number of measures that will assist Canadians. It is great to see the GST credit being doubled for a period of six months for nearly 12 million Canadians. That is \$2.5 billion. This will assist Canadians, especially at this specific period of time. We know Thanksgiving and Christmas are coming. These are important dates in all our calendars.

On the dental benefit, I said this yesterday in the House. As an MP, one encounters a lot of Canadians who are struggling, and it really pains me when I meet seniors who incur high dental bills because they do not have insurance. They are not covered under a private plan and were not fortunate enough to work under a union environment or in the public service, so they need to pay out of pocket. This program is the difference between them putting food on the table for the month or having to pay their dental bill. It will be a promise made and a promise kept by our government. We will come forth with a robust agreement on coverage of dental care.

• (1400)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member will have four and a half minutes to finish his speech after question period.

Again I want to remind members that the House is in session, and if they wish to have conversations, they should maybe take them out into the lobby. For those who are entering, please enter quietly.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I witnessed recently in Pakistan was truly heartbreaking. More than 1,500 people had died in catastrophic flooding. From my vantage point in a helicopter over Sindh province, all the roads and thousands of acres of crops were under water. In one of the most affected areas, we met with the wonderful, experienced staff of Canada's humanitarian partner organizations working on the ground.

Last year British Columbia suffered unprecedented flooding. In the last few days, Atlantic Canada and Quebec have just been devastated by a storm of unprecedented ferocity. Whether it was the floods last year in British Columbia, the floods this year in Pakistan or the devastation caused by Fiona, it is heartwarming to know that Canadians, their governments and their outstanding humanitarian organizations are always there to help.

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NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. I would like to recognize Kalley Armstrong.

Kalley is the owner and founder of Armstrong Hockey, a skills development program that works with indigenous youth on the ice and promotes the benefits of hockey outside the rink. Kalley draws her inspiration from her late grandfather, George Armstrong, Toronto Maple Leafs legend and first indigenous player to hoist the Stanley Cup. Due to the Indian Act, the Armstrong family are non-status. Armstrong Hockey has been a resource that lets Kalley connect with her culture while being a mentor for indigenous youth on and off the ice.

Statements by Members

This Friday, while wearing orange, we need to honour the survivors and the children who did not return from the residential school system. We must recognize the effects of colonialism and those who lost their culture, and support individuals like Kalley, striving to create a better future for indigenous people.

* * *

HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, "Say her name."

Social media continue to call on us to name the women who have been murdered. In Iran, they are Mahsa Amini and Neda Agha Soltan, and there are many more whose names have not yet been said. These murders and other violence perpetuated against the women of Iran are in part due to restrictions of their rights and freedoms. In Afghanistan, freedoms that were entrenched in law for decades have been stripped away from women. Closer to home, we need only look south of our border to see women's rights being rolled back. Unfortunately the list of countries and regions where women are currently being targeted is too extensive to list here, and the trend is getting worse.

We applaud the Iranian people who are protesting these atrocious and misogynistic policies. They are bravely protesting at their own peril, and we and others around the world are joining them in their indignation and anger. I am proud that our Prime Minister has spoken out against and placed sanctions on those responsible for the murder of Mahsa Amini.

I am asking that all of us in this House take a stand against the gender-based violence and repression being perpetuated against them in Iran and everywhere. We must all speak up and say their names.

* * *

[Translation]

JONATHAN BEAULIEU-RICHARD

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honour Jonathan Beaulieu-Richard, a former Montreal Alouettes player who passed away from cancer at the age of 33.

I also want to recognize his wife, Émilie Renière, who supported him to the very end.

Jonathan was a good man with a positive attitude who wanted to give back to his community, which is why he created the Jouer Bouger Rire foundation. When Jonathan found out about his illness, he and his wife had just had a child.

Because the EI system does not recognize the weeks of parental leave, Émilie was not eligible for the caregiving benefits. Even in the case of a serious illness like cancer, the system still only provides 15 weeks of benefits. These people were under incredible stress while dealing with the illness, and financial anxiety does not in any way help healing.

Statements by Members

It is urgent that the minister do her job. We must overhaul the EI system.

Émilie, our hearts go out to you.

* * *

● (1405)

EMILIA DE IACOVO

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Emilia De Iacovo's 20 years of service to several MPs in the House of Commons of Canada.

Emilia worked for the hon. André Ouellet and the hon. Pierre Pettigrew. At the provincial level, she worked for ministers Lise Thériault, Yolande James, Monique Jérôme-Forget and the hon. Clément Gignac.

I have had the privilege of working with Emilia since 2007. She is an expert in immigration and in electoral campaigning. She has an excellent relationship with seniors' clubs. She greets citizens in French, English, and Italian, and even speaks a little Arabic and Creole.

[Member spoke in Italian]

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[English]

ADOPT-A-GRAD FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I stand to recognize Mike and Lori Reist, the co-founders of Adopt-a-Grad Foundation of Canada. Initially known as "Project Jack & Jill", the charity was formed by Lori and Mike after a single mother reached out to Mike in 2016 to see if he had a suit that her son could use for his high school graduation.

When Mike reached out to the community through social media, the community rallied around the young man, getting him a suit and some formal wear gift cards. This became a template that has helped hundreds of other students at the high schools in Airdrie. Further fundraising sponsorships from local businesses and cash donations have allowed the program to cover grad-related costs that otherwise would have been a barrier to students and their families from being able to fully experience this milestone.

The program continues to grow and has now become Adopt-a-Grad Canada. Mike will remain as a board member, along with Jack Lumley, Marc Smith, Brittney Whatley and Jen Ebear, while Lori is taking on the role of executive director as a volunteer. Our community is made better because of people like Mike and Lori Reist.

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HUMAN RIGHTS IN IRAN

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to stand in solidarity with the people of Iran in the wake of the tragic death of Mahsa Amini, a beautiful 22-year-old woman who was arrested by the morality police on September 13. She was accused of violating the country's strict codes on mod-

est dress for women, and she was beaten to death while in detention.

Mahsa's killing sparked a nationwide uprising that is continuing. Protests have spread to over 100 cities across Iran, demonstrating unprecedented solidarity among men and women, students and teachers, farmers and workers, and politicians, who are protesting side by side to demand accountability and justice.

No woman should be persecuted for choosing what to wear or standing up for her rights. Mahsa's murder is a symbol of 44 years of repression and brutality in Iran. Despite the Internet shutdown and the blocking of social media in the country, the uprising continues to this day. We stand, all of us, with the people of Iran, and we pray for them and their families. Godspeed to them.

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CARP FAIR

Ms. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the weekend the best little fair in Canada returned for its 159th rendition. Thousands of participants, young and old, joined in the fun and fairground festivities at the four-day-long Carp Fair.

However, this year's festivities featured a special event and the first of its kind in Carp Fair history. From 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Thursday, the lights were dimmed, the music was hushed, and the Carp Fair welcomed over 100 participants with disabilities and their families for an inclusive hour of fun.

Fair organizers worked hard to ensure that visitors with disabilities could avoid the long lines, flashing lights and loud sounds that often preclude them from being able to join the other children. It is thanks to the work of the Carp Agricultural Society's presidents, Brent Palsson and Krista Jefferies, its board of directors and hundreds of volunteers that the Carp Fair remains a staple in the Kanata—Carleton community.

I thank them all for making the best little fair in Canada even better.

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● (1410)

ENERGY WORKERS

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put people first: their paycheques, their homes, their retirements and their country, unlike the current government. The people of Saskatchewan are sick and tired of the government promising support and then offering them absolutely nothing. Rural communities are going to be decimated because of it.

While the minister talks publicly about his government's support for the workers who will be out of a job following the shutdown of coal-fired power in 2030, he has taken zero steps to provide them and their communities with the resources needed to avoid this catastrophe. A study showed that the town of Coronach in my riding stands to lose \$400 million in GDP, have a 67% loss in population and an 89% loss in household income, yet of the funds provided by the government, only 3.5% were for economic development activities.

The minister put out an op-ed last week on how these workers need certainty, but he needs to put his money where his mouth is. He says he wants to kill the emissions but he is killing an entire industry and communities instead.

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SMART MOBILITY

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week in my Nepean riding, Invest Ottawa's Area X.O, in collaboration with our federal government, hosted an epic Canadian smart mobility demonstration day. It was the first of its kind in Canada and brought together hundreds of innovators, entrepreneurs, technology developers, smart mobility partners and stakeholders from Canada's capital and across the country. They experienced more than 30 interactive smart mobility demonstrations hosted by Canadian entrepreneurs and companies, from connected and autonomous vehicles to drones, low-speed automated shuttles, the Internet of things and smart city solutions.

I was on the board of Invest Ottawa before entering politics. Invest Ottawa is doing a great job in promoting the knowledge sector in Ottawa and keeping Canada at the forefront of advanced technologies.

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HOUSING

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put people first: their retirements, their paycheques, their homes and their country. On home ownership specifically, we need to restore hope. Right now, youth and newcomers cannot get a home, partially because local government gatekeepers block housing with heavy fees and long delays for building permits, leaving us with the fewest houses per capita of any G7 country.

A Conservative government will require big cities that want federal infrastructure money to speed up and lower the cost of permits and approve affordable housing around all new transit stations. We will sell off 15% of the underutilized 37,000 federal buildings, turn them into housing and use the proceeds of sale to reduce our ever-large deficit. We are committed to giving indigenous Canadians more control over their housing needs.

In other words, we have to get government out of the way and let Canadians build so that we can have some chance of affordability once again.

Statements by Members

COST OF LIVING

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, our new Conservative leader will put people's paycheques, homes, retirements and country first. Canadians have lost hope in this government on affordability and service levels. By choosing to retain and increase the carbon tax, the government has failed to secure a brighter future for Canadians, much less to remedy the ongoing affordability crisis. This gross mismanagement has resulted in long lineups at airports and passport offices, delays in processing immigration and firearms' applications, and the list goes on.

The Liberals have managed to hike the cost of everything, while offering nothing to serve Canadians' needs. Limiting farmers' fertilizer use and imposing the carbon tax will mean less food production and higher costs for Canadians, who are already struggling to afford groceries. Why is the government choosing to decrease the availability of food altogether?

The government can deflect, deny and blame all they want, but the facts remain: It has insufficiently addressed the cost-of-living crisis. It is too little, too late.

* * *

[Translation]

HURRICANE FIONA

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, people in Atlantic Canada and some parts of Quebec are struggling to get back on their feet after hurricane Fiona destroyed the area.

The devastation is everywhere. The storm knocked out power to hundreds of thousands of Canadians. Roads have been closed, residents have been displaced, there is lots of debris and, unfortunately, there have been a few deaths.

People watched their homes get swept away into the ocean.

• (1415)

[English]

In the wake of hurricane Fiona, the immediate need is to provide food and shelter for those displaced by the storm. Members of the Canadian Armed Forces are being deployed to help with recovery efforts. Utility crews are working around the clock to repair downed lines and the government is matching donations to the Canadian Red Cross.

[Translation]

Our thoughts are with all those affected by this terrible hurricane.

*Statements by Members**[English]*

With this help, people in our region will pick up the pieces and rebuild.

[Translation]

I commend all those back home for their resilience.

* * *

MANAGEMENT OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED SEEDS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, who in the Liberal government is in charge of managing genetically modified seeds and pesticides? Is it the Minister of the Environment, the Minister of Health or the Minister of Agriculture? No, it is not even that complicated. The companies that manufacture GMOs are directly responsible for making the regulations. According to a document obtained by the CBC, the lobbyist for CropLife Canada, who represents the industry, was one of the authors of the new guidelines. This is not without consequences.

If nothing changes, Health Canada could end up exempting a whole new generation of genetically modified seeds from assessments. This will sell even more pesticides, which will end up on our plates, and the Liberals want to let companies assess themselves. It is ridiculous.

No exception, no exemption. We want a rigorous, transparent and independent process for the Monsantos of the world. The government needs to step up and protect the health of Quebecers and Canadians.

* * *

INTIMIDATION OF POLITICIANS

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I rise in solidarity with the wife of the leader of the official opposition and all who have been bullied because of their political beliefs. We are all here in the House because we want to change things. We have different visions. Some of us see Canada as a post-national society, others as a prosperous oil state. We see Canada as a good neighbour to Quebec. We may disagree, stand our ground and debate. It is normal for parliamentarians to feel anger, outrage and opposition, but not fear. We should not have to fear for our loved ones or ourselves. Democracy does not give people the right to say they are going to physically attack someone, burn down their house or assault their loved ones. That is an assault on democracy. It is not okay. Let us all, regardless of our political stripe, condemn these actions, which must not go unpunished.

This has to stop, and now.

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*[English]***INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS**

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put people first: their paycheques, their homes, their retirements and their country. It is time for action and it is time to return a sense of self-

sufficiency to a people who have had it stripped away by the paternalistic, archaic and broken Indian Act.

Canada's Conservatives, under our new leader, would restore to indigenous people more control of their land, money and decision-making. We would remove the bureaucratic gatekeepers and barriers in legislation and have a robust dialogue with indigenous communities who want to develop their resources and invite commerce to fight poverty.

The time has come to have a national dialogue with indigenous and non-indigenous people of Canada on autonomy, taxation, capacity, transparency, accountability and property rights. We would repeal the current government's anti-energy laws and replace them with a new law that would protect our environment, consult indigenous people and get things built. Indigenous people would find, under a Conservative government led by our new leader, that they have an ally rather than an obstacle to reconciliation.

* * *

LUCE COUSINEAU

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour a member of our Hill family who recently left us. For over 33 years, Luce Cousineau served us diligently and faithfully in the parliamentary restaurant. Her warm smile and laugh greeted us and her impeccable service took care of MPs, senators and staff from all sides of the House.

She had discerning taste, earning her the nickname "Chef Cousineau" with her colleagues. She sampled new menu dishes and sent them back. Clearly she knew better was always possible. She was French Canadian, hailing from Rouyn-Noranda, and anyone who knew her knew she was a big fan of Leonard Cohen.

What many of us did not know was that Luce was in the battle of her life with an adversary that ultimately won: cancer. Luce never complained. She always showed up and had that warm smile on her face, welcoming and accepting everyone with open arms.

She will always be part of our Parliament Hill family. Her heart of gold and generous spirit will live on.

● (1420)

The Speaker: Before continuing, I just want to remind the hon. members that S. O. 31s are 60 seconds, not much more, not much less. I would not want to cut any of them off.

[Translation]

This is very important for every one of us and our ridings. Consider this a gentle reminder.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this Prime Minister has added more to our national debt than all previous prime ministers combined. The \$500-billion inflationary deficit has increased the cost of everything we buy and the interest that we pay.

The finance minister has admitted that she wants to raise EI taxes by \$2.5 billion. This will take earnings off of workers' paycheques.

Will the government cancel these tax hikes so that workers can keep more of their money?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it seems that the Conservatives finally understand that they need to support Canadians with inflation relief payments. Better late than never.

I have a suggestion for the next Conservative flip-flop. It is time that they also supported our one-time payment of \$500 to help vulnerable Canadians who are struggling to pay their rent.

It is never too late to do the right thing, even for the Conservatives.

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[English]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is never the right time to raise taxes on the working poor, yet that is exactly what the minister admits she will do. She admits that raising the EI premiums, the EI payroll taxes, will take \$2.5 billion extra out of the hands of Canadian workers, and not to fund EI. She also admits through her own public filings that the government will take \$10 billion more in EI taxes than it will pay out in benefits, money the Prime Minister will raid from the account and spend however he likes.

Will the Prime Minister get his hands off the EI fund and the paycheques of our workers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the EI contribution rate today is \$1.58. Next year, it will go up to \$1.63. Both of those rates are lower than the EI contribution rate was in every single year when Stephen Harper was prime minister, yet the new Conservative leader, who was actually the employment minister during those years, now wants to slash our contributions.

Who do the Conservatives think was the better economic manager: Prime Minister Harper or their new leader?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we were terrific economic managers together, and we will be again. I am just getting a little practice on answering questions. We will be doing more of it when we are in government soon.

EI payments have gone up for the average \$60,000-a-year worker, from \$930 when I was the minister to \$948 now. That is a small

Oral Questions

increase, but the big \$2.5-billion tax increase is just ahead. The minister admits the money will not even go to EI; it will go to government spending.

Why will the Liberals not get their hands off the EI fund and the paycheques of our workers?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in 2015, a Canadian earning \$49,500 a year paid \$931 in EI premiums. Next year, that same Canadian will pay \$807. That is nearly \$125 less than she paid when the Conservative leader was the minister in charge.

Yet again, Canadians really need to understand this: Whose policies do the Conservatives support: Stephen Harper's or their new leader's?

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● (1425)

TAXATION

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is both. The total payroll tax of a \$60,000-a-year earner went from \$3,400 under the previous Conservative government to \$4,168 today. The reality is that none of that was necessary and the Liberals want to use the money for anything but EI.

On top of that, now they plan to triple the carbon tax, raising gas, heat and grocery costs and killing jobs for many people in many sectors. Their policy is paycheques down and costs up, and in fairness they are succeeding at both.

Will they stop that policy and cancel their tax hikes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already explained that Canadians earning around \$50,000 a year next year will pay \$125 less in EI premiums. However, now I want the Conservatives to come clean on what they want to do to our pensions. Their proposal is an irresponsible scheme to eviscerate our pensions. As Rob Carrick pointed out, "Canada Pension Plan premiums are not a tax" and "the CPP is the bedrock of a Canadian retirement plan".

The Conservatives want to undermine all of our pensions, but we will not let them.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely false. The Conservatives protected the CPP, increased benefits for seniors every single year we were in office and did it without any tax increases at all. We can do that again. Everybody agrees that we should keep contributing. Nobody agrees that we have to hike taxes on workers to do it.

To get back to the carbon tax, the Liberals want to triple this tax on groceries, gas and heat at a time when Canadians can barely afford to pay their bills. They want to add 40¢ a litre to gas taxes right now with 40-year-high inflation.

Will the government cancel this tax on Canadian energy?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us get serious. Canadians know that the Conservative leader does not have a serious climate plan, and that means he does not have a serious economic plan. The economic reality is that our most important trading partners, the U.S., the EU, our customers and our markets are all taking aggressive climate action. Canada cannot afford to fall behind. Our economy cannot afford it.

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[Translation]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the CBC reports that the federal government is transforming Roxham Road into a permanent crossing and that this has already cost more than \$500 million. The federal government has signed contracts up until at least 2027 for hotels, land and trailer leases, for goodness' sake.

All this will stay until at least 2027. That is why they are not suspending the safe third country agreement. That is why they are not cracking down on criminal smugglers. They want it to last.

Who does it benefit to make the crossing at Roxham Road permanent?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe in the strength of our asylum and immigration systems. We are working closely with stakeholders on the border situation.

We are working with our U.S. counterparts on issues related to our shared border, including the safe third country agreement. We will always work closely with all of our partners.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, let me explain who benefits from making Roxham Road permanent.

It benefits the smugglers who traffic people. It benefits the criminals who see the families' desperation and figure there is money to be made. It benefits Liberal donors who get all kinds of contracts from this government.

They are laughing. They know that Roxham Road will stay open for the next five years. It may never close. Thanks to the federal government, they can turn their little racket into a thriving economic sector.

Why is the government drumming up business for criminals instead of thinking about what the migrants need and closing Roxham Road permanently?

• (1430)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that we believe in the strength of our asylum and immigration systems, and that we are working with our U.S. counterparts on all issues related to our shared border, including the safe third country agreement.

I want to say to our colleagues in the Bloc that we can and must work together on immigration because it is an economic issue for Quebec and all of Canada.

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[English]

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I spoke with Mayor Savage from Halifax earlier today about the devastation of hurricane Fiona impacting the Atlantic region. So many people lost power and so many people lost cell service. In fact, many people lost cell service because telecommunication companies are not putting in place the right infrastructure to be prepared for extreme weather.

When will the government force those companies, which are fully regulated by the federal government, to put in place the necessary infrastructure so that families do not get disconnected ever again?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me start by saying directly to every single Canadian who has been hard hit by Fiona that we are with them and we will be with them to the end, until we finish rebuilding their homes and their communities. The Canadian Armed Forces are on the ground in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

When it comes to cell service, that is absolutely a priority for Canadians, in good times and during disasters. That is why we are working hard with cellphone companies to ensure they give Canadians the service they need.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, because of the climate crisis, extreme climate events are becoming more common. The experts are clear: If telecommunications companies do not build solid infrastructure, people will continue to lose their cell service.

When will this government force these businesses to do what it takes to prevent people from losing their cell service in future?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by telling all Canadians affected by hurricane Fiona that, as a government, we are doing everything we can to ensure that everyone affected by the storm has what they need. The Canadian Armed Forces are on the ground in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Obviously we understand the importance of cell service and we are also working with the companies to ensure that Canadians have access to that service.

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[English]

DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the wine industry in Cumberland—Colchester is dominated by Jost Vineyards. From recent conversations, it is clear that hurricane Fiona has had a significant and profound negative impact. Almost 20% of the crop is now on the ground, and they only have the ability to process 25% of the crop due to a lack of electricity.

What specific and targeted programs will the government have to support the industry in its time of need?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as our colleague from Cumberland—Colchester knows, the Prime Minister is currently in Nova Scotia and is visiting Prince Edward Island today as well. I have had very constructive and positive conversations with Premier Houston and the other Atlantic premiers.

We can be very clear. The Government of Canada will be there not only to support the residents of the area who were hard hit, but to work with provinces as well to ensure that the economic engines of those provinces, like the agricultural industry that my colleague referenced, are also supported fully by the Government of Canada.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Jost Vineyards and other farmers in Atlantic Canada need more than platitudes from the government; they need action.

The other thing we need action on is cellphone service. We have already heard about it in this question period, but we also know of it from the member for Charlottetown. Last evening, he reiterated that cellphone service is essential for the safety of Canadians and that the system failed again. The government knew after hurricane Dorian three years ago that the system was tenuous at best, and once again the government has failed to act.

Atlantic Canadians need a concrete plan to ensure reliable cellular service. What is the outline from the government for this plan?

• (1435)

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that the cellular network is essential. Again, this became clear as tropical storm Fiona passed through.

Oral Questions

As a government, we are doing everything in our power to restore services. We are working in collaboration with the province. I assure the House that we are on the ground and we will do everything we can to restore all the necessary services for the Canadians affected by this storm.

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[English]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if a tornado tore up the 401 in Toronto, the government would already be repairing it. The government is not even in the communities assessing the wharf damage from the hurricane. How do I know? It is because fishing organizations are out there but no one from DFO is.

This will require new programs or we cannot earn a living. Will the minister commit that new programs to repair wharves will be 100% financed by DFO since port authorities do not have the financial resources to do this?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to express my shock after seeing the images in Atlantic Canada and eastern Quebec. My thoughts are with the families still struggling in those areas.

I would like to assure the member that DFO has already inspected 80 small craft harbours. We are on the ground, we are there for Canadians and we are there for fish harvesters. We are committed to rebuilding and renewing this infrastructure so they can do their jobs out in the fisheries.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, since the hurricane, I have been speaking every day with fishermen and fishing organizations about the damage caused by the hurricane and the needs of the industry to recover. As I said, it is clear that we need some new programs to deal with this.

It has been four days since the hurricane, and the minister has yet to call a single fishing organization in Atlantic Canada. How do I know this? It is because I talk to them to every day and she does not.

How will the minister design new programs that respond quickly if she does not talk to the fishing organizations and the people most impacted?

Oral Questions

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, having chatted with MPs and ministers from that area, I am very much seized with how much this challenges the people who may have lost their homes and may have lost their boats or their fishing gear. There may not be adequate food in the grocery stores.

We are there, DFO, our staff, the Canadian Coast Guard and the Canadian Coast Guard College. We are doing everything we can on the ground to support the people of Atlantic Canada and eastern Quebec. We will continue to do just that.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the minister or her department had bothered to reach out to fishing groups about hurricane damage, she would know that lost gear from lobster fishermen in New Brunswick and P.E.I. is over 50%. The season has three weeks left. With no traps, they cannot fish. The need for support to replace these traps is immediate.

Will the minister commit to immediate emergency support to replace this equipment to finish out the season and move into what should be our proposed extended season?

Hon. Joyce Murray (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate these voices of concern from the members opposite. I can tell the House that the members on this side of the House from Atlantic Canada and eastern Quebec have been on the ground.

I have spoken with my parliamentary secretary. He has not slept for days. I have heard about the devastation that people are experiencing. We are, and I am, in touch with fish harvesters, provincial ministers and caucus members. We will be happy to hear what requests there are for extensions and consider them very seriously.

* * *

[Translation]

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Bernard Génereux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, following hurricane Fiona, which hammered the Magdalen Islands and Atlantic Canada, it is now time for action. Extremely violent winds and rain have left behind incredible damage: flooded buildings, impassable roads, ports and boats destroyed. I know that the residents of the Magdalen Islands are resilient and are helping each other admirably.

Will the government make sure that any infrastructure under federal jurisdiction that was seriously damaged is quickly repaired so as to be accessible?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes.

The government of Canada will always be there to rebuild better any infrastructure it is responsible for. Furthermore, we will work with stakeholders, the fishing industry, the provinces and municipalities to make sure we go even further and rebuild public and economic infrastructures essential to these communities, including in the Magdalen Islands and across Atlantic Canada.

• (1440)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the federal government could shut down Roxham Road tomorrow morning if it wanted to by suspending the safe third country agreement. It has chosen not to, however. The CBC is reporting that the government chose to make Roxham Road permanent. All of the agreements required to keep Roxham Road open until at least 2027 have already been signed.

By making Roxham Road permanent, the government is also permanently enabling the criminal smuggling networks that are making money off the desperation of poor migrant families. Does the minister realize that smugglers are celebrating today by drinking champagne they bought with money they made off migrants?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we are working closely with the Government of Quebec. Our investments have strengthened the integrity of our borders and ensured that anyone who abuses the system will face justice. We will work with Quebec and the United States to ensure that our asylum system remains just, fair and transparent.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, every time, the minister says he is protecting refugees, but he is letting criminals exploit them. He is letting criminals rob them blind. He is also letting criminals lie to them, because the smugglers do not tell their victims that they have a fifty-fifty chance of being deported at the end of the process. Ultimately, the minister is protecting criminals, not refugees.

We believe that protecting migrants means letting them in through the front door at the border crossing, safe from abuse. Why is the minister opting for Roxham Road and helping human smugglers?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we should not assume that everyone who comes in via Roxham Road is a criminal. It is a bad stereotype. What does the Bloc have to say to refugees who contribute to our society? What does the Bloc have to say to my hon. colleague, the member for London West, who came into the country via Roxham Road and is now a very strong voice for her community? We need to stop these stereotypes. We need to invest in our asylum system.

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PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is proof that they cannot stay on top of their files. They do not understand anything.

Aside from smugglers, the only people who will benefit from the decision to make Roxham Road permanent are those who receive federal contracts. We know that Roxham Road has already cost at least half a billion dollars. The exact amount is unclear because the federal government refuses to disclose all of its contracts. That is worrisome because, among the contracts that are known to exist, there are seven that were awarded without competition to the companies of two well-known Liberal donors. It pays to be Liberal.

When is the government going to disclose all the contracts, all the amounts and all the suppliers?

[English]

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, transparency and accountability are critically important to our government. What we have done in terms of the Roxham Road situation is to deliver open, fair and transparent procurement processes while continuing to obtain the best value for Canadians. Of course, divulging confidential contract information would violate the agreement we have with the supplier.

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TAXATION

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, life has become increasingly unaffordable for Canadians. Because of Liberal taxes and the skyrocketing cost of living, the average Canadian family now spends 43% of their income on taxes, which is more than they spend on food, shelter and housing combined. A quarter of Canadians are even taking extreme measures like cutting back on food.

Will the government end its planned tax increases on gas, home heating and groceries, and have some compassion for suffering Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that times are tough for Canadians. That is why we have put forward a fiscally responsible plan to support them, and here is some good news. Conservatives are starting to get on board with our plan. They announced on Sunday that they are supporting the GST tax credit, which is going to give up to \$500 to hard-working Canadian families.

It is time for the Conservatives to understand there are a lot of Canadians who need help paying the rent. The \$500 one-time payment will help them. I hope the Conservatives will see the light on this great policy too.

● (1445)

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot afford to pay for the government's reckless inflationary spending and deficits. The government's planned tax hikes will drive up the cost of living and will affect rural Canadians, low-income families and vulnerable populations the most. The government is out of touch with the struggles of everyday Canadians.

I ask my question again. Will the government end its planned tax increases on gas, home heating and groceries?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, a couple of times today we have heard the Conservatives talking about deficits, debt and fiscal

responsibility. I would say that is a bit rich coming from a party whose leader actually had the temerity to advise Canadians to invest in Bitcoin, which would have eviscerated their savings. However, I do want to set the record straight on fiscal responsibility. Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7, and we have a AAA credit rating.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on average, Canadians now spend more of their income on taxes, at 43%, than they do on necessities such as food, shelter and clothing, which combined amount to 35%. Families are growing increasingly desperate as they stretch out their paycheques to fight inflation, a weakening dollar and out-of-control tax increases by the government.

When will the Prime Minister listen to their pleas, take action to cap spending and cancel his planned tax increases on gas, home heating and groceries?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind the Conservatives of something Canadians understand very well. CPP and EI contributions are how all Canadians set money aside for our retirements and create a safety net in case we lose our jobs. At a time of global economic uncertainty, I have to say it is the height of irresponsibility, almost as bad as suggesting investments in crypto, for the Conservatives to be arguing that we should not be making these essential fiscally responsible contributions.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the price of basic foods is skyrocketing. For example, bakery products are up 16% in one year. Butter costs 26% more and is now \$8.26. Thousands of Quebec families are struggling to make ends meet. Instead of wanting to help them, the Prime Minister wants to increase the burden on families. There is only one thing to do: Cancel the tax increase.

Can we count on him?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, CPP and EI contributions are how we save for retirement and create a safety net for Canadians. In this time of global economic uncertainty, it is completely irresponsible of the Conservatives to suggest that our country should stop setting money aside for retirement and a rainy day. Maybe their real plan is to cut Canadians' pensions.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, big oil has been making record profits off the backs of Canadians who are struggling, all while refusing to clean up its climate mess. The environment minister said he is not opposed to a windfall tax, but he is waiting to see if big oil will invest in climate action on its own. Instead, it is paying out huge dividends to its shareholders and bonuses to its rich CEOs. If the minister is waiting for big oil to do the right thing he is going to be waiting a long time. Time is running out for our planet.

Will the Liberals tackle corporate greed, implement a windfall tax and make big oil pay its fair share?

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I could not agree with the hon. member more. Energy companies are doing well and they must put their shoulders to the wheel and invest in reducing pollution.

We are working on many fronts to reduce fossil fuel emissions. We are going to cap emissions from the oil and gas sector. We are going to be introducing a clean fuel standard. We are putting a price on pollution. We are going to be eliminating inefficient fossil fuel subsidies in 2023, two years ahead of schedule.

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● (1450)

*[Translation]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals agree, they just need to do it and have the guts to take on big oil.

The cost of groceries is skyrocketing. CEOs are raking in record profits and lining their pockets. Last year, the head of Sobeys earned over \$8 million. Instead of raising employees' wages or lowering prices, he took away their bonuses. The nerve.

The NDP wants to see a parliamentary committee look into how corporate greed is driving up the cost of groceries. Does the government think it is okay for wealthy CEOs to pad their pockets by making families in Quebec and Canada empty theirs?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been, and we remain, fully committed to ensuring that everyone pays their fair share of tax. We are permanently raising the corporate income tax rate by 1.5% on Canada's largest, most profitable banks and insurance companies, and we have introduced a recovery dividend of 15% on the excess profits these institutions made during COVID-19.

That is action.

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*[English]***DISASTER ASSISTANCE**

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, hurricane Fiona has had a devastating impact across Atlantic Canada, particularly in communities in northern Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, Prince

Edward Island and western Newfoundland. The government has committed to making sure we are part of that rebuilding process in communities and is working with the Canadian Red Cross to match private contributions. However, it is extremely important to make sure we have support on the ground to help with the cleanup and to restore electricity to those who need the help.

Can the Minister of National Defence, who is originally from Atlantic Canada and knows our communities well, provide an update to the House on the work of the Canadian Armed Forces to help support Atlantic Canadians in their time of need?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a Nova Scotian myself, I want to assure my hon. colleague and everyone in the House that the Canadian Armed Forces will be there for as long as needed. In Nova Scotia, they are removing debris and restoring roadways and bridges. In Prince Edward Island, they are assisting with restoring the power grid. In Newfoundland, they are going door to door to check on neighbours to make sure everyone is okay.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank the members of the Canadian Armed Forces for all they are doing to keep Canadians safe in this time of need.

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TAXATION

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the weather is getting cool and people are starting to turn on the heat. Millions of Canadians rely on oil and propane to heat their homes. The costs of those fuels, however, have skyrocketed. It now costs upwards of \$5,000, \$6,000 or even \$7,000 a winter to heat their home. The government has now put on top of that a carbon tax that will cost upwards of \$400 to \$500 a winter. People are getting desperate.

Will the government listen, including to the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador, and cut the tax on oil and propane heat?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we watch yet another disaster unfold that is fuelled by global climate change and as the world is called to act on climate change, the member is playing games with misrepresenting climate action. The member well knows that the money that is taken is given back to Canadians, and the action that is taken is essential so that we have fewer Fionas, fewer disasters and fewer Canadians who are affected by global climate change. We have to take action.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is completely out of touch. Emissions have risen each and every year that the government has been in power, except for the year of the pandemic, when it shut everything down. A third of Atlantic Canadians heat with oil, as do over a million Ontarians and 10% of Canadian households.

When will the government do what other G7 governments have done and provide relief on fuel taxes, cutting the tax on the oil and propane heat that people are so desperate to use this winter?

• (1455)

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as our House leader said, in a week in which climate change has ravaged much of Atlantic Canada, it is absolutely astounding that the opposition wants to take a valuable tool off the table that is helping to reduce emissions and put more money in people's pockets. We will be there to help Atlantic Canadians rebuild. We will be there to help them transition from carbon-intensive fuels to greener energy. We will be there for Atlantic Canadians.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, economists agree that payroll taxes like the increase that the government is pushing on Canadians are the most regressive form of taxation, because they lead to lower productivity and jobs leaving Canada.

That is not stopping the government from jamming these taxes onto Canadian workers. Inflation is eroding Canadians' ability to buy the basics, and the government is gouging more of their take-home pay. Canadians get to feel the pain of the government's reckless policies at both ends.

Will the government cancel its planned tax increase on Canadians' paycheques?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what Canadians need is for Conservatives to come clean with them on their plan to eviscerate our pension system. Their scheme is highly irresponsible. Do members know who pointed it out this week? It was Rob Carrick of The Globe and Mail. He wrote, "Canada pension plan premiums are not a tax...the CPP is the bedrock of a Canadian retirement plan." The Conservatives want to undermine the pensions all Canadians depend on, but we will not let them do that.

The Speaker: We started off really well, but I am not sure what happened. I want to remind all members to look at their whips and follow their instructions.

The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in the last decade, payroll contributions under the government have risen by 13% for employment insurance and over 60% for CPP. The last year has seen the effects of massive government overspending, showing up in inflation numbers Canadians have not seen in 40 years. Workers' paycheques are not going as far, and now there will be even less in those paycheques.

Given the harsh rise in the cost of living for Canadians, will the minister take heed and cancel the tax increase on Canadians' paycheques?

Oral Questions

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I will do is tell Canadians the truth about what is happening with their EI contributions and their pensions. What is true is that in 2015 a Canadian who earned \$49,500 paid \$931 in EI premiums. Do members know how much that same Canadian will pay next year? It is \$807. That is \$125 less than she paid when the Conservative leader was the employment minister. That is supporting hard-working Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

HEALTH

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, throughout the pandemic, the Prime Minister kept telling Quebec and the provinces that he was prepared to discuss an increase in health transfers, but not until after the pandemic.

The federal government terminated all its health measures yesterday. It is time to address this issue. There is no longer anything to stop the government from tackling the other major public health crisis, namely, the chronic federal underfunding of health care.

The question is simple: When will the Prime Minister convene a summit on increasing health transfers?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be asked this question.

This gives me the opportunity to say that once again, next week, I will be speaking with all my fellow health ministers. I plan to tell them that I am their ally and that I am going to help them invest money to reduce the backlogs in surgery and diagnosis, which are huge because of the accumulated effects of COVID-19. I will also help them provide Canadians with access to a family doctor, a family health care unit, long-term care, palliative care and quality home care. Everyone knows that this care is important to Canadians, and certainly to Quebecers.

• (1500)

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government often boasts that it spent a lot of money on a one-time basis during the pandemic, but that does not solve ongoing problems.

We need the federal government to pay its fair share on a recurring basis. That will make it possible to reduce wait lists, hire more nursing staff and put an end to mandatory overtime. That will make it possible to train and hire psychologists for the public system.

When will this government understand that the future of public, universal health care requires \$28 billion in recurring health transfers with an annual escalator of 6%?

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Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is quite right. The Canadian government invested \$73 billion in health and safety for Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic, and has continued to spend on vaccines sent free of charge to the provinces and territories, rapid tests and Paxlovid.

Hundreds of thousands of courses of Paxlovid treatment are now available in the provinces and territories to help Canadians with serious health problems related to COVID-19. There is also the personal protective equipment and all the other services that we provided to the provinces and territories and paid for.

* * *

[English]

TAXATION

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, under the Liberal government the cost of living is skyrocketing. However, do not fret, because the government has an affordability plan; the same government that got Canadian families into this affordability crisis.

The truth is that families are spending more of their income on taxes than on food, shelter and clothing combined. That is 43% of their income on taxes and just 35% on essentials. Will the government end its planned tax increases on gas, home heating and groceries?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we understand that Conservatives have seen the light when it comes to our plan to support Canadians with the cost of living. They kicked and they hollered at the beginning of this parliamentary session, but over the weekend they did a very Conservative flip-flop and said that they are going to support the GST credit. They did the right thing. I hope that this weekend will see them supporting another important measure: the \$500 payment to support Canadians with the cost of housing.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the average Canadian family now spends more of its income on taxes than it does on the necessities of food and shelter combined. Farmers in Bow River are paying millions in carbon taxes annually just to power their irrigation systems. Their hard-earned dollars are being syphoned off by the NDP-Liberal government rather than being reinvested in local economies, local infrastructure and local goods. Will the government end its planned tax increases on gas, home heating and groceries so farmers can get back to feeding the world and so Canadians can afford nutritious food?

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member knows, on-farm fuel for farmers is exempt. As he would remember as well, through the fall economic statement last year we provided a carbon tax rebate for farmers, which they are eligible for this year, based on farm expenses.

Mr. Ron Liepert (Calgary Signal Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government takes more out of a working Canadian's paycheck for taxes than is left to take home to pay for groceries or their mortgage, that is if they can afford a home, and to put gas in their vehicle. That is not right.

The Prime Minister is out of touch, but he has an opportunity. I would ask him this. Can he promise to this House today that there will be no more taxes on Canadians?

• (1505)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives seem to think Canadians are not smart, but I know that Canadians are really smart. I know Canadians are responsible, and I know that Canadians understand the value of the Canada pension plan. Canadians understand the importance of saving in the Canada pension plan. That is why Canadians see right through the Conservatives, who are irresponsibly suggesting that we eviscerate the CPP. That should not be a surprise, though. They told Canadians to invest in crypto.

* * *

[Translation]

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was so tough to see the devastation caused by hurricane Fiona over the weekend. It is a sobering example of the climate crisis that we all face here and in our communities.

Could the Minister of National Revenue give us some concrete examples of this reality?

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pontiac for her important question.

With devastating storms like Fiona, we are no longer talking about climate change. We are talking about a climate crisis. One of my constituents from the Magdalen Islands told me that he had never seen such rough seas. He said that it would be impossible not to believe in climate change after a storm like that. The climate crisis is real, and we must take action.

What do the Conservatives not understand? When will they wake up and understand that we are in the midst of a climate crisis?

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in January 2017, the Prime Minister invited the world to come to Canada via Roxham Road. The Prime Minister's invitation created some very lucrative opportunities for his Liberal friends. Radio-Canada reports that at least half a billion dollars has been spent simply managing Roxham Road in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle.

For example, he awarded untendered contracts totalling no less than \$14 million to his friend Pierre Guay, a gentleman who, coincidentally, contributed more than \$16,000 to the Liberal Party of Canada. Contracts like that, awarded by this Prime Minister, smack of corruption.

Can the Prime Minister explain his actions?

[English]

Hon. Helena Jaczek (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said before, transparency and accountability are critically important to our government. The rental agreement reference was negotiated based on a fair market value to arrive at a competitive price. Given the location of the land and its proximity to the border, this was an ideal location for CBSA to use for this purpose. Our government is delivering open, fair and transparent procurement processes while obtaining the best value for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have visited the site in Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle three times in the past five years, and each time I saw totally unnecessary expenses, such as large tent villages standing empty. Money was being spent for absolutely no reason.

The worst thing about all this is that contracts have been given to friends, but we cannot know the details of those contracts. We are not getting the information, on the pretext of national security.

What do land and tents have to do with national security?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really proud of my colleague's question because it gives me the chance to talk about what we are doing and the agreements we are working with. I think the member from the Bloc Québécois also mentioned it earlier.

I want to be very clear. Our system for asylum seekers must be robust and humane. There is no magic solution. I know there has been talk of suspending the agreement, but that would surely have the opposite effect. What we need to do is modernize it. That is what we are doing, in collaboration with the United States.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today, the Liberals have falsely claimed that the immigration system is both fair and delivering value for money. I think that the 2.4 million people languishing in the longest immigration backlog in Canadian history will be enraged by these talking points. This includes the family of Ayad, a 12-year-old torture survivor who is currently huddled alone in a refugee camp.

Will the Liberals explain to Ayad's family how spending half a million dollars to make it easier for people to skip the line in upstate New York at Roxham Road is both fair and delivering value for money?

● (1510)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some of the investments we are making. We have taken measures to reduce the wait time. We are doing more to tackle the backlog in the short term, while making our sys-

Oral Questions

tem more sustainable in the long term. We are doing this by hiring 1,250 more staff members.

We understand the value of immigration and we will continue to be there in protecting our immigration system, while continuing to invest to make sure people who can come to Canada come as quickly as possible.

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, according to the United Nations, the world is going through a global food crisis caused by war, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada, with its international partners like the World Food Programme, has worked tirelessly to combat food insecurity.

Mr. David Beasley, the executive director of the World Food Programme, has been championing this cause during his ongoing visit to Canada.

[Translation]

Could the Minister of International Development tell us how Canada is working with its partners from the World Food Programme to fight food insecurity around the world?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the climate crisis is causing a food security crisis for the most vulnerable around the world.

Hunger leads to conflict. This is why Canada was the fourth-largest single country donor to the World Food Programme in 2021, providing over \$306 million in humanitarian funding for emergency food and nutritional assistance to people in need.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the World Food Programme and the many other organizations for feeding the most vulnerable on our planet.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, families across Canada are struggling with food prices. Grocery costs are even worse in Nunavut. CEOs of big grocery stores get millions of dollars in bonuses, while families in the north are unable to access affordable, fresh food.

The government refuses to listen to Inuit and fix the nutrition north program.

Oral Questions

When will the government step up and finally implement a wind-fall tax on grocery stores making record profits and help Nunavummiut access the nutritious and affordable food they deserve?

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in Inuvik, approximately a month ago, we announced an expanded nutrition north program, with \$164 million in new funding, in partnership with indigenous partners. The newly expanded program moves beyond simply a subsidy with a new community food program fund to directly support community-led food security activities.

We are providing more funds directly to indigenous partners, through the harvesters support grant, increasing access to traditional country foods, through hunting, harvesting and food sharing.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, an Inuit woman who travelled to Ottawa to be a nurse died after just four days in the city. She was a victim of violence, who had no access to safe, affordable housing. The missing and murdered indigenous women and girls inquiry's final report cites housing 299 times.

The minister was asked about it today and he said, "words fail me." His words and inaction are failing indigenous, Inuit and Métis people.

Will the minister ensure that there are meaningful investments in a "for indigenous, by indigenous" urban, rural and northern housing strategy in budget 2023?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the case the hon. member is referring to obviously touches all of us. When a member of our community is targeted and does not have access to safe and affordable housing and is on the street, it diminishes all of us.

We are committed to a "for indigenous, by indigenous" urban, rural and northern housing strategy. That is why in budget 2022 we dedicated \$300 million as a first installment of what is needed, which is a significant amount of money and investments that are needed, to put in place serious investments in a "for indigenous, by indigenous" urban, rural and northern housing strategy.

* * *

• (1515)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of the Hon. Ashni K. Singh, Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

The Speaker: I would also draw the attention of members to the presence in the gallery of Mr. David Beasley, Executive Director of the World Food Programme.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Speaker: We have a point of order.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, something very unfortunate happened during question period. The Minister of Public Safety twisted my words, thereby misleading the House on an extremely sensitive issue. I think it is important to choose our words carefully—

Some hon. members: Debate.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, may I speak? I was talking about smugglers, and he insinuated that I had said they were criminals—

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. member can continue in two seconds. I think everyone is leaving, and they are talking as they leave. We will wait two seconds.

Now that it is quiet, I would ask the member for Lac-Saint-Jean to please continue.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, it is a sensitive issue, as you know. I am asking the minister to apologize for twisting my words. I was talking about criminal human smugglers who exploit migrants trying to cross the border. He said that I said that criminals were crossing the border. Those are two entirely different things regarding a sensitive issue. I want him to apologize because he twisted my words and it is unacceptable.

The Speaker: Sometimes in the House we do not always understand what is being said or what is being asked. I would remind members to pay attention to what they are hearing and saying. This is not really a point of order. This is a matter of debate on what was said. I will ask all members to be careful what they say.

[English]

Mr. Jake Stewart: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Today in question period, the official opposition cited a March 2022 report by the Parliamentary Budget Officer that shows that the carbon tax will be a net cost to Canadian families. I am seeking unanimous—

The Speaker: I am afraid it is pretty clear that is debate and I will have to shut that one down.

Mr. Ted Falk: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, there is a matter arising out of question period. Today the member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, who is also the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, falsely stated that all on-farm fuel is carbon tax exempt. He knows that is blatantly false—

The Speaker: I am afraid I am going to have to cut that off as well. That is more of a debate. I am here to ensure that procedure is followed. What is answered and what is asked is, unfortunately, out of the purview of the Speaker.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1520)

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—CARBON TAX

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was a riveting question period.

We all know that Canadians, along with citizens of countries across the world, are dealing with inflationary pressures. Our government has acted since day one, in 2015, to ensure we work hard to strengthen our middle class and obviously assist those who wish to join the middle class.

In this Parliament, we have put forward a number of measures to assist Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It is great to see that the opposition will be joining and supporting us in the GST tax credit, which would assist nearly 12 million Canadians, which is great news, and would allow for the doubling up of the GST credit for the next six months. The payments would be received prior to the end of the year, which would obviously be a big help for families as we enter the fall and Christmas period.

We are putting forward the rental benefit, a \$500 top-up, which would assist 1.8 million Canadians, those who really need the assistance the most, such as seniors, people on fixed incomes and lower income families. We need to be there for those Canadians. That is what this country is about, and that is what our government has been about since day one, ensuring that Canadians have access to the resources they need to provide for their families while we continue to grow our economy and generate the investments we need to create jobs for our citizens. We have done this since day one, in complete contrast to what I would call the anemic record of the prior government, which we defeated in 2015.

I would also like to comment on the dental benefits, which I touched upon very briefly before question period started. As members of Parliament, we deal with cases consistently. There are those cases that really leave an impact on how we could help, not only for today, but also for the future. We are creating a dental benefit for Canadians, especially for seniors and lower income folks, so they do not have to make a choice about whether they can go to the dentist to get that dental work done, to pay \$500, \$1,000 or even more out of pocket to get assistance. We are acting on that.

First, we would introduce the Canada dental benefits for kids under 12 who do not have a proper insurance coverage. This is obviously means tested, which is important and something I believe in. It would then be introduced for seniors and families. That is what I would define as responsible and prudent leadership from any government, and specifically from our government.

Business of Supply

Going back to my original comment, I ran for office as an economist. I ran as somebody who worked in the global financial markets for over 20 years, and I ran as someone who grew up in a small town in northern British Columbia to immigrant parents who worked hard, saved, sacrificed and did the right thing. They were provided with the opportunity to push their kids forward to not only create a better environment and brighter future for their children but also for them to have the opportunity to do so. That is why I ran for office.

Our government has continued to do that since day one, whether it was the redesign of the Canada child benefit or the implementation of the Canada workers benefit, which we would see by the end of this year up to \$2,400 more in the pockets of hard-working Canadians. This is, again, means tested, and has helped literally three million Canadians since the inception of our changes. We have done that.

We have cut the small business tax rate for our businesses across the country, from 11% to 9%, providing the necessary support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those supports were essential for so many businesses, for so many employers and for so many Canadians and Canadian workers. That is what our government has done since day one.

Our fiscal position remains strong as we continue to deal with the issues of the day. Affordability is something that I know all my constituents are dealing with. I ask the opposition parties to join us in pushing this legislation through quickly and efficiently to ensure that Canadians get the help they need, especially folks on fixed incomes, seniors and working families.

● (1525)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Before asking my colleague a question, I do wish to recognize the passing of a friend from high school and former constituent, Daniel Letendre. I wish his family all the best, and may eternal light shine upon him.

I heard my colleague speaking about small business tax cuts and things of that nature. Would he agree that, especially over the last seven years, we have seen incrementalism come in when we are dealing with paycheques? There is 1.5% on income tax and a little more on CPP, and then there is a little more on EI and a little more on the carbon tax. If we look at take-home pay over the last 20 years, it has slowly dwindled, and house prices have doubled under the government.

How can we simply say that we are doing something for small business or for the ordinary Canadian when, incrementally, the situation has gotten way worse, especially with inflation and rises in these types of expenses?

Business of Supply

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I must admit that the family of the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo and mine have known each other for over 50 years, since they immigrated from southern Italy to Canada, and I consider the member a great friend.

I will say that our government has focused on returning money to the pockets of Canadians. We have introduced two tax cuts directly aimed at middle-class Canadians, one in 2015 with the raising of the basic personal amount. We will continue to return money into the pockets of hard-working Canadians from coast to coast to coast, including the residents in the member's riding.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, my colleague addressed the issue of dental care. What amazes me is that they are trying to see this as a solution for contributing to finances, including seniors. Does my colleague not agree that before getting their teeth taken care of, people need to eat?

The government is still refusing to give seniors what they need, in other words, help seniors who receive old age security at 65. There should not be two classes of seniors. The \$110-a-month increase for seniors aged 75 and up is discriminatory and unfair. It is ageist.

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Shefford for her question.

From our government's election in 2015 to today, we have helped seniors.

[English]

We have been there for seniors since day one, and we will continue to be there for seniors. The 10% increase in old age security was introduced, with \$800 more in the pockets of seniors, to over 3.3 million seniors across Canada, which is a great benefit. We know that seniors who are living in poverty tend to do so later on in their years, which is why we put in a measure for seniors when they hit 75. We have also increased the guaranteed income supplement for seniors by 10%, and we returned the age of eligibility for old age security and GIS back to 65, as the Conservatives had raised it to 67, which was very important for many seniors in my riding and in all members' ridings.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I find it disturbing that the Conservatives raise questions about the carbon tax today. This is a time when people on the eastern seaboard of the country are suffering from one of the worst examples of a crisis caused by climate change, which climate scientists are absolutely *ad idem* on that we are going to see more of because we are not dealing with the fundamental causes of the climate crisis. This is the exact wrong time to be reducing the effect of any mechanism that may help in reducing our carbon emissions.

These are my questions to my colleague: Would he not agree that, in order for a carbon pricing mechanism to be most effective, we should have to make sure that it is actually effective in helping to reduce the consumption of carbon? Is that, in fact, happening with the federal carbon tax? Is it reducing carbon emissions in this country?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Mr. Speaker, we have introduced a suite of measures to ensure that, by 2050, we will be net zero. Those measures include putting a price on pollution and innovation, which we are seeing in many industries across the board, such as the auto industry as well as companies like ArcelorMittal and other steel companies where they will be switching from carbon-intensive energy sources to less carbon-intensive energy sources. That is the way we will get down to net zero by 2050.

● (1530)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to note off the top that I will be splitting my time this afternoon with the member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

We know that costs are continuing to soar in this country and affordability is becoming a greater stress for more and more Canadians. Families are feeling the pressures of inflation, which continues to be fanned by the Liberal government's deficit spending, and while inflation takes a bite out of the paycheques of hard-working Canadians, the Liberal government's tax hikes only dive deeper into their pockets.

Canadians are feeling the squeeze, and if the Liberal government really wanted to, it could take meaningful action to alleviate those pressures. It could cap government spending, cut red tape and scrap its tax increases.

Today's motion, put forward by our Conservative leader, calls on the government to abandon its plan to triple the carbon tax, and it would make a real difference in the lives of Canadians. Canadians, and certainly my constituents in Battlefords—Lloydminster, cannot afford the tripling of the carbon tax. The Liberal government has burdened Canadians with a carbon tax as it is, a carbon tax that is ineffective and costly.

The Liberals' so-called price on pollution has failed to deliver any meaningful results. Since the Liberal government has imposed the carbon tax on Canadians, it has failed to meet every climate target that it has set for itself. Doubling down on this failed policy, or I should say "tripling down", will continue to do nothing for the environment. However, the government's failed carbon tax policy has not been without any consequences. Its failure has been at the expense of Canadians.

The carbon tax is making everything more expensive, and the government's plan to hike the carbon tax further could not come at a worse time, as the cost of living continues to skyrocket in this country. Small businesses, which have been doing everything they can to get by during the last few years of uncertainty, cannot afford these added costs, and workers, families and seniors who are struggling to put food on the table or to heat their homes cannot afford another tax hike.

The carbon tax hurts those who can afford it the least, the most. The cost of basic necessities should not be out of reach for Canadians. We know that the carbon tax is making food more expensive. It is making home heating more expensive. Driving to work, appointments or school is more expensive, and that is a direct result of the government's failed policies.

These costs are even greater for rural Canadians, such as those who are in my riding of in Battlefords—Lloydminster. Every single Canadian living in rural and remote communities are punished more by the federal carbon tax, and that is a reality that really cannot and should not be ignored. The simple fact is that rural Canadians have to drive to get groceries, to get to work and to drive to go to school. Even for medical appointments, they have to drive. There are no other alternatives. There are ridings that do not even have public transit, and often times their drive is a greater distance. Sometimes constituents of mine are driving one to two hours just to see their doctor to have a prescription refilled.

However, we have to realize that at the same time, the cost of shipping foods and goods into our communities also goes up with this failed carbon tax, and as the fall cold air moves in, we cannot forget the reality of our Canadian seasons. Come winter, home heating is not a luxury. It is a necessity. It is a necessity that far too many Canadians are struggling to pay for, and unfortunately, it is going to be harder if the government follows through on its plan to triple the carbon tax.

We know members on that side of the House are always very quick to get up in this place to repeat their rhetoric that most Canadians get more back more than they pay in taxes. That is far from the truth. Liberal math fails to give a complete picture of the impact of their carbon tax. Canadians know this. My constituents know this, and the Parliamentary Budget Officer also knows it.

● (1535)

The PBO has clearly stated that under the government's carbon tax plan, most households in Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario will suffer a net loss. These are real families and real businesses that are being punished with this carbon tax. Many of my constituents cannot afford the carbon tax at its current rate, much less if it were tripled.

While the government might operate on endless deficits and expect taxpayers and future taxpayers to pick up the bill, that does not work for Canadians. I hear directly from constituents all the time about the impact of the carbon tax on their families and on their businesses.

For example, Rob, a welder in my riding, shared some energy bills with me. One bill shows that for just 800 dollars' worth of gas delivered, his business paid \$450 for the Liberal carbon tax. In another month, he paid over \$600 in carbon taxes on just under \$1,100 of gas delivered. The carbon tax is 25% of his overall natural gas bill. That is a significant expense for small businesses. What is also worth noting is that those bills were before the latest carbon tax hike in the spring. That was when the carbon tax rate was only \$40 a tonne, and 25% of his energy bills went to the carbon tax.

Business of Supply

Let us not forget that the carbon tax is hiking the cost of materials and operations. The Liberals are creating a very risky business environment. Red tape is making it harder and harder to do business in this country, and higher taxes are hiking business costs. We need to ensure that businesses have the ability to succeed.

We have not even talked about our farmers yet. Farmers are some of the hardest hit by the ineffective and costly Liberal carbon tax. They are paying tens of thousands of dollars on the failed carbon tax. We heard in question period earlier that farmers get rebated what they pay, but that is not true. They may receive a drop in the bucket of what they pay in carbon taxes.

We need our Canadian farmers. The world needs our Canadian farmers. Food insecurity is an increasing concern globally, and Canadian farmers can be an important part of the solution.

It is not feasible for our farmers to continue to operate if they are overrun with costs. The carbon tax and nonsensical policies like the Liberal plan to cap fertilizer use hurt farm operations and jeopardize food security globally, as I said, and also here at home. I believe the tripling of the carbon tax would be absolutely detrimental to our farmers and farm families.

We need the Liberal government to get serious about affordability. The Liberals cannot keep spending money and driving up inflation. They need to get their hands out of the pockets of hard-working Canadians. Every single person, no matter their background and no matter where they are from, should have the opportunity to succeed in this great country. Canadians should be confident that when they work hard, they will have enough money in their pocket to put food on their table, put gas in their car and put a roof over their head, and still have something left over for their family's own priorities.

If the Prime Minister and his Liberal government truly cared about Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet, they would give Canadians a break. He would support this motion and cancel his ineffective and costly carbon tax increase.

● (1540)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party's approach to the whole issue of the price on pollution can be very confusing at best. When we look at it, the principle of a price on pollution actually originated in Canada out of the province of Alberta. There are many other provinces with a price on pollution. In fact, these very same Conservatives have flip-flopped like fish out of water on the issue. Some days they are in favour of it and some days they are opposed to it. They have a new leader and a new position. Then we get misinformation.

Business of Supply

Will the member not acknowledge what the Parliamentary Budget Officer has stated? It said a vast majority of people, such as 80% of the residents in Winnipeg North, have a net benefit because of the price on pollution. Is she saying the Parliamentary Budget Officer is wrong and that 80% of the residents in Winnipeg North are not receiving a net benefit, as referred to by the budget officer?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, I have been sent here to represent the constituents of Battlefords—Lloydminster, which is in Saskatchewan. I have always been against a carbon tax. I know how ineffective and costly the carbon tax is. I have bills here from a small business owner, and 25% is what he is paying on the carbon tax. That was before the last hike. What is that doing for the environment? I can tell members what it is doing for the business environment: crushing it.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have been thinking about history, going back a bit and realizing that Brian Mulroney's government actually resorted to putting a price on pollution to address critical environmental problems at the time. We need only think of acid rain and CFCs.

I was wondering why it worked under Brian Mulroney and why, suddenly, under these new Conservatives, this pricing mechanism that allowed us to eliminate pollution would not work anymore. I would like my colleague to explain that.

[English]

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, what is perplexing about “carbon pricing”, or the carbon tax, is this: What is it doing to prevent disasters? What has the federally imposed Liberal carbon tax done for the environment? I ask because I come from a province that it has been imposed on. How come it did not prevent hurricane Fiona? Where are those tax dollars going? What is it doing? It is doing nothing.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, under the output-based pricing system, Canada's biggest polluters pay the lowest carbon tax rate. I want to hear what the member opposite has to say about fairness on that and what we need to see. If the Conservatives are ultimately so against this carbon tax and we need to see a corporate tax rate on the biggest polluters, where does that need to go?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Mr. Speaker, what needs to happen is the people who come to this place have to hear what their constituents are saying and bring that forward. I see on a first-hand basis that, because we have to drive where I reside, families have to choose.

That being said, we can look at companies and technology like carbon capture, for example, and things that industry is already doing. There are parties in this place that do not want to acknowledge the work that energy companies and the industry are already doing. It is only good enough if our energy stays in the ground and is not developed, according to certain parties in this place, and that is unacceptable.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour and a privilege to stand in the House of Commons to represent the constituents of Peterborough—Kawartha.

Today, I rise to speak to the Conservative opposition day motion calling on the Liberal government to eliminate its upcoming plan to triple the carbon tax. For those who are unaware, an opposition day sets aside a block of time on certain House sitting days when the opposition, the Conservative Party, can set the agenda. Most days the government sets the agenda. Today is our day to fight for Canadians, which we do every day, but especially today as we ask the government not to triple the carbon tax.

When Canadians are facing record-high inflation, a cost-of-living and mental health crisis and a growing housing affordability crisis, an increase in the carbon tax completely lacks the compassion Canadians need and deserve at this time. This increase would mean Canadians will pay more for groceries and home heating, and it would add up to 40¢ a litre to the cost of gas. Fuelling a vehicle is not a luxury to Canadians and the constituents in my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha. For many, it is essential for getting to work and school, for picking up groceries and for taking kids, if people have any, to hockey practice, taekwon do, dance and all of their other sporting activities, if they can even afford to put them in one.

One of the biggest lessons we have learned from this pandemic is that rural and urban Canadians have very different needs, yet the Liberal government continues to punish those who have to drive to work or plow their field to feed us. The carbon tax disproportionately impacts those in rural ridings who do not have a choice in transportation.

The government argues that individuals will receive a carbon tax rebate. That is its claim to fame, that Canadians are going to get some of this money back. However, the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that the carbon tax costs 60% of Canadian households more than what they get back in tax rebates.

As I have said many times in this House, our current affordability crisis is a mental health crisis and the two cannot be separated. This week, the CBC published its “first person” column, which amplifies personal stories that reflect contemporary Canada. In the column, Danielle Barnsley shares the actual cost of the current affordability crisis. She states, “Slowly, I watched the prices [rise] at the grocery store. The rising cost of gas. At first I thought it was me just not pinching pennies enough. It wasn't.”

She continues:

I cancelled subscriptions. I stopped eating out. When my kids are with their dad, I don't leave my house just so I can save gas money. It's like living in lockdown—from poverty—rather than the fear of the virus. I live off whatever non-perishables I have in the house and somehow cut my grocery bill by 75 per cent, but that has meant not getting as many healthier foods. The amount of fresh fruits and vegetables I buy has dwindled because it's simply not affordable. I've accessed the food bank sometimes when there just isn't enough.

I can speak from personal experience as well. In my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha, when I drive by the Salvation Army, which is an incredible organization, the lineup of people accessing food banks is longer every day.

She goes on to state:

My kids come first, my bills come next, and I go last. Every nickel is accounted for, every dollar placed toward something. Yet even with all the ways I scrimped and saved, it hasn't helped. It used to be paycheque to paycheque, now it's paycheque to 10 days before paycheque.

The average family of four is spending over \$1,200 more each year to put food on the table. Grocery prices are up by 10.8%, the highest rate since 1981. Across the board, food prices are up by 9.8%. Nearly half of Canadians are within \$200 of insolvency.

Taxing Canadians when they cannot afford to feed themselves or their family is not addressing climate change. It is causing further suffering and adding to our current mental health crisis.

Canadians by nature are very good neighbours. We are kind people. We care about our country and our earth. However, let us be honest. We must meet people where they are. How can someone be the best parent, partner, employee or steward of the land if they are barely surviving? We need to meet Canadians where they are and invest in technology that fights climate change, not triple an ineffective carbon tax.

• (1545)

There are so many solutions and alternatives we have presented in the House, yet no other party except the Conservatives are supporting these solutions: small nuclear reactors, SMRs; regenerative farming; carbon capture; and investing in our own clean oil, rather than dictator oil. We can do so much better than tripling a carbon tax that does not work. Canadians are tired of the false promises of the Liberal government. Canadians cannot trust the Liberal government. The Liberals promised the carbon tax would never go above \$50 a tonne, yet here we are right now, fighting to stop three times that amount.

As a member of Parliament, it is my duty to bring the voices of Peterborough—Kawartha directly to the House. I asked my constituents how the current cost of living crisis is impacting their day-to-day lives. Here are some of their stories.

Kevin writes, “As a small business owner, I've had to up my rates to compensate for the insane diesel prices. That hurts my clients while still cutting into our profit margins, which were slim to start with. I'm making less, clients are paying more, and that is how inflation grows and grows. Raising fuel costs hurts all Canadians. No matter how badly they want us to switch to EVs, they simply aren't practical. Farming needs diesel, construction needs diesel and trucking needs diesel. This entire nation revolves around diesel; when it goes up, everything does.”

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Let us acknowledge that we have a housing crisis. We have over 300 people right now in my riding of Peterborough—Kawartha who do not even have a home. If this carbon tax is driving up the cost to build a home, how is that going to help our housing crisis? How is that going to help get more houses built?

Here are some more quotes. The first says, “Rent prices have gone crazy, \$2500 plus utilities. How do people afford to eat after they pay rent and utilities? No wonder mental illness is at a high, people are stressed out.” Another says, “Just switched from wood to propane as I do it all on my own and not getting any younger. \$1500 a month to keep it at 58 degrees.... On top of everything else going thru the roof, I guess I will keep working 60 hours or more a week to make ends meet.”

The next one says, “As two small business owners, it's a struggle! Hard to make ends meet, but we take on extra jobs and become overworked! Nothing else you can do!” Here is another quote: “Most of us aren't managing. We're sinking”.

When we talk about the future of this country how do colleagues think these stories are impacting our children? If parents are at the dinner table so stressed, that is, if there is even dinner, how does that impact the children in our country?

This week, a local news outlet in my riding reported that post-secondary students were looking to access shelters and being turned away due to overcapacity. A student was asking for advice about whether sleeping in a vehicle in Peterborough was safe. We have university and college students who cannot find housing. They are going to shelters that are already at overcapacity, and the government wants to triple the carbon tax. We can do so much better than this.

Canadians from coast to coast to coast are struggling with record-breaking inflation rates, with no hope for the future that, if they work hard and save reasonably, they will be able to get ahead, afford a house and feel comfortable and financially secure. The hope of home ownership has gone out the window for our younger generation.

Today, Conservatives urge the House to do the right thing, to meet Canadians where they are at, to give them the break they need and to scrap the upcoming tripling of the carbon tax.

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• (1550)

Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there were some very compelling points in the member's statement around the challenges that people are going through. I know that in my riding of Don Valley East people are going through a very challenging time. The member did speak about bringing voices into the House and standing up for affordability.

My question to the member is this. Will she be supporting a \$1,300 dental care plan for young people and the \$500 subsidy? That will really help the children in your riding that you referenced and the voices you speak for in this House.

• (1555)

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind the member not to forget to direct things through the Chair and not to use the word "you".

The hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, it is important to note what we are here to discuss today, and that is an affordability crisis. The more we spend, the more that drives up the cost for people to live.

There is no trust, as I mentioned in my speech, for a program designed to give free things. How do we trust a government that said it would never take the carbon tax above \$50 a tonne? It is positioning the tax at triple that.

Conservatives will continue to fight for Canadians, their mental health and their ability to afford to eat and live.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I sit with my colleague from Peterborough—Kawartha on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women and I thank her for the question. Although I am thanking her, I clearly cannot agree with her today.

Among other things, she spoke about clean oil, a term associated with greenwashing. My partner gives presentations about this and he explains that the terms "oil" and "green" do not go together. No, that does not work.

Last Friday, I participated in a march organized by Ami.e.s des boisés de Granby, who told me that the climate emergency and the need to take immediate action are real.

MC Gilles made the analogy that if you want to lose weight, you can eat at McDonald's for a few months or a few years to save money. Then you can take that money and buy salads or go to the gym. That just puts off the problem, whereas we must take action now. The climate emergency is real.

What the Conservatives are proposing, as they usually do in this matter, is a false solution to a real and much more complex problem.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of solutions we can look at when we talk about climate change. It is about investing in technology, not taxing people.

We have heard from many colleagues on this side of the House that this tax is not saving anyone, so why are we not looking at

small modular reactors? Why are we not looking at regenerative farming? Why are we not looking at sustainable farming, and why are we not investing in local products here in Canada rather than relying on dictator oil?

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Peterborough—Kawartha is also the Conservative critic for tourism. I am the NDP critic for tourism and here we are on World Tourism Day. I thought I would point that out.

This whole debate around the carbon tax, as if it is what is driving up the price of gas, Canadians are rightfully concerned about it. I was just in Vancouver and the price of gas was \$2.33 a litre, and 11¢ of that is carbon tax. The big increase over the last year of a dollar came a bit from the world price on oil and mostly from greed. It is mostly from big oil and gas companies seeing an opportunity when world oil prices went up and inflating that price many times over.

The NDP is the only party here that I see proposing a real solution to that, and that is taxing that greed and putting a windfall tax on big oil and gas companies so that we can create funding for all the good things that the member mentioned.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Mr. Speaker, happy World Tourism Day. I thank my hon. colleague for pointing that out.

When we look at tripling the carbon tax, there is still no justification. There is no logic behind that. Why are we not investing in the technology? There are solutions. Forty cents a litre of gas on top of what we are already paying is just not achievable. Canadians are hanging on by a thread. If we really want to look at our future, our mental health crisis and this opioid and addiction crisis, we need to take care of what is in Canadians' bank accounts and give them the ability to buy food and afford groceries.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg North.

Here we are, once again, debating this concept of a price on pollution. Like the member for Winnipeg North said a few moments ago on a question that he had, the Conservatives are just flip-flopping back and forth on this issue repeatedly. It is like *Groundhog Day* when we get here to discuss the price on pollution.

I am going to read something for us. This is a proposal and it is called the "Personal Low Carbon Savings Account":

Canada's Conservatives will work with the provinces to implement an innovative, national, Personal Low Carbon Savings Account.... Canadians will pay into their Personal Low Carbon Savings Account each time they buy hydrocarbon-based fuel. They will be able to apply the money in their account towards things that help them live a greener life. That could mean buying a transit pass or a bicycle, or saving up and putting the money towards a new efficient furnace, energy efficient windows or even an electric vehicle.

This is from the 2021 platform that the Conservative Party of Canada ran under. Here we are, just around a year since that election, and once again Conservatives are back to railing against this idea of pricing pollution, when all of the members who sit in the House ran on this very platform with the words that I just read out to us. They ran on the idea of pricing pollution.

We get to this place and, once again, Conservatives are trying to suggest that pricing pollution is not the solution, trying to play, in my opinion, to the lowest common denominator here, to enrage people in order to get them to react in a certain way to government policy, but it is policy that they agree with. It is policy that 14 out of the 31 OECD countries agree with. Pricing pollution is the solution to dealing with carbon.

It is very simple. It is just about saying that it is not free to pollute. It is just like when one is manufacturing a product and one has waste that is produced out of the product. If we take that waste, what do we do with it? Sometimes we can recycle it if we are lucky. Sometimes we can recycle it at a premium and we are actually making money, but sometimes we have to pay to recycle it. Sometimes we have to pay to put it in a landfill. It is the exact same concept.

We heard members from across the way, earlier today, talking about a market mechanism or trying to influence the way that people make consumer decisions. Well, it is also the way that corporations make decisions. I will point out to us that this is not just about individuals making decisions.

Umicore is going to be breaking ground just outside of Kingston, actually in a Conservative riding, the riding of the member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington. This will be the largest battery manufacturing plant in North America for electric vehicles. They are set to break ground in 2023 and be fully into production by 2025.

The Prime Minister came to the announcement of that opening back in the summer of this year. Who was there? The member for Hastings—Lennox and Addington, a Conservative member, who was so excited to see this new opportunity in her riding, as she should be.

What I found really interesting though is that the question was asked of the CEO of Umicore as to why they had picked Loyalist, which is right outside Kingston, instead of the other options. Another option was Detroit, Michigan, and there was another location in the States. They were debating and deciding among this short list of locations.

The president for Umicore said that one of the defining reasons why they chose Ontario and, in particular, Loyalist was that they were a company that was producing a sustainable product and they wanted to make sure that sustainable resources went into the sustainable product that they were making. Because the vast majority

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of their production is done with electricity, they knew that the electricity in Ontario was cleaner than the electricity in the other two locations they had to choose from.

• (1600)

Now we are seeing corporations making decisions based on sustainability. It is no longer an issue of just individuals talking about making the smart, green, energy-efficient choices. It is about corporations investing and saying they want to go and be located where they have access to energy that is not produced in an environmentally unfriendly way.

I go back to the point that we have been through three elections now in which we have been talking about this. In 2015, we ran on the idea of pricing pollution. We were elected and we implemented the idea. Conservatives railed against it. In 2019, the electorate had the opportunity to weigh in on that legislation. The electorate decided that it was in favour of seeing through pricing pollution, because we know that the majority of the parties in this House support pricing pollution.

What happened in 2021? The Conservatives kind of came around and the previous leader, the member for Durham, said that they seemed to be losing the war on this front and perhaps people are in favour of pricing pollution and do not think it should be free, so he put it in their platform. He said they would run on this concept and tweak it a bit to be more like a rewards program, which is what they did, but they still ran on it. Still the electorate said no, the Conservatives' half-baked kind of pricing scheme that they were proposing was not good enough and the electorate was going to stick with the plan that had already been put in place and adopted.

Here we are, years later, five or six years into this since the legislation passed, and we are still debating this. We have been through multiple elections since then. I cannot understand why the Conservatives continually rail against this.

I heard the member for Cumberland—Colchester talk earlier today about letting provinces determine their own fate instead of forcing these schemes on them. That is exactly the point. The whole point is that we have set standards. This was done back in 2017 when the legislation passed. We said we were going to establish standards and that if the provinces' own programs met those standards then they did not have to have the federal government's backstop.

In fact, many provinces and territories meet the standards, including British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. All of these provinces meet the standard and do not have the federal backstop of pricing pollution.

Some of the provinces are somewhat there, such as Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, and the balance do not have anything in place and therefore needed that federal government backstop. It is a way to be equitable across the country and all provinces and territories with regard to how aggressive we have to be on this, but it is about letting provinces determine their own path, providing they can meet those requirements. That is exactly what we have seen. For the member for Cumberland—Colchester to somehow suggest that this is not in the provinces' hands is just disingenuous.

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One of the things that Conservatives routinely leave out of this debate is the fact that, yes, the price of carbon will go up, but the rebate also goes up. That is why this is a market mechanism. That is why this is not a tax. It was never intended to be a tax. It was always intended to be a market mechanism to encourage decision-making, not just among individuals but also among corporation stakeholders, away from carbon emissions and toward cleaner and more environmentally sustainable options that could in turn produce a cleaner economy for us. Therefore, it is extremely important that when we have this discussion and when we talk about this, we need to remind people that the rebate goes up as well.

I would remind members that the rebate in particular will be going, primarily because of the decisions that are made in terms of the purchasing, to those individuals who need it the most. That is what we have seen and that is what the data supports. We know that ensuring that we are providing that money back will continue to ensure that people have options to pollute less by making the decisions they make.

It goes without saying that I will be voting against this opposition motion. We are well beyond this discussion. We have had it a number of times before and we have had three elections on this, including one in which the Conservatives supported pricing pollution.

• (1605)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have more a comment than a question. I learned long ago to never argue with a fool because they will never know when I am right.

The Liberal platform in 2019 spoke about a carbon tax that was going to be about \$50 a tonne. Surprisingly, just a year after that, the Liberals announced that they were going to raise that up to \$170 a tonne, which is almost a fivefold increase. At a time when Canadians can least afford it because of inflation and the affordability crisis, here they are raising carbon taxes again.

We are saying, give Canadians a break right now and give Canadians a break in the future from an affordability standpoint. Young people are neither fearful nor anxious. They are despondent right now, because they do not feel like they have hope for a prosperous future.

• (1610)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, that is great advice that the member gave at the beginning about arguing with fools, yet I still come back here day after day and subject myself to it. I guess I will just have to deal with it, because I keep doing it.

The member, again, is missing the most important part of this, which is the fact that yes, the price on pollution goes up, but so does the rebate. The member wants to talk about making life more affordable. I would encourage the member to start voting in favour of some of the legislation coming before this House.

We know that the Conservatives have just recently said they will support the increased GST top-ups, but what about dental care? If we want to talk about affordability and helping individuals who really need help, will the member vote in favour of that? Will the member vote in favour of some of the various other measures that have been brought forward by the government? I highly doubt it.

The Conservatives have perhaps been pressured into voting in favour of the GST top-ups, but I think that is where we will see the end of their collaboration with this side of the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I know that he travelled a lot this summer in his electric car. He passed through Montreal and ordered his pou-tine in French. I checked.

The carbon tax does not affect us in Quebec because we already have an emissions trading mechanism in place. It is true that some sacrifices must be made. It is true that western Canadians must make sacrifices to reduce their fossil fuel consumption.

In a way, I can understand their anger. I can kind of understand the alienation they feel when they are asked to make daily sacrifices on their home heating bill while, at the same time, they see the Liberal government buying pipelines and financing and approving a project like Bay du Nord.

I wonder if the dialogue between western and central Canada would be easier if the Liberal government were a bit more consistent.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for bringing that up. Quebec has an incredible system, the cap-and-trade system.

It was actually Ontario, under the leadership of an environment minister with my last name, that went to California back in 2006-07. They negotiated that deal with California to put California, Quebec and Ontario in that agreement. Unfortunately, it was the first thing that Doug Ford threw out when he got into government.

I also want to commend the member for the initiative. He brought up my electric car and travelling through Quebec. Quebec has by far the best electric charging infrastructure in the country. It is light years ahead of many of the other provinces. We will see that Quebec will win the game as it comes down to it.

He asked a question about what to do between the various provinces and pipelines. I am personally not in favour of purchasing pipelines. I have made that case known. I have said it in this House before, and I stand by that position today. It is unfortunately one of the areas that I depart from some of my colleagues on, but I respect everybody's position on it, and that is my position.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind members to try to keep the questions and answers as short as they possibly can so everybody can participate who wants to participate. I see a lot of people standing up and wanting to ask questions, but we are running out of time.

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[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. The NDP, the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois all agree that there should be a price on pollution. However, everything that the Liberal government does is cancelled out by other decisions it makes that wind up increasing greenhouse gas emissions. I am talking about the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion, the Bay du Nord decision and the increased subsidies for oil companies.

How can the Liberals claim to want to reduce pollution but then approve things that increase pollution?

• (1615)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are saying we are doing too much, and the NDP is saying we are not doing enough. Perhaps we are landing where we are supposed to be.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what a pleasure it is to rise and address the issue of a price on pollution. It is an issue that just does not seem want to go away.

I had the opportunity earlier to formulate a question on something I wanted to expand upon, and that is trying to really understand what the Conservative Party is doing on the issue of a price on pollution. Over the years, we have seen many different types of positions coming from the Conservative Party. If we go back into the history books, we will find that it was the Province of Alberta that came up with the principle of a price on pollution. We have seen other provinces, whether it is British Columbia, Quebec or many, if not all, of the Atlantic provinces, that have seen the benefits of a price on pollution.

A number of years ago, when we first came into government after the 2015 federal election, we conducted a series of discussions, working with the different stakeholders and, in fact, other world leaders, as the world recognized the value of a price on pollution. People like Stephen Harper, the former prime minister, and Brian Mulroney, a former Progressive Conservative prime minister, supported at least the principle of a price on pollution.

We have seen the Conservative Party, in opposition, change its position. I remember when we first announced it, Conservatives were jumping out of their seats in protest against a price on pollution. As we got closer to an election, particularly the most recent election, we saw a change of heart. In fact, Conservative candidates across Canada in the last federal election knocked on doors saying they supported a price on pollution. They campaigned on it.

Now the leader who got them to convert and recognize the value, as people like Stephen Harper and Brian Mulroney did, is no more. At least, he is no longer leader of the Conservative Party. A shiny new leader says Conservatives are opposed to a price on pollution, and now there is an energy starting to come from many of the Conservative MPs I heard years ago saying they oppose it. If we listen to some of the speeches, we can see the misinformation they are trying to spread.

Eighty per cent of the residents I represent in Winnipeg North, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, will have more money coming into their homes as a direct result of the price on pollution. The Conservatives tell the constituents of Winnipeg North, my constituents, that they are paying more as a result of the price on pollution, and that is not true. I would suggest that my constituents and Canadians across the country look at what the Parliamentary Budget Officer stated in terms of the benefits to a vast majority of Canadians, and that they look at what other provinces are doing.

I would ask members to try to understand this one. The Conservative Party of Canada says it is a bad policy and it wants to get rid of it. If the Conservatives were successful, and heaven forbid that occurs, they would get rid of the price on pollution, but that applies only to Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Is the leader of the Conservative Party approaching the different premiers of our Confederation, saying the Conservatives are going to get rid of it in Ottawa and he wants them to get rid of it in those provinces?

• (1620)

Does he plan on compensating those provincial governments in one form or another to encourage them to get rid of a price on pollution, or is he just saying that in some regions of the country it is okay to have a price on pollution and in other regions it is not? If there was no federal price on pollution and the Province of Manitoba at some point in time in the future wanted one, would the Conservative Party say it cannot have a price on pollution? I do not believe that to be the case.

The Conservative policy really makes no sense at all. If we listen to what has been said by the Conservatives over the years, we understand that they are all over the place, and at the end of the day it makes no sense. I think they need to go back to the drawing board, like their former leader, the one who campaigned in favour of the price on pollution in the last federal election. Maybe they should invite him in and allow him to participate in that discussion. The Conservatives need to be more consistent in understanding the long-term impact of the type of misinformation they give, and should even try to deal with the issue, which many of us have, that there are many climate change deniers in the Conservative Party.

We have heard from the newly minted leader of the Conservative Party and many of his colleagues that he is this new economic guru of sorts. He actually made a statement, so my colleague from Kingston posed a question on it, as did our parliamentary secretary for tourism: What about the advice to Canadians about cryptocurrency?

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Let us remember that when he was running for the leadership, there were two things that really stood out. One was that he was going to fire the Governor of the Bank of Canada. I do not want to say any unparliamentary words, but suffice it to say, that is not a good idea. Along with that was forgetting about the Canadian dollar and investing in cryptocurrency. He was contending to be the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada. Believe it or not, unfortunately, some people would have followed the advice, been intrigued by the statement and looked into it. I would suggest that many would have bought into cryptocurrency. Today, those who did are suffering great losses as a result of listening to the leader of the Conservative Party.

I find this interesting. Yesterday, I was listening to a number of the Conservatives talk about having a wonderful economic policy. I have not seen it. There is some room for encouragement, I guess, and we talked about the GST rebate to support Canadians during this time of inflation. I recognize there is inflation. Our inflation is lower than that of the United States and the European Union, but we can always do better. We are striving to do that, and one of the ways we are doing that is by introducing substantial legislation to provide relief to Canadians in all regions of the country.

We have Bill C-31, on dental care. The Conservatives are still offside and say it is a bad idea. It is the only party in the chamber saying it is a bad idea. However, with respect to Bill C-30, the Conservatives saw the light. Originally, they were against it, but I guess they did some math and figured out we are giving 11 million Canadians a financial break through the enhanced GST rebate, so over the weekend they made the decision to support it.

Let me give them some words of encouragement. If they are genuine in wanting to support Canadians and help them deal with inflation, why not do what they can to encourage the quick passage of our legislation, and at least Bill C-30? After all, they apparently support it now. That is some good, sound advice. I hope they take advantage of it.

• (1625)

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the member opposite.

Just this week, in our local newspaper in Barrie, the executive director of the Barrie Food Bank was talking about how much more use there is right now. She is even seeing that some people who have historically donated to the food bank are now coming in and using it. She lists some of the reasons. Obviously number one was the inflation rate, which people are finding tough, but she specifically mentioned the price of gas going up. That is causing concern to the organization and to people coming in.

What would you like me to go back and tell the executive director when we are talking about raising the carbon tax, which you seem to feel is fine going forward? I understand there is a climate situation, but these people are struggling out there, and I have to tell them if it is either going up a few more cents, as you say, or going up by three times, which is what I hear. Please tell me what I am supposed to go back and tell the executive director of the Barrie Food Bank.

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind folks to ask questions without speaking directly to members.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would tell constituents, number one, that there is a rebate for the price on pollution, whereby 80% of Canadians actually get back more money than they pay. I would also tell them that I am going to be voting in favour of Bill C-30 and Bill C-31. Bill C-30 would literally put hundreds of dollars into the pockets of 11 million people to help combat inflation. I would tell them that when they take a look at Bill C-31, they will see a dental care plan so that those who have challenges with their financial needs will be able to get their children dental work. As opposed to having to pay for it, it would be claimed back.

Literally hundreds if not thousands of dollars are going back into the pockets of people to help them through this challenging time of inflation. That is what I would say.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague.

The topic of the day is inflation. The Conservatives have their reasons for talking about the carbon tax.

Does my colleague agree that seniors are among those who are struggling most because of inflation? Does he agree that seniors are suffering the most because of inflation and that, more than anyone else, they have been abandoned by his government? My question is quite simple and straightforward.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the member's statement that seniors are one of the most affected groups because they are on fixed incomes. However, I would totally disagree with abandoning them.

If the member takes a look, right from the word "go" when we first took office back in 2015, we enhanced senior services, both directly and indirectly. If he takes a look at the pandemic, again we have supported our seniors, whether it is through the GIS, OAS, indexing based on COLA, the direct payments that have led to thousands of dollars or the 10% increase for seniors over 75. This is not to mention the hundreds of millions of dollars we have provided to non-profit organizations to continue to support and provide services for seniors. No government in the history of Canada, I would argue, has been there in such a significant way to support our seniors from coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague spent some time talking about policy that makes sense. While it is true that the Liberals have talked a great deal about the climate crisis since 2015, they have not yet hit a target they have set and emissions are higher today than they were when they took office in 2015.

Under the output-based pricing system, Canada's biggest polluters pay the lowest carbon tax rate. Oil and gas companies are only paying a tiny fraction of the cost of their pollution, and 80% to 90% of emissions are exempt. Suncor only pays one-fourteenth of the full carbon price. Of course, the government bought and is building a TMX bitumen pipeline and approved Bay du Nord, which will increase carbon emissions in this country.

How can the member tell Canadians that this makes any sense?

• (1630)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, whether it is working with the Province of Alberta on TMX or working with the NDP provincial government of B.C. on LNG, making good on ideas that are going to have positive income at the end of the day is something we very much want to see take place.

That is one of the reasons this is not just about the short term. We should also be thinking long term. We have a commitment through legislation to hit net zero by 2050. There are also targets established for every five years, I believe, and there is a review process to ensure that we are able to maintain those targets. In the short term we are there, and in the long term we will be there too.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Foothills. I always learn so much when he is on his feet.

I appreciate the opportunity to rise and debate today.

Make no mistake: Inflation is a very serious concern. Inflation, as we all know, leads to the Bank of Canada raising interest rates, and that creates a whole new number of very serious concerns. Yesterday, before I began writing this speech, I came across a tweet from the Bank of Canada that said, “The high cost of living is felt daily by everyone, particularly people with fixed incomes. To control #inflation, we need higher interest rates to bring it down. By moving quickly now, we can avoid even higher rates later on.”

I have spoken with many of my constituents at length about this issue and continue to hear almost daily from citizens about this serious concern. Based upon what I am hearing, parts of that tweet from the Bank of Canada simply are not accurate. When the Bank of Canada says, “The high cost of living is felt daily by everyone”, it is simply not true. Wealthy individuals, those who have no debt, have told me that while they are concerned, they themselves are not impacted at all. Some have even suggested they are coming out ahead, as their investments, in some cases, are now earning higher interest.

I do not bring this up to pick on the Bank of Canada, but the bank is naive in suggesting that we are all in this together when it comes to higher costs of living. This simply does not affect people with more wealth that way.

To the credit of the Bank of Canada, it does acknowledge that the higher cost of living does seriously impact those on fixed incomes, and that is absolutely true. However, there is another group of citizens the bank ignores, and it is those who carry debt with variable interest rates, also known as the working poor. To them, the higher costs of living are a serious concern. The only greater concern to

them, and it is a much greater concern, is the higher interest rates from the Bank of Canada itself.

Last week, I heard from a household in Kelowna that now has to come up with an extra \$900 a month to cover the higher interest rates on the mortgage payment. This is a family of four, and they do not have a spare \$900 a month sitting around. Few working families do.

I should also point out that the Liberal stress test itself, in some cases, forces people to take a variable interest rate because they do not qualify for a fixed rate. People are often left to make a decision: Do they get into a variable mortgage rate on a house, which is often cheaper than renting? Then they find out that with the interest rates going up, they are barely hanging on.

What are they to do? They could try selling, although there is no guarantee that this would not leave them further in debt. Worse still, there is nothing they could rent for any less than what they are paying in a mortgage. They live in fear that the Bank of Canada will raise rates even further, and who can blame them for being fearful?

What does that situation have to do with our motion today? As the Bank of Canada says in the same tweet, “To control #inflation, we need higher interest rates to bring it down.” However, here is the thing. According to the Liberal government, as we have heard many times now, inflation has nothing to do with it. It is all related to supply chain problems outside of Canada, it claims. For higher gas prices, which we know is one of the stronger drivers of inflation, the Liberals blame Putin. If the Liberals are telling us the truth that all of this is due to factors outside of Canada, how does the Bank of Canada raising interest rates fix international supply chain problems or stop Putin? It does not, of course.

Let us all stop for a moment to ask an obvious question. Given that we have all witnessed how dramatically rising gas prices can drive inflation, is it not a reasonable question to ask what factors drive the price of gasoline that the Liberal government can actually do something about? It turns out we have an obvious answer here: the Liberal carbon tax. In fact, our very own Bank of Canada governor has written a letter on this to the chair of the Standing Committee on Finance. In that letter, he says, “According to the Bank’s calculations, if the charge were to be removed from the three main fuel components of the consumer price index (gasoline, natural gas and fuel oil) it would reduce the inflation rate by 0.4 percentage points.” Just so we are clear, the charge is the charge of the Liberal carbon tax.

Business of Supply

• (1635)

There we have it in writing from the Bank of Canada. The carbon tax, at its current rate, adds almost half a percentage point to our inflation. As we know, the Liberal carbon tax is set to triple, even though the Liberals promised before the last election that they would not do that.

I can already hear the howls of outrage from some within the Liberal caucus: "But the rebates, the rebates will triple." Here is the thing. The rebates, as I have concluded recently in this place in a different speech, may well help some to get ahead. As an example, for the finance minister living in Toronto without a car, she would likely come out a winner, but for people in my riding, living in a community such as Hedley, they will not be so lucky. Why? Because in Hedley there is no high school. There is no middle school. There is no hospital. There are no major grocery stores and few public transit options are available.

People in Hedley have two choices: drive west to Princeton or drive east to Keremeos. Sometimes they may have to drive to Penticton, which is even farther away. That same situation occurs for much of rural Canada.

Why should these people be punished with a carbon tax for living in a community that they can afford to live in? Why should someone be punished with a carbon tax for trying to heat their home in the cold winter months? People with older, poorly insulated homes that cost more to heat do get punished. Punished for what? In British Columbia, where we have Canada's oldest carbon tax, the emissions continue to rise, not unlike federally where the government has missed every single emissions target it has ever set.

In other words, we have a carbon tax that inflicts financial pain as it does not treat people equally. It does not actually reduce emissions, and the Bank of Canada confirms that it actually drives up inflation, which hurts everyone. These are facts that can be verified. Worse, our major trading partners, the United States and Mexico, do not have carbon taxes. The United States is supposed to come out with its own plan to fight climate change, but of course it is doing so with a focus on technological improvements and new standards, not a carbon tax. When the government says that any plan has to include a carbon tax to be taken seriously, how is this line of reasoning expected to be taken seriously when it comes to our largest trading partner, the United States, refusing to add an inflationary divisive measure like a carbon tax?

Why are energy companies like TC Energy focusing more on places in Mexico than their home country, particularly during a moment when the world is clearly in need of more energy, not less?

While North America has seen a drop in energy prices in recent months, one has to ask when the American strategic reserve, by law, has to start refilling. When demand from the American federal government and the American consumers start rippling through our integrated energy markets here in Canada, will we not have wished that we had done more work by Canadian companies and the government to secure our own energy security, rather than the reserves of other countries like the United States and Mexico?

It does not end there. The forestry companies that owned the last three lumber mills that shut down in B.C. did not leave forestry.

They have opened three new lumber mills all in the United States where they will pay zero carbon taxes. They will also pay zero of the Liberals' increased payroll taxes as well, but that is a topic for a different debate.

Recently, at the end of August, one of the largest recreational boat builders closed shop in Kelowna. They moved their operations down to Texas and perhaps Mexico. Guess how much carbon tax they will pay there. The answer, of course, is zero.

To recap, it is true that there are some problems outside of our control in Canada but, make no mistake, we have families here right across this country who are barely hanging on and who cannot afford another interest rate hike from the Bank of Canada.

What if there is something else we could do to help the cost of living? There is something we can do and we can do it as soon as possible. Stop the government's plan to triple the carbon tax. This will do two things. It will help lower inflation. Also, it will help increase affordability. It is for these reasons I will be supporting this motion. If the government is not prepared to do those things for Canadians, so be it. However, the government should not pretend that all these challenges are from outside of Canada when indeed we do have a made-in-Canada solution, more so now as winter is coming.

I ask all hon. members to please consider voting in support of this motion. I would also like to pass on my thanks for listening to my comments here today on behalf of my constituents.

• (1640)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in his discussion today, the member said that any plan has to have a carbon tax. That is simply untrue. Quebec does not have a carbon tax. Quebec has used a very progressive system of cap and trade that was done through collaboration with Ontario and California, as I indicated earlier in my questions and comments.

In the United States, several jurisdictions have various different forms of pricing pollution. One of them I just mentioned. In fact, 14 out of 31 OECD countries have some form of pricing pollution. Therefore, for this member to make a comment that any system has to have a carbon tax to be effective, that is just not the reality of what is going on in Canada right now and in the rest of the world.

Business of Supply

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the hon. member raises the Quebec cap-and-trade system. It is a really good thing to focus on. As the carbon tax increases in other parts of the country, tripling, and causing all sorts of economic hardships for families, as well as for industries I should add, if the Quebec cap-and-trade system does not increase, then it will be out of sync with the government's own stated plans.

The second part of that point is that if the cap-and-trade is artificially raised by the Government of Canada, either through a second carbon tax or by pressuring the Government of Quebec, we will not have people in the American markets purchasing them in Quebec markets. That will nullify that system and make it so that it is impossible for Quebecers to be able to carry on with the system.

The government needs to start actually deciding which is more important. Is it to have affordability, to deal with inflation and to allow for proper functioning of some of these markets? They are just talking about more intervention, higher prices and more inflation for everyone.

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I am a little tired of hearing the same old story from the Conservatives. It is agonizing, like listening to a family member play an album with one terrible song over and over ad nauseam. Can we move on to something else?

One thing I know for sure is that the tax does not apply in Quebec, as the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands said. People do not come up to me on the street to talk about the carbon tax. What they want is concrete measures to fight inflation.

I am a little discouraged by the Liberals, who are letting things unfold without really doing anything; by the Conservatives, who are challenging the Bank of Canada's independence while calling for more restrictive monetary policy; and by the New Democrats, who want to implement measures that would only make inflation worse.

In short, I am pretty proud to represent a political party that is the grown-up in the room, a party that has put forward concrete solutions to inflation, such as dealing with the labour shortage. That is what people want to talk about, and that is what can help fight inflation.

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I certainly listened to this member. When she stands up to speak on behalf of her constituents, I find her to be a very strong member with firm things to say, but to trivialize other legitimate points of view in a democracy and to say that one person is the adult in the room trivializes everyone else. I think it is actually unbecoming of her as a member and of this place.

She can disagree that my constituents believe these kinds of policies are inflationary and cause affordability issues, but I do not think she should trivialize them and say that, somehow, she is the only adult in the room. I think there is room in this country for many adults with distinct ideas on how this country should be managed.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member started off well, pointing out that inflation does hit lower-income Canadians more than it hits higher-income Canadians, but he seems to forget that we are debating his party's motion here, which is about the carbon tax.

Right now, we have seen, in British Columbia, our home province, his and mine, that gas prices have increased about a dollar a litre this year. Two cents of that increase was from the carbon tax. The bulk of that increase was not from the price of oil. It was from greed. It was from big oil and gas companies seeing an opportunity and putting up the price of oil by a tremendous amount, fuelling inflation, and now he says that the federal government cannot do anything about that.

It can. It can put a windfall tax on those profits, those profits from greed, and take that money, billions of dollars, and distribute it in various ways to the people in Canada who are suffering now because of that rising cost of fuel.

• (1645)

Mr. Dan Albas: Mr. Speaker, I would certainly say that the hon. member raised the fact that there was a price jump in British Columbia in the Lower Mainland by 25¢. That was because of a shortage of ethanol, as more governments start to pull in and draw on that limited resource for ethanol requirements.

British Columbia is also short 90,000 barrels a day. That, structurally, makes us more dependent on the Americans. That means that we are sending them our product, and they are processing it and then sending it back. Our dollar has gone down quite tremendously.

Look, the NDP keep talking about adding more taxes and how that is going to fix everything. One of the reasons we do not have a proper system right now is due to delays by the NDP government around the Trans Mountain pipeline and the opposition of that member to any new infrastructure, which means the Americans are getting richer and we are taking a limited resource and not getting the full value for it.

The member has a lot to say but, unfortunately, it is in the wrong direction for Canada.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it truly is an honour to speak in support of our opposition day motion for the Liberals not to increase the carbon tax.

I want to read a couple of quotes from agriculture producers I met with this summer, including a farmer in Ontario who told me the only threat to the success of his family farm is Liberal government policy. A Saskatchewan farmer said, "When it comes to farming, I feel like I'm digging my own grave to follow my dream."

Business of Supply

In fact, a recent survey showed that the biggest stressor for Canadian farm families is not commodity prices and it is not weather. It is government policy and regulation. I would say, for the first time, Canadian farmers see their government as an adversary, not an ally. This is having a huge impact on the financial and mental health of our Canadian farmers.

According to a survey on farmer mental health by the University of Guelph, 75% of farmers have mid to high stress levels and farmers are four times more likely to commit suicide than any other part of the general population. This is the kind of stress and anxiety that our Canadian farm families are facing, and their number one stressor is the policies and regulations imposed on them by the Liberal government.

I will take a moment to look at a couple of them before I get in depth on the carbon tax. Last November, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change announced there would be a fertilizer emissions reduction of 30%, with no consultation and no idea exactly what that would mean. However, now it is putting further pressure on Canadian farm families regarding what they are going to do to make themselves economically viable as the government takes away some of the most important tools they have.

Why is the government not looking at our hard-working Canadian farm families, our innovators, our agri-food businesses and our researchers as a critical part of the climate change solution? It is almost looking at them with disdain, instead of looking at them as part of the solution. For example, in 1981, the average farmer was getting about 27 bushels to the acre. Now they are getting more than 50, but the kicker is that they are doing that on less than half of the acreage, significantly reducing their carbon footprint. Do they get any credit for that whatsoever? No, they do not. On average, we are 50% more efficient in fertilizer use than any other country on the face of the earth. Do Canadian farmers get any credit for that? No, they do not.

Instead, when it came to this fertilizer emissions reduction policy, here is the narrative the Liberal government should have had. When the European Union started making massive cuts to fertilizer use in livestock production, that was its decision, but the Liberal government should have said, if there is an issue in the European Union, why not look at what we are doing here in Canada? Why not look at our innovators, our farmers, our experience, our technology, practices like precision farming, variable rates, 4R nutrient stewardship and show Canadians just how impressive Canadian agriculture is? Instead, its fallback every single time is to look at Canadian farmers, much like it does our energy workers, as the enemy rather than part of the solution.

According to the Parliamentary Budget Officer, even if the carbon tax is increased to \$170 a tonne, does anyone know what the impact on emissions from agriculture is? It is zero. The reason is that there are no other options. Farmers right now, many of them use combines and they cannot fuel them with anything other than diesel. As one of my Liberal colleagues told me a few months ago, they cannot put a solar panel on top of those machines. They run 24-7. They do not have any other options. This is what they do to ensure that they can not only feed Canadians but feed the world.

Now I would like to focus on the carbon tax specifically. We heard it again today in question period. In answer to a question from one of my colleagues, the parliamentary secretary said that farmers are exempt from the carbon tax on all farm fuels. That is patently not true. Some fuels are exempt, but fuels like natural gas and propane are still subject to the carbon tax. The Liberals are either misleading Canadian farmers or they really do not understand their own policy. The parliamentary secretary said in committee that, even talking to farmers in his riding, and he talked about it again in question period today, we have Bill C-8. We have a farm carbon tax rebate.

• (1650)

The message from the Liberals is always that the carbon tax is revenue neutral. We now know from Ontario grain farmers, from the Department of Finance and from the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture that this is also not true. Farmers are getting less than 30% and in some cases less than 15% of what they are paying in carbon tax, through that rebate from the Liberal government.

In fact, the Department of Finance said that the average farmer was getting \$800 a year through the carbon tax rebate. I have seen the carbon tax bills from some of my farmers, especially large poultry operations, large dairy operations and certainly our grain growers here in Ontario, who are drying grain or heating barns. Their carbon tax bills are in the thousands and sometimes tens of thousands of dollars a month.

When we hear the finance department say that it is revenue neutral because the farmers are getting \$800 a month, that is a slap in the face to Canadian producers who are certainly carrying the burden of the carbon tax. It has basically become wealth distribution on the back of Canadian agriculture. When a Canadian farmer is getting between 13% and, on a good day, up to maybe 30% for their carbon tax rebate, members can see why, as the opposition in the Conservative Party, we are so adamant that we cannot see this carbon tax continue to rise and triple to \$170 per tonne.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business also ratified and confirmed the numbers from the Grain Farmers of Ontario, saying that, in the first year, the average farmer paid about \$14,000 in carbon tax. After it went up this previous April 1, the average farmer is now paying \$45,000 in carbon taxes. My math is not always the greatest, but between \$45,000 and \$800 there is a big gap, which certainly shows that the carbon tax is not revenue neutral.

The frustrating thing is that the finance department know it and the Minister of Agriculture knows it, and the Liberals continue to allow this to happen. The Minister of Agriculture is complicit in seeing Canadian farmers being taxed to death. They are going to be losing their businesses.

We have put forward two private members' bills: one in the previous Parliament and one in this Parliament. The one in this Parliament is Bill C-234, which would exempt the carbon tax from all farm fuels. I am very happy to say that we have the support of all the opposition parties, which include the Conservatives, the Bloc, the New Democrats and the Greens. The holdout is the Liberal Party, the government, which still does not see that this was an error. The carbon tax should be exempt on all farm fuels and not just a couple. This is imperative to the financial success of Canadian farmers.

Farmers are the ones who are paying the carbon tax over and over again. When buying fuel, buying feed, buying fertilizer, transporting grain and transporting cattle, they are paying the carbon tax every single time. Here is the kicker: Many Canadian consumers see this as an agriculture problem and a rural issue, but farmers have nowhere to pass those costs on to. The result of that is seeing food prices go up more than 10%, which is the highest rate of inflation on food in more than 40 years. This impacts every single Canadian in every single corner of the country, as many Canadians are unable to put food on the table.

By tripling the carbon tax, which we are asking the Liberals not to do in a time of record inflation, they are demanding Canadians to pay more to fuel their out-of-control spending. They are demanding seniors to pay more. They are demanding that youth pay more. They are demanding single mothers to pay more. They are demanding our small business owners to pay more. They are certainly demanding our Canadian farmers to pay more. It is nonsensical, especially in a time of global food insecurity, when we need our Canadian agriculture to be firing on all cylinders to meet the demand that we are going to see, not only here at home but also around the world.

Therefore, I am asking my colleagues from all parts of the House to support our opposition day motion to ensure the financial and mental health of our Canadian farmers first and foremost because they are part of the solution. They are not the problem.

• (1655)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if this opposition day motion is just a sneaky way to put in place the Conservatives' carbon tax plan. Earlier, my colleague referred to the 2021 Conservative platform, which spoke about the carbon tax that the Conservatives, had they been elected, would have implemented.

I am curious as to whether the hon. member spoke to farmers and if he got feedback on the fact that the Conservatives were going to implement a carbon price, but instead of cash in their pockets, people could redeem it for a bicycle or a transit pass. I am curious as to whether the member opposite spoke to farmers and his constituents and asked if they would prefer a bicycle, some Air Miles points or a transit pass, instead of cash in their pockets, like our plan has.

Business of Supply

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I speak to farmers every single day. I am not sure if my colleague can say the same, but here is where the Liberals are so out of touch. We have the Liberal Minister of Agriculture saying farmers are in support of a carbon tax. We have the previous Liberal minister of agriculture saying farmers are in support of a carbon tax.

However, I can tell members that I have not talked to a single farmer, ranch family, agri-food producer or processor in Canada who supports the Liberals' carbon tax plan. This puts them out of business. This puts Canadian food security at risk, and this is why we are bringing our opposition day motion. The least the Liberals could do would be to support our PMB, Bill C-234, to exempt all farm fuels from the carbon tax.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

As I said earlier today, this feels like déjà vu since we are once again discussing the price on pollution and the carbon tax. It seems like every time the Conservatives run out of things to talk about, they bring up this old chestnut. It seems that the page—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I cannot hear a thing. I ask that the member repeat his question.

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I feel like we have gone back 10 years. The Conservatives are still talking about the price on pollution and the carbon tax. They cannot seem to get over it. Every time they run out of things to talk about, they come back to this debate that was supposed to be settled.

To anyone who takes climate change seriously, this measure is one of the rare tools that the federal government has that works. The Liberal government does not do enough, but at least we have this measure. Without it there is nothing left. We will keep increasing our greenhouse gas emissions and that will be dangerous for future generations.

To combat inflation, the NDP has offered other proposals that are much more tangible and help the less fortunate.

What does my colleague think of that?

Business of Supply

● (1700)

[English]

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I would have to question the premise of his question that this is one of the tools the government has that is working. It is obviously not working. Emissions under the government have gone up every single year, despite it increasing the carbon tax, so I am not sure what data he is looking at that says the Liberal carbon tax, which is supported by the NDP coalition government here, is working.

I think it just shows how out of touch the NDP is, that it does not understand the impact this is having on Canadians. Certainly, he must be going back to his riding and talking to his own constituents who cannot afford to put food on the table, cannot afford to fuel their vehicles and are now wondering how they are going to heat their homes, but he wants to double down on a failed policy, when Conservatives are looking at constructive ideas such as technology over taxation.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much my hon. friend from Foothills correctly stating Green policy, because we do support Bill C-234. We think that what happened here was that the government's intention was to not put a carbon tax on farm fuels, and then we had that extremely flukey weather situation. We had farmers with wet grains, and they had to spend a lot more money than usual to dry the grain. To catch the additional costs of that fuel should have been covered in exemptions, so we completely support the member.

One quick point as well is that Green policy is to ban the importation of all foreign oil. That has been our policy for many years, and the hon. leader of the official opposition mis-stated it earlier today.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for my colleague, and if she keeps talking like this, she may as well cross the floor and join the Conservative Party.

In all seriousness, I do want to thank her for supporting Bill C-234. I agree with her. I do believe that is how this came about. However, it was not flukey weather, it was winter, and our farmers face winter every single year. When temperatures are low during calving season, we are heating barns to bring calves in. I know our farmers across the country are having to dry grain most years, and that is an increased cost they are going to be facing, which again puts their financial health at risk.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Taxation; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Regina—Lewvan, Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by stating the obvious: Inflation is a real, serious problem. That is the first thing. Some people are even talking about a recession. The Premier of Quebec, Mr. Legault, estimates that we have a fifty-fifty chance of ending up in a recession. Back when he was a separatist, that very same François

Legault said that if a slowdown or a recession were to happen, Quebec would be entirely dependent on Canadian federalism.

He was quite right, but I want to get back to the topic of inflation. In July, the price of goods and services in Canada rose 7.6% from a year earlier. In August, the consumer price index rose 7% year-over-year. Inflation slowed down a bit, but that was only because the cost of gas went down in August. I remind members that gas prices skyrocketed at the beginning of the summer. In August those prices dropped a little, as we recall. That is the only reason why inflation slowed down a bit.

Turning to the cost of food, the situation is serious. Food prices have increased by more than 10% annually, which disproportionately affects low-income households for an obvious reason. These households cannot just simply decide to cut other expenses to offset their higher grocery bills. That is very serious. It seems to me that any discussion about inflation should include a discussion about fighting poverty.

According to a recent poll, 56% of households report that they are financially unable to keep up with inflation. It is 41% for Quebec. Up to 80% of Canadian households and 70% of Quebec households report that they have had to cut spending because of the higher cost of living. Therefore, the situation is extremely serious.

I see that there is some movement behind me. It is not the subject matter that is making me laugh, but quite simply the indecisiveness of my colleagues behind me.

On September 7, the bank raised its key rate for the fifth time. It is now at 3.25%.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry, I have some terrible colleagues who have no sense of solidarity.

For consumers, this new increase in the key rate will lead to higher interest and mortgage rates—

● (1705)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I will give the member one minute. I do not know what is happening.

The hon. member for Mirabel on a point of order.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that the member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot certainly does not have terrible colleagues.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not really a point of order.

Now that everything is okay, I recognize the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, at the same time, wages are catching up with inflation. The labour shortage is forcing employers to increase wages in order to remain competitive and continue to attract employees. Wages are therefore catching up a bit in some respect.

However, the Government of Canada only started talking about it last month. There was nothing about it in last spring's budget, nor was there anything new in the speech given by the Deputy Prime Minister on June 16 at the Empire Club on Bay Street in Toronto.

We agree with the Conservatives that the Liberals are taking a laissez-faire approach—that is indeed a reality—but of course, we are not going to launch a childish campaign with a play on words using “inflation” and the Prime Minister's first name. However, we do not agree on the Conservatives' analysis of the cause and the solutions. This is where the problem lies.

Contrary to what the leader of the official opposition said when the member for Richmond—Arthabaska left the Conservative caucus, just because we do not agree with the Conservatives' solutions does not mean we are opposed to fighting inflation. Let us be clear about that.

The motion explicitly targets the carbon tax. This does not affect us in Quebec, because we have the carbon exchange system, which was created by a famous Conservative, none other than Jean Charest.

There is some question as to how this proposal will really help anyone or anything, apart from businesses operating in the oil and gas sector. The Conservatives' political interests may also be served. They are trying to get political mileage out of people's suffering. This summer, the recent jump in the price of crude oil greatly benefited businesses operating in the oil industry.

The motion is even based on an untruth, in that it attributes inaccurate statements to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. He did not state that the carbon tax was currently causing a loss for 60% of households. Rather, he spoke of what might happen between 2030 and 2031 at a price of \$170 per tonne. Furthermore, the tax remains progressive because of the refund. Lower-income families will see a net gain.

This is not to say that the carbon tax is not problematic, particularly when it comes to equity. Small and medium-sized businesses are subject to this tax, yet large carbon emitters are entitled to relief programs.

However, the issue of inflation cannot be reduced to simplistic, electioneering solutions that would have the additional effect of eating up significant parts of the government's budget.

That said, there are real solutions. If we are unable to single-handedly fight a global phenomenon through government policies alone, we can at least offer meaningful relief to its main victims, such as seniors or low-income earners, who need our support to increase their purchasing power. We cannot forget that, for the most part, our seniors do not work.

Why not reimburse them for the GST in the quarters when inflation exceeds the Bank of Canada's target? Or reimburse those feel-

ing the pressure of rising gas prices, primarily farmers, taxi drivers and truckers?

There are so many opportunities for action, from tackling the labour shortage and restoring supply chains to housing, where governments can increase funding and redirect it from private developers to housing co-operatives and community associations. We could also talk about how important it is to amend legislation to promote competition because we know that monopolies result in higher prices.

If the Conservatives' motion included potential solutions to these issues, the Bloc Québécois certainly would have been very open to studying and debating them. Had they concocted a motion that, at the very least, identified the problems we just talked about as priority issues in the fight against inflation, we would have been happy to work with them, but there is nothing like that here.

• (1710)

I am sure no one will be surprised that there is one crucial aspect that the Conservatives left out of the motion. I am talking about the need to reduce our dependence on oil to build a more diversified economy. Since the very foundation of this country, Canada's economic development has been centred on the extraction of raw materials. This has been the pattern since the very beginning of Canada. Historically, the Canadian colonies specialized in bulk commodities, which, at the time, were raw materials for export. These products did not require much processing in a market that was in large part dictated by international trade.

The consequences can be even greater if this sector starts struggling as well, as a result of the depletion of resources or fluctuations in the price of a barrel, for example. The price of oil is chronically unstable. It is so known for its tendency to increase suddenly and drastically that most measures of inflation do not factor in energy. Since the cost of oil is essentially tied to the London and New York stock exchanges, there is little that can be done to mitigate the fluctuations and price hikes.

Today we are paying the price for the unwavering support that Ottawa, the banks and the pension funds give to the Canadian oil and gas sector. The pension funds have increased their investments in this sector. The pensions of Canadians and Quebecers are in jeopardy because they are dependent on oil fluctuations. That is not really a winning strategy. Just look at the share of foreign investment in Canadian oil. It has steadily declined over the past few years, meaning there are very few royalties to be had. For example, shale oil development is a very bad business proposition, and yet Canada cannot seem to escape it.

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One of Canada's biggest disappointments is definitely that in the global marketplace, in the midst of this great geopolitical struggle, Canada is ultimately a minor player with basically no influence. It is easy to see the problems that come from putting all our eggs in one basket, especially when that basket is the oil sector. The problem is that it is really tough to get out of oil. When the price is high, investments pour in, and when the price is low, individuals and companies consume more. In other words, it is a lose-lose situation.

We wish we were debating a motion that dismantled deep-seated prejudices instead of relying on them to score political points. For now, this motion is not even worth a bitcoin.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is encouraging to see that the Bloc members appear to be offside with the Conservatives on this issue, which is good. I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on why we have seen such a fluctuation in policy from the Conservative Party on this very important issue when a majority of society, levels of government and politicians of different political stripes have seen the value of having a price on pollution.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat surprised to hear my colleague speak of rare disagreements between members of the Bloc Québécois and members of the Conservative Party. It seems to me that we do indeed have disagreements and that they are numerous. That, by the way, is part of democracy. As to the worship of oil in Canada, there seems to be a non-Quebec cross-party consensus in the House. That said, we have a system in Quebec that works well and that we are very satisfied with. It is the carbon exchange.

If I must comment, I would say that this tax is imperfect, as I said earlier. In fact, small and medium-sized businesses are—

• (1715)

The Deputy Speaker: I must interrupt.

It being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith all questions necessary to dispose of the supply proceedings now before the House.

[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.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to an order made on Thursday, June 23, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 28, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect if you were to canvass the House you might find unanimous consent to call it 5:30 p.m. at this time, so that we could begin Private Members' Business.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CHILD HEALTH PROTECTION ACT

The House resumed from May 6 consideration of the motion that Bill C-252, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibition of food and beverage marketing directed at children), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to Bill C-252, legislation that seeks to amend the Food and Drugs Act, and more specifically seeks to impose an advertising ban on unhealthy food and beverage products to youth under the age of 13. This bill is substantively similar to Bill S-228 from the 42nd Parliament, which I similarly opposed.

The objective of the bill is a laudable one. After all, obesity is a real problem in Canada among young people. Recent data indicates that approximately 30% of children and youth between the ages of five and 17 are obese. That is not good. That is a problem, and it is one that we must work toward addressing.

The issue with the bill is not its laudable objective, but rather that it seeks a simplistic solution to a complex problem, that of childhood obesity, for which there are many underlying factors. It is truly a multidimensional challenge.

The idea proposed in the bill is not a new one. Similar advertising bans have been implemented in other jurisdictions, including in the province of Quebec. In the case of Quebec, the law has been on the books for more than 40 years.

Unfortunately, the data from jurisdictions that have such bans in place demonstrate that the intended purpose of reducing childhood obesity has not borne out. In the province of Quebec, it has been on the books for 40 years. What has happened in the last 40 years? Childhood obesity has gone up, not down. If it worked, we would expect to see it go down, but that has not happened.

Looking at other jurisdictions within Canada, we see that these types of bans have not had their intended impact. We can look at a province like Quebec, which has a ban, and provinces like Alberta, which do not. For example, the Canadian community health survey indicates that my province of Alberta has a similar level of childhood obesity as that of the province of Quebec.

Given that this has been tried and tested in other jurisdictions and it has not worked, it is difficult to see how implementing this nationally would suddenly work. I do not believe it will. The evidence is not there, and on that basis alone, this bill merits to be defeated.

Let me stress that this is not just a bill with a laudable objective and with a solution that has not worked, but maybe it would work, so let us give it a try. No. This bill, if passed, would have very serious repercussions to key sectors of the economy, including reducing the GDP, costing jobs and, ironically, adversely impacting youth amateur sport.

With respect to some of the economic concerns of this bill, this bill has the potential to have major ramifications when it comes to food and beverage advertising writ large. That is a result of vague language in the bill. More specifically, the bill would seek to ban advertising directed primarily at persons under the age of 13.

The bill says advertising “that is directed primarily at”. What does “directed primarily at” mean? The bill does not specify. It does not provide any clarity. Instead, it is left to regulators at Health Canada to fill in the blanks. That simply is not good enough.

● (1720)

It is not good enough that we would be voting on a bill that seeks to impose an advertising ban without understanding exactly what it is we are banning. When the previous iteration of the bill, Bill S-228, was studied, key stakeholders, including the Retail Council of Canada and Restaurants Canada, expressed concern that the bill could result in a sweeping ban of all food and beverage advertising directed at adults and children alike.

This concern was informed by indications that Health Canada would be taking a broad view of interpreting what constitutes child-directed marketing. To mitigate against unintended consequences, these and other stakeholders put forward recommendations to tighten up the language and incorporate more precise language into the bill. That precise language recommended by key stakeholders remains absent from this version of the bill, so the very issue that was raised with respect to Bill S-228 remains a problem with respect to Bill C-252.

With respect to amateur sport, the bill before us could prevent, or at the very least diminish, corporate partnership and sponsorship of youth amateur sport. There are sponsorships, such as Timbits hockey, Timbits soccer, and McDonald's Canada, which sponsors more than 50,000 kids to play hockey, that could be shut down as a result of the bill because of the broad definition of “advertisement” under the Food and Drugs Act coupled with the vague language in the bill. Indeed, when Bill S-228 was studied, Hockey Canada and Canada Soccer expressed real concern that millions of sponsorship dollars for their organizations would dry up.

It is a bit ironic that a bill that seeks to reduce childhood obesity would have the effect of taking away programs and opportunities for young people to participate in amateur sport, which is a tried, tested and proven way to stay healthy and avoid obesity, in contrast to the bill before us, which is a tried, tested and failed way to reduce childhood obesity.

In closing, Bill C-252 is just another Liberal government-knows-best bill. It would put power in the hands of regulators instead of putting power in the hands of parents. We on this side of the House, as Conservatives, trust parents not bureaucrats to make the best decisions, including health decisions for their children. For that and the reasons I have outlined, I will be opposing the bill.

● (1725)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to see you back here in the House. I sincerely hope you had a nice summer. It was probably much like mine, with a lot of time spent resolving problems with passport applications. Of course, we always enjoy helping our constituents.

We are considering a bill with noble goals and intentions. Bill C-252 deals with the prohibition of food and beverage marketing directed at little children. I am pleased to speak to the bill because I will probably be at the standing committee on health for the clause-by-clause study. There are a number of items that I will be very interested in looking at; I will come back to that later.

First, we must acknowledge that there is an obesity problem among adults and children. If we believe a report from the public health officer for Quebec dating from 2016, the trend is still clear. Fully 52% of the population is overweight. Approximately 18% of people are obese, and that is also true among children between the ages of two and 17. In children aged two to 17, the prevalence of obesity or excess weight has increased from 15% to 26% over time. The diagnosis is clear. We need to act. I think there is a role for public policy-makers and governments to play. That is essentially what this bill does, without claiming to fix everything.

We know the long-term consequences of childhood obesity. There is no clear cause-and-effect relationship, but we do know that there is an epidemiological link to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, musculoskeletal conditions and certain cancers. Preventing these diseases becomes even more important. Obviously, this is a prevention bill. However, the Liberal government, which includes the member who introduced this bill, refuses to give Quebec and the provinces the health transfers they are calling for in order to be able to provide people with the necessary care.

I would therefore encourage my colleague to pressure her caucus and her government. I know her well because her riding is not far from mine. I know her constituents are like mine. They think health transfers are important. I also know she has a member of the National Assembly in her riding, one of the MNAs who unanimously called for health transfers. It is important to listen, but it is also important to look ahead, and there are a lot of good things in this bill.

Some will see this as proof the government thinks it knows everything. They will see the bill as a socialist conspiracy. That is pretty much what my Conservative colleague was insinuating.

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I can actually hear a small child in the House of Commons. That child may one day be protected by this piece of legislation.

Children cannot differentiate between information and persuasion. Their brains are not capable of it. The Standing Committee on Health heard from the president of the Association des pédiatres du Québec about child development. Children begin to distinguish persuasion from content around four or five years of age, but it is not until they reach seven or eight that they can really tell the difference between ads and content. They may not really understand until they are 11 or 12.

Most of the time, these ads are not meant to convince anyone, to provide information or to help consumers make informed decisions. It is persuasion aimed at children who are not in a position to make rational and informed decisions, which is why we need to support them.

I can assure the House that the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of the bill and this principle. I think it is a good thing. This bill is also consistent with the Quebec government's 2019 action plan to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks and promote water. Water can be drunk, but oil cannot. The Quebec government states in its report that the consumption of sugary drinks and the marketing practices that promote their consumption must be denormalized. There is, after all, a cause and effect relationship.

Of course, someone in Alberta could always make comparisons and think they are just as thin as a Quebecker, and wonder why Quebecers have advertising laws. Such statements do not work. These statistics and comparisons between different jurisdictions are pretty shaky. This is counterfactual thinking, and these arguments are pretty weak. At the very least, it is hard to imagine that this bill will make the situation any worse.

• (1730)

Quebec's policy was obviously designed to prompt a reduction in the consumption of sugary drinks. The Bloc Québécois is here in Parliament to express the consensus of the Quebec National Assembly, the vision of Quebecers and the vision of the Government of Quebec. It would be consistent with our mission in the Bloc Québécois to support this bill, at least at second reading so that it can be sent to committee.

This bill also reflects the recommendations made by the WHO in 2010. The Government of Quebec was not alone in considering this issue. This WHO report applies to the whole world, not just Quebec. One of the recommendations made by the WHO in its 2010 report reads as follows: "Given that the effectiveness of marketing is a function of exposure and power, the overall policy objective should be to reduce both the exposure of children to, and power of, marketing of foods high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids...". In short, we need to take action.

Experts have recognized that there is a link between marketing and consumption. We are not saying that it is a definitive link. We are saying that there is a link and we must act. That is consistent with the Quebec government's position, the Quebec government's strategy, the WHO's position and how the Bloc Québécois has voted in the past. I am thinking in particular of Bill C-237, which, I believe, was passed unanimously by the House of Commons at first

or second reading. We are being consistent with our past voting and support. We will continue in that vein with the bill being studied. There is also Bill C-228 on food and beverage marketing directed at children; it died on the Order Paper.

It is only fitting that we support this bill. I invite my colleagues, including the Conservatives, to vote in favour of this bill. Let us support it because as parliamentarians we know that second reading is not a final step. If there are concerns to be addressed, corrections to be made and discussions required, I can assure my colleague on the Standing Committee on Health that she will find a colleague ready to work constructively on this bill, which I find quite promising. I know that it is well intentioned. Let us refer it to committee.

We are looking for some assurances in committee. First of all, Quebec did not help develop the federal, provincial and territorial framework for action to promote healthy weights. Quebec does not endorse any pan-Canadian response that encroaches on its jurisdictions, so we will have to ensure that this holds true for this bill. Furthermore, Quebec alone is responsible for developing and implementing programs to promote a healthy lifestyle within its borders. I say that, but, at first glance, it does not appear that the bill currently under consideration encroaches on our jurisdiction.

Plus, a simple reminder that Quebec has full jurisdiction over health matters, which I feel needs to be pointed out every day, if not every hour. Furthermore, we must ensure that the bill will not interfere with Quebec's jurisdiction over civil law. Section 248 of Quebec's Consumer Protection Act already prohibits advertising directed at children.

The bill does not seem to go much further, except that the Quebec legislation does not currently regulate store windows, displays, containers, packaging, labels, and so on. Some procedures will therefore need to be reviewed. Perhaps we will find out why my Conservative colleagues do not like the Quebec legislation.

I have said it many times and I will say it again. The intention is good. The public health objective is good. The reasoning behind the bill is quite rational and well thought out. Now, once again, as is often the case with issues related to health legislation, there is a fine line between Quebec's jurisdiction and the federal government's jurisdiction. However, it is obviously worth it, because the health of our children is of the utmost importance. It is worth passing this bill at second reading, sitting down and studying it diligently. I invite all my fellow parliamentarians to do just that.

• (1735)

[English]

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and support this bill at second reading, Bill C-252, which would amend the Food and Drugs Act to prohibit marketing foods and beverages that contribute to excess sugar, saturated fats or sodium in children's diets in a manner that is directed primarily at persons who are under 13 years of age.

Poor nutrition and unhealthy food and beverages are key contributors to poor health in children. Good eating habits and avoiding unhealthy food are key preventative elements of health policy, not only for our children but for generations to come. New Democrats have been calling for a ban on junk food advertising targeted at children for many years. We believe that it is wrong to let wealthy corporations manipulate our children's eating habits, particularly to the detriment of their health.

New Democrats want every child in Canada to develop a healthy relationship to nutrition and the foods they consume. We are calling for the establishment of a national school nutrition program to give every student access to healthy, nutritious food and to make healthy eating a daily lesson for our kids.

The data is clear. Numerous studies have found strong associations between increases in advertising of non-nutritious foods and rates of childhood obesity. One study by Yale University found that children exposed to junk food advertising ate 45% more junk food than children not exposed to such advertisements. In Canada, as much as 90% of the food marketed to children and youth on TV and online is unhealthy.

By way of background, there is strong agreement among leading Canadian pediatric and allied health organizations that the impact of food and beverage marketing is real, significant and harmful to children's development. Marketing to children has changed dramatically in the last 10 to 15 years as well. Today, it is a seamless, sophisticated and often interactive process. The line between ads and children's entertainment has blurred with marketing messages being inserted into the places that children play and learn. Three-quarters of children in Canada are exposed to food marketing while using their favourite social media applications.

Canadians are the second-largest buyers of ultraprocessed foods and drinks in the world, second only to, of course, the Americans. To give members an idea of how epidemic this problem is, nearly one in three Canadian children is overweight or obese. The rise in childhood obesity in recent decades is linked to changes in our eating habits. Overweight children are more likely to develop health problems later in life, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

Canada's New Democrats, as I have said, have advocated for a ban on unhealthy food and beverage marketing to children for a long time. In 2012, my colleague from New Westminster—Burnaby introduced legislation to expressly prohibit advertising and promotion for commercial purposes of products, food, drugs, cosmetics or devices directed to children under 13 years of age. As members can see, this is a much broader prohibition that would protect our children not only from unhealthy food but from being preyed

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upon by multinational corporations who would take advantage of their youth.

Quebec has prohibited commercial advertising that targets children under the age of 13 since 1980. Other jurisdictions have since adopted similar legislation, including Norway, United Kingdom, Ireland and Sweden. Quebec's restrictions on advertising to children have been shown to have a positive impact on nutrition by reducing fast food consumption by 13%. This translates to 16.8 million fewer fast food meals sold in that province and an estimated 13.4 million fewer fast food calories consumed per year. Quebec also has the lowest rates of obesity among five- to 17-year-olds as well as the highest rates of vegetable and fruit consumption in Canada.

In 2016, Senator Nancy Greene Raine introduced the child health protection act that was S-228. That legislation would have banned the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages in a manner that is primarily directed at children under 17 years of age, a higher age than this bill would set. At the House Standing Committee on Health, the Liberals amended Bill S-228 to reduce the age limit from under 17 years old to under 13 years old and they added a five-year legislative review.

• (1740)

Although Bill S-228 passed third reading in both the House and the Senate, unfortunately that bill died on the Order Paper when Parliament was dissolved for the 2019 federal election. Again, Bill C-252 is similar to that Senate bill, with the following key differences. Again, the current bill would set the age that would prohibit advertising at under 13 years of age, where the Senate bill was under 17 years of age. There is also a change in definition. The current bill says, "no person shall advertise foods and beverages that contribute to excess sugar, saturated fats or sodium in children's diets in a manner that is directed primarily at persons who are under 13 years of age." The Senate bill just said, "no person shall advertise unhealthy food in a manner that is directed primarily at children."

Finally, of course, this bill before us today has, once again, a five-year review that would focus on whether, after this bill became law, there was an increase in the advertising of foods and beverages that contribute to excess sugar, saturated fats or sodium in children's diets in a manner that is directed primarily at persons who are 13 to 16 years of age.

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I want to pause for a moment there and make a comment on that. There is a healthy debate on this bill about what the proper age should be set at. Again, the Senate bill was more ambitious and said not to let advertisers advertise to children under 17. This is under 13, and one of the concerns, of course, is that advertisers, who are extraordinarily sophisticated as we are talking about large multinational multi-billion dollar conglomerates that make a lot of money peddling chocolate, sugary beverages, etc., to children, will instead shift and focus their advertising on 14- to 17-year-olds. I think this is a healthy way to compromise, by having a study that would monitor it carefully to see if, in fact, that does happen, because if it does then this House could then adjust our legislation in five years on an empirical basis to cure that mischief.

The previous health minister's mandate letter did direct her to "introduce new restrictions on the commercial marketing of food and beverages to children". The current health minister's 2021 mandate letter instructed him as well to support "restrictions on the commercial marketing of food and beverages to children." The Liberal 2021 platform pledged to "Introduce new restrictions on the commercial marketing of food and beverages to children and establish new front-of-package labelling to promote healthy food choices."

We are happy, then, to see this legislation before the House. Unfortunately, it is done through private members' legislation and not, as stated repeatedly in the mandate letters and in the Liberal platform, by the government itself. No matter; as long as it passes, that is what is important. However, it is curious that the current Liberal government has not kept its word in its mandate letters and in its platform, and introduced legislation itself.

Industry organizations, including the Association of Canadian Advertisers, the Canadian Beverage Association, Food and Consumer Products of Canada and Restaurants Canada, have called legislation like this a "significant overreach". They claim that legislation like this would lead to serious consequences for the economy. On the other side of the coin, Canadian pediatric, child advocacy and other health experts are strong supporters of this bill.

New Democrats want to stand unambiguously on the side of child health and welfare, not corporate profits. We want children to develop a healthy relationship to nutrition and the foods they consume, rather than being manipulated by sophisticated marketing campaigns, especially when it would affect their health.

Over 120 organizations and children's health advocates across Canada have called on the current government to restrict food and beverage marketing to kids. The Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition is governed by 12 steering committee member organizations. They range from the Heart and Stroke Foundation to the Childhood Obesity Foundation, the Canadian Dental Association, the Canadian Cancer Society, Diabetes Canada and Dieticians of Canada.

The pervasive marketing of unhealthy foods is a contributing factor to the growth of childhood and adolescent disease. Sex and gender differences come into play in the design of and responses to these marketing strategies, contributing to the perpetuation of stereotyped behaviour and generating disparities in food choices and health. This particularly hurts girls.

Studies have demonstrated that this intervention, as is presented in this bill, would result in both overall cost savings and improved long-term health outcomes, with the greatest benefits of all to the most socio-economically disadvantaged.

Let us do this for our children.

• (1745)

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and I hope that if you seek it, you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion: That notwithstanding any standing order, special order—

Some hon. members: No.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons will have heard the noes, but I will let the hon. leader conclude the presentation.

Mr. Peter Julian: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. A tradition in the House is that we hear the motion. I would like to hear the motion that the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I just invited the hon. Leader of the Government in the House of Commons to read—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I would like you to review the fact that previously in this session the Speaker has ruled that if there are noes, there is no right to complete a presumption of unanimous consent when members have already made clear that there is none. The Speaker—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There was no ruling per se. There was a recommendation to do that, not a specific ruling.

Hon. Mark Holland: Madam Speaker, I move that notwithstanding any standing order, special order or usual practice of the House, later today, the House shall continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment until 12:00 midnight for the purposes of considering Bill C-30, an act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit) at second reading, and if at the debate tonight no member rises to speak, the question be put, a recorded division be deemed requested and deferred until tomorrow at the conclusion of Oral Questions and the House be deemed adjourned until the next sitting day, and that the debate pursuant to Standing Order 38 not take place.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is truly disappointing to see this. We are ready to work for Canadians. We were ready to stay here until midnight to discuss important issues for Canadians to get the relief the Conservatives have been demanding. They have been saying that Canadians need relief on inflation, yet here is an opportunity to debate that. Here is an opportunity to get that relief to Canadians faster on a bill that they support, but they would rather play parliamentary games than help Canadians. That is a shame.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the private member's bill introduced by the hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Bill C-252, known as the child health protection act, which proposes changes to the Food and Drugs Act to better protect our children from the harms of food advertising and, ultimately, the health implications associated with unhealthy eating.

Healthy eating is a key priority for our government. It is for that reason we have worked since 2016 to implement a robust set of initiatives through the healthy eating strategy. The strategy has been the cornerstone of our plan to promote healthy eating for all Canadians, including and very importantly, our young ones. This plan has led to action on a number of fronts, from releasing a new and modernized Canada Food Guide, prohibiting the commercial use of trans fats in food, updating sodium reduction targets and, most recently, publishing new front-of-package labelling regulations to provide simplified and easily visible information to help Canadians make informed and healthy choices. These policies are having, and will have, real and tangible impacts, but promoting healthy eating is a complex and ongoing effort, and we cannot stop here.

Members will know that our government has made clear our commitment to protecting our most vulnerable populations by supporting restrictions on the commercial marketing of food and beverages to children. The sad reality is that the current food environment continues to pose real challenges for families in being able to make nutritious food choices, including the impact on children by food marketing techniques. This is why our government believes in demonstrating strong leadership in this area. Our actions are guided by the recognition that a healthy population is key to reducing vulnerabilities at public health events and protecting our health care system. In addition, a healthy population is central to the long-term growth and prosperity of Canadians today and well into the future.

I am pleased that a number of my colleagues in the House share our government's concern about childhood obesity, diet-related chronic disease and the risks to long-term health, and rightly so. We know that one of the consequences of unhealthy eating is chronic disease, which is on the rise. Diet-related chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases and some cancers, are now a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in Canada, and most concerning is that these diseases are starting to affect children.

Obesity, although a multifactorial condition, is influenced by a range of factors, including environmental and individual factors. Diets with excess intakes of sodium, sugars and saturated fat are a key risk factor linked to obesity and other diet-related diseases. Studies have shown that most children in Canada are consuming excess amounts of some or all three of these nutrients. Given what

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we know about the number of interconnected factors that influence our diet, our government believes in taking a comprehensive approach to tackling the issue, and food advertising is an area of high priority.

Research has shown us that of all age groups, children are particularly vulnerable to food advertising. Food advertising influences their attitudes, preferences, purchase requests, consumption patterns and overall health. The more children are exposed to food advertising, the more likely they are to request those foods. In Canada, children are exposed to food advertising throughout their day in a variety of settings, including in their homes, schools, restaurants and grocery stores.

Unsurprisingly, television has long been an important source of exposure to food advertising. Despite our change in technology and media-consumption habits, it continues to contribute significantly to children's exposure. In fact, data collected through Health Canada's monitoring estimates that children between the ages of two and 11 are seeing up to 33 food ads per week on television.

The popularity of smart phones, tablets, computers and other devices has also made it easier for advertisers to reach children and amplify their messaging. A study published in 2019 estimated that children in Canada aged seven to 11 saw approximately 30 food ads per week on social media apps alone. The vast majority of these ads were for foods that contain excess sodium, sugars, and saturated fats. In fact, more than 90% of them did.

● (1750)

Advertisers typically employ strategies that strongly appeal to children, such as featuring characters from children's programs and movies, offering incentives like free toys and featuring celebrities, athletes and influencers popular with children.

Not only that, the emergence of sophisticated digital advertising technology over the last decade has enabled industry to reach specific audiences with precision, and children are no exception. Digital advertisers are able to analyze, access and utilize a wealth of data to increase the reach and effectiveness of their advertisements, including users' interests, location, demographics, information, emotional state and much more.

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These advances are further exacerbating the need for government to step in and help children make healthier eating decisions by restricting food advertising directed at them. Restricting the advertising of certain foods to children is not a novel idea. Over the years, public health experts and advocacy organizations have continued to tell us that government intervention is required to protect children in Canada.

When looking at our counterparts internationally, many countries have already taken action or are currently moving to restrict food advertising to children to protect this vulnerable segment of the population. We recognize the truly global aspect of this issue. It is paramount that we do more to protect our children from the influence of food advertisers.

Beyond the very obvious health benefits, there is a very strong economic imperative for doing everything we can to promote healthy diets. We anticipate Canada's life expectancy will be reduced by three years due to excess weight and obesity by 2050. The economic burden of obesity is also significant. The OECD reported that obesity accounted for 10.6% of all Canadian health expenditures and is one of the highest rates of all countries analyzed.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Obesity Federation estimated that the economic burden of diet-related chronic diseases, obesity and other modifiable risk factors at \$26.7 billion per year, rising to \$33.7 billion per year by 2025. Overall, the evidence is crystal clear. Obesity and diet-related chronic diseases lead to decreased life expectancy, increased economic hardship, lower educational and employment outcomes and decreased labour force productivity.

Our government is committed to promoting healthy eating and supporting Canadians in making healthier food choices. If we recognize the need to take action now and prevent disease in the future, generations of Canadians will remain productive members of society and enjoy good health. The bill would help limit the undue influence of advertising that makes healthy eating a challenge for families and their children.

There is one point that I would like to address that a previous member brought up, in terms of the concern for advertisers, the concern for sponsorships. It took me back to a time when the government was considering banning smoking and tobacco advertisers on various events, like jazz festivals and races, and that these events would disappear. This is going back decades, when members of Parliament stood up at the time and said that we needed to keep smoking advertisements on events that are marketed to children, because it is good for these events and they would disappear if those advertisements disappeared.

Those advertisements disappeared in the name of public health, and those activities still remained.

Using children's sports as a means to knock down this legislation is truly shocking. The sponsorship opportunities will continue to be there, as they were when this place debated tobacco advertising years ago.

I truly hope that all members of the House will come together and do what is right for our kids. I see it first-hand. The advertisements my kids see on YouTube and other platforms lead to the

choices they want to make and where they want to go and, "Dad, can we go here?" We need to do better. We need to do better for them. We need to do better for all Canadians.

I hope all members of the House support the bill.

● (1755)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

I want to, respectfully, just draw your attention to an exchange that I had with the Speaker on June 9 of this year. The context was that the member for Kildonan—St. Paul sought unanimous consent for a motion and was cut off in the middle by the Speaker because of a number of nays.

I asked the Speaker, "Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could clarify the process. Is it your ruling going forward that if a member is saying 'no', you will stop the reading of the motion? I think we have had cases where some members were saying 'no' and yet the member continued with the unanimous consent motion."

The Speaker ruled as follows. He said, "In fact, I have been getting this from both sides. Both government and opposition members have been asking for that exact type of behaviour, rather than let it all go through. Sometimes unanimous consent motions are used as a method of getting a message across, but that is what S.O. 31s are for. If we can just shift everything over, we can use it that way. We will do our best to make that happen."

Given the precedent set and given the cutting off of the member for Kildonan—St. Paul on June 9, I ask that this be taken into consideration in future moments like this.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That was not a ruling from the Speaker. I maintain what I said: It was a recommendation by the Speaker.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to Bill C-252, which focuses on the prohibition of food and beverage marketing directed at children.

This bill is mostly a preamble, and there is some strong language in the preamble about protecting kids from manipulative media and about their vulnerability to marketing and media. We should be concerned about marketing that is targeting kids with things that are beyond their age or could be harmful to them.

What about sexually explicit materials and their impact on kids? Numerous studies show the harmful impact that exposure to pornography and hypersexualized media can have on kids, including mental health issues such as depression, loneliness, low self-esteem, increased likelihood of accepting sexual violence or rape myths and an increased risk of girls being sexually harassed and boys committing sexual harassment. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection highlights that exposure to pornography by children may shape a child's expectations in relationships, blur boundaries and increase a child's risk of victimization, increase a child's health risks through, for example, sexually transmitted infections or sexual exploitation, and increase a child's risk of problematic sexual behaviour against other children in an effort to experiment.

We know that children's exposure to sexually explicit content, particularly that which is violent and degrading, causes serious and significant harm to mental and emotional health. We know that much of the pornographic content published and hosted on MindGeek websites is sexist, racist or degrading to particular groups. We also know that some of the content involves actual violence or coercion, or is shared without consent.

We need to be focused on the marketing that targets children, and one of the most pressing areas is companies that publish sexually explicit material. If we want to protect "vulnerable children from the manipulative influence of marketing", particularly harmful content online, we should be starting with predatory porn companies. Porn companies should not have unlimited access to kids online but they do, and they have no requirement to make sure those accessing their sites are actually over the age of 18.

For example, MindGeek is a Montreal-based company not too far from the riding of the sponsor of this bill. MindGeek employs around 1,600 people. It is based in Montreal and the online platforms it owns include Pornhub, RedTube, YouPorn and Brazzers. According to MindGeek's own data, its websites received approximately 4.5 billion visits each month in 2020, equivalent to the monthly visitors of Facebook. Many of those visitors were kids.

That is why last spring, when Bill C-11 was going through the Canadian heritage committee, I proposed amendments to help protect kids from exposure to sexually explicit content. Specifically, my amendment would have added to the policy objective of the Broadcasting Act that it "seek to protect the health and well-being of children by preventing the broadcasting to children of programs that include sexually explicit content". It was supported by multiple child advocacy organizations and those fighting online exploitation in briefs submitted to the heritage committee.

Defend Dignity, a great organization, pointed out that these amendments are supported by general comment 25, which was recently adopted by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Canada is a signatory to it. The Convention on the Rights of the Child's general comment notes:

States parties should take all appropriate measures to protect children from risks to their right to life, survival and development. Risks relating to content, contact, conduct and contract encompass, among other things, violent and sexual content, cyberaggression and harassment, gambling, exploitation and abuse, including sexual exploitation and abuse, and the promotion of or incitement to suicide or life-threatening activities, including by criminals or armed groups designated as terrorist or violent extremist.

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To be clear, they urge signatories like Canada to "take all appropriate measures to protect children from risks...relating to...violent and sexual content". That is why Defend Dignity said, "Protecting children from the harms of sexually explicit material and society from the dangerous impact of violent sexually explicit material must be a priority."

Timea's Cause, another great organization, and OneChild, with a combined 32 years of experience in combating the sexual exploitation of children, wrote to the heritage committee and said:

● (1800)

Today, Canadian children's access to sexually explicit content and the broadcasting of sexual violence has gone far beyond the realm of television and radio. This content is broadcasted online through digital advertising to pornography. The Internet has unleashed a tsunami of content that is objectifying, violent, and misogynistic in nature, and those viewing this harmful content are getting younger and younger....

This content greatly informs our cultural norms, values, and ideologies. In the case of children, who are still navigating the world and are in the process of developing their sense of self and esteem and learning how they should treat others and how others should treat them—this kind of material is detrimental to their development. It warps their understanding of sex, consent, boundaries, healthy relationships, and gender roles. Moreover, viewing this kind of online content has frightening links to rape, "sextortion", deviant and illegal types of pornography such as online child abuse material, domestic violence, patronizing prostitution, and even involvement in sex trafficking.

At the heritage committee, when it came to a vote on my amendment, it had NDP support, but the Liberal Party voted it down. It was puzzling that, for the Liberals, who want to control the posts of regular Canadians and now target food advertisers, porn companies get a free pass when it comes to our kids.

I will say it again: Predatory companies such as MindGeek should not have unlimited access to our kids online. This is not new. Over two and a half years ago, we wrote to the Prime Minister asking him for help to stop this. We got no reply. Then, two years ago, MPs and senators from across party lines wrote the justice minister, and this was followed by a New York Times exposé asking, "Why does Canada allow this company to profit off videos of exploitation and assault?"

We then had an ethics committee study last year, a committee that the sponsor of the bill sat on, with 14 recommendations supported by all parties, and still there was no attempt by the government to provide oversight to a part of the Internet that has caused so much pain and suffering to women, youth and vulnerable individuals.

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Now, there is a courageous, independent senator who is taking on predatory porn companies like MindGeek with the goal of keeping kids safe online. She has introduced Bill S-210, the protecting young persons from exposure to pornography act, in the Senate, which would require all that publish sexually explicit material to verify the age of the consumer.

The preamble of Bill S-210 states:

Whereas the consumption of sexually explicit material by young persons is associated with a range of serious harms, including the development of pornography addiction, the reinforcement of gender stereotypes and the development of attitudes favourable to harassment and violence — including sexual harassment and sexual violence — particularly against women;

Whereas Parliament recognizes that the harmful effects of the increasing accessibility of sexually explicit material online for young persons are an important public health and public safety concern;

The preamble then continues:

And whereas any organization making sexually explicit material available on the Internet for commercial purposes has a responsibility to ensure that it is not accessed by young persons;

• (1805)

This bill is at committee at the moment in the Senate, and it is hopefully headed to the House soon. When it gets here, I hope it will have strong support among all the parties.

When it comes to Bill C-252, I support the intentions and the aims of the bill, and I commend the member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel for her efforts. As parents, we want our children to be healthy and protect them from marketing that could be harmful.

The striking difference between Bill S-210 and Bill C-252 is that the former has a clear framework put in place to do what it aims to do, and I do not see that in Bill C-252, which is not written in a way that could actually accomplish what it claims to do. We know that Quebec passed similar legislation in 1980 to ban advertising aimed at kids under 13, and it has largely been ineffective in lowering child obesity rates.

I also believe that parents should be able to make informed food choices for their families and have affordable access to nutritious foods, the latter of which has become incredibly difficult due to the inflation crisis caused by the Liberal government.

To be successful on this, we need co-operation across all sectors, and I look forward to working with members of the House and across the economy to ensure that we have parents and corporations working together to encourage healthy living.

• (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I ask that the House give unanimous consent to support the Province of Saskatchewan's environmental plan. Saskatchewan's plan mirrors the plan of other provinces that the Liberal government has accepted. Therefore, based on fair and equal treatment of provinces within the dominion of Canada, Saskatchewan's plan should be accepted and approved by the government of the day.

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

Some hon. members: No.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue has three minutes for his speech.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, currently, more than half of Quebecers are overweight, and 18% are obese. Obesity affects 6% of 12- to 17-year-olds and 17% of 18- to 24-year-olds. These statistics show that, for some people, obesity sets in early in life.

We have to take this problem seriously, but what can we do? Schools, public places and workplaces need to make it easy for everyone, young and old, to make healthy choices when it comes to being physically active, eating properly and, most importantly, limiting their consumption of sugary drinks.

Why am I pointing the finger at sugary drinks? It is because the total number of people living with diabetes has doubled since 2000.

The science shows that being overweight and especially being obese increases the risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and certain cancers. The health care cost of obesity is estimated to be nearly \$3 billion, not to mention the effects of sugar and acidic drinks on oral health, which might also render the NDP-Liberal agreement useless.

That said, according to Quebec's Weight Coalition, advertising directed at children has a significant economic impact for the industry. We know that children have economic power because they influence almost 40% of family purchases. Since 2006, Canadian children have spent close to \$3 billion in allowance money. They are more vulnerable to advertising. They may not yet have the ability to recognize the commercial nature of advertising. Above all, advertising builds brand loyalty among current and future consumers.

I would like to commend all those who have overcome, for example, their addiction to Diet Pepsi, which is one of the most difficult things to do. In particular, I want to commend my girlfriend.

In conclusion, we must protect children from marketing. For that reason, the Bloc Québécois will vote in favour of this bill, provided that the provinces, like Quebec, have full jurisdiction. There must be clear, informative labelling to counteract the appealing colours, imagery and characters used in the ads. Food labelling must be clearer, and that is a federal jurisdiction. We propose mandatory labelling of foods and products like GMOs. This should not be left up to businesses. The federal government must introduce a traceability program to properly inform consumers and to promote buying local.

[English]

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today in support of my private member's bill, Bill C-252, known as the child health protection act, which aims to help the youngest and most impressionable Canadians maintain and improve their health by restricting the advertisement of certain foods to them. I am confident that hon. members in this chamber can agree on the harms that diets with excessive amounts of sugar, sodium and saturated fats can have on the health of Canadians.

Research has shown time and again that unhealthy diets with excessive consumption of these nutrients of concern are linked to a higher lifetime risk of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and other chronic diseases. We also know that developing healthy eating habits early in life is important to help protect children from developing these health problems in adulthood.

Each year, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent on food advertising in Canada by the food and beverage industry. Evidence shows that food advertising strongly influences children's food preferences and consumption patterns. Children in Canada are exposed to thousands of food advertisements every year across their daily settings and, unfortunately, most of these ads are for foods that contain excess sodium, sugar or saturated fats.

Opportunities to advertise to children have expanded with television and digital media. Children today are more digitally connected than ever before. Their screen time has increased and advertising directly to them has become easier. Tackling chronic diseases and maintaining public health is a whole-of-society issue and everyone has a role to play.

Since 2007, some of the largest food and beverage companies in Canada have been self-regulating certain types of food advertising to children. Recognizing that the current self-regulatory initiative did not go far enough, some industry associations have recently introduced a code. The code outlines criteria that the food and beverage industry will use to determine which advertisements are considered primarily directed at children, and it is the same industry that will determine the nutrient criteria in order to assess which foods are subject to the self-regulatory restrictions.

Although the proposed code is a step forward, it clearly demonstrates that the industry acknowledges the health consequences that food advertising can have on children. However, let us be clear. We know that voluntary codes are not enough to tackle and solve the issue. The first challenge of solely relying on industry self-regulation is simply that they are voluntary in nature. This allows restaurants, food companies and advertisers to abstain from signing on or simply to withdraw their adhesion at their convenience.

Also, criteria used for these codes often omit to stipulate important advertising techniques, tactics and sources of exposure that are known to appeal to and/or influence children. There is also a lack of transparency in the enforcement of these codes with no enforceable sanctions for non-compliance and, more importantly, it does not provide an independent monitoring.

It is clear from experience that self-regulatory initiatives do not go far enough to safeguard the health of our children. Canada's ex-

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perience with industry-led self-regulatory initiatives has been similar to those of the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom and Spain. Research in each of these jurisdictions has clearly shown that self-regulatory marketing codes have limited impacts in curtailing children's exposure to the marketing of food and beverage products. Consequently, the U.K. and Spain are pursuing new mandatory restrictions following the observed limited impact of self-regulatory initiatives. This government agrees and believes industry self-regulation is not enough to protect children from being exposed to the harmful and incessant advertising of certain foods.

The Minister of Health's mandate includes a commitment to protect vulnerable populations, including our children, from a range of harms, such as the stream of commercial messaging and endorsements that trigger the most basic eating instincts, especially for foods containing excess levels of sodium, sugars and saturated fats. Supporting Bill C-252 is well aligned with this commitment and will help address many of the shortcomings of the current landscape of the industry-led self-regulating codes.

Our children, just like the one that is in the gallery with us today, are our priority and concrete action is needed now in order to ensure that they are not subject to and do not succumb to the aggressive advertising of foods that contain excess levels of nutrients of concern and that pose unnecessary risks to their health and the health of future generations.

• (1815)

[Translation]

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

The hon. member for Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel.

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the division stands deferred until Wednesday, September 28, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

*Adjournment Proceedings***ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS**

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

• (1820)

[English]

TAXATION

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, today in the House, the Conservatives put forward a motion with a simple ask of the government: to recognize the harm being done to Canadians by the government's high tax, high borrowing, high spending, high inflation agenda, and to stop the damage by committing to reverse planned tax hikes, which are scheduled to take effect automatically next year. We have been very clear. The Conservatives are calling on the government to stop these automatic tax changes.

In particular, tonight I want to focus on the issue of the carbon tax, because there has been so much, dare I say, misinformation from the government around the carbon tax and around the actual record on the environment.

Earlier today, the parliamentary secretary misstated the record by implying that emissions went up under the previous government. Actually, emissions went down under the previous government. In every single jurisdiction across this country, emissions either went down or went up by less than they had in the previous decade.

A carbon tax is not necessary, and what we are seeing with the government is it is not effective at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. However, the Liberals continue to double down on a failing strategy. They have said that raising taxes is somehow an environmental plan, and when it is shown not to work, when they are missing their environmental targets, their solution is even more taxes.

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. On the issue of a so-called environmental plan, the government thinks that if its current taxes have not worked to achieve environmental objectives, it is going to pile more and more taxes on and expect a different result. Projections from various corners are that this carbon tax is going triple under the government, and Canadians simply cannot afford that.

As a basic show of good faith, the government should listen to Canadians. It should listen to premiers, and not only Conservatives premiers. There is even a Liberal premier who is saying that now is not the time for the government's planned carbon tax hikes to go ahead.

I mentioned in my previous questions the way that the carbon tax hike, these scheduled tax increases and the crisis they are causing regarding inflation and affordability are threatening national unity. There are deep divisions in this country, and understandably, because many Canadians have lost their jobs and many Canadians are struggling to pay for basic necessities such as groceries, gas and home heating fuel. Those Canadians are increasingly frustrated by the fact that the government is not listening, does not seem to care and is in fact putting in place automatic tax increases that would make it even harder in the future for them to afford their basic necessities.

This is causing a national unity crisis. This is causing further deepening divisions within our country. The government is simply failing to listen and respond.

The first step the government needs to take is to recognize this reality. We are calling on the government to support our proposal, which is to immediately reverse the planned automatic tax increases, the scheduled tax increases for next year, that the government has said it is going to put forward. We are calling on the government to stop this, to give Canadians the relief they are asking for, to start allowing our country to heal and to start allowing Canadians to see hope and opportunity so they will actually be able to afford their basic necessities.

There is more we need to do, of course, to make life more affordable, but a first step would be for the government to stop the damage and stop increasing taxes.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, through you, I wish to give virtual greetings to my friend from Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

We are seeing higher inflation rates and higher costs of living around the world as a result of many factors, which include the war in Ukraine; global supply chain bottlenecks, in large part due to the pandemic; and, global energy market uncertainty. That being said, inflation in Canada, at 7%, has slowed and is now more than one percentage point below its June peak; moreover, it is lower here than among many of our peers, such as the United States at 8.3%, United Kingdom at 9.9% and Germany at 7.9%.

Elevated inflation is not a unique Canadian problem, but we are uniquely positioned to deal with it. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. We have a AAA credit rating, and according to the International Monetary Fund, Canada will have the fastest-growing economy in the G7 both this year and next. This means we can build a comprehensive affordability plan for Canadians while continuing to reduce our debt-to-GDP ratio, and that is exactly what we are doing.

Our affordability plan is a suite of targeted inflation-relief measures totalling \$12.1 billion in new support for those Canadians who need it the most. This is about balancing fiscal responsibility with compassion. We know that the pandemic has been a major shock to the economic livelihoods of Canadians and Canadian businesses, and we know that recent global events have pushed us even further. It is important that we address these challenges while not adding further fuel to the inflationary fire.

Let us be absolutely clear. The suite of measures that comprise our affordability plan will support Canadians without increasing inflation. Many economists, including the former deputy parliamentary budget office, University of Calgary's Lindsay Tedds and Alberta economist Trevor Tombe, have all agreed that this support package for Canadians is non-inflationary.

Let us now turn to fighting climate change and our national price on pollution. First, fighting climate change is an absolute necessity for the future of our planet, and let us also acknowledge that the effects of climate change are also an inflationary pressure on our economy. It is well known that having a national price on pollution is a highly effective market mechanism for reducing greenhouse gas emissions while making life more affordable for the majority of Canadians.

Through debates all this session, Conservatives have tried to correlate the massive increase in the price of gas with the federal carbon price. This is simply not true. In 2019, the carbon price was approximately nine cents per litre in British Columbia. Today, it is 11¢ per litre. That means that although gas prices have increased by more than a dollar per litre, only two cents of that increase can be attributed to the price of pollution in B.C. over the last three years. Further to that, because the carbon price in British Columbia is provincially administered, if the federal carbon price were eliminated, as the Conservatives are suggesting and the member opposite is suggesting, this would result in zero savings for residents of British Columbia. Instead, it would simply mean that other jurisdictions, such as Alberta and Saskatchewan, would do less to fight climate change.

In jurisdictions like Alberta and Saskatchewan where the federal carbon price is in place, it is important to know that approximately 90% of directed proceeds are directly returned to residents and that the fee is revenue neutral to the federal government. Further, with the climate action incentive, carbon pricing actually makes life more affordable for 80% of Canadian households.

I hope that the member opposite will share this information with his colleagues and convince his caucus to go back to supporting carbon pricing, as those members previously did, less than 12 months ago.

• (1825)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has entirely missed the point. Higher taxes are not an environmental plan. They have not worked, and the government members think that even further increasing taxes is going to somehow achieve a different result. It will not.

Let me put to the member something that is very obvious. Even proponents of carbon taxes generally admit it, and that is that the very purpose of a carbon tax is to increase the price of gas. That is why the people who support it, support it. They say it would be better if we had a higher price of gas because it would deter people from driving. That is the argument for it.

The member says that it is totally incidental to the carbon tax policy that there happens to be higher gas prices, but that is the point of the policy. Of course there are other inputs to the price of gas, but the price of gas would be lower if the government were not intentionally increasing it through a carbon tax that has as its very purpose the increase of the price of gas. This is obvious, and when everybody admits—

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

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Mr. Terry Beech: Madam Speaker, the government does understand that Canadians are feeling the effects of elevated inflation. They feel it particularly at the gas pump and when they reach for items at the grocery store. I would encourage all Canadians to read or listen to my previous speech to fully understand the Liberal plan to fight inflation, to make life more affordable and to grow an economy that works for everyone. Canadians can count on us to continue supporting them through this inflationary crisis while remaining prudent fiscal managers.

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Madam Speaker, on April 28 I asked the Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship how I should respond to constituents who are experiencing severe delays in processing immigration applications and the pause on express entry draws. People have had to put their lives and careers on hold as they wait for rescue from IRCC purgatory.

The government, four months after my question, was finally embarrassed enough to take some action to address the then over three million backlog, and the minister announced a 10-point plan on August 24, but sadly it was just more smoke and mirrors.

It has been over a month now since the plan was announced, and let us look at the numbers. As of the end of July, over 50%, over half of applications in IRCC's inventory were considered backlogged. Let us put that percentage into context: There are 2.4 million total applications in all IRCC inventories, with 1.3 million cases exceeding the IRCC's own service standards. Is this what amounts to progress?

Moreover, the government has set a 20% backlog target. This is no game. The government is dealing with people's lives and its continued failure has real consequences for the highly skilled foreign workers we need, who are being left in limbo. The government's continued failure is hurting our nation's businesses as we face a labour shortage, and it has real financial and business implications for our nation's economic prosperity.

If the government thinks it is worthy of a gold star for doing its job of processing applications while also accepting a 20% backlog, its members are simply delusional. Failing at 20% is still failure. Worst of all, the government is projected to not even meet its own target of failing at 20%.

Citizenship applications are projected to fall shy of the target, with a 25% backlog by December of this year. Temporary resident applications will continue to experience the highest level of backlogs by year end, and work permits, in particular, will face even more severe backlogs. The projected backlog for these applications is listed at 60% by December, which is an over 30% increase from current levels. The government has been failing Canadians and immigrants. It moved the goalposts in the hopes of making it appear like it was making progress, and is even failing to meet its new targets of only failing at 20%.

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Given this, can the parliamentary secretary provide the millions who are waiting some glimmer of hope of their applications being processed in their lifetime? Let us not forget either the quagmire of Afghani refugees or indeed the Ukrainians. They have yet to see the government acting in a timely fashion to bring in the numbers that it promised to bring in. Some observers, looking at all of this information, would strongly suggest that the minister not take up archery as a hobby, because it is clear he cannot hit any target.

• (1830)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am happy about the questions, because I hope they are going to help my hon. colleague to maybe answer some of his constituents and give me the chance to talk here about the accomplishments the government has achieved to strengthen and expand our immigration and refugee system.

As I hope the member for Spadina—Fort York is aware, the pandemic presented challenges to our immigration program that had not been seen before. Actually, the government has taken action to reduce wait times, expand online services and provide better information to clients on their applications, all to provide better services to Canadians. Our plan is working: Canada was able to achieve record-setting admissions of permanent residents.

[Translation]

In 2021, we set a record, bringing in more than 405,000 new permanent residents. Our goal for 2022 is to bring in 431,000 permanent residents, and we are on track to reach that goal, with about 309,000 admissions between January 1 and August 31. Never before have we brought in that many people that fast.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, or IRCC, also issued more than 199,000 work permits in 2021. This year, we issued over 349,000 work permits between January 1 and July 31, compared to approximately 112,000 permits issued during the same period last year. That includes over 220,000 open work permits. Every day, these work permits enable up to 1,700 new people to come work in Canada and contribute to our economic growth.

Canada is also a destination of choice for foreign students. In 2021, IRCC finalized nearly 560,000 applications for study permits, breaking the previous record set in 2019 by 31%. This year, IRCC is on track to break that record too, having finalized nearly 452,000 study permits between January 1 and August 31, 2022, compared to 367,000 permits during the same period in 2021. That is a 23% increase.

• (1835)

[English]

We have also taken actions to support those already here. We have extended post-graduation work permits for recent international graduates. Those whose permits have already expired are eligible for an additional open-work permit of 18 months.

The government has invested to improve processing. By the end of this year, we will have added up to 1,250 new staff to increase processing capacity. Also, some of our new system improvements are already increasing efficiency, with more coming to make pro-

cesses more sustainable in the long term. The government is committed to providing regular progress on reducing inventories and delays. This is why IRCC publishes monthly updates on its website.

This all demonstrates that our immigration system is returning to its previous activity and will again achieve Canada's proud standard of welcoming immigrants and refugees.

Mr. Kevin Vuong: Madam Speaker, here we go again. It is more smoke and mirrors. When is the government going to stop blaming the pandemic? It did all of these actions that the parliamentary secretary mentioned, yet we still have 2,583,827 people in the backlog as of the end of August. The proof is in the pudding and this pudding is 20% bad, or at least that we know of, because we know there are higher backlogs in other streams. We are not getting the full story and the government is not doing a full job. We are clearly headed for a backlog iceberg and the department is the *Titanic*.

When are we going to see a government capable of conducting an immigration system for this country, instead of a litany of failures, excuses and band-aid solutions?

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Madam Speaker, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has been working hard to improve processing times for all applications since the beginning of the pandemic.

We have hired more staff and implemented new systems to process applications more quickly. We will have hired 1,250 people by the end of the year to process more applications for temporary and permanent residence.

[English]

We are well on our way to reaching our historic immigration levels again this year with approximately 309,200 admissions from January to August 31, a number reached faster than any previous year. This year, we have already issued over 350,000 new work permits, meaning that up to 1,700 new people are able to come to work in Canada every day and help grow our economy.

[Translation]

We believe that, by hiring more staff and modernizing our immigration system, we can get back to our processing service standards by the end of this year.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am happy to take to my feet tonight to try to get some answers regarding the carbon tax that the NDP-Liberal government is going to force upon the people of Canada. Not only was a commitment made in the 2019 campaign that the Liberals would never increase the carbon tax by more than \$30 per tonne, but now we are going to see it go to \$150 per tonne.

The question that I asked the Minister of Agriculture a couple of months ago was this: What are people supposed to do on the farms?

I have a friend now who is paying \$90,000 a week in fuel, and a big chunk of that is from the carbon tax. I have another friend who runs a restaurant in Regina. His name is Raul. He said that if he did not have to pay a carbon tax on the heating and utilities to operate his restaurants, he could hire one new employee in each restaurant. He could give someone else a living wage so they could support their family, go to work, earn a paycheque and do better. It would make sure they do well in society.

These are a couple of things that I would like to have answered.

Another burning question I have right now is this: When is the carbon tax going to kick in enough that it actually lowers emissions? I also hope my friend from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell can answer this question: How much has the carbon tax lowered emissions across the country? I believe that in their seven years of being in government, the Liberals have never actually hit an environmental target. They have not planted their billion trees. They have not lowered CO₂ emissions. Really, they have just been punishing everyday families, punishing ordinary Canadians and making it harder for them to get by.

We see the rising cost of inflation, and no one believes that the carbon tax has not had a negative effect on it. We have to pay more to truck fruits and vegetables and other groceries into different areas, especially rural and remote Canada. The carbon tax affects the price at the grocery store. I would like to know from my friend as well whether he believes that the carbon tax has not negatively affected the price of groceries. Does he think the carbon tax might actually make the price of groceries go down once it hits \$150 a tonne?

These are a few things that I hope he can answer in his response.

Finally, the government has had some trials and tribulations, obviously of its own making, and I would ask him about the commitment the Liberals made to Canadians that they would not increase the carbon tax past \$30 a tonne. I think that is very important, and people across Saskatchewan and Canada want to hear the answer to this: Why did they break that promise? Why did they feel it was okay for the Liberal government to make a promise in that campaign and then not follow through? It is not doing anything for the environment. If they are not lowering emissions and this carbon tax is still making everything less affordable for Canadians, what is the point?

I know he is going to answer with this: “Oh, we are just going to give it back in a rebate.” No one in Saskatchewan believes that, be-

cause the Liberals are making life less affordable and the rebate does not cover the price at the pumps or the price we are paying at the grocery stores.

● (1840)

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the member for Regina—Lewvan that this government has been making significant investments in Canadian agriculture. I am glad that he has been asking many questions, but I am going to stick to agriculture, as that is my passion and my job in the House.

I would remind the hon. member as well of the way our government has been supporting agriculture. Our total budget for 2021-22 was just shy of \$4 billion, the highest in recent years. I would also remind him that there was \$400 million cut when the Conservatives' hero, Mr. Harper, was in government. We have put back \$500 million, and I am glad that the Province of Saskatchewan signed on this July for the federal-provincial-territorial meeting, which created a new program. This includes historic investments in innovation, business risk management, market development and compensating our producers and processors under supply management.

We fully recognize that the price of inputs increased due to a number of factors, including COVID and supply-chain disruptions, which is why we have taken concrete actions to help producers facing this challenge. We increased interest-free loans to provide them with the necessary cash flow to access key inputs, such as fertilizer. We increased the interest-free portion of the advance payments program from \$100,000 to \$250,000 to help producers cover the cost of inputs, including fertilizer, which is an average savings of \$7,700 per producer and a total savings of \$69 million over two years for the approximately 11,000 producers who take advantage of advances above \$100,000. Canadian producers have access to business risk management programs, and we continue to make them more bankable for them.

In July, federal, provincial and territorial ministers agreed to increase the compensation rate under AgriStability to 80%, and I think that is good news for Saskatchewan. It would be up to an additional \$72 million per year to better support our farmers in times of need. This builds on our removal last year of the reference margin limit, which could increase the overall amount that the program pays out to Canadian farmers by another \$95 million a year.

We worked hard to ensure that Canadian producers have the support they need to succeed in the 2022 growing season, and producers have responded. As the harvest nears completion, Statistics Canada is projecting significant increases in production this year compared to last year, with over 55% for wheat and almost 40% for canola.

Adjournment Proceedings

Let me remind the House that climate change is real. Last year, western farmers lost 38.5% of their crops. On this side of the House, we needed to act as this supports agriculture across Canada, and we are closely monitoring the situation with regard to the sourcing of the fertilizer needed for 2023.

• (1845)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my friend's comments from across the aisle.

One thing that I will not disagree with him on at all is that I firmly believe that Liberals know how to spend taxpayers' dollars. I believe that he could read a huge list of spending that this government has done, whether it is effective and efficient is a totally different debate.

However, one thing the member did bring up was fertilizer targets, and the fact that last year farmers lost about 35.8% of some of the crops that they planted. However, this government wants to bring in a fertilizer reduction target where it is going to put 30% less fertilizer in the fields for farmers. We talked to farmers in Saskatchewan and across the country, and they said that they would not be able to grow the same number of crops with that amount of fertilizer.

I am not sure if the member went out to Ag in Motion in Saskatchewan, but I would love him to come out for that tour. I think he might have actually, but it is doing amazing things in agriculture with technology. I went to the YARA incubator, where they actually can scan leaves in a field—

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

Mr. Francis Drouin: Madam Speaker, the member is so passionate about agriculture, and that is the one thing we share, whether from eastern Ontario or from Saskatchewan. We have had the opportunity to sit together on the ag committee, and while we are trading barbs, we are still friends outside of the House.

I can assure the member that for the 30% emissions reduction, we will achieve that by providing incentives and not by regulation. There will be no bans on fertilizer of any sort, it is just a matter of providing incentives, and farmers have done an amazing job.

Some farmers have adopted 4R, and we have provided some funding to the Canola Council of Canada so that it can increase the uptake on the 4R program with canola farmers out west. I think that is great news for agriculture, and I am sure that the hon. member will welcome the \$500 million more of investments in agriculture that we announced this year, and that we announced in partnership with Saskatchewan.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:48 p.m.)

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