



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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# House of Commons Debates

Official Report  
(Hansard)

**Volume 151 No. 109**  
Thursday, October 6, 2022

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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, October 6, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

### PUBLIC SECTOR INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

**The Speaker:** It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 38(3.3) of the Public Servants Disclosure Protection Act, a case report of the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 32(2) and consistent with the current policy on the tabling of treaties in Parliament, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled “Convention Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work”, adopted in Geneva on June 21, 2019, and “Amendments to the Convention on the International Maritime Organization”, adopted in London on December 8, 2021.

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### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### FISHERIES AND OCEANS

**Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled “Marine Cargo Container Spills”.

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

I would like to thank all members of the committee for their work on this study, as well as the clerk, the analysts, the translation team that makes our meetings go so well and our individual staff for making us look good each and every day.

\* \* \*

### PETITIONS

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to present my first petition in this Parliament as the member for Simcoe North.

This petition is from members in my community who are concerned about the ancient water deposits of the Simcoe uplands of Ontario's Tiny, Springwater and Oro-Medonte townships. This is water that sits underneath what is now the territory of Beausoleil First Nation. There is some proposed development of a gravel pit.

The petitioners are asking the government to validate claims of this being some of the most pure and pristine water in the world. The petitioners also call on the government to work with the powers it has under the Canada Water Act to implement a study to confirm the validation of the claims of this water being pristine so that it may be preserved for many generations to come.

\* \* \*

• (1005)

### 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.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—HIGH FOOD PRICES

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP)** moved:

That, given that,

(i) big grocery stores have made massive profits in the past year, not long after several were investigated for bread price-fixing,

### *Business of Supply*

(ii) workers' wages and the prices paid to producers in the agricultural sector are not keeping up with those corporate profits, or with inflation,

(iii) Canadian families are struggling with the rising costs of essential purchases,

the House call on the government to recognize that corporate greed is a significant driver of inflation, and to take further action to support families during this cost-of-living crisis, including:

(a) forcing CEOs and big corporations to pay what they owe, by closing the loopholes that have allowed them to avoid \$30 billion in taxes in 2021 alone, resulting in a corporate tax rate that is effectively lower now than when this government was elected;

(b) launching an affordable and fair food strategy which tackles corporate greed in the grocery sector including by asking the Competition Bureau to launch an investigation of grocery chain profits, increasing penalties for price-fixing and strengthening competition laws to prohibit companies from abusing their dominant positions in a market to exploit purchasers or agricultural producers; and

(c) supporting the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in investigating high food prices and the role of "greedflation", including inviting grocery CEOs before the committee.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I wish to notify the House that I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Today is a good day in the House of Commons because we as New Democrats are forcing parliamentarians to deal with the issues that are concerning Canadians. The motion that we as a party are bringing forward for debate today is specifically calling out the massive corporate profits that are occurring in so many sectors, often at the expense of what ordinary Canadians are able to afford.

Canadians see this week in and week out. They see it when they fill up their vehicles with fuel and they see it when they are at the grocery stores. It is reaching a breaking point for many families. It is forcing too many families to make difficult decisions that no family in a country as wealthy as Canada should have to make. These are decisions on whether their family budgets can afford to pay the rent or mortgage, decisions on whether we can get as much fresh produce for our young children as we used to get and decisions on whether we should only fill up the car with half a tank this week because we need to save money for next week.

This is the reality for too many families, and not only in my riding of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, but across British Columbia and across Canada, from coast to coast to coast. For far too long, these Canadians have been looking at the profits that have been made, especially over this year. Some oil and gas companies are making over 100% more compared with what they were making just a few years ago. I hear a lot of talk in this place about taxes, but not enough talk is happening about the revenue we are losing, the revenue that would be there to support Canadians who are in dire need of it.

It is important that Canadians see that their members of Parliament are addressing their concerns. It is important that they see the people they have sent to this place debating this issue with sincerity and making policies that are going to address it. That is why I am such a proud member of the New Democratic caucus. We have been the only party in this place to call out massive corporate profits and champion an excess profits tax. We will continue to champion that until policy-makers see the light in this place and respond with effective policy.

I want to segue to the remarkable success that Canadians enjoyed yesterday at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. I want to thank my colleagues from that committee who agreed to my motion to study the excess profits in the grocery sector in particular.

I want to centre particularly on food because food is the great equalizer in our society. No one can live without food. Everybody needs to eat, but some in our society are able to eat without worry. Others have to make difficult choices. When it comes to our nation's children, we know that a healthy and balanced diet is incredibly important not only for their growth, but for their ability to achieve a good education. In a country as wealthy as Canada, far too many children are suffering.

Juxtapose that reality with the fact that the three largest grocery chains in Canada have been raking in the money. We can look at Empire's net profits, which are up by 27.8% in two years. Loblaw's profits are up by 17.2% compared with those of last year, and Metro's are up by 7.8%. I know that the CEO of Sobeys has recently been in the news complaining about us taking up an examination of their profits and shining a spotlight on this issue, but if I am in the bad books of a corporate CEO, I think I am doing my job properly in this place.

Those profits are publicly available, but I also want to identify the fact that calls are coming from inside the house. Last week, my office received an email from an employee. I am going to keep him anonymous. I am not going to mention who he works for, because he is afraid of reprisals, but I will quote him. He said:

I have noticed a worrying trend over the last year of large quantities of retail price increases being sent down on a weekly basis.... However, cost increases on these items don't match the increases of retail prices that are sent down....

● (1010)

I have noticed a trend where retail prices consumers must pay for products will increase, and cost increases will come down months after the fact, if at all. Based on what I know of our systems at [the] store level this means that the profit margins on saleable goods will increase for the company until a related cost increase brings it back down. Thus prices consumers must pay are overinflated until costs align with the retail change....

...That is why I believe that a federal probe into grocery store price increases should be supported in our parliament.

I would say to that employee that the New Democrats have heard their call. We are taking action and we are leading the initiative in this Parliament, not only at committee but in the House of Commons, to address this person's concerns and the concerns Canadian consumers have.

We are not going to stop there. We are also going to go after oil and gas. It is one thing to talk about the carbon price, a price on pollution, but if the government is going to completely ignore the massive profits that oil and gas companies are making off the backs of working Canadians, I think it needs to do some reflection on where its policies stand.

We are at a point where the CEO of Shell is being more progressive than the Liberals and calling out something the Conservatives will not even touch. I do not know what kind of a topsy-turvy world we live in when we have to depend on a CEO to be more progressive than our own government, but it is shameful.

In British Columbia, my constituents know the price of gas. They see it all the time, but they can also match that up with what large oil and gas companies are raking in right now. We need to follow the lead of other countries like the U.K. We need to implement an excess profits tax. That natural resource is owned by Canadians. Private companies have the privilege of bringing it out of the ground and selling it back to us, but it is a resource that is owned by Canadians. It is high time we put in place policies to make sure we are getting the full value out of it.

We also heard earlier this week that last year alone we did not collect \$30 billion in corporate taxes. That is the difference between what corporations actually paid and what they should have paid. We are having this talk about the structural deficits we see in our housing and the structural deficits in supports for Canadians who are going through hard times, and then we look at what \$30 billion in one year alone could have paid for: How many doctors could we have hired? How many school food programs could we have implemented? How many workers could we have retrained with that money to prepare them for the 21st-century economy?

That is the fundamental question before us. It is a question of what we want to be as a country. Do we really want to pursue well-funded programs that help lift everybody up, not just those at the top? I know where I stand on this matter, and I hope colleagues and other parties will do some genuine reflection on where they stand as well.

We are in a place where there has been extreme inaction from both the Liberals and Conservatives. If we were to follow Conservative tax policy, the Margaret Thatcher cosplay they are so often engaging in, we need only look to the United Kingdom as to what Conservative policy would result in. The Conservative prime minister there has single-handedly caused the U.K. economy to go into an absolute economic free fall through tax policies that rightly belong in the 1980s and have no place in the 21st-century economy, especially when we are trying to address massive inequality.

I know I am in my last minute of this speech, but I want to assure my constituents in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and people in British Columbia and people right across this great country that, for as long as I have the privilege of standing in this place, I will never let them down. I will continue to aggressively pursue these progressive policies. I will do that until we actually see the fundamental change we need to see.

• (1015)

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as my hon. colleague mentioned, yesterday the agriculture committee, with amendments from the Liberals, the Conservatives and the Bloc, passed his motion. I certainly think that reflects the working spirit of our committee.

I do not disagree with the proposition of what the member is putting forward, but when I look at the text of the motion it seems

### *Business of Supply*

to almost have the conclusion before the investigation has even happened. When he talks about high corporate profits and high food prices, I guess my question for the hon. member is this. Is he asserting that there is absolute price gouging happening in this country, or does he think there are plausible reasons as to why corporate profits and food prices are higher? For example, because many Canadians are buying groceries as opposed to going to restaurants, that could have driven profits higher at the same time as we are facing inflationary pressures.

Does he think there is legitimate price gouging happening in this country, or are there plausible reasons as to why those two things could exist at the same time?

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Kings—Hants and all colleagues on the agriculture committee for supporting my motion yesterday. It is going to be a very important inquiry to get the answers Canadians deserve.

I am trying to approach this issue from the perspective of one of my constituents. Two things are true. Prices on food items that people need to survive are going up faster than the general rate of inflation. That is the first truth. The second truth is that the large corporations that have cornered the grocery market are making profits. These two things exist at the same time, and it is about time that parliamentarians took this issue seriously, started an inquiry, got answers and met the challenge with effective policy that is going to tackle inequality in this country.

**Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I have listened to the hon. member's speech, and I have to say that only the NDP could think that raising taxes on Canadians would make life more affordable. Talk about topsy-turvy. Raising taxes would make life more affordable, what a fantasy world.

The fact of the matter is that if the NDP were really serious about making life more affordable, it and its Liberal coalition partners would not be tripling the carbon tax. They have allowed housing prices and gas prices to spiral out of control. They are increasing the paycheque taxes. How can we take this member seriously when his logic is just so backwards?

• (1020)

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I am so glad to see Conservatives, yet again, going to bat for their corporate friends. If the member thinks this is an NDP policy, he should look across the Atlantic Ocean to Conservatives in the United Kingdom who are proposing the exact same policy and have implemented what we are pursuing.

It is actually time for Conservatives to wake up, listen to their constituents, stop moaning about taxes and going after CPP and EI, and join us in going after the corporate fat cats who are profiting from an economy that so many Canadians are suffering under.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I have the pleasure of working with him at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

Let me start by gently correcting my colleague when he states that the NDP is the only party to advocate for taxing companies that made record profits in the past year. The Bloc Québécois has also talked of taxing companies whose profits exceed \$1 billion. However, that is a small detail.

On the substance of the motion, I would like to give my colleague the opportunity to tell me about the importance of the work being done right now to establish a grocery code of conduct to prevent unfair practices by the big players in that sector.

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor:** Madam Speaker, I would like to compliment my colleague. Indeed, he is a pleasure to work with at committee. We have always had very constructive talks on this.

As for the grocery code of conduct, absolutely, it has come up repeatedly at our committee. What we have heard, especially from producers and processors, is that when they are trying to market their items in large grocery chains there are all of these hidden fees. They can get charged for not supplying enough product, supplying too much or late delivery. That is why this grocery code of conduct is being put in place. It is because of the business practices of large grocery chains, which have put an unfair advantage on our producers and processors.

Again, it is part of the trend of why we are here today to tackle this issue and meet it with effective policy.

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Madam Speaker, let me take this opportunity to triple, triple, triple congratulate my NDP colleague for his work. It is incredible. This is exactly what a member of Parliament should do.

[Translation]

My extraordinary NDP colleague has three wins here. First, there is this opposition motion that will actually affect people's lives and make a difference with practical solutions by looking at the situation concerning the cost of groceries for families and workers who are struggling. Also, the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food will conduct an investigation on what is happening with the large grocery chains. Finally, I congratulate my colleague on his outstanding speech, which I will try to address in a worthy manner. That is exactly what a member does to defend the people he represents, namely his constituents, who are struggling right now. I think we should all be inspired by the work my colleague has done.

We are facing a real problem right now. The cost of living is going up everywhere. Whether we are talking about the rising prices of gas, housing or groceries, some people are taking advantage to line their pockets. This is particularly unfair in a situation where there are so many people struggling to pay their bills and make ends meet. I find it particularly egregious that multinationals, big corporations and CEOs are taking advantage of human suffering to

get rich. They are taking advantage of the fact that people are struggling to get even richer than they already are.

For those who are progressive, men and women from the left like us, this is absolutely unacceptable. We want a society based on justice and social justice where everyone can live in dignity and where some are not literally being eaten up by others.

Here are a few important figures for today's debate. According to Statistics Canada, the inflation rate for groceries reached 11% in August, while the general inflation rate was 7%. If the general inflation rate for the cost of energy, transportation and raw materials is at 7%, but at the grocery store the costs are rising by 11%, there seems to be a discrepancy. Someone is profiting, somewhere. We are talking 11% on average. The inflation rate for some foods like fruits is 13%; for meat, it is 25%; and for pasta, it is 32%. Who is profiting?

Empire Company, which owns Sobeys, Safeway and IGA, saw net profits soar by 27% between 2020 and 2022. In one year, Loblaws saw its profits rise by 17% between 2021 and 2022. That is significant. Loblaws is owned by the Weston family, one of the richest families in Canada. I will remind members of the gift the Liberal government gave the Weston family: Under some sort of program, the Liberals purchased new fridges they then donated to the Weston family for Loblaws.

It is not just the NDP saying that there are people who are lining their pockets and profiting from the inflationary situation right now. Bruno Larue, a professor in the Agri-Food Economics and Consumer Sciences Department at Université Laval, said the following: "Of course, when inflation is very high, as it is right now, there are businesses who take advantage of it to raise their prices even more". The operating margins of these big grocery chains are increasing in a completely abusive way. Professor Larue went on to say, "Clearly, there are those who profit all along the way."

It is quite clear, thank you. This is undisputable evidence that there are indeed people who are taking advantage of the situation. In particular, the CEO of Sobeys comes to mind. In one year, in 2022, he personally pocketed \$8.6 million. That is shameful. He is not alone: Metro's CEO pocketed \$5 million and Loblaws' CEO \$5.4 million.

Meanwhile, there are people who call us and knock on the door of our constituency offices to say they cannot pay their rent and buy groceries. They are asking who they can go see. Right now we are seeing a dramatic increase in the number of people who are working but need food aid because they are unable to pay for their groceries.

• (1025)

The billionaires and the ultrarich are profiting while people struggle. I find that disgusting and appalling. I am proud that we are able to debate the NDP's motion today to see what we can do, as a government and as a country, to put forward concrete solutions so we can help people and resolve this problem.

*Business of Supply*

We need to stop this greed inflation. We scratched our heads a bit to try to translate the term “greed inflation” to French. The word “greed” means cupidity, avarice and the desire to keep everything for oneself to the detriment of others. We therefore found a reference that we think some of our colleagues will like. In French, we should call this “séraphinflation”.

It is reminiscent of Séraphin, the loathsome man from *Belles histoires des pays d'en haut* who used to say, “Damn, Donald, this costs a fortune”. Well, there are Séraphins at the helm of these big corporations and grocery stores, and they are stuffing their pockets. Let us call this phenomenon by its real name and a Quebec cultural reference: “séraphinflation”.

What can we, as parliamentarians and elected representatives, do to combat this avarice, this greed?

My NDP colleague put forward some solutions. We could specifically increase taxes on these excess profits, amend the Competition Act and give the Competition Bureau more powers. It is important to go get the money where the money is right now, and right now we can find it in the big corporations, where CEOs are getting rich at the expense of the people.

However, grocery stores are not alone in this. My colleague pointed this out earlier. It is incredible that only yesterday, the boss of Shell, the big oil company, was calling on the government to increase taxes on oil companies. Even the Shell boss realizes that it does not make sense. These companies are making ludicrous profits while people are struggling to make ends meet and make it to the end of the month.

The Shell boss was echoing a call from UN Secretary-General António Guterres to raise taxes on the windfall profits of big oil and gas companies, a suggestion the Liberal government's Minister of the Environment was quick to shut down.

António Guterres said that perhaps the oil companies should pay their fair share and even more, but the Minister of the Environment was telling us that there is no problem, that his government will leave things as is, and that this is something we should not do. One week later, he was contradicted by Shell's CEO, who claims to support this solution and thinks it is a good idea.

Unfortunately, we have a Liberal government that, for years, has not dared to tackle tax havens, tax evasion, and the fact that there are so many tax loopholes that the money is slipping through our fingers and is no longer there to fund important programs for people. It is estimated that over the past few years, we have collectively lost \$30 billion as a result of Liberal inaction. They do not want to tackle this system that, in the words of Alain Deneault, is a “legalized scam”, when we could have the means to keep this money here, at home, in our coffers, to improve the collective good and fund programs that help people.

We need more education transfers, more money in our universities. We have students in debt and blatant housing problems. We need social housing, affordable housing, housing co-operatives. The needs are great in our society.

Unfortunately, we have a government that is sitting on its hands. It says it wishes it could do something; it taxes a boat here, a pri-

vate plane there. It is all a smokescreen, however, and nothing really changes. All this is done at the expense of ordinary Canadians, the people we represent, when we should be working together to make it easier for them to access medication and dental care, and for the elderly to have enough income to age with dignity.

This is the debate we must have today and every day in Parliament: How do we create a fair society where everyone has a place and where everyone can live with dignity?

• (1030)

**Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from Montreal for his speech and for starting this debate. I would like to ask him a question.

I sincerely believe that simply holding this debate today will not only have a beneficial effect on Canadian families facing this increase in grocery prices, but will also send to the companies a message that we are watching them. Parliament is aware of the situation, and members are listening to their constituents.

Does my colleague agree with me that this is an important debate to hold, in order to show everyone that Parliament is taking care of this issue?

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I agree that this is an important debate, especially since the NDP brought it to the House.

We would not have brought it forward if we did not think it was important for people, for our society. We took that initiative. It is true, we are sending a message with this debate. We are telling them that we are watching and that we are keeping an eye on them. Then there needs to be action. That is the second part.

We are setting the stage, bringing up the problem and analyzing the situation. After that, we want an investigation by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. We are also asking the Competition Bureau to investigate. Then, there must be regulatory, fiscal and legislative action to ensure that these situations do not happen again.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about greed inflation. I prefer to call it unjust inflation. I think that is more appropriate. Right now, all Canadians are feeling the rising cost of absolutely everything.

I wonder why my colleague and the other members of his costly coalition chose to vote against the recent opposition motion calling on the government not to raise taxes on all Canadians, when every Canadian needs more money in their pockets.

*Business of Supply*

Why does the NDP support raising taxes and the government's decision to triple the carbon tax? That is the real question.

• (1035)

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to set the record straight. The Conservative Party sees premiums as a tax. An EI premium is insurance in the event of a loss of employment. A pension plan premium is an investment for the future. We will need this money when we are older. There is a world of difference between the two concepts. It is important to tell the truth.

We are taking action to help people. We forced the Liberals to pay for dental care for children under the age of 12. This year, families could receive \$1,300 per child. We forced the Liberals to double the GST credit. These two measures are in Bill C-30 and Bill C-31. People will be able to get between \$250 and \$500 starting this year. These are real measures that the NDP is putting forward. We forced the Liberals to put them in place, and they will provide people with practical support.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke of tax havens, and I think it is important to spend some time talking about that. Not only is the government not doing anything, but it actually participated in the creation of these tax havens.

In 1994, the Chrétien government gave companies permission to repatriate income that they were earning in Barbados without paying tax in Canada. From that moment, Barbados became the tax haven of choice for Canadian companies. Even Paul Martin registered his shipping company in Barbados. Worse yet, in 2009, the Harper government decided that Barbados was not enough. It made another regulatory change. It decided that, once Canada entered into an information sharing agreement with a tax haven, it would be possible to repatriate profits without paying tax. It created 18 new ones. Not only did the Conservatives and the Liberals do nothing, they took it one step further and participated in the creation of tax havens.

My colleague agrees with me that the NDP and the Bloc Québécois have been speaking out on this issue for years, but that neither of our parties is going to form government.

Would he also agree with me that the only way to combat tax havens is for Quebec to become independent?

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice:** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague on why it is so important to fight tax havens, but here is where we part ways. The Bloc Québécois will never be in power, but we might be. It is entirely possible—more possible, anyway.

It is true that both Liberals and Conservatives have for years failed to take action on tax havens. It is a perennial problem. Barbados alone is sheltering \$80 billion Canadian. What about the Cayman Islands? Believe it or not, there are more companies registered in the Cayman Islands than there are people who live there. Either they are very entrepreneurial people, or the system is not working at all.

[English]

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Kings—Hants.

I am pleased to rise in the House and address this important topic today. The motion before us rightfully focuses on the impacts of inflation on Canadians and the challenge it is causing, particularly with food prices.

As my colleagues on all sides of the House know, there are many drivers of this global inflation challenge, including the war in Ukraine and the supply chain disruptions in the aftermath of the acute phase of COVID-19.

However, the laser focus of our government remains on supporting Canadians through this difficult time and ensuring that our supports are targeted to those who need the support the most and when they need it the most. We are also working to ensure that corporations pay their fair share of tax.

Today's motion calls for many actions, which the government has already done or is actively doing, such as closing tax loopholes and directing the Competition Bureau to act if there is evidence of unlawful or anti-competitive behaviour in the marketplace, as the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry did many months ago. However, our government welcomes the opportunity to highlight the work that we are doing to make life more affordable for Canadians and how we intend to continue supporting Canadians through a time of global economic uncertainty.

[Translation]

We introduced targeted support measures totalling \$12.1 billion this year to help families across the country cope with inflation. Our goal is to help make life more affordable for millions of Canadians. That is more money in the pockets of Canadians who need it most, when they need it most, without driving inflation.

• (1040)

[English]

The last two federal budgets have helped to ensure that many of the supports in our affordability plan are in place right now to help Canadians.

First, and perhaps most important, the key benefits that Canadians rely on, including the Canada child benefit, the GST credit, the Canada workers benefit, the pension plan, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, are all indexed to inflation. This allows them to keep pace with the cost of living.



Then in budget 2021, our government enhanced the Canada workers benefit, cut taxes and put up to \$2,400 into the pockets of lower-income working families, starting this year. In fact, many recipients have already received this increased support through their 2021 tax return. This enhancement of the Canada workers benefit is extending support to about one million more Canadians and helping to lift nearly 100,000 people out of poverty.

[Translation]

In July, we increased old age security for seniors over 75 by 10%. This is the first permanent increase to old age security since 1993; I was 3 years old at the time. This measure is over and above inflation indexing, and it will strengthen the financial security of 3.3 million seniors by automatically paying more than \$800 in the first year for those receiving a full pension.

[English]

Finally, our government continues to work with provinces and territories to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Thanks to a historic investment of up to \$27 billion over five years, regulated child care fees will be cut by an average of 50% by the end of this year. In my home province of Alberta, this agreement is already saving families hundreds and, in some cases, thousands of dollars each month.

These measures are providing real and much-needed supports to Canadians right now, but we know there is more to do. That is why we have been working so hard on Bill C-30 and Bill C-31. Through new legislation that our government has introduced, we are proposing to provide \$3.1 billion in additional supports in 2022 to help make life more affordable for millions of Canadians.

First, we are doubling the GST credit for six months, which would provide \$2.5 billion in additional targeted supports this year to the roughly 11 million individuals and families that already receive the tax credit.

[Translation]

Second, we are providing a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit this year to deliver \$500 to \$1.8 million low-income renters who are struggling with the cost of housing. We are more than doubling the commitment we made in budget 2022, helping twice as many Canadians as initially promised. This will be in addition to the Canada housing benefit that is currently jointly funded and paid out by the provinces and territories.

[English]

Three, we are providing dental care for Canadians without dental insurance earning less than \$90,000, starting with hundreds of thousands of children under 12 this very year, direct payments totalling up to \$1,300 per child over the next two years for dental services. This is only the first step, outlined in the supply and confidence agreement, to develop a national dental care program.

These are not just empty stats. These programs would provide real support for real individuals.

Let me give some examples. A couple in Thunder Bay, with an income of \$45,000 and a child in day care, could receive about an additional \$7,800 above existing benefits this fiscal year. A single

### *Business of Supply*

recent graduate in home city of Edmonton, with an entry-level job and an income of \$24,000, could receive about an additional \$1,300 in new and enhanced benefits.

[Translation]

A senior with a disability in Trois-Rivières could receive \$2,700 more this year than they did last year.

[English]

Simply put, our plan is putting more money into the pockets of Canadians who need it the most at the time when they need it the most.

[Translation]

In terms of consumer protection, a few months ago, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry asked our department officials to use all available tools to review the variations in pricing and closely monitor any potentially harmful actions.

It is completely unacceptable to take advantage of a crisis to raise prices on consumers. We expect the Competition Bureau to act swiftly if there is evidence of unlawful or anti-competitive behaviour in the marketplace.

If there is evidence of anti-competitive behaviour, the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry will ask the Competition Bureau to investigate promptly and take appropriate action.

We will continue to use all of the tools at our disposal to make life more affordable for Canadians. When it comes to ensuring that companies pay what they owe, we take the fight against tax evasion very seriously.

The Minister of National Revenue and the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, continue to fight tax evasion in Canada and abroad. Thanks to a robust system of tax treaties and ongoing government investments, it is harder than ever to hide money abroad. The CRA is well positioned to find tax evaders wherever they are hiding.

The measures adopted in budget 2021 comprise many investments and legislative changes to combat tax evasion, including by closing loopholes used to avoid paying tax. There is also an additional \$300-million investment to improve CRA's capacity to fight tax evasion and to modernize Canada's general anti-avoidance rule. These measures will enable the CRA to use all the tools it needs to continue making progress on this important file.

*Business of Supply*

• (1045)

[English]

Over the last five years, the number of criminal investigations has gone up by 60%. Over the last five years, the number of cases with at least \$1 million in tax potential has gone up 189%. Over the last five years, the average fine by conviction has gone up 14%. Every time our government invests in the Canada Revenue Agency to go tax cheats and the people putting money overseas, we get multiple dollars back.

[Translation]

Our government is fully aware that Canadians are feeling the effects of high inflation, especially when they go to the grocery store or fill up at the pumps.

Canadians can rest assured that they will get support when they need it. Since 2015, our government has brought in real improvements to make life more affordable for Canadians.

[English]

Our affordability plan builds on these successes and is providing more money to the most vulnerable Canadians this year to help make life more affordable. We remain committed to continuing to build an economy that works for all Canadians and leaves no one behind.

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, it was good to hear the member for Edmonton Centre go on and on about all the good programs the government is bringing out that the NDP forced it to do. However, it has studiously avoided doing the one thing that has huge support from Canadians and that would make one of the biggest differences, and that is to put a windfall tax on the excess profits of big oil and gas companies and big grocery store chains.

Now we have the CEO of Shell saying to tax them because they have made too much money. Canadians are hurting, yet the Liberals just do not want to do this. The Conservatives certainly do not want to do it. Most Canadians want us to tax the companies that have made windfall profits. Why do they not do that? It would take a huge burden off Canadians who are suffering right now.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Before we go to the response, I want to remind members that, if they want to have conversations, maybe they should take them outside, instead of having them across the House of Commons. It interferes with parliamentarians' ability to hear questions or answers, depending on when they are having those conversations. Members can also sit beside another member and have a quiet conversation.

The hon. minister has the floor.

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, I have three things in response to my colleague from the New Democratic Party. First, let us put in context the oil and gas sector. It is 10% of our gross domestic product, it is a critical industry for us and the workers in that industry, and those companies are going to be working with the government to get our country to net zero. They are a critical investor, and they will be making huge investments into CCUS, so we need to make sure that takes place.

Let us also take a look at the fact that, in budget 2021, we made sure that we increased tax on the banks with what is essentially a windfall tax, an extraordinary tax for banks and insurance companies. We understand Canadians are experiencing inflation at the grocery stores and at the pumps, and that is why our affordability measures are targeted to focus on those Canadians who need it the most when they need it the most. It will not stoke inflation. It is 1/1,000 of the size of our economy. This is smart and responsible leadership for Canadians when they need it the most.

• (1050)

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke about the CRA. Could he please explain to the House how he is ensuring that terrorists in this country are not funnelling money to support other countries? What is the CRA doing about that?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, the Canada Revenue Agency has robust measures in place to make sure that terrorist financing does not take place in our country. We constantly survey these issues to make sure there are no loopholes in that system.

If we are talking about the issue on the floor of the House today, which is making sure that we do not have tax evasion, we could look at the Canada Revenue Agency's tax record. In just the investments we have put in to the CRA since we formed government, billions of dollars have come back from individuals and companies that have put their money into tax havens. The CRA is doing its job. It has a great track record on that issue. Not only do we not stand for any financing of terrorist organizations in Canada, we are going to make sure that tax cheats pay their fair share.

[Translation]

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to hear my colleague say whether he does or does not support the objective of the motion moved by the NDP.

The fundamental question being asked is the following: Are we prepared, as a state and as a government, to do more to secure the revenue we need from big corporations who are getting rich at our expense? That is the principle of the motion.

I find that the government boasts about its results and that my colleague is exaggerating. When he says that Canada is doing a lot to crack down on tax havens, he believes it. In reality, the federal government is quite complacent.

In effect, it has been giving the Canada Revenue Agency more and more money to tackle the problem with little to show for it. The CRA has only gone after a few million dollars.

Is the government prepared to do what the motion is calling for in order to ensure tax fairness?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

We strongly believe that businesses and Canadians must pay their fair share of taxes. That is the basic principle.

Let us talk about the results achieved by the Canada Revenue Agency, or CRA, with the investments made by our government after 10 years under the Conservatives. We invested in the CRA, which has recovered not millions, not hundreds of millions, but billions of dollars from those who did not pay their taxes.

In our 2022 budget, we asked banks and insurance companies to pay more.

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege for me to rise in the House, and I am pleased to speak to today's NDP motion.

This motion was moved by the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, and he knows how much I respect his work. However, I do want to share some concerns I have regarding the wording of the motion.

I think it is important for Canadians following the debate in the House to understand that this opposition motion does not compel the government to take any action. It is simply something for members of the House to reflect on.

I am not sure whether today's opposition motion is strictly necessary. Some key elements of the motion were adopted yesterday at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food through Liberal, Conservative and Bloc Québécois amendments. We know that affordability and inflation are very important to Canadians right now.

I am not opposed to the idea of looking into food prices in this country. However, I do believe that the text of this motion puts the cart before the horse, as the saying goes. In my view, this motion alleges price-fixing occurs before the committee can do a proper inquiry and before we have the opportunity to hear from industry officials about the possibility we are looking at the unintended consequences of the circumstances.

• (1055)

[English]

As I mentioned, I do not have a whole lot of contention as I stand before the House today, but the text of the motion is almost suggesting this is a *fait accompli* and absolutely real, and I think there are important questions that need to be asked. However, I do have some concerns about the fact that the motion is almost saying that this is absolutely happening before we have even had the inquiry at the agriculture and agri-food committee. I know that was expressed yesterday by some of my colleagues who sit on that committee.

I also want to take a moment to examine specific provisions of the motion. Under paragraph (b), there is a mention of “an affordable and fair food strategy which tackles corporate greed”. It goes on to suggest that perhaps there is something that should be done to control the prices, and although I did not have the opportunity to ask this question specifically to my hon. colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, I want to know whether that is suggesting the government has a role to play in setting prices.

### *Business of Supply*

This is not something we have seen since, I believe, World War II, when the government did intervene in those circumstances to set maximum price caps. The text of the motion does not come right out and say it, but “an affordable and fair food strategy” could include, I presume, regulatory measures. That would be a question I would have for my hon. colleague. Perhaps, if he has the opportunity today in the House, he could address that, or perhaps some of his NDP colleagues who know could raise the point of whether they see that as a specific measure.

Yes, it has been done before, but the government should be very cautious that it is absolutely necessary to completely intervene, to set prices in a market, until such time that we have real evidence that the allegations being put forward in the text of the motion today are absolutely true.

Paragraph (c) talks about “greedflation”, and I just want to go on record that this is not what the committee agreed to yesterday. Yes, the key elements of the hon. member's motion were adopted, but there was a desire, particularly from the member for Berthier—Maskinongé, to look at the issue.

He rightfully pointed out that, before we get to the point of saying this is greed inflation, we should actually call the witnesses to bring forward evidence and hear that before we simply say that it is indeed the case.

The committee has agreed to look at inflation in food prices in the entire food retail sector, not just the grocery sector, to be able to ask what questions can be put forward in co-operation with the food retail sector to help support it and avoid large increases in food prices.

[Translation]

I am glad the motion mentions the Competition Bureau. I think it is a very important organization that already has the tools needed to study these issues.

[English]

I have concerns about the capacity of our agriculture committee to be able to get to the bottom of exactly what might be happening. Yes, we can come in and ask questions, but I do not know if there are any forensic accountants who might sit on the agriculture committee. We will ask those questions, but it is ultimately the Competition Bureau that has the tools and expertise to be able to examine whether or not some of the allegations that are being made are indeed happening.

It calls into question whether there is anti-competitive behaviour or pricing fixing happening, because the Competition Bureau, as far as I know, has not intervened to date. However, I think it is an important question that all members of this House should reflect on.

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I think that the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford missed an opportunity to raise and mention the importance of the national school food program. We all know that affordability is a top issue right now for many Canadians. This is a program that could make sure we have healthy food in school, ensuring that children who might be living in families who do not have a whole lot of economic means can be supported. It was announced in budget 2021, and I would have liked to see the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford raise it and encourage the government to expedite that allocation of money and work with the provinces and territories to roll it out.

The motion also does not call on ways in which the grocery sector itself might be able to help mitigate food prices by implementing a price freeze. I understand it has happened elsewhere and there have been some retail grocers in other jurisdictions around the world that have, by their own will, actually implemented a price freeze. There might be differing opinions on whether or not that is best public policy, but the member failed to mention it in the text of his motion today.

I will go on record and say that I have some concern about the way in which the NDP is bringing forward and villainizing corporate leadership. Now, before my friends from the NDP start screaming that I am a friend of big business in Canada and standing up for my corporate friends, it is not that. It is that we want to have a level of decorum in our public policy and in our politics in this country that does not simply make vast statements.

I read into the record the other day a Facebook post from the leader of the NDP, which said that CEOs in this country are rigging the system, that they are stealing Canadians' wealth. Boy, what an allegation that is. In making it, he is villainizing an entire group of individuals who serve in corporate leadership in this country. I hope the position of the NDP is not simply that every corporate leader in this country is corrupt, because that does nothing to unify the country. It creates a further divide—

• (1100)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I want to remind members who are coming into the chamber right now to please keep their voices down. There is quite bit of a hum coming across, and I would ask members to keep their voices down.

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I can see why the House is filling up. It is because I have the opportunity to have the floor, and people are very interested in what I have to say.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity to get to engage with so many of my colleagues, and I look forward to their questions momentarily.

However, I think that if NDP members want to put forward more constructive debates in this House, they need to stop villainizing corporate leadership and start putting forward policies. If they want to tax Canadian high-income earners more and put forward other pieces, that is fine and that is their ideological position, but they should stop villainizing individuals who lead corporate entities in this country. It is not helpful, and it is not really going to help us get to a better system and better policies for all Canadians.

I will leave it at that, and I look forward to taking questions from my hon. colleagues.

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, people are clearly frustrated that they are paying more for food, but the CEOs of big food chains are making big profits on the backs of people, and we are not villainizing these people.

For the seven years that the Liberals have been in power, this government has protected the profits of the wealthiest by refusing to toughen the Competition Act to punish the CEOs of the big companies that are overcharging consumers and agricultural producers. Why do the Liberals refuse to ban the price-gouging strategies of wealthy CEOs at the expense of the people?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, whether it is the grocery code of conduct that the Minister of Agriculture is working with industry to be able to move forward or whether it is putting excess profit taxes as we have on the banking sector, there are a number of ways in which this government is able to move to make sure there is equity in how we tax Canadians and to ask Canadians who have more means to give a bit more to help support public programs that matter for all.

I know my ideological viewpoint may not completely align with that of the member opposite. As I have said in my remarks, I would like us to have an investigation before we simply put forward an assertion that there is complete corporate greed in this country. Let us examine the facts. Let us go before the committee before we simply make those allegations in the House.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there is some irony today in the NDP's signing a deal to support three years of Liberal budgets, sight unseen, and then putting forward a motion to call for additional measures that were not contained in the New Democrats' coalition agreement.

For the Liberal member who just spoke, is not the best way to address affordability simply to allow people to keep more of their own money? Would the member acknowledge that with cancelling the scheduled tax increases for next year, the tripling of the carbon tax and the increase in payroll tax, rather than the government taking more of their money to spend for them, it would be better to let people keep more of their own money and choose for themselves how they are going to spend it?

• (1105)

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, that is exactly what the government has done, since day one, when we lowered taxes and allowed Canadians of lower and middle income to keep more of the money they earn, and increased taxes on those who have the most money to give into the system. The member voted against that motion.

The member speaks about carbon pricing in this country. It is going to be tripling by 2030, not overnight, and the money actually goes back to Canadians and to businesses, so it is a false narrative that the Conservatives are putting forward. Best of all, they do not have a plan on climate. They do not put forward any meaningful policies to reduce emissions. It is a false narrative, and it is extremely problematic.

I look forward to the day when the Conservatives look forward to a pricing system that is market based and can move forward. That is what the former leader of the official opposition did in the last election. I look forward to seeing what the new leader of the official opposition does in the next election.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I just want to remind members that they should not be heckling or trying to answer or making comments while someone else has the floor. It is not very respectful.

The hon. member for Kitchener Centre.

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, today's motion follows a report from Canadians for Tax Fairness that shows that some of the wealthiest corporations in the country quietly avoided \$30 billion in taxes in 2021 alone. Meanwhile, however, the CRA continues to chase low-income Canadians in my riding, as well as in the member's riding of Kings—Hants, for example, for a couple of thousand dollars in CERB repayments. What can the member do to help refocus where the CRA should be, which is on this \$30 billion in tax loopholes?

**Mr. Kody Blois:** Madam Speaker, I have not had the opportunity to read the report the member is referencing, but I will say that the government has invested in CRA resources to be able to tackle off-shore accounts and tax evasion. It has brought in nearly \$4 billion of additional revenue. I take notice that there is more work that the government can do in that domain, but these are important elements that we have done concretely.

Is there more work to be done? Sure, but we also have to balance that against global competitiveness at the same time. Sometimes the policies of the NDP or the Green Party would just lead to more off-shoring of taxes. Just to reference the Laffer curve, if their income taxes or corporate taxes are too high, companies will choose to do business or leave their money elsewhere. That is an element we have to be mindful of when we are devising public policy in the House.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** There is still quite a bit of chatting going on by members of the official opposition. I am about to call up one of their members, and I would hope that they are going to be respectful and are not going to be chatting while that is being done, or when others are going to be speaking in the House.

Resuming debate, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[*Translation*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House of Commons today to talk about food inflation, which is at its highest in 40 years.

I will talk about the price increases for a few food items. The price of fish has risen by 10.4%; the price of butter, by 16.9%; the price of eggs, by 10.9%; the price of pasta, by 32%; and the price of coffee, by 14.2%. These are only a few examples of the rising prices Canadians are paying for food. The poorest Canadians are the hardest hit. It is only appropriate that we address this problem.

What are the causes of food inflation? The cost of government is increasing the cost of living. The \$500-billion inflationary deficit is increasing the cost of the goods we purchase and the interest we

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pay. Inflationary taxes are increasing production costs for our businesses and farmers, which further contributes to the increase in prices. The more the government spends, the more expensive it gets. This is the result of the costly coalition between the Liberals and the NDP. The solution is to undo the problems the Liberals have caused.

First, we must limit government spending by passing a law that requires politicians to save one dollar for each new dollar spent. This law used to exist elsewhere in the past. In the 1990s, such a law enabled the U.S. government to eliminate its deficit and pay back \$400 billion of its debt while creating jobs. After the law was repealed, they started to accumulate deficits once again. This shows that we must impose legal limits on politicians' spending. Otherwise, they are undisciplined, and consumers pay the price.

Second, we must eliminate inflationary taxes. This government, with the support of the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, wants to triple the carbon tax on farmers, small businesses and truckers, which will obviously drive up the cost of food. Food does not come from the store, but from farms and farmers. In addition, it is transported by truckers. Every time we increase taxes on these people, consumers pay more.

Since farmers can no longer bear the costs, we are importing food from other countries that are creating far more pollution. We would be able to produce the food here, but the taxes on farmers increase costs and make it impossible to produce food in Canada. We should eliminate these taxes to encourage food production here in Canada. We have the best farmers in the world, and we should be able to feed ourselves.

Third, we must eliminate the bureaucratic hurdles that prevent the production of food and other essential goods, as well as the red tape and delays that prevent the construction of housing units, energy production and, of course, food production. Instead of printing money like this government and the Bank of Canada are doing, we should be producing what money can buy: more food, more housing units and more energy, here in Canada. That means that we have to eliminate obstacles, make it easier to get a construction permit and allow people who work hard to achieve their goals.

Rather than simply printing money, let us produce what we need. This policy will make life more affordable and Canada more self-sufficient. That is the goal we will be pursuing as Conservatives.

• (1110)

[*English*]

I will be splitting my time with the member for Foothills, Madam Speaker.

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The New Democrats point out in this motion that corporations should pay what they owe. We agree with that. They say there should be increased penalties for price-fixing. We agree with that, too. They think that the agriculture committee should study high food prices and whether there is something called “greedflation”, including inviting grocery store CEOs to the committee. We agree with that, too. That is all very reasonable. Unfortunately, in some ways, it does not go far enough, because they have a very limited view of greed. They think that it only exists in the private sector. They ignore in the motion government greed.

The New Democrats have this fantastical view of human nature. I would not say that it is optimistic or pessimistic; it is both at the same time. They think that human beings are angels when they work for the state, but demons when they work in the private sector, as though greed is part of human nature only in the free market. However, when these same people who work for a company then transfer over to work for a bureaucracy or as politicians, all of a sudden they are purified of all greed and transformed into an entirely different being.

The reality is that human nature is what it is, warts and all, good and bad. There is greed and that greed exists in government as well. When the government expands itself vastly faster than the economy, increasing costs by \$500 billion in the last two years alone, \$200 billion of which had nothing to do whatsoever with COVID, and when the government, against the warnings of the Conservatives, gives corporations wage subsidies, even though they can afford to pay out dividends to their shareholders and bonuses to their executives, the government is engaging in feeding that greed.

When the government printed \$400 billion, causing inflation to spiral out of control to the benefit of the super-rich, who saw their assets inflate, but to the disadvantage of the poor, who then lost purchasing power and watched house prices go out of reach so they could never get out of their parents' basements or out of that 400-square-foot apartment, it was government greed that had caused that transfer of wealth from the have-nots to the have yachts.

I just wish once in a while the NDP, which believes in the endless expansion of the state, would acknowledge the roll that government greed has played in plaguing the country with the highest inflation in 40 years. The cost of government is driving up the cost of living. Half a trillion dollars in new inflationary spending has bid up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay. The inflationary taxes have bid up the cost for businesses and farmers to produce those goods. The more Liberals and New Democrats spend, the more things cost. That is how we got into this mess in the first place.

The Liberals and the NDP, the costly coalition, want to double down on the problem by further increasing the costs on the backs of Canadians by tripling the carbon tax, which will inevitably be passed on to consumers. We cannot tax farmers, truckers and grocers without having those costs pass on to the people at the end of the grocery aisle. We know they will pay those higher prices; we know they already have.

Conservatives say: enough. The time has come to cap government spending and cut government waste so we can phase out the inflationary deficits and taxes, cancel the plan to triple the carbon

tax and, instead, deploy technology to make green alternative energy more affordable. Let us bring down the cost of energy, rather than bring it up.

Speaking of which, let us remove the government gatekeepers who make this the 64th-ranked country in the world when it comes to getting a building permit. Sixty-three other countries give them faster. What does that mean? It means that farmers can put up their barns faster. It means that mines, which would produce lithium, cobalt, copper and other minerals for green electricity, must wait longer and, therefore, costs more money. It means that producing clean, green Canadian nuclear energy, etc., could be coming onto the market faster.

Let us get these gatekeepers out of the way, speed up the production and unleash the mighty force of our free enterprise system, so instead of creating cash, we create more of what cash buys and unleash the production of a cleaner, more affordable economy for all our hard-working people.

• (1115)

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague across the way did say that he felt this motion did not go far enough, so I assume that means he supports it. I cannot imagine he is against having CEOs pay the money that they owe.

He has made it very clear that he is not against having a fair and affordable food strategy. Obviously, his members have already said that they would be supporting the study in agriculture.

Does he feel that asking CEOs to pay their fair share is reasonable or does he think that all men should be told that they can go their own way?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, CEOs should pay their fair share and pay what they owe, as the motion says. We believe in tax enforcement and we believe the government has done a terrible job cracking down on those who hide their money in offshore accounts and refuse to pay what they owe. The Conservatives do support that, to clearly answer the member's question.

What we do not support is forcing working-class people to pay higher taxes. We do not support higher energy costs. We do not believe that consumers in Vancouver should pay more than \$2.40 a litre. We do not support the plan to triple the carbon tax on home-heating oil for Newfoundlanders and to further drive the people of eastern Canada, 40% of whom are in energy poverty, into more poverty still.

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We believe that life should be affordable for all of them, and that is why this has not gone far enough.

● (1120)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, this morning, some very disturbing news has been reported, in particular, that misogynistic tags were being used on the Leader of the Opposition's YouTube channel to attract certain individuals to his channel, in particular those who would sympathize with these misogynistic terms.

I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition would like to explain to the House and to Canadians his position on this and perhaps what he will do to ensure this does not continue.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will allow the official opposition leader to respond, however, I do want to remind members to stay relevant to the motion before the House.

The leader of the official opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, we on this side reject all misogyny and all acts of extremism, and we will always stand up to that over here.

I will give the House an example of why the subject of food affordability is so important, because the people who are the least advantaged in our society end up paying the most. Those with the least means, with the least resources, end up spending a larger share of their income on food. The very wealthy can spend a smaller share of income on food. That is why those people are not as affected by inflation.

Two years ago, I warned that we would have an inflation crisis if the government continued with its inflationary taxes and deficits, and that is exactly where we are today.

We, as Conservatives, will reverse the policies that got us here, to make the dollar go further for everybody.

[*Translation*]

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

I would like the House to get down to business, to work like the mature adults we are supposed to be, rather than to repeat slogans and idiocies all day.

With respect to the carbon tax, is my colleague aware that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food is currently working intelligently to create exemptions where necessary, but that, overall, the carbon tax is necessary? There has to be a price on pollution if we are to take a different path.

My colleague mentioned the increase in the price of coffee in his speech as if it were a terrible thing. Is he aware that analysts are predicting that the price of coffee will not only remain high, but that, like chocolate, it will become the luxury product it once was? That is not because of the big bad Liberals, the big bad NDP and the big bad Bloc. It is because of global warming. Is he aware of the aphid problems in our crops this year caused by global warming?

Can we please get down to business and work on climate change?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre:** Madam Speaker, neither the Bloc Québécois, nor the Liberals, nor the NDP have a plan to deal with climate change. They have a plan to increase taxes. Since the implementation of the carbon tax, the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets have never been met. It simply has not worked.

The hon. member says there will be exceptions, but when? We introduced bills to exempt farmers years ago, but that never happened. We cannot trust the current government or the costly coalition to make it happen.

[*English*]

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a difficult task to follow the leader of the official opposition, but I will do my best to carry on with our message about the NDP opposition day motion, which I also agree does not go far enough. It does not put a lot of the blame on the inflationary crisis we face where most of it belongs, which is on government spending.

We cannot say that CEOs, corporate Canada or global companies are driving inflation when we have a federal government that has put in half a trillion dollars in spending, which is having a significant impact on the prices that Canadians are facing all across the board.

I find it interesting that we see a bit of schizophrenia with our NDP colleagues, where with every opportunity they have to support increased spending and the tripling of the carbon tax, they vote with the government, yet their motion today attempts to try to make life more affordable for Canadians.

In question period yesterday, the leader of the NDP had concerns about rising gas prices, especially in his province of B.C. where fuel has hit \$2.40 a litre. That is exactly what Liberal and NDP policy wants to achieve. It wants us to have higher fuel prices. It wants to force us to drive our cars less. I am sure that works in many of my colleagues' urban communities. Some days they can park their cars and take public transit or ride their bikes. My riding is almost 30,000 square kilometres.

Public transit does not exist in my riding. My constituents must drive their car. They must drive long distances to work. They must heat their homes and their barns in -40°C weather in January. These are the facts of life. These are the necessities of life. These are not extravagant choices; they have to do that. In response to that, our Liberal colleagues, supported by the NDP, want to triple the carbon tax.

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I am going to focus a little on the agricultural sector and the impact that is having on rural economies and rural Canadians. I would argue that rural Canadians, especially our farmers, producers and ranchers, pay the carbon tax over and over again.

It was interesting to hear my Liberal colleague say that while farmers were price-takers, the carbon tax did not have an impact on the price of food. It is true that they are price-takers. However, when we triple the carbon tax, we triple the price of fuel. We saw the price of fertilizer go up 100% last year. That does not include the 35% tariff on fertilizer from Russia and Belarus. That impacts hauling their grain, hauling their cattle and transportation to the terminal. Every single time they are paying that carbon tax over and over again.

The company or rail company hauling their grain passes that carbon tax on to the consumer. Every time those prices go up on those transportation or commodity services, it impacts the price of food. That is why we have seen the cost of groceries go up more than 10%, the highest rate of inflation in more than 40 years.

Therefore, I understand my NDP colleagues when they say that the CEOs in Canada should pay their fair share. I agree with that. Every Canadian should pay their fair share. The Liberal government has been in power for seven years. If there are loopholes, it should be holding taxpayers accountable for paying their fair share. Obviously, it has not done that. However, to shift the blame from where it lies to other parts of the economy is disingenuous.

An interesting statistic came up yesterday at the agriculture committee, and I want to highlight it. We heard it from my Bloc colleague, who I have a lot of respect for as well. Climate change is real, but to put the price of fighting climate change on the backs of Canadian farmers is not fair. Let us be real here, as my colleague was saying. Let us have an honest conversation about this. GHG intensity in agriculture is about 28% globally. What it is in Canada? It is 8%. We are tenfold better than any other country in the world when it comes to GHG emissions and intensity in the agriculture sector in Canada.

• (1125)

With respect to the fertilizer issue, the Liberal government wants to see a 30% reduction in fertilizer use. As I said, grocery prices have gone up 10%. If the Liberals follow through with this policy, all I can say to Canadian consumers is “you ain't seen nothing yet”. When farmers have to see their yields go down between 30% and 50%, depending on what the commodity is, that means significantly lower yields and significantly higher grocery prices. That has nothing to do with the CEO of Loblaws. That has exactly to do with government policy put forward by the Liberals.

Again, what makes that so frustrating is they are saying to Canadian farmers that they are not part of the solution; they are the problem. Canadian farmers are 50% to 70% more efficient in their fertilizer use than any other country on planet earth. Instead of congratulating them for that and going around the world saying that we are the gold standard and here is where everybody else in the world should go, we are apologizing and dragging our farmers down to where everybody else is. That is the wrong philosophy and certainly the wrong policy.

All that is doing is making our farmers worse off. It is also more harmful to the environment, and food prices will go up. It is a triple whammy. Instead of doing the right thing and being a champion and advocate for Canadian farmers, we are going in the exact opposite direction.

There are other policies the Liberals have put forward that have made the cost of groceries and the cost of food go up, and I really want to focus on this part. I am going to backtrack a little to the carbon tax again. My colleague from the Bloc brought that up. In the agriculture committee, we are talking about Bill C-234, a private member's bill brought forward by the Conservatives to exempt natural gas and propane from the carbon tax on farms. This is a critical piece of legislation that would ensure our farmers are able to remain competitive on the global stage. However, the Liberals are arguing that we do not need Bill C-234 because farmers get a rebate through Bill C-8.

We now know from Finance Canada officials that the average farmer will get about \$800 back a year through that rebate. We also know that farmers pay close to \$50,000 a year on average in carbon tax. I asked a representative from Finance Canada how they could argue that the carbon tax is revenue-neutral when they were admitting that the average farmer is getting about \$800 to \$860 back. His answer was that if we made it revenue-neutral, urban Canadians would have to subsidize that. Okay. He was telling me that rural Canadians were subsidizing the carbon tax and wealth redistribution for urban Canadians. That is what he was telling me.

That is not what the Liberal policy on the carbon tax was. They said it was going to be revenue-neutral and that eight out of 10 families would get more back than they paid. That is baloney. Rural Canadians are suffering and certainly paying significantly more in carbon tax than other Canadians. That is not what the Liberals are selling. Again, it is Liberal policy that is driving inflation and driving up the price of food.

It is going to get worse. Although we had a bit of a win this spring when we got the Liberals to back down on front-of-pack labelling on ground beef and pork, they are still going ahead with front-of-pack labelling on most other products. The cost of that is going to be \$1.8 billion to the industry. Who do we think pays for that? I can guarantee that Galen Weston at Loblaws is not covering that cost. I can guarantee that French's ketchup is not covering that cost. They are passing that right on to the consumer.



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Again, a Liberal policy that no one asked for and serves very little purpose is going to be passing on \$2 billion in costs to the Canadian consumer for no reason. That is not to mention that the United States has already identified this policy as a trade irritant. Therefore, not only are we upsetting Canadian consumers, but we are also upsetting our number one trading partner, which is looking for every excuse possible to fight back against Canadian trade.

In conclusion, I appreciate what my NDP colleague is trying to achieve with this motion, and there are many portions of it that we agree with. Certainly CEOs should pay their fair share and affordable food should be available for every Canadian, but the facts are the facts. Inflation is being driven by ideological, activist policy by the Liberal government. That should be the focus of the House.

• (1130)

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I share with the member a lot of his concerns about what farmers are dealing with in this day and age and about the inflation that is putting pressure on all Canadians. However, one thing we are asking for in this motion today is to put a tax on the excess profits of big companies. Big companies like Loblaw's and Sobeys have made windfall profits while Canadians are suffering. There are also the big oil and gas companies. They talk forever about the carbon tax on the Conservative side, but they never mention the huge profits that oil and gas companies are making, which cause 10 times the increase in gas prices than the carbon tax.

I am wondering if he could comment on the comment the CEO of Shell made yesterday. He is saying to please tax Shell; it made too much money. He wants to help Canadians. When will the Conservatives—

• (1135)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I will get the hon. member to respond.

The hon. member for Foothills.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Speaker, as I said, we agree with the portion of the motion about CEOs paying their fair share. As we said, every Canadian should pay their fair share.

His colleague, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, in his opening speech asked why the Conservatives are moaning about taxes all the time. Well, what our constituents are telling us every single day is that the tax increases by the Liberal government are punishing.

To answer my colleague's question, how is increasing a tax on Loblaw's and Sobeys going to reduce food prices? Does he think that by increasing taxes on Galen Weston, he is going to turn around and reduce food prices?

**Ms. Lisa Hefner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I know the member opposite. We have met, and I know his riding very well. It is a riding in which my Alberta family lives.

I have made my career in Hamilton for more than 20 years, and I have heard from the residents of Hamilton Mountain that they are concerned with the cost of living. It is tough to go to the grocery stores today.

I am wondering if the member opposite would agree that it is good to have this debate today and it is good the NDP has put forward this motion, because it is a complicated issue. Here we are, and it is important to have this time in the House to debate these issues.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Speaker, I would argue that the Conservatives, especially under the leader of the official opposition, have been talking about affordability every day in this House for the last two weeks. I do appreciate the motion brought forward by the NDP, but it is the Conservative Party that has addressed and highlighted that Liberal policy, Liberal tax hikes and planned new tax hikes are making life unaffordable for Canadians.

Grocery prices are up 10%. I did not even talk about interest rates, which have gone up several points and have put thousands of family farms on the brink of possible foreclosure. I cannot imagine what that is doing to many Canadians. I have had constituents in my riding say that interest rates have made their mortgage go up \$500 a month. Not many Canadians have the resources to cover that new cost.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member for Drummond for a brief question.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Foothills for his speech. It can be a bit ironic to hear the Conservatives go to bat for regular people and lament the burden they bear as the cost of consumer goods rises across the board. However, when anyone suggests that big corporations, such as web giants, should pay their fair share, the Conservatives waste no time interfering with every process and shooting down everyone's suggestions.

I think about tax havens a lot. The Liberal government is under fire, and rightly so, for supporting tax havens and even creating some. However, in 2009, it was the Harper government that legalized 18 new tax havens simply by passing regulations allowing people not to pay taxes on profit generated in tax havens when they bring that money back to Canada. I know the Conservatives really want to fight inflation and bring more money back—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The question was supposed to be brief, but the hon. member took a whole minute, and that was all the time that was left.

The hon. member for Foothills has the floor, but I see the hon. member for Drummond rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, I simply want to point out that we made good use of the time allowed during questions and comments.

With all due respect, it might be appropriate to respect the time for questions. That would allow all parties to get a turn to speak.

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**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I invite the hon. member to have that discussion with his whip.

I would simply add that I did mention that it should be a brief question, because there was only one minute left. The hon. member used up almost the whole minute. This means we have no time left, but I will give the hon. member for Foothills the opportunity to answer.

• (1140)

[*English*]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Madam Speaker, as a brief answer, we are not the government. The Liberals are. If the member has an issue with tax havens, he should take it up with the government.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will begin by saying that I will be sharing my time with my very esteemed colleague from Joliette.

I first want to thank my colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for raising this very important matter in the House, as the price of groceries is a concern for many of our constituents.

We see that food inflation is higher than inflation in general. Naturally, there are some distinctions to be made. I will refer to what my colleague from Kings—Hants said earlier about that. That will also touch on the question that I asked the Leader of the Opposition earlier.

It would be good if we could try to work diligently and not take a populist attitude one way or the other.

As I just said, the motion is important. The Bloc Québécois supports it. I believe that this is an issue that we must deal with. It is why, when we talked about it yesterday, we approved the motion. For those who perhaps were not here earlier, I am informing the House that this issue will be studied thoroughly at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food.

I have to say that the changes I wanted to make by amending the motion yesterday were not intended to block the motion, but only to avoid drawing any conclusions about the study before the study is actually done.

I find myself facing a similar problem this morning. It is the new fashion in the House to pun on the word “inflation”. There is one pun I cannot mention because it contains the Prime Minister’s first name, but there are others, like “greedflation”. There will probably be three or four more by the end of the week. Puns do not solve our problems, and neither does repeating the same word three times 45 times a day. I do not see what that will do in the House, apart from lowering the tone of debate.

However, studying this issue and looking into the huge profits being made right now by the major agri-food distributors will have an effect.

It is an important issue, and that is why the Bloc Québécois will support the motion. However, it needs to be done in a smart way. My colleague who moved the motion referred to this earlier, saying that if he is drawing attention to the matter, that means that there is a real issue. The Retail Council of Canada wrote to us to say that

we should be careful how we deal with the matter, and I do not think that these people are illiterate.

We are all for examining the question, but let us do so properly. That is what we are being asked to do, and I think that it is also our duty as elected members.

I have no bias one way or another. I am biased in favour of the less fortunate, who are having a hard time buying groceries right now.

I will try not to get upset, but there are a lot of people in this House who say a lot but do not do anything. They are not getting anything done.

Why has old age security still not been increased for seniors starting at age 65? The 338 members of the House are well aware of the insanely high prices in grocery stores these days.

We are privileged to earn a good salary, so it does not bother us too much, but when I go to the grocery store, I think about ordinary people who are also paying income tax.

I think about the constant audits of ordinary citizens. I just want the House to know that people in long-term care facilities are getting audited. They are asked to submit the receipt from the facility. They submit the receipt, but that is not enough: Now they need a report filled out by their doctor to prove that they need to be in a long-term care facility. The next word that comes to mind is unparliamentary, but I am speaking as a caregiver. However, let us move on.

In the meantime, nothing is being done about tax havens. We are talking about billions of dollars each year. We have been condemning this for years. Why are we not doing anything about tax havens? We could at least try to recoup half the money, or a quarter, something like that. Then the government could redistribute the money to the poorest citizens. Once again, let us do this the smart way.

• (1145)

Is it really smart to pass a bill that proposes a \$650 dental benefit even if a family only submits a bill of \$100? The money will indeed be redistributed to families, but will dental care really be improved?

That is what I am urging us to do as members of Parliament. We must be rigorous and wise. We must also be aware that inflation is widespread for a number of reasons. COVID-19 has destabilized supply chains. Transportation costs have exploded exponentially. There is a labour shortage that is completely mind-boggling.

We are talking about food, so let us talk about it. People are complaining that food is expensive. However, this government is preventing farmers from working because it cannot be bothered to approve visas for foreign workers. It stubbornly insists on redoing labour market impact assessments even though Quebec has already done them. Those assessments take eight, 10, 12 months.

In the meantime, crops stay in the ground. They end up being plowed under. Asparagus fields are being mowed down because the workers have not arrived, not because they do not want to come, not because there are no workers, not because the farmers failed to plan a year in advance, but because the government is incompetent when it comes to approving these visas.

Obviously, food costs more because of all that. It is not just the fault of the big bad grocery stores, although that is part of it. We know that 80% of the retail market is controlled by five companies. It is a real problem. Various groups have been bringing this to our attention for several years. That is why an effort is currently being made to establish a grocery code of conduct as a way to prevent abusive practices.

For instance, a large retailer may require a small supplier to supply a certain amount or it will no longer purchase from that supplier. The small supplier supplies the amount requested, but if that amount does not sell, the retailer often demands that the supplier reimburse it and come collect its merchandise. Is that fair? I do not think so.

Are all corporate executives bad apples? I do not think so. That is why we need to stay objective. That is why the study in committee will be essential. I pledge to study this issue carefully, with one goal in mind, namely to protect our constituents from runaway inflation. I will ensure that people will not have to choose between groceries, drugs and gas.

Everybody here needs to wake up and see the light. I spoke about this earlier when I was asking the Leader of the Opposition a question. I say “see the light” because some people here are in the dark. If they need a light, I can get them one.

I am talking about climate change. We are experiencing droughts, flooding and increasingly violent winds. There were extremely violent winds this spring in Quebec. These may not be the kinds of major disasters that make the headlines for three weeks at a time, but hundred-year-old maple stands were destroyed. How long will it take to replace them? It will take a hundred years.

A shortage of products is inevitable. This year, vegetable growers are dealing with an epidemic of aphids, which are not usually an issue with vegetable crops. Normally, they are a problem for soybean farmers. Because of climate change and warmer-than-normal air currents, harvests have deteriorated. This will result in further losses, as fruits and vegetables remain in the fields.

Last spring, I spoke about bees. Record numbers of bees have died because of climate warming. The colony-killing parasite had more time to reproduce and cause more damage. The government needs to smarten up and do something about climate change.

I wish people would stop telling me that we need to eliminate the taxes aimed at fighting climate change. I will repeat what I said to

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my Conservative colleague: We can be smart about this and make exceptions. Grain drying could be exempt, for example, because there is no alternative. The government is capable of being smart. Let us all be smart. Let us take action.

We are going to study the issue of grocery prices. If we uncover any abuse, we will have to get tough.

• (1150)

[*English*]

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, Canadians deserve answers. We deserve to learn why corporate greed is protected while Canadians pay more for food. This motion is a way to try to get some of those answers.

Does the member agree that the agriculture committee should call the CEOs of the major grocery chains to come and explain their excessive profits?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Nunavut for her question. We certainly do agree that we need to examine the issue in depth and call witnesses.

I would like to take this opportunity to say publicly that I love the sound of my colleague's language when she speaks it. I encourage her to use it more often.

I said that we agree. However, when I am told that we need to condemn greed on the part of major corporations, I say that we should study the matter first, before we decide whether they have in fact been greedy. Of course, there is always greed in the capitalist system.

We need to find out if there is any abuse happening. I think that there probably is, but I do not want to go out on a limb today, because I have not yet examined the matter.

[*English*]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am looking forward to seeing how the agriculture committee goes about its study. It was good to sub in on the committee when it was talking about grain dryers this week and the complexities around that. Most of the retail profit growth from Loblaws came from its pharmacies, like Shoppers Drug Mart and Pharmaprix. The study of profit growth and where the profits are happening could be part—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I think there is a problem with interpretation. Is it working now?

[*Translation*]

Now that everything is working, I would ask the hon. member for Guelph to please start from the beginning.

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[English]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield:** Madam Speaker, I thank the interpreters for helping us through my lack of French knowledge.

I thank the hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé for his work here this morning and also his work on the agriculture committee.

The study the agriculture committee will be looking at, I am hoping, will look into the source of profits. Loblaw's has drug store chains like Shoppers Drug Mart and Pharmaprix, which have actually been the highest part of their profit growth through this, with the sale of medications the drug stores provide. Also, with the transfer of food from restaurant sales to sales through the retail sector, there has been a shift in demand, so that will also impact prices. As the member mentioned, with climate change, California is not supplying fruits and vegetables to Canada to the degree it used to because of climate change impacts.

Are these the types of things they will be able to look at during the study?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his intervention.

Yes, that is our goal. That is why I am saying that we need to do a serious study. We have a certain number of meetings planned, and we can hold more as needed. I think it is our duty to do things intelligently and identify the sources of this inflation.

I said it in my speech, but I want to repeat that we must help the people who are less privileged right now by providing some money so they can deal with the impacts of inflation, because it could take us quite a while to complete our analysis and take action, and in the meantime, people need to eat.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague on two points.

I agree with his view of the government's incompetence in fighting inflation and improving the cost of living for everyone. I also agree with him when he talks about acting wisely to provide quick solutions for Canadians.

Acting wisely would have meant voting for our motion to stop the government from going ahead with its plan to raise taxes, which will increase the cost of absolutely everything for Canadians in the coming months. That would have been wise.

● (1155)

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, acting wisely in Parliament would mean not repeating the same stupid nonsense three times in every speech. It would also mean—

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

The hon. member for Mégantic—L'Érable.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Madam Speaker, I think my colleague ought to apologize. I am not stupid. I am not someone who repeats words and uses words like that. I find this totally unacceptable.

This is the second time today that my colleague has used this type of language. I would like him to withdraw his remarks and apologize.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** I do not believe the member said that the member for Mégantic—L'Érable was repeating those words. He did not say anyone's name. I will allow his comment, but I would ask members to choose their words wisely.

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I am very sorry if the member felt personally offended. My intention was to speak out against the fact that people have been saying the same thing over and over for days. In my view, that does not contribute to the debate. I did not intend to attack him personally. I hope that clears things up.

That said, acting wisely might also mean not taking the populist tack of arguing for an end to all taxes.

**Mr. Luc Berthold:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Madam Speaker, I would like it if people could hear our answers to questions. I think I did that properly.

The Speaker may want to check what I said and let me know if I followed the rules of the House. Acting wisely means considering all aspects of a debate, listening to what other people have to say, and using government money to help the less fortunate. We have to find the equilibrium there.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the motion calls for:

(a) forcing CEOs and big corporations to pay what they owe, by closing the loopholes that have allowed them to avoid \$30 billion in taxes in 2021 alone, resulting in a corporate tax rate that is effectively lower now than when this government was elected;

The motion talks about tax avoidance by all corporations in every sector to the tune of \$30 billion. In fact, that corresponds to the difference between the corporate tax rate, which is 25%, and the rate corporations actually pay, which is around 15%. We have to be very careful when we make such statements since the gap between the tax rate and the effective tax rate is not necessarily due to abuse.

Parliament often adopts measures to provide tax breaks and tax credits to encourage good behaviour. Just look at the research and development tax credit and the production technology tax credits, which increase productivity and help limit the effects of the labour shortage. Look at the tax credit for clean technologies and the deductibility of contributions to pension plans and workers' group insurance plans.

All those credits lower the effective tax rate, but they are neither abuse nor fraud. It is false and inflammatory to suggest that inflation is due in large part to greedy corporations not paying their fair share of taxes.

Madam Speaker, I would ask the Liberals to respect decorum. I know they do not listen when members are speaking in French in the House, but they could at least keep quiet so as not to interfere with the business of the House.

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

I would like to remind members that, if they want to have discussions outside the time provided for questions and comments, they have to go to the lobby.

In the meantime, I will let the hon. member for Joliette continue his speech.

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, we need a tax system that is fair and equitable. The system should be progressive, with the wealthy contributing more to support public services. Obviously, that should apply to corporate profits too.

To achieve a fair and equitable tax system, I urge parliamentarians to do much more to fight tax evasion and tax avoidance. Tax havens are becoming increasingly popular because of lax legislation. Companies open subsidiaries that are nothing but empty shells. They do not do anything. They exist solely for the purpose of tax evasion. By recording revenue in empty shells, profitable corporations declare next to no profits in countries with normal tax rules. That is how they avoid paying tax. These despicable schemes carried out with the help of unscrupulous experts are usually perfectly legal. That is what we call tax avoidance. We need to change the laws and regulations as soon as possible.

Wealthy individuals usually opt to shelter their fortunes and their income in tax havens where information is less transparent so they can cheat the tax system. That kind of fraud is tax evasion. It is also important to note that organized crime and terrorist groups use tax havens.

According to the World Bank, in 2016, tax havens held more than \$36 trillion U.S. Yes, I said \$36 trillion U.S. The situation is probably even worse today.

According to economist Gabriel Zucman, in 2017, no less than 40% of international financial transactions involved tax havens in some way.

The International Monetary Fund estimates that the use of tax havens costs governments \$600 billion a year in lost corporate income tax revenue and \$200 billion in lost individual income tax revenue, for a total of \$800 billion.

As expert Alain Deneault notes, everyone else has to make up this shortfall, either by paying higher taxes or by enduring austerity policies.

Considering their impact on government finances and operations, tax havens are a major political issue. The public wants them to disappear, but those profiting from them want them to stay. As the IMF concluded, “the wealthier the individual and the larger the multinational corporation...the more deeply they are embedded in the offshore system and the more vigorously they defend it”. That has to change.

Statistics Canada reports that Canadian corporations invested \$381 billion in the top 12 tax havens in 2019. That is nearly one-third of all Canadian foreign investment.

In a 2019 report, the Parliamentary Budget Officer found that “financial flows between Canada and certain jurisdictions are disproportionately large compared to their GDP”. This proves that

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those amounts are not genuine investments, but rather accounting manoeuvres aimed at evading taxes.

Also in 2019, the CRA estimated that the use of tax havens by Canadian companies could be costing the treasury up to \$11.4 billion in lost revenue, more than three-quarters of which would be from large corporations. That is four times more than the CRA had estimated that it was losing to individuals' use of tax havens in a report published the previous year. That amount is undoubtedly vastly underestimated.

In fact, the CRA was only considering schemes that were fraudulent or dubious, not those that were perfectly legal, as “its report does not estimate the gap resulting from ‘legal’ tax avoidance through profit shifting”, which is much greater.

The federal government is complacent with respect to the fraud and abuse that takes place with the use of tax havens. Parliament allocates ever higher amounts to help the agency tackle the problem, but nothing happens and we are not seeing results. Not only is the government complacent in going after fraudsters but it has essentially legalized the use of tax havens.

Unlike the NDP motion, which only condemns the greed of bad companies and accuses them of causing inflation, the Bloc Québécois's more constructive approach specifically targets the problem of tax avoidance with the use of foreign tax havens. We are proposing six possible solutions.

First, amend the Income Tax Act and the Income Tax Regulations to ensure that income that Canadian corporations repatriate from their subsidiaries in tax havens ceases to be exempt from tax in Canada.

Second, review the concept of permanent establishment so that income reported by shell companies created abroad by Canadian taxpayers for tax purposes is taxed in Canada.

● (1200)

Third, require banks and other federally regulated financial institutions to disclose, in their annual reports, a list of their foreign subsidiaries and the amount of tax they would have been subject to had their income been reported in Canada.

Fourth, review the tax regime applicable to digital multinationals, whose operations do not depend on having a physical presence, to tax them based on where they conduct business rather than where they reside. Progress is being made in that regard.

Fifth, work toward establishing a global registry of actual beneficiaries of shell companies to more effectively combat tax evasion.

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Sixth, and finally, use the global financial crisis caused by the pandemic to launch, or relaunch, a strong offensive at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development against tax havens with the aim of eradicating them for good.

• (1205)

[English]

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, and I hope that Bloc Québécois members bring all of those points forward in their next opposition day motion. It would be a bit much if we included all of that in ours today, but I think we totally agree with the member.

I will bring up one example that I would like to talk about here in the House, because it shows how egregious these offshore tax havens are.

A Canadian mining company had a big mine in Mongolia, and over the course of five years or so, it was facing \$600 million in Canadian tax and \$200 million in Mongolian tax. However, the company opened a post office box, not an office, in Luxembourg and wrote to the CRA to ask if it was legitimate. The CRA said it could go for it because it was perfectly legal. The company ended up paying no tax in Canada, no tax in Mongolia and \$80 million in tax to Luxembourg, and it is legal. We have to change this.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague that this has to change. We just need the government to show some political will. The problem is that the power keeps bouncing back and forth between two parties that have no interest in doing anything about it, so it remains legal.

The kind of scheme my colleague described would simply be illegal in many other countries, and possibly even punishable by imprisonment. Here, companies ask for advice and are told that everything is just fine. If there is a problem, they are told to simply pay the tax they should have paid, without any further consequences. Meanwhile, people would go to jail in many other countries.

This has to change, but the government needs to show the political will to change it.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity to listen to quite a bit of the debate today, and I guess the overriding concern that I have is the bottom line, which is the cost of inflation with respect to food for the constituents I represent. This is something that is so critically important for all of us.

The debate on the floor of the House of Commons here in Ottawa has an impact in itself. I would ask the member if he agrees that, since the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food will now be looking at this, in part because of this debate, the committee has a great opportunity to ensure that there is going to be more accountability in terms of the cost of food in Canada today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

When it comes to the work of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, we should draw inspiration from what the British Parliament is doing. We know that the food distribution sector is an oligopoly. Do its members engage in reprehensible practices? Did they take advantage of their position and increase profits off the backs of the thousands of farmers who compete with each other or the millions of consumers who buy their products? Was there collusion that would explain these excessive profits?

The Competition Bureau should look into this. The British Parliament has given that mandate to its competition bureau. As stated in this motion, the Competition Bureau should be given the mandate to study whether there is collusion that resulted in excessive profits, and then we can intervene. It is our duty to give this mandate to the Competition Bureau.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is always exciting and interesting to hear my colleague speak so passionately.

Is Canada's Competition Bureau doing enough? Can it be given a stricter mandate and should it be given a stricter mandate?

• (1210)

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie:** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from Beauport—Limoilou for her question and for the excellent and tireless work she does in the House.

The Competition Bureau is not doing enough at the moment. Obviously, it is up to the government and the House to tell it to do more, to take on more cases, conduct more studies and intervene more.

Competition is very important. I will remind members of the time Rona was sold to the American company Lowe's. The Competition Bureau had the power to do something about that but chose not to, and, in my view, that deal was bad for the Quebec economy.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Nunavut.

I am pleased to rise today to speak to the motion in the name of my esteemed colleague from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. I commend him on his excellent advocacy on behalf of workers and producers in the agricultural sector. I also commend our leader, the member for Burnaby South, for his unwavering fight to force CEOs and big corporations to pay what they owe and to tackle the corporate greed that has gouged families in every corner of our country.

As more and more people struggle to make ends meet, wealthy CEOs are raking in record profits. To make matters worse, workers' wages are not keeping up with these rising profits or inflation. The motion we are debating today is a logical and responsible response to alleviate the burden being placed on workers, families, seniors and Canadians as a whole by closing the tax loopholes the government and its Conservative counterparts continue to support, allowing these already-wealthy CEOs and big corporations to avoid paying \$30 billion in taxes in 2021 alone.

After seven years in government, the Liberals continue to allow ultrarich CEOs and large corporations to avoid paying their fair share. While making these profits, they are stagnating the wages of workers and increasing prices. After seven years of government promises to be there for people and have large corporations pay their fair share, we are instead where we are today, with large corporations continuing to benefit off the backs of everyday Canadians.

While the Conservatives continue to make noise, they continue to prop up the ultrarich while leaving people behind. The Conservatives will always have the backs of their wealthy friends, not those who need it most. While the new Conservative leader was minister, the Conservatives cut the tax audit of the wealthiest and prioritized excessive CEO profits. While the Conservatives fight against children having dental care, they step back and prop up the Liberals to continue, as they always have, refusing to have those making the most pay their fair share.

My NDP colleagues and I continue to fight for people, as we always have. Instead of sitting idly and continuing with the status quo of the rich getting richer, we continue to pressure the Liberals to make the wealthiest CEOs pay what they owe and to stop the price gouging they are doing to people.

I want to take a moment to look at what we are talking about exactly. While Canadians pay the price for rising food, billionaire Galen Weston, chairman of Loblaw Companies, which includes stores like Real Canadian Superstore and Extra Foods, has increased dividends to shareholders from \$118 million to \$125 million by 2022. While shareholders reap the profits, more and more Canadians are having to cut back on the amount of food they buy. As a matter of fact, 23.6% of Canadians in a recent survey identified having to do so. We are not talking about Canadians having to cut back on luxuries here. We are talking about Canadians having to cut back on the basics: bread, milk, meat, fruits and veggies.

Canadians not having access to nutritious foods impacts us all. Prior to entering federal politics, my work was focused on the many symptoms of poverty and fighting for those who have the least to access their most basic human rights, such as a home, food on the table and the head-to-toe health care they deserve. I worked on the front lines with those who are almost always forgotten in the decisions being made by the federal government. The decisions made in this very chamber impact the lives of Canadians in endless ways. Every decision is an opportunity to do better, and this is even more true at a time when so many are struggling to make ends meet.

Children are among those most impacted by these decisions. In my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, over half of children of lone-parent families live in poverty. Imagine for a moment a parent

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working hard to provide for their children, yet regardless of how hard they work, the money coming in does not cover even the most basic expenses. To make matters worse, the cost of living continues to increase, leaving them further behind than they were when they began.

I understand first-hand the frustration and hopelessness that parents trying to give their kids the best start in life experience and feel when all the systems surrounding them have set them up for failure. No matter how hard they work, they are always worried about how they are going to keep a roof over their heads, healthy food in their kids' stomachs and even transportation to school. However, children in Canada, who will one day be the ones to make decisions about our well-being, are often an afterthought.

● (1215)

There is no reason that children in Canada should not have access to healthy, nutritious foods. We know healthy foods are essential to the development and learning of children, yet while I was working in schools and had the honour to serve as a school board trustee, I saw too many children show up to school hungry. This impacted children in endless ways, with increased misbehaviour and challenges in learning, and now we know that the number of children showing up to school hungry continues to increase.

I am thankful for the work of so many on the ground in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith who continue to do what is best for our communities despite the challenges that are being faced. I think of Nanaimo Foodshare, as one example, which continues to provide what it calls “good food boxes”. These boxes are offered on a pay-as-one-can basis to members of the community and include seven to nine varieties of whole fruits and vegetables, all packed and provided by the hard work of local volunteers. I also think of the Ladysmith Resources Centre Association, which offers a food recovery program that collects food from commercial production and distribution channels and redistributes it to those in need.

We know that those using food banks are disproportionately women, children, indigenous and racialized individuals, and those living with disabilities. Nanaimo Loaves & Fishes Community Food Bank in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith has distributed 2.4 million pounds of food, valued at \$6.5 million, to people on Vancouver Island directly or through first nation communities, non-profits, food banks and schools.

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Clearly, as Canadians, we carry on the deep-rooted values of taking care of one another, but the onus of responsibility should not be laid on the shoulders of members of our communities. We need federal leadership that prioritizes people first, not the profits of rich CEOs. The trickle effect of the lack of federal leadership can be felt at every level: provincial and territorial, municipal, first nations and even school boards. Our municipalities and school boards, for example, should not be left to pick up the pieces where the government has failed with minimal resources to do so. Nobody benefits from this.

It is not just children who are impacted by the government's inaction. The number of seniors trying to make ends meet with low, fixed incomes while costs continue to increase is also on the rise. In 2018, 12% of seniors in Nanaimo were living in poverty, and we know that this number has seen steep inclines since. I heard from a senior recently, who wrote to me and said, "I am a senior who is just trying to live on a fixed income. Rent increases, cost of food, just too much to list. We were the people who helped build this country and we need to see some help please."

There are also those who get up in the morning and head to work daily in order to provide for their families. They are also unable to make ends meet. It is sad to see so many working hard, day in and day out, and still struggling. This is just not right.

The cost of so many people struggling impacts us all in many ways. We know that as the number of people struggling to make ends meet increases, so do the needs within our health care system, as just one example. When we take care of one another and remain proactive with the ways we do so, we all benefit. It costs us all to leave people behind.

That is why the motion we are debating today is so important. While so many are going hungry in our country, wealthy CEOs are making record profits. It is time we force CEOs and big, wealthy corporations to pay what they owe so that this money can go where we need it most: back to people.

It is time to launch an affordable and fair food strategy that tackles corporate greed in the grocery sector and includes a full investigation into grocery chain profits, while increasing the ways we can hold them to account for abusing their positions for gain. It is time to remember that the decisions we make today impact people and that nobody benefits when we line the pockets of the ultrarich at the expense of Canadians.

I am happy to vote in support of this motion to do what is right for people, and I hope my colleagues in this chamber will do the same.

• (1220)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague for her speech and her passion for this file.

We have been hearing a lot more about inflation and tax havens in recent speeches. However, we know that the food issue, particu-

larly regarding food prices and inflation on store shelves, is more complicated than that.

Will the committee study of this motion take into account our farmers and factors like climate change, labour shortages, the next generation of farmers, the effects of the illegal war in Ukraine and any other elements that contribute to higher prices in our stores?

[*English*]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Madam Speaker, it is clear that this issue is complex. There are many different factors that we need to be looking at.

However, in response to the member's question, I will quote from an article about Jim Stanford, an economist and director of the Centre for Future Work, who says that when people spend more on shopping, it inflates supermarket profits. This is "acting as a kind of trickle-up economics and transferring wealth from the poorest to the richest.

"The inflation we're seeing 'wasn't caused by wages,' Stanford said, or by workers. 'It's caused by greed.'"

This is why this motion is so important. We need to look at what is happening, look at the greedflation that is happening around us and finally start having those who are profiting off the backs of Canadians pay their fair share.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the enthusiasm of the speech, but I would like her to respond to a couple of things. When corporations pay dividends, those dividends go to Canadian pensioners. We have to remember that a lot of Canadians rely on the income they get from their pensions.

We will hear no opposition from this side of the House to corporations paying their fair share. We believe that, before we think about increasing taxes on Canadians, we should make people pay the taxes they actually owe.

Is the NDP willing to accept the results of the investigation at the agriculture committee, or does it already have its mind made up because it is good politics? The average net margins in grocery store are about 2% to 4%. It has been that way for about 10 years, and that is what they are right now.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Madam Speaker, I hope this is supported and goes to committee so we can look at the results from witnesses and from those who are seeing, first-hand, the impacts.

What we know is that currently the system is set up to be lining the pockets of the ultrarich at the expense of everyday Canadians. I cannot reiterate that more than today. We are seeing the trickle impact. When I was in a level of government that was very local, we could see the impacts of federal inaction and how it trickles down to everyday people on the ground.



We need to be flipping this on its head and starting to make choices that benefit workers, seniors and children in our communities.

[Translation]

**Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois is proposing measures to combat inflation. It is suggesting, for example, helping people who are hardest hit by inflation, including pensioners, who are often on a fixed income.

I did not hear the NDP say anything about that. Still, I do think that the NDP MPs are also concerned about inflation. I would like to know if we can count on the NDP's support to help our seniors have better living conditions.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the emphasis on seniors, and I most definitely mentioned this, although it may have been missed, in my speech. I spoke of seniors who are living off of fixed incomes, who are feeling the burden of the cost of living continuing to increase while the income they are receiving remains fixed and, by far, does not bring in enough to make ends meet.

Absolutely, anything that we can do to provide seniors with dignity and respect into their retirement, and to ensure that they are able to put food on their tables, I am in support of. I would be happy to continue the conversation with my colleague from the Bloc.

● (1225)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, big grocery stores are taking too much from struggling Canadians. Much of the time the north experiences unique challenges. Unfortunately, the north is not immune to this issue.

NorthMart, owned by the North West Company, reported net earnings of over \$150 million in 2021. This is nearly a 10% increase from the year before. Canadians need answers. Shareholders profited from increased prices while families went hungry.

In Nunavut, one in four households are severely food insecure. Food Banks Canada reported that many of these families are female-led. It said that, in 2020, the cost to feed a family of four in Iqaluit was roughly \$1,721 per month. In Ottawa, that cost was around \$868. That is almost doubled in Iqaluit. No one should have to worry about putting food on the table. Nunavummiut have been past this breaking point for years.

The current inflation has worsened the situation for my constituents. The federal nutrition north program is failing to make a meaningful difference. The price of bread ranges from three dollars to five dollars. In the rest of Canada, that price is less than two dollars. Subsidies from the federal nutrition north program should be going to families. Instead, the \$103-million program is failing to make a difference in the price of food. Grocery stores are using the money for their own interests. In return, food prices continue to climb. Nunavummiut deserve answers.

Nunavut is being geodiscriminated against because food needs to be flown into communities. With no competitive regulations, food costs continue to climb with no intervention. Nunavummiut are

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forced to pay these costs because there are no alternatives. Without a competitive food market, costs will go unregulated. Southern companies line their pockets with profits while northern communities go without. Northern retailers receive a subsidy for every kilogram of staple food they ship to northern communities. There are no rules on pricing. They are taking advantage of the money, and the families in Nunavut are the ones who suffer.

Climate change and corporate greed are making it more difficult for Inuit to have access to traditional foods. Caribou populations are declining, and increased stress on other species is having an effect. By limiting what can be harvested, there is more reliance on food from grocery stores.

Food insecurity in the north is the longest-lasting public health emergency in Canadian history. This problem is not a new one, but it is one that continues to be ignored. The wages of workers are not keeping up with food costs. Children are going to school hungry. Food is a human right, not a luxury, but the current price of food is saying otherwise. Change needs to happen. We cannot keep going at this rate.

CEOs and big corporations are not paying what they owe. My community and others like it are suffering. Corporate greed will not stop unless we make it stop. An investigation needs to occur. The penalties for price-fixing need to be more strict. A slap on the wrist is not enough. One company should not have this much power.

I thank poverty advocate Irene Breckon, from Elliot Lake, a member of the riding of Algoma—Manitoulin—Kapusking, who initiated the class action lawsuit that brought this issue to light.

● (1230)

Shipping costs can no longer be an excuse for the rising costs of food. We need to look at the root of the problem. Nearly \$30 billion in taxes were avoided in 2021 by CEOs and big corporations. This is where the problem is. This is where change needs to happen. Canadians deserve answers.

We need to support the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food. Action needs to happen. Data needs to be made available. My community deserves answers. Without a competitive food market, tinfoil can be priced at \$64. Indigenous communities will continue to be at risk at this rate.

**Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from Nunavut for her incredibly important and unique perspective, and for sharing that with the House for this critical debate.

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Residents in my riding of Windsor—Tecumseh are also concerned about the high price of groceries. They are also seeing the skyrocketing profits of grocery store chains. I, too, applaud the work of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, and specifically calling CEOs of grocery stores in to testify.

What would be the first question the hon. colleague would ask the CEOs testifying at this committee?

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** *Uqaqtittiji*, the first question I would ask is how they formulate profits over prices, because prices do not need to be at the cost of profits going to CEOs.

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, over the summer I had a chance to visit Yukon. I went to the north and spoke with some people who are farming up in the north.

I was blown away by what they are doing with very little compared to what we have here. Where I am from, Lambton—Kent—Middlesex in southwestern Ontario, we have a plethora agriculture. We are right in the heart of fruit and vegetable production. What they were doing in the north was nothing short of a miracle, growing fresh fruit and vegetables. I was impressed with how they actually do have a selection in the north.

That being said, with prices continually rising for inputs, whether it is fertilizer or carbon tax on the transportation to get the goods up to the north, we are seeing increases at the farm gate. I can speak from experience. As somebody who is growing agricultural products right now, who is farming, I see my inputs going up, which means that I will have to pass that cost on to the next person down the chain, the grocer who is buying it to resell. If I am seeing an price increase, there is going to be a price increase at the grocery store.

Could the member comment on what the government could be doing to help reduce some of those costs at the farm gate so we could have more affordable production of food in this country?

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** *Uqaqtittiji*, the realities in Nunavut are very different from the other northern territories, NWT and Yukon, so food production is quite different.

For Nunavut, one of the ways that improvements could be made is to better support hunters and harvesters who still rely on subsistence hunting, which they do not get enough support for. I would definitely professionalize the systems in which Inuit thrive in the Arctic and find a way to make sure we are reducing reliance on government programs so more individuals could be self-sufficient with the skills they have.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, as my colleagues have said today, some of the astronomical profits made by the large grocery store chains come from the fact that there are research and development tax credits, among others. I will not list them all.

My question is the following. If these tax credits would help us develop the means for the north to have high-quality, fresh affordable food, would the reinvestment of these profits into research and development be more acceptable to my colleague?

• (1235)

[English]

**Ms. Lori Idlout:** *Uqaqtittiji*, I was very recently in Greenland with other parliamentarians at the Arctic parliamentarians summit, and we had the great pleasure of visiting a greenhouse facility that runs on hydroponics. It was such a great example of what can happen in Arctic communities, and we need to model those kinds of examples. If they can work in Greenland, they should be able to work in Nunavut as well.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, first and foremost, I would like to mention that I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Winnipeg North.

I would like to thank the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford for raising this very important issue.

Today my colleagues have talked about the factors that affect food prices and our efforts to ensure Canadians have access to healthy and affordable food. There has been a lot of talk about retail prices, inflation and tax havens, but I want to approach the issue from a new angle.

Specifically, I am talking about food on store shelves that is coming from producers. Canadian farmers produce the best food in Canada and provide quality, nutritious products for Canadians across the country.

This week, the House began the second reading of Bill S-227 to establish food day in Canada. My riding has a lot of agriculture-related businesses, each more diverse than the last, and I have had the opportunity to look at the issue of the price of food on store shelves. The producers have helped me understand certain things, and I would like to share that with the House.

This food day is very important for the people of Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation. It will strengthen ties between consumers and farmers by showcasing the richness and diversity of the local, high-quality and safe food they produce. It is important to have food, especially fresh and healthy food.

We need to remind Canadians that the agri-food sector contributes significantly to Canada's economic, social and environmental well-being and the health of Canadians. Everyone is facing the same problems these days related to labour shortages and transportation. Our schools providing training in the food-related trades are even having a hard time recruiting people. We are starting from a very long way down in the food chain.

Across Canada, food producers and processors are the engine of our economy. They contribute more than \$130 billion to Canada's GDP and account for over \$80 billion in exports. In addition, one in nine jobs created is food related. I would also like to highlight the contribution of all workers in the agriculture and agri-food sector, from farm to fork.

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Last week, I had the opportunity to celebrate a third-generation dairy farmer in my riding. As many of us know, it is increasingly difficult to recruit the next generation of farmers, and it is increasingly difficult to ensure the survival of these industries that put food on our plates.

Over the past two years of the pandemic, farmers truly have taken the lead to ensure that Canadians have the safe, high quality and local food they need.

The pandemic may be an excuse, but it has certainly renewed the loyalty of Canadians for the fabulous local food and drink produced by Canadian producers and processors.

Buying local has become more popular than ever. More than 90% of Canadians say they look for locally produced products to support the local economy and reduce the impact on the environment, or the “food miles”. People are trying to reduce how far food is transported and to create a local synergy so that we can consume local more.

Today, more and more consumers want to know where their food comes from. They want to know whether the food is organic and how it is grown. They want to know what they are eating and to understand the growing and livestock living conditions. Consumers want to reconnect to agriculture and support the local economy.

The agriculture and agri-food sector has a lot to gain by reinforcing the relationship that has been established with its clients. It is a new way of thinking about our producers and farmers that we have not seen in the past decades.

Establishing direct contact with Canadians fosters dialogue about consumer values and industry practices. As a result, consumers can make informed decisions and the industry could focus its investment on continually improving its production practices.

I believe that many consumers would be impressed to see the progress made in Canadian agricultural operations in recent years.

● (1240)

Last week, in my riding, I met another dairy producer who uses robotics. He uses advanced technologies to improve milking and care for his cows and to put more products on our tables and plates. The era of pitchforks and horse-drawn carriages is over.

Farmers are using state-of-the-art tools to improve efficiency and adopt sustainable agricultural practices. Technology is opening up new horizons for food and agriculture and for other sectors of the economy. We must adapt to climate change. We must innovate and we must be there to anticipate climate change.

Precision farming now allows farmers to adjust inputs such as water and fertilizer and even to identify the plants that need them. Farmers can work smarter when it comes to procuring what is needed for production. Thus, farmers can save money and reduce their impact on the environment by using fewer inputs. This allows them to do more with less.

Farmers now use drones to detect pests, nutrient deficiencies in crops and weeds. Today, the possibilities for this technology are endless.

Farms have also made many advances in animal health and food safety. Many farms have strict biosecurity measures in place. Today, all of these measures must be considered. We must consider more than just inflation when looking at the price of food on store shelves. We have to look at the whole supply chain, beginning with our producers.

Today, our producers are doing better with technology, but factors such as transportation, labour shortages and climate change have a direct impact on consumer prices.

Many farms are implementing biosecurity measures. For example, access to a hog farm now requires showers on entry and exit to maintain animal health. That is just one example.

Responsible use of animal health products is another way farmers can keep animals healthy while ensuring food safety. Producers face many restrictions, and we need to reach out to them to make them better. Farmers care about food safety as much as they care about the environment. It is critical to their success.

More than ever before, their clients in Canada and abroad want to know where their food comes from, how it was produced and what its ecological footprint is. They also want to know how we ensure the animals are well treated. Public trust is valuable and we must find new ways to strengthen our connection with consumers. That is why the bill to establish food day in Canada is so important.

Last year, the government put in place another measure to strengthen confidence in Canadian foods by launching the agricom- munication initiative, which aims to build stronger links between Canadians and the agricultural sector. Agricom- munication will help farmers discuss their concerns with Canadians. That is why I regularly consult the producers in my riding to find out how we could do better. The way they take care of our environment and their animals is important, now more than ever. They are stepping up their efforts to implement sustainable practices.

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The initiative will enable us to gather more information so we can help producers learn more about consumer expectations. Organizations can use the funding to develop digital communications products for consumers that show how producers are fighting climate change by practising crop rotation and using green technology. I heard about this last week in my riding. This funding can also help not-for-profit groups organize events like farm tours to show members of the public how farmers care for their animals, the soil and the water.

In closing, our government is working tirelessly to ensure the safety and security of our food supply, strengthen connections from farm to table, support local farmers, celebrate our wonderful local foods and ensure that all Canadians have access to the healthy food they need.

• (1245)

[*English*]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a couple questions. The member told my colleague in the previous speech that there was some complexity to the food system, and he brought forward an awful lot of suggestions, options and information in his speech. I think, as a member of the government, it would be fantastic if his government was to bring some of these things forward. What we are doing right now with the NDP motion is bringing forward three concrete steps that can be used at this point to help. The motion would not solve the food crisis writ large. It would be three concrete steps that would go toward solving that for Canadians.

I am wondering whether he will be supporting this motion, and if not, which of those three very concrete steps, which are not a comprehensive food strategy for all things, he is opposed to.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, our government has already made a commitment to some elements of this motion. We have already implemented some measures.

My colleague asked me if I will support this motion. I will support it because it is important enough to be studied in committee.

Is all of it current? I think not. I really think we will have to address it point by point and show how the government has already made progress on some of the demands.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, there are some things I can agree with the member on in his speech. I know that might be shocking, but he did say, and I agree 100%, that Canadian farmers grow the best food and produce in the world, not just in Canada. We need to be proud of what our farmers do, day in and day out.

They do take the steps necessary for biosecurity, for ensuring the health of their animals and herds. These are families' livelihoods. This is what puts bread and butter on the tables of farmers: taking care of their land, being stewards of their land and caring for the health of their animals, and at the same time producing food to feed the world.

Farmers face a lot of labour challenges. We have advanced technology, but what I find fascinating is that, while the member opposite will say some of the things he knows and thinks Canadians want to hear, the exact opposite is true with the policies of the government and how it is treating farmers.

I was wondering if the member could speak to why the Liberals continue to not support our farmers, not believe they have the best tools to make decisions for their farms and not give them credit for the good things they are doing on their land to reduce emissions and to reduce—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. parliamentary secretary.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that my colleague is also singing the praises of farmers. We are seeing today that they do an excellent job.

We must acknowledge that producers are dealing with a level of biodiversity unlike that of the past. They have to adapt. This new biodiversity is mainly the result of climate change. We are experiencing tornadoes. We are experiencing storms. There have been floods in my riding. Farms were surrounded by water. Thousands of litres of milk were dumped into the river because it could not be collected. Land was destroyed.

We have to address climate change as quickly as possible. This side of the House is taking concrete action to address climate change.

• (1250)

[*English*]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for bringing forward such a wide range of impacts on our food supply, and also highlighting Food Day Canada, which is hopefully coming through Parliament, and the work of innovation.

The hon. member could maybe highlight the need to protect our water supply and climate, so that farmers can do the work they do so well. An elder from the indigenous community said that our climate crisis is actually a water crisis, and that impacts the cost of food we are debating today. Could the hon. member expand on that?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. Of course, waterways are affected by climate crises, and they are an essential resource for farmers. Farmers use water to produce food and irrigate the land.

With the changing climate, our government must take the necessary measures to deal with the climate crisis as quickly as possible.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it almost goes without saying that we understand and appreciate what is taking place in the communities we represent. The Prime Minister often reminds us that as members of Parliament we want to bring the issues that are happening within our constituencies here to Ottawa and ultimately, whether in standing committees, on the floor of the House or within our caucus walls, express those feelings and the issues that are so important to our constituents.

It is upsetting when one gets a call, or is communicating with someone in one form or another, and they are genuinely and justifiably concerned about the issue of inflation. Food is not an option, and we understand that. I understand that, as do all members of Parliament, I would think, and we are concerned about the price of food today, which is why it is quite encouraging that we are having this debate.

I compliment the New Democrats for coming forward with this opposition day motion. Having this debate here on the floor of the House of Commons sends an important message to many of the individuals who might be exploiting the situation that is causing some of the inflation that we are seeing. That message is that we, as parliamentarians, are listening to our constituents. We are genuinely concerned about the issue of inflation and, for me personally and I know for many others, the issue of food prices.

We owe a great deal of gratitude, whether it is to the lobster farms in Atlantic Canada, our cattle and pork industries in the prairies, our salmon and fishery industries out in B.C. or the Arctic char industry up north. From coast to coast to coast, we have some truly amazing people. Through their efforts, not only is Canada provided the necessary nutrition, but we help to feed the world with quality product that is second to none in the world.

We recognize that, but we also see the difficulty and the level of effort our prairie farmers have to put in to produce our wheat, for example. It has to be a love, because often these individuals are receiving not much more than minimum wage, and some would argue even less than minimum wage. However, they understand the important role they have in our communities in many different ways, such as being primary in providing food.

I do not believe for a moment that our producers are gouging in any way whatsoever. I believe they are sacrificing in many ways. The constituents I represent who are doing the shopping understand that, at times, inflation occurs. However, they are concerned, whether it is with what they hear in the news or about the price of a product, about being taken advantage of. Whether one is a federal or provincial politician, I think we all need to do what we can.

We have recognized the importance of tax fairness from day one. We have a Prime Minister who, when we first came to office, said that we want to ensure that people are paying their fair share of taxes, which is the reason that one of the very first things we did was put a special tax on Canada's wealthiest 1%. The wealthiest 1% of Canadians received an additional tax rate hike from the government. At the same time, we reduced the tax rate for Canada's middle class. Not only did we introduce those measures, but all of our Liberal caucus voted in favour of them.

● (1255)

From those two pieces of legislation, we have continued to support Canadians. We realize that we want an economy that works for everyone. It is important that we support Canada's middle class. It is important that we support those who have extra needs. That is why, if colleagues look at the budgetary and legislative action that we have taken over these years, including legislation we passed just yesterday, they will see that we have had a very progressive attitude in supporting Canadians. I can cite a number of examples, such as in the legislation we have before us.

We just finished passing Bill C-30, which will enhance the GST rebate for 11 million Canadians. They will have more money in their pockets to assist in fighting inflation, because of that legislation.

We have other legislation, like Bill C-31, which is going to help individuals through the housing benefit. I believe about two million households will have additional money to assist them in dealing with the issue of inflation.

We are indexing the old age security and the guaranteed income supplement. In fact, on the OAS, because we know there is a difference of needs and abilities and additional costs for someone who is 75 or older, we are giving an additional 10% permanent increase.

Looking at child care, we have the first-ever national child care program, with the objective of making it more affordable. We are talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars in our communities, hundreds of millions throughout the country, in order to support that program.

We can talk about the dental program that we are bringing in through legislation, Bill C-31. That will again put money into individuals' pockets to ensure that young children under the age of 12 will be able to get dental services, which is not the case throughout Canada. These are all measures that I have listed, and there are more.

When the NDP talks about taxes, the reality is that we have budgets now where we have literally spent hundreds of millions of dollars through CRA to go after those individuals who have not paid their taxes. We want to ensure that if someone has a business in Canada and is working in Canada, whoever they may be, they are paying their taxes. Everyone has an important role to play in terms of paying their fair share of taxes. We take that very seriously, as I have illustrated virtually from day one.

Many aspects of the motion that the NDP has proposed today are already in progress. Some of it has already been done, but I believe it is a good motion. This motion could assist the agriculture committee. As parliamentarians, we want to do what we can for our constituents in ensuring that we are dealing with the issue of the cost of food. That is a good, solid commitment coming from the Government of Canada and, I would think, all members of the House.

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• (1300)

**Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC):** Madam Speaker, often I have to educate the member for Winnipeg North about how the aggressive policies that the Liberal government has brought forward are hurting Canadian farmers. The carbon tax, in itself, is escalating the price of food, increasing the price of production of that food and creating food insecurity. What the Liberals are doing on reducing the use of fertilizer in this country by 30% is actually going to reduce production by more than 30%.

Why do the Liberals hate the Canadian farmer? Why are they creating food insecurity? Why are they going to force Canadian farmers out of business and move that production elsewhere in the world, where they actually encourage their agricultural producers to grow more food?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I can tell the member that I love the prairie farmers. I love our farmers. In fact, we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars to support our farmers in regard to the environment. We are spending more money in the Department of Agriculture than the Stephen Harper government ever did.

When it comes to—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Could members allow the hon. member to answer the question without heckling, please?

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, when it comes to the issue of the price on pollution, less than a year ago, the member and all members of the Conservative Party were going around Canada saying they supported the price on pollution. It is flip-flop, a new leader and a new position.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am trying to hear myself think over the din of heckling coming from the opposition.

Earlier, we heard our friend from Kings—Hants talking about maybe going a little easier on our friends in the corporate sector, yet we see the CEO of Shell in the media saying they need the government to tax them more.

My question is on the principle of excess profits. A principle that Canada once held is that during a time of national crisis, like, for instance, the Second World War, it was inappropriate and reprehensible for corporate entities to make excess profits. Is this a principle that the parliamentary secretary believes is valid? We are getting through an extraordinary crisis as a country that is unparalleled in recent memory, yet we see certain companies posting record profits and taking advantage of the situation. Does he—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I will give the hon. parliamentary secretary an opportunity to answer.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, actions speak louder than words. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has actually applied a special corporate tax for financial and insurance institutions. We have a Minister of Finance and a government

that has now made a commitment, by the end of 2023, to end all oil subsidies in Canada.

Understanding the issue of fair taxation is something that the Prime Minister himself highlighted when we brought in our first piece of legislation, which ensured that Canada's wealthiest 1% would pay more of their fair share through an increase in tax rates. By the way, the NDP voted against it, but that is okay. We—

• (1305)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Speaker—

[English]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Can we have silence so the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou can ask a question?

The hon. member.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Madam Speaker, towards the end of his speech, my colleague talked about the measures put in place to combat tax havens and how much they cost. According to the Minister of National Revenue, those measures cost \$1 billion.

If a measure is to be cost-effective, it typically has to yield at least as much as it cost, if not more, within three to five years.

To what extent have these measures paid for themselves so far, knowing that Quebec has managed to do better with a smaller investment?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I believe it is over two budgets that well over \$1 billion has been committed to CRA to look at how we can prosecute, investigate and so forth. One would have to look at it to see the actual breakdown in terms of how many prosecutions are under way. That is what is important. Sometimes prosecutions take a while to get through the court system, and hopefully there will be a lot of negotiated settlements.

The point is that under this Prime Minister, for the first time, we are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in order to go after people—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski.

Before I start my speech on this very important motion today, I want to apologize to the amazing interpreters of this place. I was just in a committee where we were having some conversations with interpreters and some of their representations on the work they do here and the impacts that hybrid Parliament have had on them. I hope that all of us are mindful, as we go through this process, of how precious our interpreters are to the work we do. We should honour and respect them the best that we can.

Today, we are here to talk about fairness. I have talked about it in this place before, and I will never stop talking about it until I leave. It is the idea of having a bar of a dignity in our country, a bar of dignity that we do not let anyone fall below, that we hold one another to account. Whether as individuals, as corporations or as part of a big family or a small family, regardless of where we are from or our age, we need to commit, collectively, to having a bar of dignity that will allow people to live the best lives they can.

Today's motion talks specifically about that bar of dignity. We know that so many people across this country are falling behind. We know they do not have enough food to eat. We know they are unable to find somewhere safe to live. I am still saddened, disgusted and shocked by how many seniors from across the country are calling my office and talking about how close they are to losing their homes, how some of them, even as old as people in their 80s, are couch-surfing from one family friend to another, because they simply have nowhere safe to live.

Parents from across my constituency have told me that they do not have enough money to make ends meet, that they have made hard choices about what they will feed their children and whether they can make the basic necessities of their life happen.

I do not know about the other members, but I have lived through very hard financial times and, as a parent, one of the hardest things was saying no to my kids on things that I would regularly ensure they had. That is what is happening in our country.

We are talking about this bar of dignity, because we know that people are worried about whether they will be able to feed themselves. I have talked to parents who are not eating their last meal of the day so their kids have enough to eat for the whole day.

At the same time this is happening, CEOs and grocery stores are seeing huge returns. People in the oil and gas industry, at the top echelon of it, are making more profit than they have seen in over 30 years, while the most vulnerable, the most hard-working of them, the everyday people who are doing their jobs, going to work every day and coming home, who are doing nothing wrong, are paying the price of inflation and they are paying the price of the wealthy becoming wealthier.

The CEO of Sobeys has been awarded a total compensation package of \$8.6 million in 2022, which is over 15% from the previous year. I do not know about the rest of the members in this place, but the constituents who I have talked to have not seen their wages increase by 15%. They are not seeing that return on the hard work they are often doing so wealthy people can get these huge extra payments. That is shameful in a country like ours.

I keep hearing discussions on the Conservative side about whether we should be giving people this bit of money to help with

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their dental care, the one-time payment of \$500 to help get them through this next period of time. I think it is absolutely essential.

• (1310)

What is so sad is that both the Conservatives and Liberals are not talking about addressing the issue of ensuring the very ultrarich are paying their fair share. We hear from the government side, but we do not see action. What we do see are reports, like I saw the other day, of \$30 billion that could have been brought to Canada to help with key important things like non-market housing, housing that seniors, with their very limited fixed incomes, could afford to live in, or people who are struggling one day to the next with different challenges would have a place to stay, a place to call home.

This is happening because of tax loopholes. I bet a lot of people across the country right now are working very hard and paying their taxes. They do it during tax time. I talked to seniors who have a little extra and pay their taxes. I talked to working families that pay their taxes. Why do we have a system that builds in these loopholes that allow the very wealthy, who can afford to pay people who understand these systems, to get away with paying less? Why should hard-working Canadians pay more, in terms of share, than those who make so very much?

CEOs are walking away with huge bonuses, getting incredible raises of 15%, having millions of dollars in annual income, while 24% of people are cutting back on how much basic food they buy. These are real people in our communities who are having to make these hard decisions, and it is not fair. We need voices in this place fighting for fairness, that are saying that it is not right that there is this big disparity and it is growing every year. Everyday Canadians are staying at one level and the ultra-wealthy are rising and rising.

I hope that everybody in this place is going to support the motion, because this is about saying we are going to hold those making excess profits accountable and ensuring that they finally are going to pay their fair share, so the bar of dignity is there for all.

Not too long ago, there was an incident in one of my communities where some young people were addressing unhoused people in a manner that was less than profoundly kind. This tell me that if we are not fighting this lack of fairness, we will be allowing for things to happen in our society of which we will have to live the long-term consequences. It is hard for people who are unhoused. It is hard for their loved ones and for businesses. It is hard for everyone, but we do not have a government that is taking it seriously, in a profound way, and it is not taking action to address fairness.

It is really sad that we are now living in a country where eating without worry is becoming less and less of a reality. Eating without worry is now becoming a privileged place to be. That is absolutely shameful and we need to do better.

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There are things we can do and this motion would provide them. We can strengthen the Competition Act. We know that in European countries the competition laws can fine people substantively, so we need to do that. We need to ensure there is no price gouging. They have used it to ensure that pharmaceutical companies are not increasing medication costs, especially, for example, cancer drugs.

Right now, competition law in Canada has no teeth; it has no way of addressing this. This motion is about accountability to fairness and to the hard-working people of Canada. It is time we put it in place, and I hope every member in the House supports this.

● (1315)

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when we look at the text of the motion, I think most members in the House would agree that the conversation around food inflation and pricing is an important one, but it seems to suggest that there is already a predetermined outcome, that grocers and CEOs are absolutely price gouging.

When the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford raised his point, I asked him about whether there could be a correlation between the fact that many Canadians would have been buying groceries for home over the last year as opposed to eating at restaurants and that, because of the inflationary pressures we are seeing, prices could have been up, but grocery profits also could have been up because of the changed dynamic of how we were purchasing food and feeding ourselves over the last couple of years.

Does the member think there is a plausible rationale for why those two things are happening or is it just her assertion that grocers are absolutely price-fixing the system?

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, one of the things I have talked about for many years, prior to this job as well, is that systems matter. They matter profoundly. We can trust people and hope they are doing the right thing all the time. I am a person who usually believes that. I believe most people have a good heart and care about people, but without robust systems, we cannot be assured of that.

This motion talks about having that Canadian competition law and making it more assertive, aggressive and accountable for everyday Canadians. We can speculate who is doing what, but until we have the system that holds people and systems to account, we will never be at the place we need to be.

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I hear from my constituents on a regular basis, too, that they are having difficulties making ends meet. It is not just Canadians right now; we are seeing food insecurity across this globe. If we do not have farms in Canada, we do not have food. If we do not have a viable area in Canada to produce food, if we do not have good policy to back our farmers up, we will not have food sovereignty in Canada. We will not be able to feed not only ourselves, we will not be feeding the world and we will have a global food shortage.

I am wondering if my colleague can comment on what supports she thinks we need to see from the government and what we could be doing to improve supports to our farmers to ensure we can con-

tinue to have food sovereignty in Canada and have food security for folks, so they have available and affordable nutritious food.

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, in the area I live, we have different farms of different sizes that do incredible work to feed our communities. One of the things that is unique in our area, as we live on Vancouver Island, is that we have three days of food for people, and that is it. If there is any emergency, there is a lot of concern about what we will do to address the fact that there is three days of food on the whole island for the people who live there. If we cannot get food into our communities, it will have a profound impact.

Part of the solution is that all levels of government need to work with farmers to ensure they have a robust ability to do their work. I went to visit a farmer not too long ago in my riding. On Vancouver Island, we are seeing draught like we have never ever seen before. One of the things the farmer showed me was that she had dug a significantly huge hole so that during the winter it filled up with water, which allowed her to keep all her produce watered even during the draught. She talked about how we needed to do more work on those sorts of innovative solutions.

● (1320)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from North Island—Powell River on her excellent, empathetic and sensitive speech.

I completely agree on the issue of fairness and sensitivity to the populations or regions that are having a tougher time. I also think it is important to hold big corporations accountable and make them pay their fair share of tax.

This government is doing nothing to eliminate or correct the problem of tax avoidance and tax havens. In 2019, we lost \$381 billion to 12 tax havens. That is more than one-third of Canadian investments abroad.

Does the member not agree that it is good to bring in measures to help those who are struggling the most, but that we really need to stop big corporations from profiting from tax avoidance and these tax havens?

[*English*]

**Ms. Rachel Blaney:** Madam Speaker, I could not agree more. The bar of dignity in the country is based on our capacity to take the ultra-wealthy and make them accountable, to ensure they pay their fair share. We are not asking for more; we are asking them to pay for their fair share, like most Canadians do.



**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise today to talk about our NDP motion, proposed by my colleague the hon. member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, which urges the House to recognize the struggle and the pain Canadians are going through right now.

The reality is that excessive corporate profits and out-of-control inequality are harming our country. These excessive corporate profits are fuelling inflation. A government that cares for its citizenry would have done something about it. Sadly, we are not seeing that from the current government. A government that cared about the struggle that working people and families are going through would have requested an investigation into the predatory behaviour of grocery store chains. Not only did we not see that, but this is the same government that preferred to buy fridges for these grocery chains a short time ago.

Unfortunately, that is how it has been with the Liberal government, preferring empty words to real systemic change, preferring to be there to support its rich friends rather than holding them accountable and making them pay their fair share. It is time for the wealthy to pay their fair share in Canada. It is clear that we simply cannot afford not to do so. Every tax loophole and avoidance scheme is money taken out of the pockets of working people and the most vulnerable in our country. It keeps them in poverty and holds our country back. It is a choice made by the current government and governments before it to keep people poor, marginalized and divided. All the while the rich are laughing all the way to the bank.

It is clear that Canadians are angry. Many of them are increasingly also hungry. They cannot afford their next meal. They do not know how they are going to feed their families. All the while, rich CEOs in our country are gouging them. There is only so much to squeeze out.

It is hard to even call what is in our current system loopholes anymore, as these are by design. We are talking over \$30 billion in tax avoidance in 2021 alone from only 123 corporations. That is \$30 billion in the pockets of the already obscenely wealthy that could have been invested in communities across our country. Let us be clear. This is a choice, a choice with disastrous effects on Canada.

In August 2022, the price of a grocery basket rose 10.8% in one year, exactly twice as fast as people's wages. Meanwhile, the CEO of Sobeys has been given a total compensation package of \$8.6 million in 2022, an increase of more than 15.5% over 2021. This is a choice our government has made and it is clearly not a good one. The choice by the government to cover its eyes and avoid helping Canadians who are struggling has left nine out of 10 Canadians tightening their budgets, as if there was room for many to do so. Almost one-quarter of Canadians are buying less food. We need to call this what it is, a crisis, and one that has been growing for a long time for far too many people. It is only now that the Liberals are noticing.

While the Liberals are not offering any real solutions, and neither of course are the Conservatives despite all their bluster, there is an important distinction to make. We, in the NDP, will work with any-

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one if it means getting results for Canadians, if it means real results for people struggling to get by so they can get the supports they need, whether to make rent, get dental care or afford the most basic necessities.

When the Conservatives and the Liberals team up, watch out, because it is the little guys, the working people, the Canadians on the margins, who are getting screwed. They may sit on opposite sides of the House for the TV, but when it comes down to it, the Liberals and Conservatives have a track record of going to bat for the ultra-rich in Canada. This is the real coalition government in our country, one run by the wealthy, for the wealthy. It allows the Liberals and Conservatives to block meaningful change, whether it be ending the housing crisis facing indigenous communities, stopping the billion-dollar giveaways to big oil or ending the ability for telecom companies to screw Canadians over, time and time again.

● (1325)

This is perfectly in character for the new Conservative leader. Do not forget, the Conservative leader wants to give a \$567-million gift to corporate CEOs at the expense of workers, who will see their EI benefits and pensions cut. So much for standing up for working people. Not surprisingly, he has already voted against the minimum wage increase twice. Why is the Conservative leader putting the interests of wealthy CEOs ahead of workers?

What should we as parliamentarians, who are supposed to be acting in the best interests of Canadians, be doing next? We need to find solutions and act on them to end the unfair tax system. We must place a priority on fixing the tax gap, as highlighted by Canadians for Tax Fairness earlier this week.

First, we must raise the corporate income tax rate. It is only 15% today, and with all the loopholes available to corporations, it is clear that they can easily avoid, and they are easily avoiding, paying that tax. Increasing the basic tax rate is a solution to tackling inequality in our country.

Second, we must implement a minimum tax on book profits and take inspiration from what our neighbours to the south are doing. The U.S. Inflation Reduction Act passed this measure that will be a check on corporate exploitation of tax loopholes. It is essential in ensuring that we close the tax gap. Had Canada had a 15% minimum tax rate in 2021, we could have increased government revenues to fund essential services by over \$11 billion.

Third, we must close the capital gains loophole, finally. Income must be taxed as income, whether it is for rich shareholders or working-class Canadians. It is a matter of basic fairness. Doing so would go a long way to fixing the housing crisis that many people on first nations and indigenous communities face. It would go a long way to ending the crisis in our emergency rooms and hospitals. It would go a long way to lifting people up across our country in every community across Canada.

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The reality is that Canadians are struggling to make ends meet. Those of us connected to our communities hear this, day in and day out. In regions like mine, people do not have more to give. As somebody who represents one of the poorest parts of Canada, people are already set back and are only being set back further. I have heard from many indigenous people who had already been struggling to make ends meet and afford healthy foods in their communities that things have only become worse. I have heard from working people across our north, for whom access to basic services are already limited, that times are increasingly tough. I have heard from families who do not know how they are going to pay for a Thanksgiving meal with their children.

The reality is that we, as MPs, are not just here to talk about the difficulty people are facing. We are here to act on their behalf and to act on the solutions that many have said are right in front of us. That starts with showing some political will: political will that we have yet to see from Liberals and Conservatives, political will that prioritizes taxing the rich and political will that requires looking into why so many corporations, including supermarkets, made a killing during the pandemic and made sure their CEOs got off with major bonuses and incomes, only to see Canadians set further and further back.

We are not here to just talk; we are here to act. That is why I am proud that we in the NDP have put forward a concrete plan in today's motion to act on ending inequality in our country, to act on the affordability crisis many Canadians are facing and to act to end the greedflation that we are seeing, aided and abetted by the Liberal government.

Let us no longer sit by. On the eve of Thanksgiving and families coming together, however they do, to celebrate being together over food, let us make sure we are taking actions so that they can afford what they need, and what we all need, to move forward. It is our responsibility to act now.

• (1330)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I know the member in her speech referenced the political will of Conservatives and Liberals. I would encourage her to have a little more optimism and not to assume that there is no political will on this side of the House with regard to this motion. I certainly am very much interested in it. I do agree with her, in that I believe it is a well-crafted motion and that it hits on a number of things. There might a couple of words or terms in here I do not agree with, but I certainly agree with what the NDP has put forward.

I know the motion speaks specifically about the grocery sector, but I am curious if she can highlight any other sectors that she believes should also be looked at other than oil, which I think is a very obvious one. Are there other sectors the NDP believes we should be looking at?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the openness of the member and I certainly hope it will result in the Liberals supporting our motion and, more importantly, acting on what is in our motion, it has been disappointing so far to see the Liberal Party, which claims to stand up for the middle class, not actually taking

bold action when it comes to taxing the rich, which we know is a critical step in standing up for the middle class and reinvesting in our social programs and the social safety net that is essential to greater equality in our country.

We believe it is important to act on the recommendations in the groundbreaking report by Canadians for Tax Fairness. It is not a quick fix, but there are clear steps we could be taking right now to close loopholes, to tax capital gains and to increase the corporate tax rate, which would obviously apply to not just grocery chains but all sectors that have seen record profits during the pandemic.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today on behalf of the constituents of Regina—Lewvan and ask a question of my NDP colleague.

I listened to her speech very intently. One thing she talked about throughout her speech was how the government could get more money, how the government could cut more money and how the government could be more greedy and take more money from taxpayers and not put it back in taxpayers' pockets.

The member talked about concrete actions that could be taken to help Canadians. There are not a lot of concrete actions in here. There is talk of doing a study or making a plan. When we brought a forward a motion a couple of days ago to lower taxes for all Canadians, to make sure that they were not triple-taxed when it came to the carbon tax and to make sure that they were not further taxed on their paycheques when it came to EI and CPP, the New Democrats voted against that.

How far has the NDP fallen? How irrelevant is it going to become? It will basically be as irrelevant as Blockbuster video if it does not stop taxing Canadians.

• (1335)

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I had to compose myself, as somebody who grew up with Blockbuster video.

I am not sure the member actually listened to my speech, because what I was talking about was taxing corporations and the rich. Maybe he did not hear it because the Conservatives seem to be largely allergic to wanting to tax the rich and corporations, something that they did not do when they were in power a few years ago.

Concretely, we point to the groundbreaking work of Canadians for Tax Fairness that talked about the \$30 billion that corporations did not pay in taxes, the \$30 billion that could have and should have been invested in Canadians. I will say there is a double standard in this country. Working people are expected to pay their fair share of taxes while the richest among us get away scot-free. It is time for the Conservatives to get on board with the idea that there should be tax fairness for everybody, including their rich friends, who are clearly not paying their fair share of taxes. I invite the Conservatives to support our plan to tax the rich and lift Canadians up during these hard times.

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**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Madam Speaker, this afternoon some governing party members have bragged about a windfall tax on banks and insurance companies, yet the UN Secretary-General has called for the same windfall tax to be placed on the excess profits of oil and gas companies that are gouging Canadians at the pump in the midst of a climate crisis.

Could the member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski comment on the importance of the governing party following this call?

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Madam Speaker, we know it is bad when Shell is out there saying that oil and gas companies should be paying more in taxes.

Instead of hearing the Liberals listen to them or anybody else who has said that the time is now, not only in terms of tax fairness but also tackling the climate crisis, we need to step up—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Vaughan—Woodbridge.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is nice to see all of my wonderful colleagues today as we debate the opposition motion from the New Democratic Party. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

After reading the opposition day motion, it struck me that there were many things in it that related to what is called corporate concentration. As most of my colleagues know, I grew up in small-town Canada. I am the son of immigrant parents who worked hard, saved and provided a great future for their family and children. I went to university and then worked on Bay Street and Wall Street for over 20 years of my life. I am a big supporter of capitalism and free markets, which have lifted the tides and literally billions of people out of poverty across the world. However, I will also call out crony capitalism, excess corporate concentration and practices that are deemed uncompetitive and detrimental to consumers and individuals here in Canada and across the world.

When I worked in New York City, there was a point in time when there was an announcement that Canadian banks would merge and go from the five big banks, as they were referred to then, to three. At the time, there were arguments put forward that the banks needed to compete with the U.S. banks in size, and they were too small and needed efficiencies. The Liberal government, under then prime minister Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin subsequently, said no. When I think back to that decision, I think of how important it was for today. There are some members in the House currently who were members of Parliament during that time. Consider how anti-competitive that would have been for the Canadian marketplace.

When we think about corporate concentration today, it is why the Retail Council of Canada is working on a retail code of conduct for retailers. In other jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, this is much easier to do because it can be done at the federal level of government and that is that. However, here in Canada, we have a fiscal federation and the federal government must do it in unison with all the provinces, as our Minister of Agriculture is doing. She is working prudently and expeditiously with the provinces so that we have a retail code of conduct to deal with a lot of the issues relating to

corporate concentration in the Canadian marketplace when it comes to retail.

In a prior budget, we also introduced, under the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, the hon. member from Shawinigan and my dear friend, changes to the Competition Act. These changes are related to wage-fixing, drip pricing, private right of access for abuse of dominance allegations and expanded information-gathering powers. For these changes, as I have argued for a very long time, we need to give the Competition Bureau more teeth and more resources to ensure that we have a competitive marketplace in a number of our industries. It is very important that we as a government undertake these policies, because corporate concentration is an issue.

The Biden administration actually set up a White House Competition Council, led by Janet Yellen, to deal with these issues, and I would say that we are treating it as seriously as the Biden administration. It is very important. It showed up in relation to our budget with changes to the Competition Bureau. If members go to the August 8, 2022, release from the Competition Bureau, they will find a wonderful summary of the changes that are being recommended to ensure that we have competitive practices.

Members can look at the continuum of our agri-food industry. When I first joined Parliament, we had the Barton reports, which were developed by our government to identify industries of growth for our economy. The agri-food industry was one of them. As many know, the agri-food industry is a continuum. There are farmers, processors, retailers and distributors, and we need a competitive place for farming. We need our farmers to be rewarded for the product they produce, and we need our processors to have the resources they need in terms of workers and so forth. Again, we need a competitive marketplace. However, we also need a competitive retail marketplace for our agri-food industry to sell in, and we have seen issues with that. The motion identifies the issue of the price-fixing on bread that occurred a few years ago, so we need to ensure a competitive marketplace.

• (1340)

Now I will move on to inflation.

[*Translation*]

I am grateful to have the opportunity to elaborate on the concrete measures taken by the government.

Our government is well aware that we are going through a period of high inflation worldwide. Canadian families feel the effects when they fill their tanks with gas and go to the grocery store.

[*English*]

For all Canadians families this is a tough period of time.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

The fact remains that Canada is faring better than other countries.

[English]

With regard to the inflation rate, we are actually doing better. Still, we need to help Canadians, and that is what our government is doing. I am glad to see the opposition join and assist us in passing Bill C-30 and, hopefully, Bill C-31 with regard to GST.

[Translation]

I also want to point out to the House that inflation is a global phenomenon that can be attributed in large part to Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and China's zero-COVID policy.

While our problems may have originated outside our borders, there are certainly things we can do here right now to help Canadians. That is why we are bringing in measures totalling \$12.1 billion to make life more affordable for millions of Canadians in order to help them make ends meet and provide for their families.

Our government has introduced an assistance plan to make life more affordable for Canadians across the country. We introduced two pieces of legislation last month, specifically Bill C-30 and Bill C-31, to implement important measures to help Canadians.

Bill C-30 doubles the goods and services tax credit for six months. The credit for low and modest-income individuals and families is paid in quarterly payments in January, April, July and October, with the benefit year beginning in July. The GST credit is indexed to inflation annually, based on consumer price index data published by Statistics Canada.

Doubling this credit would provide an additional \$2.5 billion in support to Canadians who need it most. Single Canadians without children will receive up to \$234 more while a couple with two children will receive up to \$467 more this year. The proposed extra GST credits would be paid to all current recipients through the existing GST credit system as a one-time, lump-sum payment.

• (1345)

[English]

I encourage all Canadians to please file their taxes to receive this GST payment. We know that about 10% to 12% of Canadians do not file their taxes. I encourage them to please file their taxes. That is how they receive so many of the credits and benefits that our government provides, which help them and their families. Again, it is \$2.5 billion, and 11 million Canadians would be assisted.

Our government continues to help Canadians. We will deliver \$27 billion over five years for a transformative early learning and child care system for Canadians. I know it is going to help my family in approximately a month and a half when our little daughter enters child care. It is something great. It is high-quality child care.

The first province that signed on was British Columbia, in July 2021. The federal government's plan for affordable and high-quality child care was signed by the Government of B.C. It came into effect for people to receive reductions in their child care costs.

Again, it is benefiting families in British Columbia, which is my home province and where I grew up. These are after-tax dollars that families are saving, which is a big help to those families. In addition, we are aiming to create 250,000 new child care spaces across Canada with these agreements with the provinces and territories.

As always, I look forward to questions and comments.

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my friend from Vaughan—Woodbridge noted a number of current government initiatives that he feels address some of the affordability challenges we are seeing out there in Canada, yet all measures of economic inequality show that this phenomenon is hitting in the wrong direction.

I wonder, first of all, if my friend would agree that economic inequality is something we want to see reduced, and, further, whether he can discuss what it means that all the initiatives to date from the government have failed to reverse the trend of worsening economic inequality.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, Skeena—Bulkley Valley is the riding or area that my parents and family immigrated to 50-odd years ago and that I grew up in. It is a beautiful part of Canada.

There is a measure called the Gini coefficient, which measures inequality in our country and throughout the world. It is a standard measure used by economists. Our Gini coefficient has actually improved in Canada. We have seen less inequality by a number of measures, and we have, on a very tangible basis, lifted hundreds of thousands of children and families out of poverty since we came into power in 2015, through the Canada child benefit, the OAS increase, the GIS increase and two middle-class tax cuts. Our goal is to drive inclusive economic growth and that is exactly what our government is doing.

**Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC):** Madam Speaker, here is my concern. In my riding of King—Vaughan, we have 41,000 acres of farming, nurseries and tree farms, which help with carbon capture. The region is also home to the Holland Marsh, which is a recognized producer of a significant percentage of vegetables grown in the province. Unfortunately, the high cost of the added carbon tax, which has increased operational costs for all our farmers, has impacted the cost of production.

When is the Liberal-NDP government going to recognize that punishing farmers is not the way to go? Without our farmers, we have no way of feeding not just our country but the world. The survival of humans depends on the survival of our farmers.

*Business of Supply*

• (1350)

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, it is great to see the hon. member today.

I am a big supporter of the agri-food industry and the whole continuum of the agri-food industry in Canada. We must always put in place policies that support our farmers, whether they are grain farmers, chicken farmers, beef farmers or dairy farmers. We have been there. I visited many of these farms in the area that the hon. member has identified, and we need to be there to continue to listen, consult and work with Canadian farmers from coast to coast to coast.

**Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks earlier this morning, I have concerns with the way the text of the motion is reading. It is almost like the inquisition has already happened, there is absolutely corporate greed and there is price-fixing in the grocery market here in Canada.

I asked a question of some members of the House about whether Canadians were buying more groceries from the grocery market as opposed to going to restaurants. Maybe the high number of pharmaceuticals that were being bought during the pandemic or the fact that some retailers, such as Sobeys, Loblaws and others, were helping administer vaccines could help account for some of the corporate profit and higher prices we have seen.

Does my hon. colleague think that this particular question might be a little more nuanced than the NDP is putting in the motion today?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, during COVID-19, when all restaurants were closed, Canadians shifted their spending habits. I think the real factor we look at for how corporations are doing, as I did in the days I worked on this, for 20-plus years, is what we call their EBITDA margins, operating profit margins or cash flow metrics. We do this to see if a large bump in revenues from Canadians shifting their spending habits is translating into higher profits and if their margin is staying the same.

As I said in my remarks, the changes to the Competition Act with the Competition Bureau are very important. Crony capitalism has no place in my world. It has no place in our society. It is detrimental to consumers. We always need to tackle that and have better enforcement measures for the Competition Bureau.

**Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address this topic. The inflation we are experiencing is a global phenomenon, and unfortunately Canada is not immune. My riding of Hamilton Mountain is not immune. We know Canadians are feeling the rising cost of living, particularly through higher grocery bills, rent and gas prices.

While this motion calls for many measures that the government has already done or is actively doing, we welcome the opportunity to highlight our work to support Canadians and describe how we will continue to do so.

The government is helping families weather this global challenge through our affordability plan, which is a suite of targeted measures totalling \$12.1 billion in new support this year to help make life more affordable for millions of Canadians. This plan is putting more money in the pockets of Canadians who need it the most,

when they need it the most, and without adding fuel to the fire of inflation.

The government's affordability plan is particularly targeted to help address the needs of low-income Canadians who are most exposed to inflation. Because of investments our government has already made in the last two federal budgets, many of the measures in our affordability plan are in place right now to help Canadians.

In budget 2021, our government enhanced the Canada workers benefit, putting as much as \$2,400 more into the pockets of low-income families starting this year. Many recipients have already received this increased support through their 2021 tax returns. This enhancement of the Canada workers benefit is extending support to about one million more Canadians and helping lift nearly 100,000 people out of poverty.

We also implemented a 10%-increase to old age security for seniors over 75. That began in July this year. This is the first permanent increase to the OAS pension since 1973, other than adjustments due to inflation. It will strengthen the financial security of 3.3 million seniors by providing more than \$800 in the first year to full pensioners automatically.

In addition, our government continues to work with provinces and territories to build a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. Thanks to a historic investment of up to \$27 billion over five years, regulated child care fees will be cut by an average of 50% by the end of this year.

We also increased the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour and indexed it to inflation, making it now \$15.55 an hour. Furthermore, the key benefits Canadians rely on, including the Canada child benefit, the GST credit, the Canada pension plan, old age security and the guaranteed income supplement, are already indexed to inflation. These measures are providing real and much needed support to Canadians right now, although of course we know there is always more to do.

Through Bill C-30 and Bill C-31, new legislation our government tabled, we are proposing to provide \$3.1 billion in additional support in 2022 on top of the funds previously allocated in budget 2022 to help make life more affordable for millions of Canadians. This includes doubling the GST credit for six months, which would provide \$2.5 billion in additional targeted support this year to the roughly 11 million Canadians who already receive the tax credit. Single Canadians without children would receive up to an extra \$234, and couples with two children would receive up to an extra \$467 in their pockets this year. Seniors would receive an extra \$225 on average.

*Statements by Members*

We will also be providing a payment of \$500 this year to 1.8 million low-income renters who are struggling with the cost of housing through a one-time top-up to the Canada housing benefit. This more than doubles our budget 2022 commitment, reaching twice as many Canadians as initially promised, and will be in addition to the Canada housing benefit currently co-funded and delivered by provinces and territories.

We will also be providing dental care for Canadians without dental insurance who are earning less than \$90,000, starting this year with hundreds of thousands of children under 12, with direct payments totally up to \$1,300 per child over the next two years for dental care services. This is only the first step outlined in the supply and confidence agreement to develop a national dental care program.

• (1355)

Taken together, here is what the affordability plan looks like for Canadians we represent. A couple in Thunder Bay with an income of \$45,000 and a child in day care could receive \$7,800 above their existing benefit in this fiscal year. A single recent graduate in Edmonton with an entry-level job and an income of \$24,000 could receive an additional \$1,300 in new and enhanced benefits. A senior with a disability in Trois-Rivières could benefit from over \$2,700 more this year than last year. Simply put, our plan is putting more money in the pockets of the Canadians who need it the most, at a time when they need it the most. They are our lowest-paid workers, our low-income renters and the families who cannot afford to have their kids see a dentist.

Our government is fully aware that Canadians are feeling the effects of elevated inflation, particularly when they reach for items at the grocery store or go to the gas pump. Canadians can be confident that they have access to support when they need it the most. Since 2015, the government has delivered real improvements to make Canadians' lives more affordable, including introducing the Canada child benefit, which has helped lift hundreds of thousands of children out of poverty since 2015; providing 10 days of paid sick leave for all federally regulated private sector employees; and making post-secondary education more affordable by waiving interest on Canada student loans until March of 2023 and ensuring no one making less than \$40,000 will need to make payments.

Our affordability plan builds on these successes and is providing more money to the most vulnerable Canadians this year to help make life more affordable. A tax system in which everyone pays their fair share requires actions on multiple fronts, including addressing aggressive tax-planning schemes, aligning our rules with evolving international norms, ensuring that digital service providers pay their fair share of taxes, and strengthening the government's ability to crack down on tax evasion. We are committed to continuing to build an economy that works for all Canadians and leaves no one behind.

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

• (1400)

[English]

**FIRE PREVENTION WEEK**

**Mr. Churence Rogers (Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the eve of Canada's Fire Prevention Week, I rise today to recognize the tireless work of all the firefighters in my riding of Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, the majority of whom are volunteers who assist and serve their communities every day as they respond to fires, medical emergencies and other traumatic events.

Every fall, many towns across Bonavista—Burin—Trinity recognize the service and sacrifices of these firefighters at awards banquets and receptions. They bring together the volunteers, their families and community members. Many volunteers are recognized for significant milestones, such as five, 10 or even 30 years of service. I am so grateful to be invited to many of these banquets every year. I always try to get to as many of them as I can because I value and respect the great work of these tireless volunteers.

I want to acknowledge all firefighters in Bonavista—Burin—Trinity, as well as those across Newfoundland and Labrador, and across the country. I thank them all, on behalf of the residents they serve, for their bravery and hard work.

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**CHARITABLE GIVING IN SASKATCHEWAN**

**Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, northern Saskatchewan is home to the most compassionate people in Canada. In Meadow Lake, Eve Danilkewich and her family donated land to build the NorthWest Community Lodge, a 72-bed long-term care home. Mrs. Danilkewich's additional \$100,000 contribution to the lodge's fundraising campaign has helped ensure that this new home will create an environment to deliver quality care and comfort for seniors in Meadow Lake for decades.

In La Ronge, the generosity is from La Ronge Petroleum Ltd., which along with residents Denis and Lynda Renaud, has raised more than \$100,000 for the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon. They wrapped a semi-trailer with the children's hospital logo as a visual reminder of the work the foundation is doing. Donors' logos are then added to the side of the trailer as it travels all around Saskatchewan.

These selfless acts of generosity speak to the heart of northern Saskatchewan, where hard-working and supportive people make our communities always feel like home.

*Statements by Members***WORLD CEREBRAL PALSY DAY**

**Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark World Cerebral Palsy Day. Cerebral palsy is a permanent disability that affects movement and posture. Its impact can range from a weakness in one hand to almost a complete lack of voluntary movement. There are over 17 million people in the world living with cerebral palsy, and approximately 80,000 of those individuals live in Canada.

As we celebrate this day and support everyone living with cerebral palsy, I want to highlight the tremendous work done by families, loved ones and caregivers in making sure that people with cerebral palsy are supported in their daily lives and that their wellness remains at the forefront.

I would like to end my statement by emphasizing the continuous need to create a more accessible and inclusive future for everyone here in Canada, especially for people living with disabilities.

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[*Translation*]**LOUISEVILLE BUCKWHEAT PANCAKE FESTIVAL**

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Louiseville buckwheat pancake festival is back in its entirety this year, and the 43rd edition is in full swing, making the Mauricie region and all of Quebec proud. It started out as a meal put on for those in need known as the “souper des gueux”, or supper for the poor, with a menu consisting of buckwheat pancakes, roast pork, cretons and hash browns.

Who would have thought that a meal for the poor would grow into such a rich tradition?

President André Auger and his energetic team have created a fantastic event that brings together people from all over Quebec and beyond.

I invite everyone to enjoy our diverse programming. Come join us for the many shows by local artists, the super bingo, the live auction and the historical parade, and get to know our miller and our people and discover our region and its history.

Hurray for buckwheat country.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

[*English*]**PENSE MEMORIAL RINK**

**Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the local rink is the heart of every Canadian community. It is where our kids learn to skate or curl, learn important skills and life lessons such as teamwork and sportsmanship. Perhaps most importantly, they create lifelong friendships and cherished memories.

After a fire burned down the rink in Pense 30 years ago, people rallied and built its replacement in just 15 months. Recently, the arena needed upgrades. People may remember that Pense was up for the Kraft Hockeyville contest. They did not win, but that did not

stop them. This small town was able to raise more than \$500,000. This past weekend, I was honoured to attend the grand reopening.

This is exactly the kind of story that makes me proud to represent Pense and other communities across rural Saskatchewan.

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**GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

**Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this morning we learned that the leader of the official opposition and the Conservative Party have been using tags to promote, connect with and target incel, right-wing, anti-women, violent rhetoric for their own personal and political gain. These incels promote the murder of single women and men who date them. They want to decriminalize marital rape. They have very real-life consequences, including followers like the Toronto van attacker.

Nobody believes the Leader of the Opposition did not know. This has been going on for more than four and a half years. Will the leader of the official opposition and the women in his caucus stand up against this hate, apologize and denounce it? Who in this House is going to stand with us and—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Sherbrooke.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]**MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK**

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Sherbrooke, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this week is Mental Illness Awareness Week.

The last two years have been hard on Canadians, exacerbating existing health inequalities and gaps both in Sherbrooke and across the country.

However, the pandemic has also facilitated open, authentic conversations about mental health and substance abuse. It is incumbent upon all of us to keep those conversations going and to make sure that everyone who struggles with mental illness gets the support they need.

More and more, across Canada, the concept of mental health is being integrated into our institutions. That is certainly true at the University of Sherbrooke. I want to take this opportunity to salute Professor Guillaume Rousseau and his students, who have come to see us in Ottawa today.

In the past few years, the University of Sherbrooke has launched many initiatives to support students and now offers a wide range of services, thanks in part to the RBC centre for university expertise in mental health.

Together, let us continue to break taboos and increase our knowledge of mental health issues.

*Statements by Members**[English]***WOODBRIIDGE FALL FAIR**

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in 1847, the first running of the Woodbridge Fair was organized by John Gamble, the first mayor of Vaughan township and a parliamentary spokesperson for Ontario farmers, millers and merchants who believed that the agricultural sector and its workers were at the heart of a community's success. True to these values, for 175 years the fair has been a place to come together and celebrate the joy of autumn, community agriculture and our local history.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Woodbridge Agricultural Society's volunteers, this year's fair promises to be the most entertaining one yet. Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to invite my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Woodbridge fall fair and everyone celebrating this community mainstay on its 175th anniversary. This Thanksgiving weekend, they should come and visit the fair with us. I will be there, and I look forward to seeing many of the residents of the city of Vaughan and beyond.

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**VACCINE MANDATES**

**Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the last two years have been difficult for Canadians. This is especially true for Canadians who made a personal medical decision that the Prime Minister disapproved of. Because they disagreed with him on this issue, he called them extremists, racists and misogynists. He also questioned whether they should be tolerated. If people did not agree with the Prime Minister on their personal health choices, he said they held "unacceptable views". That is why he supported the firing of these folks. At the same time, he took away their employment insurance benefits. Then he banned them from travelling on planes and trains. This happened here in Canada.

If that was not enough, he introduced a discriminatory border surveillance scheme that ended up being a logistical nightmare. This was the ArriveCAN app, the app that also ended up destroying many businesses in the travel and tourism industry, including in my region of Niagara.

I believe the Prime Minister's comments and actions will echo in history and will be judged very poorly by future generations. He should be held accountable for those actions.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to the Prime Minister that enough is enough and he should let folks live their lives.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**WORLD SPINE DAY**

**Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of World Spine Day, which is taking place this year on October 16.

The purpose of World Spine Day is to raise awareness around back health and spinal disorders. Musculoskeletal conditions like low back pain are a leading cause of disability, impacting 11 million Canadians each year. These conditions are more prevalent than

cancer, stroke, heart disease, diabetes and Alzheimer's combined. One in eight Canadians suffer from chronic low back pain, and it is responsible for almost one-third of lost time at work. This is an important issue that impacts the health and economic well-being of our communities, large and small.

This year's theme is "Every Spine Counts", which emphasizes the diversity of the underserved communities impacted and the need for improving access to regulated essential spinal health services, like chiropractors.

Today and on World Spine Day, I call on all members to recognize the importance of spinal disorders and spinal health in our communities.

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**NATIONAL CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE WEEK**

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to mark National Catholic Health Care Week and celebrate the impact of Catholic health care in our communities. This year's theme, "Building Bridges", underlines the importance of creating connections, addressing gaps and working together to improve the health and well-being of all Canadians.

In my riding of Edmonton Mill Woods, the Grey Nuns Community Hospital provides a full range of health care services. In 1988, during the transfer of acute services, staff walked from the Edmonton General to the Grey Nuns, carrying a torch as a symbol of continuing the sisters' legacy of compassionate care at the new facility. The sisters were instrumental in establishing palliative care services, mental health programs, and care for pregnant mothers and babies. In fact, my daughter was born at the Grey Nuns.

During this week, the Covenant family will share many stories that show their impact and mission in action. I hope we can all find opportunities to build bridges, create connections and improve the well-being of all those around us.

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**HOCKEY CANADA**

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are in a crisis that we must address. For the past several months, I have had the opportunity to sit on the heritage committee, where we are focusing on Hockey Canada and the rape that occurred following its gala dinner in 2018.



However, this has opened up a whole new can of worms. In the coming weeks, Rick Westhead, the reporter who brought us the story on Hockey Canada, will be releasing his documentary, in which viewers will hear from former gymnasts who have come forward and shared their stories of inappropriate touching and sexual abuse. Over 400 gymnasts have now come forward, asking for an independent investigation. We are hearing from high-performance gymnasts, boxers and rowers, who are all sharing their stories.

The common denominator here is that these are our kids; these athletes are our children. Someone said to me, "Hockey Canada is too big. We have no power against them." I disagree. No one is too big when it comes to the safety and well-being of our children. There needs to be an investigation, and the government needs to take action on behalf of the many young athletes who have been wrongfully violated.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

**Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelega, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this morning's news was sickening and shocking. The leader of the Conservative Party used tags associated with the incel movement, which promotes disgusting and degrading conspiracy theories about women. It is unbecoming a leader who aspires to the highest office in the land.

After four years, this cannot be called a mistake, but a deliberate strategy. He needs to apologize, because these groups have a real impact on the real lives of women in this country.

Not only does he need to publicly apologize, but the women in his party also need to stand up and condemn what he did, because women's rights do not recognize political boundaries.

\* \* \*

• (1415)

[English]

#### BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which is a month dedicated to honouring those facing breast cancer and those who have lost their lives. We also pay tribute to all health professionals and caregivers providing treatment and support.

One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer. This year alone, 27,000 will learn they have breast cancer, and we will lose 5,500 people: mothers, sisters, wives, daughters, aunts, cousins, co-workers and friends.

Today we call on the federal government to commit to saving lives and reducing suffering related to this terrible disease. We should start by suspending the use of flawed breast-screening guidelines from the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care and catch up to other countries who do better. It is time to appoint a credible panel of qualified specialists and informed patients to develop breast screening guidelines using current, accurate and relevant evidence. If we do, we can help put an end to avoidable deaths of Canadian women. It is time.

#### Statements by Members

[Translation]

#### GRAVITÉ MÉDIA

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, last week, I had the opportunity to take part in Gravité Média's fifth anniversary celebration.

Five years ago, Julie Voyer and her business associates founded Gravité Média and acquired five weekly newspapers in the Montérégie region, including our riding's local paper, *Le Reflet*.

These weeklies are a source of invaluable information and a genuine forum for cities, businesses, organizations, elected officials and the public. In addition to securing the future of local media, Gravité Média has grown its marketing department, which has really made a name for itself in my part of the world over the past five years. Many organizations, businesses and cities have benefited from Gravité Média's considerable expertise.

I would like to applaud the Gravité Média team for their exceptional work. Not only are they dedicated professionals, but they are also involved in our local organizations and foundations.

I am grateful to Ms. Voyer and the Gravité Média crew for being such a valuable partner in our community.

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[English]

#### CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the new Conservative leader will put the people first: their paycheques, their savings, their home and their country.

The carbon tax is an utter failure. Liberals say it will reduce emissions, but emissions have gone up under the government. B.C. has had a carbon tax for 14 years, and its emissions have only gone up. Quebec has had one for 12 years, and its emissions have gone up as well. The carbon tax only drives the cost of everything higher and is punishing Canadians who can least afford it.

The Liberals say people get more money back from the carbon tax, but the PBO has said this is false, and many Canadians lose money because of the carbon tax. However, the Liberal government is going to triple the carbon tax by April 2023.

It would seem the Prime Minister is experiencing the carbon tax differently from hard-working Canadians, but help is on the way. A Conservative government led by our new leader would scrap the carbon tax.

*Oral Questions***ACHIEVEMENTS OF FREDERICTONIANS**

**Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one of the many reasons Fredericton is such a vibrant community is the dynamism of the people: the leaders, the dreamers and the doers.

Today I am so proud to celebrate the achievements of a few of them whom I have the honour to represent here in this House. Keith Lyon, the recipient of the Champion of Mental Health Award for sharing his journey with schizophrenia and donating proceeds from his four children's books to the psychiatric unit that helped him.

Natasha Dhayagude, founder of Chinova Bioworks, was named as a semi-finalist for the CANIE Entrepreneur of the Year Award for creating a natural alternative to artificial food preservatives.

Earlier this month, a four-person team representing the Fredericton Fire Department won the Canadian FireFit Championships. Running, climbing stairs, hoisting hoses and saving lives, the competition is done in full gear to simulate actual field conditions.

Candy Paul of the Under One Sky friendship centre won a Prime Minister's award for excellence in early childhood education, and Angela D'Entremont and Shauna Kelly from Park Street elementary school each won an award for teaching excellence.

I invite everyone to join me in congratulating these Frederictonians on their achievements.

**ORAL QUESTIONS**

• (1420)

[*Translation*]

**TAXATION**

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to wish the Prime Minister and his family a happy Thanksgiving. However, it will not be too happy for many families, because the cost of turkey is up 16%. The cost of other food items has gone up over 20%, so one-fifth of Canadians will have to cut back on what they put on the table this Thanksgiving weekend.

How much will the price of Thanksgiving dinner go up once the Prime Minister triples the carbon tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have all heard stories of Canadians who are struggling with the rising cost of living. That is why our government decided to do something about it. We are sending hundreds of dollars to families through the GST-HST rebate. We are also providing assistance to low-income renters and low-income families whose children need to see a dentist.

While the Conservative leader finally decided to support our measure to help families with the GST-HST rebate, he unfortunately does not support the measure to help people with dental care. When will he help Canadians with dental care?

[*English*]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in English, I would also like to wish the Prime Minister

and his family a happy Thanksgiving. However, it will not be too happy for a lot of people whose costs have gone out of control. In fact, the cost of turkey is up 16%, according to one food processor. The cost of other items are up over 20%, and one fifth of Canadians will have to reduce what they put on the plate this Thanksgiving weekend.

How much will the Prime Minister's tripling of the tax on our farmers, truckers and consumers increase the cost of Thanksgiving dinner for the future?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians across the country are struggling with the global inflation crisis, and that is why we are moving forward with concrete measures to help out. After we proposed a GST rebate that would help significant numbers of families across the country, the Leader of the Opposition came out criticizing it, but then fortunately reversed himself, and is now supporting our GST credit.

Will he now support the low-income dental supports for families? Will he support the rental supports we are giving? Kids deserve to have happy smiles. Why will the Leader of the Opposition not help them with that?

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, they will not be smiling if their parents cannot afford a bit of pumpkin pie for them at Thanksgiving dinner. Look at the cost increases that have happened: a 16% increase for the cost of turkey; a 22% increase for potatoes; bread is up 13%; butter, 13%; cranberries, 12%; bacon, 10%. That all adds up to an unaffordable Thanksgiving dinner, and the Prime Minister wants to make it worse still by tripling his tax on our farmers, our truckers and ultimately our consumers.

How much will that add to the cost of Thanksgiving?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, he wants to help Canadians, but he will not stand with low-income Canadians who want to give their kids better smiles.

However, there is another important issue that is on the minds of Canadians, particularly the minds of Canadian women, as we meet here. If it were not for Global News, we would not have learned that the Conservative leader has been purposefully using his videos to appeal to far-right misogynistic online movements. These are anti-women movements and they have had devastating real-life consequences.

I call on the Conservative leader to stand in the House, take responsibility and apologize.

## ETHICS

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I condemn this organization, and I corrected the problem as soon as it became known to me. I condemn all forms of misogyny, including when the Prime Minister fired the very first female indigenous Attorney General. I condemn when he mistreated minority young women in his own caucus who had to leave politics. I condemn him for when he dressed up in racist costumes so many times he forgot them all.

We condemn it always.

• (1425)

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the choice made by the Conservative leader in reaching out to extremist online groups and pulling in anti-women, misogynistic groups for his own political gain is one for which he will have to answer. Women across the country want to know why he allowed this to happen and want to see him take responsibility for it.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I took responsibility and corrected it as soon as it became known to me, but the Prime Minister does not take responsibility for the extremism that he has funded. He funded a vicious anti-Semite to spread hatred online with taxpayers' dollars. He repeatedly, in fact so many times he cannot even keep track, dressed up in racist costumes, for which he has never come fully to account. He drove many women in his own caucus out of the party and out of Parliament altogether with his mistreatment of them. We condemn all of that behaviour.

We condemn misogyny always and everywhere, and we ask the Prime Minister to finally do the same.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have all seen the effective campaign that the Leader of the Opposition ran to become leader, using online videos, using ways of reaching out through social media. We all marvelled at his admiration of old wood. What we did not see was that every time he put out—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Is everyone done?

I would ask the Prime Minister to start from the top, please.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, a lot of ink was spilled and there was a lot of admiration for the effectiveness of the Leader of the Opposition's campaign to become leader, using social media, using clever videos. We all marvelled at his admiration for old wood, but what we did not see was his choice to include deliberating reaching out to far-right organizations, including hateful anti-women organizations, to try and advance his own political gains. He has played too close to the line with extremists for too long.

Now that he has gotten caught, will he admit it, will he apologize, will he take responsibility?

## Oral Questions

[Translation]

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, here is what the Prime Minister intends to do at Roxham Road: increase the number of immigrants to Quebec, without Quebec's consent; secure contracts for generous Liberal Party donors; and, now, address the labour shortage by bringing in highly vulnerable workers who do not speak French and who will not get work permits for over a year.

Is it not obvious that there is absolutely nothing humanitarian about the Prime Minister's Roxham Road policy?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we all know that immigration is crucial to our economy. As the member opposite already knows, Quebec sets its own immigration targets. Last year, we welcomed over 50,000 new permanent residents to Quebec. We will always work closely with the Government of Quebec to welcome immigrants, grow our economy and ensure that the French language and Quebec culture stay vibrant.

\* \* \*

## PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will continue to speak out against policies that promote what is known as “cheap labour”. Instead of investing half a billion dollars in hiring qualified public servants at the Department of Immigration, the government is spending it on buildings and contracts, including an undisclosed amount that went to big Liberal Party donors.

Will the Prime Minister order the immediate tabling of complete, unredacted versions of all the contracts awarded in relation to Roxham Road since 2017?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois keeps saying Quebec should have more immigration powers, but Quebec actually has a lot of immigration powers, more than any other province.

The fact is, Quebec could take in a lot more immigrants than it currently does. It could make sure they all speak French. It has all sorts of powers, and we are here to work with Quebec to keep building the Quebec nation and Canada as a whole through immigration, by protecting the French language and by creating economic growth for all.

\* \* \*

• (1430)

## THE ECONOMY

**Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, with rising prices, people are being squeezed, and they are having trouble making ends meet at the end of the month. Big bosses are profiting off human suffering to line their own pockets, and that sickens me.

The CEO of Sobeys makes \$8 million, the CEO of Metro makes \$5 million, and the CEO of Loblaws also makes \$5 million. These profits are up 17% to 27%.

### Oral Questions

While people are being forced to cut back on their food purchases, the Liberals are letting big companies get rich at the expense of ordinary Canadians.

Will the Liberals take action to stop “greedflation” and rein in the greed of large grocery chains?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I agree that it is unacceptable to see families paying more than ever for their groceries while grocery chains are making record profits.

That is why we are putting more money in Canadians' pockets through the goods and services tax credit, the \$500 payment to renters, and the money we are giving low-income families for dental care. We are calling on all parties to support this measure. We are also committed to strengthening the Competition Act to better protect consumers.

We will continue to be there for Canadians.

[English]

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, he should have said “thanks to the NDP” that these measures are in place to actually help Canadians, but there are just pretty words from the Prime Minister when it comes to helping Canadians through this “greedflation” crisis.

The CEOs of big grocery stores are bragging about their massive profits on the backs of families. The Empire CEO bragged “we improved them”, and he is \$8 million richer. Galen Weston of Loblaws is proud of achieving strong top-line growth. He has \$5 million more. These CEOs line their pockets while families struggle to feed their kids.

When will the Liberals act to stop this profiteering and stop this corporate greed?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that corporate CEOs and grocery store CEOs are earning record profits while Canadians are paying more for groceries. That is why we are focused on putting more money back in the pockets of Canadians through the GST credit, the \$500 for renters and more money for dental care for kids from low-income families.

We thank the parties in the House that are supporting this and call on the Conservatives to support us in delivering dental care for kids from low-income families. We cannot understand why the Conservatives continue to stand against that. These are measures that will help low-income families at a very difficult time. Why can this whole House not come together and support dental care for kids?

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### SPORTS

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has chosen to protect Hockey Canada instead of women who are victims of sexual assault. The government has known since 2018 that there was a problem at Hockey Canada, but it deliberately looked the other way.

On behalf of all these victims who were let down by Hockey Canada, we demand to know why the government turned a blind eye to these multiple sexual assaults.

**Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government is taking all necessary steps to hold Hockey Canada's leadership to account. We have broadened the scope of the financial audit to 2016 so as to obtain all the necessary information, to be sure that no public funds were used to settle sexual assault cases.

We have also required Hockey Canada to become a signatory to the Office of the Sport Integrity Commissioner so that it can investigate the culture.

We will not back down. Hockey Canada must be held accountable for the sexual assaults within its organization.

[English]

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has known for four years about the heinous allegations of sexual assault against eight players from team Canada. Hockey Canada received \$14 million from 2020 to 2021 from the Liberal government. Hockey Canada has paid millions to pay off sexual assault claimants.

My question is for the Prime Minister, who claims to be a feminist. How is covering up sexual assault helping women?

**Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, after hearing today's story about how the Conservatives are mobilizing an organization that promotes violence against women, it is a bit shameful the questions they are asking today.

\* \* \*

● (1435)

### CARBON PRICING

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in contrast, the Conservative leader has condemned these actions and has actually asked the Prime Minister to hold himself to account for his actions, so I expect that.

In my riding, they have actually had a nice fall. Harvest is done. They are looking through their bills. They are saying, “Oh my God, everything is more expensive due to this Liberal carbon tax.” This has meant that they have less money to feed their families, to take care of their livestock and to pay for their heat.

Will the Prime Minister cancel his plan to triple the carbon tax? Can he not understand that Canadians cannot afford it?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite works hard with his constituents and I am glad that he is congratulating them for their harvest. I would like to congratulate them too.

Canada's farmers work hard and the people of rural Saskatchewan work hard. We know that times are hard and that is why I am delighted that, today, the House will vote to support the GST tax credit. That is going to get nearly \$500 to the hard-working Saskatchewan families the member opposite represents.

\* \* \*

**SMALL BUSINESS**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, today, our leader stood up and condemned everything that the Liberals were calling him out for today. In contrast, not a single Liberal has called out their leader for the racist blackface that he wore—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**The Speaker:** Order.

If I could have everyone calm down, I just want to make sure that everybody hears the question so that when the minister or the Prime Minister answers, everyone can hear that as well.

The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan:** Mr. Speaker, rising interest rates are crushing over 70% of small businesses, according to a report by the CFIB. Small businesses in my riding are being squeezed by rising taxes, record-high inflation, the labour crisis and punishing interest rates.

When will the government wake up and get off of the necks of our small businesses and job creators?

**Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for this important question about the small business entrepreneurs that are at the heart of the Canadian economy. What we have been doing in the past three years is supporting small business entrepreneurs through the pandemic, with targeted support for wage subsidies and access to finance to support them and their employees.

What we are doing since the pandemic is targeting entrepreneurs that will promote inclusive recovery. That means women entrepreneurs. That means Black entrepreneurs. That means indigenous entrepreneurs. What we are doing is understanding that small businesses will carry us through and out of this pandemic, and that is where our priority lies.

\* \* \*

**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, any type of help is being vaporized by the inflation that they have created. This Thanksgiving, the Liberals are serving Canadians with high inflation, leaving families to turn to food

banks and homeless shelters at an alarming rate. Next Thanksgiving, the Liberals will serve Canadians a turducken of tax by tripling the carbon tax on groceries, home heating and filling up one's tank.

Will the government have some mercy, stop serving suffering to Canadians and cancel its plans to triple the carbon tax?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a few days before Thanksgiving and I absolutely agree that now is the time for all of us to have a lot of compassion. That is why I am glad that we have overcome partisan division, and today, together, we are going to vote for the GST tax rebate. That is going to get nearly \$500 to Canadian families who need it.

I want to encourage all of us to take another step. Let us support Canadian kids under 12 whose parents cannot afford to take them to the dentist. How is that okay? Let us vote for this measure too and get it through in record time.

**Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, next Thanksgiving, Canadians, after the tripling of the carbon tax, will be paying around \$2,300 out of their own pockets. That is just next year. Students are some of the hardest hit by the Liberal government's inflationary economic policies and failed carbon tax. While missing every single emissions reduction target, it is punishing Canadians for the crime of heating their homes or just driving to work. The Liberals are driving students to food banks and to sleeping in homeless shelters at alarming rates.

Will the Liberals get off of the backs and out of the back pockets of students and Canadians and cancel their plan to triple the carbon tax?

● (1440)

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, young Canadians and students are the future of Canada. With budget 2022, we are investing \$26 million over four years to increase the maximum amount of forgivable Canada student loans by 50% for health care workers in rural and remote communities. We have had students' backs all along the way and we remain committed to permanently eliminating the federal interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans.

We will help young Canadians transition into the workforce.

*Oral Questions*

[Translation]

**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the federal government refuses to discuss immigration powers with Quebec. Let us look at what happens when the federal government is in charge. It is responsible for refugees, and 64% of refugee claims in Canada are made by people who come through Roxham Road. In other words, becoming a refugee in Canada in 2022 means being exploited by smugglers at the border and being arrested by the RCMP. Just this morning, the federal government was dragged before the Supreme Court by refugee advocates for its inaction on Roxham Road.

How can it give lessons when this is how it deals with the people it is responsible for?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our system for asylum seekers must be robust and humane. There is no magic solution, and closing Roxham Road is not a realistic solution. Suspending the safe third country agreement would likely have the opposite effect of what we are looking to do. What we need to do is modernize the safe third country agreement, and that is what we are doing. We are working with the United States on a permanent, sustainable solution.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, let us continue to look at what happens when the federal government is in charge of immigration. The federal government is the one that takes care of temporary foreign workers. It is always the same thing. Businesses pay for workers who never arrive because their file is languishing in Ottawa. Just today, the newspaper *Le Journal de Montréal* reported that businesses such as *Nationex* have been waiting for workers since November of last year. It quotes discouraged businesses that say that the investment is not worth it, since the process takes anywhere from six months to a year and a half.

Why is the federal government refusing to transfer the temporary foreign workers program to Quebec if it is unable to take care of it itself?

**Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when the federal and provincial governments work together, men and women join Quebec society, succeed, perform, work and learn French. Children go to school, make friends, play hockey, participate in and contribute to society. That is a positive thing. Let us stop talking about immigration like it is just about numbers. These are men, women, children, human beings who come here to contribute to Quebec and Canada.

**Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the members opposite will have to change their tone because we are saying the same thing as they are. However, asking these people to wait three years for a work permit is not helpful.

Let us continue examining what is happening with immigration. Do members know how long it takes to process the file of a francophone skilled worker in Quebec who wants to become a permanent resident? Two years. At least workers fare better than francophone students from Africa who want to come to Quebec, because they face a refusal rate of 88%. That is more than twice the norm. When

it comes to immigration, either the federal government is incompetent or it is acting in bad faith. In both cases, it should let Quebec take responsibility.

When will it do so?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows very well, the Canada-Quebec accord gives Quebec the exclusive authority to select the majority of its immigrants. We have always respected Quebec's jurisdiction with respect to immigration, and we will work closely with Quebec to support its objective of welcoming the immigrants it needs to deal with the shortage and ensuring the development of businesses and the vitality of the French language. Here, we will work with the Province of Quebec today and in future.

\* \* \*

**TAXATION**

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the average Canadian family will have to pay \$1,200 more for food this year. This is simply impossible for some families. Parents are going without meals in order to feed their children properly, and demand for food banks is skyrocketing across the country. The Liberal government is about to triple the carbon tax and increase the EI tax. As a result, the cost of food, goods and services will triple for consumers.

Will the government cancel its tax increases, yes or no?

• (1445)

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the hon. member for supporting our plan to provide inflation relief payments. That was a good decision, one that will help families across the country.

Now I want to sincerely ask all members of the House to also support our plan to help children, young children, get dental care. We need to get this done.

[English]

**Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, every day I get another letter from my constituents in Calgary telling me about the challenges they are having making ends meet.

Inflation rises, taxes rise, but their paycheques do not. Eight per cent inflation has the effect of cutting a full month of purchasing power from the annual family budget. Many Canadians are worried about how they will eat and stay warm this winter.

Will the Liberal government cancel its plans to triple taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me start with a small point. On inflation, the latest number was actually 7%. That is still too high and that is still causing real challenges for Canadian families. That is why I am really sincerely pleased that the Conservatives swallowed their pride and are supporting our GST tax credit, which would get nearly \$500 to Canadian families. I would like to urge them now to take the next step, although it is hard, to swallow their pride again and to support dental care for children under 12 who need it.

**Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, everything is getting more expensive as the government drives up inflation with its tax-and-spend policies. Now it is planning to triple taxes on gas, triple taxes on groceries and triple taxes on home heating. This is all while Canadians are struggling to get by and are just barely able to afford the basic necessities.

Will the finance minister, today, finally announce a plan to cancel her tax hikes that would triple these costs?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives said that today they would put forward a private member's bill promoting crypto, but earlier this week, and for the third time in a row, they pulled the bill. I hope that means the Conservatives are collectively embarrassed by their leader's reckless advice to Canadians to invest in crypto. I really hope that is the case, and I hope that now they will have the good grace to publicly recant and apologize to Canadians for that reckless, dangerous advice.

**Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have a government of fakers. The Liberals fake standing with working people, and they may even believe it, which is shocking given their record of corporate giveaways and their refusal to make the wealthy pay their fair share to the tune of \$30 billion in 2021 alone. The reality is that billionaires have it easier under this Prime Minister—

**The Speaker:** I am going to interrupt the hon. member for a moment. I want to remind everyone that just because someone is here virtually and it is nice and loud over the speakers it does not mean we can all talk. I want to remind everyone to keep it down. For those watching remotely, please do not cut in. It is really not polite.

The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, from the top, please.

**Ms. Niki Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, we have a government of fakers. The Liberals fake standing up for working people, and they may even believe it, which is shocking given their record of corporate giveaways and their refusal to make the wealthy pay their fair share to the tune of \$30 billion in 2021 alone. The reality is that billionaires have it easier under this Prime Minister than they did under Stephen Harper.

It is time for fair taxation. It is time to make the rich pay. Which will it be, more faking or will the Liberals make the ultrarich pay their fair share to deliver the support Canadians need now?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government absolutely is committed to ensuring that everyone in Canada pays their fair share. We have shown it with concrete measures.

### Oral Questions

Let me remind all members in the House that we are permanently raising the corporate income tax by 1.5% on the largest, most profitable banks and insurance companies. We are introducing a Canada recovery dividend of 15% on banks and insurance companies to do the right thing and help pay for the cost of COVID. Of course, our luxury tax on superexpensive cars, yachts and planes is already in force.

\* \* \*

● (1450)

### FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, families dealing with the rising cost of living are worried about what they can afford. Canadian financial institutions already charge some of the highest credit card fees in the world while making record profits. Now Canadian consumers will have to pay those charges directly, simply for using their credit cards.

New Democrats have urged both Conservative and Liberal governments to cap credit card fees at 1%, but governments keep protecting corporate profits. When will the Liberals finally defend Canadians by capping credit card merchant fees?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I spoke just a moment ago about our commitment to ensuring that everyone in Canada pays their fair share, and I listed some of the very concrete tax measures that are coming into force, some of which have come into force already. We are going to keep going.

When it comes to credit card fees, I am very much in agreement with the member opposite. We need to support consumers. We need to support small businesses. We are committed to doing that and we will.

\* \* \*

### DISASTER ASSISTANCE

**Mr. Heath MacDonald (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, like many other Atlantic-Canadian communities, Malpeque was hit extremely hard in the province of Prince Edward Island. Jobs, livelihoods and infrastructure were destroyed.

Can the Minister of Rural Economic Development tell me and the rest of Atlantic Canada how this government is going to help rebuild?

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Gudie Hutchings (Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on the ground at home last week, I saw what we know about eastern Canadians: We come together during difficult times.

I want everyone to know that the federal government has come together in these difficult times to help everyone get through this. On top of the disaster financial assistance arrangements, which are administered through the province and cover up to 90% of the cost of this terrible storm damage, we announced, this week, the hurricane Fiona recovery fund. It is an additional \$300 million to help people and businesses whose situations may fall through the cracks under the DFAA.

The federal government will be there with every person, every community and every business as we build back stronger and get back on our feet in Atlantic Canada.

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**TAXATION**

**Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the price of everything has gone up, and now almost half of Canadians are \$200 away from insolvency. Jennifer and Kristen are two moms in my riding who recently reached out to me to stress that they cannot afford to pay one dollar more.

Will the Prime Minister cancel his plans to triple the taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, when we compare our record with that of the Conservatives, there is a clear difference on which side of the House has been there on behalf of Canadians, whether it is with the Canada child benefit, the middle-income tax cut, child care, which in Alberta is now reduced by 50%, or dental. We are trying to get it through this House, but for some reason the Conservatives do not want children to have access to dental care.

We continue to stand for families. We will continue to do that, and we hope the Conservatives get onside.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, daily, Westman residents tell me it is getting tougher to make ends meet. Under the Liberal government, Canada is the only G7 country to raise taxes on energy. This drives up the cost of everything, particularly for those in rural Canada. It is not just; it is inflation.

Will the Prime Minister leave these dollars in the pockets of cash-strapped seniors and families by cancelling the plan to triple the taxes on gasoline, groceries and home heating fuels?

**Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our record on supporting children, families and seniors is an important one. Do members know the first thing we did? We lowered income taxes for middle-income Canadians. Do members know what else we did? We reversed the age increase on pensions for seniors while the Conservatives wanted to raise the age of eligibility to 67. We increased the GIS, we increased the OAS and we created a generous Canada child benefit.

We have been there every single day for Canadian families and Canadian seniors, and we are going to continue to do that.

• (1455)

**Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the inflation and affordability crisis facing Canadians right now is a direct result of the Prime Minister's failed economic policies. When the Prime Minister of a G7 country admits that he does not even think about monetary policy, it is Canadian families and businesses that pay the price, and they are. They are paying the price with higher payroll taxes and higher costs for the necessities of life, like food, shelter, heating and clothing, and it is getting worse. Families need a break.

Will the Prime Minister stop his planned tax hikes on Canadian paycheques and his plan to triple the carbon tax?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, monetary policy is, of course, the province of the Bank of Canada, whose independence we on this side of the House respect.

We know that times are tough for Canadian families. That is why I am really glad today that we in this House have overcome petty, partisan squabbles and are coming together to support the GST tax credit. It is going to get nearly \$500 to Canadian families that need it the most. It is time to do the same thing on dental care for kids and on rental support.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, thanks to the Liberals' inflationary taxes, Canadians are so poor now, they are less than \$200 away from being unable to pay their monthly bills. This Liberal government is turning a blind eye to the cost of living, but Canadians have tightened their belts as far as they could.

Can the Prime Minister tell us whether he will scrap the triple tax on gas, food and home heating?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we fully understand that affordability and the cost of living are important and difficult issues for many Canadian families. That is why I am so happy today that the House is going to vote unanimously for our idea, our plan to deliver inflation relief payments. It is the right thing to do.

Now, we must come together once more for children's dental care.



### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, from January to August of this year, the RCMP intercepted 23,196 asylum seekers at Roxham Road. These were men, women and children, most of whom were fleeing poverty. These 23,196 people were welcomed to Canada by the police. Then they were either detained or taken by the police to file a claim for refugee status.

My question is simple: Is this really how Canada should be welcoming refugees?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, closing Roxham Road is not a solution for our borders. It would not solve the overall problem. As the member opposite knows, Canada shares the longest demilitarized border in the world. Roxham Road gives officials an opportunity to obtain identification documents from these asylum claimants and prevent dangerous crossings.

We need to modernize the safe third country agreement, and that is what we are doing.

**Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the RCMP intercepted 23,196 refugee claimants at Roxham Road in 2022 alone. At the same time, 499 refugee claimants were processed through regular land border crossings. Border officers are dealing with 2% of refugee claimants, even though that is their job, and the RCMP at Roxham Road are dealing with the other 98%.

Again, my question is simple. Would we not be better served at the borders if customs officers dealt with customs and police officers dealt with, say, illegal weapons trafficking, for example?

**Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is important.

The solutions proposed by the Bloc Québécois would simply move the problem from one place to another. The safe third country agreement is an important bilateral tool for managing refugee claims at the land border between Canada and the United States. Contrary to what the member opposite believes, the agreement is a bilateral one. It is essential to work with our partners in the United States, and we will continue to support those who are very vulnerable.

\* \* \*

• (1500)

[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, prices are out of control in Canada. Businesses are raising prices to keep up with costs, individuals are cutting back on groceries, families are renewing their mortgages to find out that their payments are double and seniors are panicked about being able to afford their heating fuel. Canadians know that rebate cheques do not cover these costs. We need a government committed to lowering costs.

Will the Liberal government cancel its plan to triple the taxes on gas, groceries and home heating?

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Kamal Khera (Minister of Seniors, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we recognize the challenges that seniors are facing and our government has been there for them. To now help seniors who are struggling, we are doubling the GST credit. That means seniors will receive an extra \$230 in their pockets. Nearly two million low-income renters who are struggling with their rent will receive \$500. We also increased old age security for seniors aged 75 by 10%.

On this side of the House, we are going to continue to create an economy that works for everyone, including seniors.

\* \* \*

### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's priorities are descending into farce. It will not allow U.S. officers into Canada to reopen NEXUS offices even though we have an agreement and the United States is an ally. Meanwhile, Iranian officers freely come to this country to intimidate Canadians because it will not list the IRGC, and now we find out that police officers from the People's Republic of China are operating out of three offices illegally opened in Canada, intimidating Canadians.

What is the government doing about these illegal police stations in Toronto?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to be unequivocally clear that we continue to condemn, in the strongest terms, the brutal killing of Mahsa Amini in Iran. We will continue to ensure that we are taking every appropriate action to hold those who did this responsible for their transgressions. We stand with the women. We stand with everyone who is advocating for human rights.

Speaking of women's rights, now would be a fine moment for the Conservatives to stand up and apologize for the way they exploited technology to proliferate hate among anti-women, misogynistic groups. Today is the day to do that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, according to the National Post, the Chinese Communist regime has opened at least three police stations on Canadian soil to monitor the Chinese Canadian diaspora.

Beijing maintains that the stations exist simply to assist expats in completing administrative tasks such as renewing driver's licences, but the Chinese Communist regime is not known for telling the truth. This is not the first time that we or the Prime Minister have heard about Chinese communists harassing Canadians.

Is the story reported by the National Post accurate? Will the Prime Minister give us some real information about what he is doing about it?

*Oral Questions**[English]*

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government has a clear track record of providing all the tools necessary for our national security apparatus to combat the kind of foreign interference and threats to national security that my colleague across the aisle talks about. It was the last Conservative government that cut nearly a billion dollars out of that national security apparatus. We restored those cuts because we know it is important and paramount to protect Canadians from all threats, and we will continue to do that.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]***DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

**Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these days, we are more aware of the conditions facing Black communities in Canada. That is why the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion launched a call for proposals this week for organizations to implement the Black-led philanthropic endowment fund announced by our government.

Can the minister tell the House how this fund will support Black communities?

**Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

Black-led and Black-serving organizations are crucial to our fight against systemic racism. That is why our government created the Black-led philanthropic endowment fund. This fund will be managed by a Black-led organization. We will continue to build a more inclusive and equitable Canada.

\* \* \*

• (1505)

*[English]***FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister was asked four times yesterday if he believed the IRGC is a terrorist organization. They shot down a plane, killing 55 Canadians. They have intimidated Iranian families right here on Canadian soil. They have killed thousands of their own people. They have raped and murdered women and girls and have terrorized the world.

If the Prime Minister cannot bring himself to call the IRGC terrorists, who does he think are the terrorists?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think every member of this House stands to condemn the heinous actions of the Iranian regime. We stand in solidarity with women, particularly Mahsa Amini, and all of the people who have been subjected to the tremendous terror of this regime. That is why we have said that Iran is a state sponsor of terror and we will continue to take every action necessary to ensure that Iran's crimes are punished.

**Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we do not have the strongest sanctions in the world but we should. They

killed 55 Canadians. The Prime Minister stood in this House in 2018 and voted to ban the IRGC from Canada, and yesterday he could not even bring himself to call them terrorists.

For all the families of the victims of flight PS752, all the women protesting in the streets and the Iranian Canadian community being terrorized by the IRGC despots who are in Canada organizing, planning and raising money, when will the government show some courage and call a terrorist a terrorist?

**Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we want real action that will actually target where danger lies. We do not have time for jargon and rhetoric. We do not have time to try to make a political spectacle out of this. Real people are hurting. Real Canadians have been hurt.

We will continue to take every action possible to make sure that we target very specifically those who commit heinous crimes. That is what we will do on this side of the House.

**Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, look at what is going on here today. We have a government that cannot say the IRGC is a terrorist group. We know from Bill C-5 that the Liberals are weak on crime. Now we know they are weak on terrorism. The IRGC fired a missile at a civilian airliner, murdering 176 people, including 55 Canadians and 30 permanent residents. This is personal for this country.

I have a simple question for the government. If the members of the IRGC are not terrorists, then who are?

**Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House say with a very clear voice that Iran is a state that supports terror. We will continue to call out those who are responsible for all the transgressions of human rights. We will continue to stand with the families who are advocating for women's rights.

Conservatives want to talk about being weak on law and order. When are Conservatives going to finally wake up and do what is right when it comes to combatting gun violence in our communities? Their only plan is to make assault-style rifles available again. That is wrong. On this side of the House, we will continue to do what is necessary to protect the health and safety of Canadians and to protect human rights around the world.

*Government Orders*

**HEALTH**

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, diabetes is a serious chronic disease, and it is one of the most common, affecting millions of Canadians. It poses extensive challenges for those living with it, and for their families and communities. Yesterday, a framework for diabetes in Canada was tabled, marking a pivotal moment in our ongoing efforts to support Canadians impacted by this disease.

Can the Minister of Health tell the House how this will contribute to our efforts to better support and collaborate with those impacted by diabetes in Canada?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by thanking the member for Brampton South for her outstanding work, including the work she did to proceed yesterday with the announcement of the first-ever framework for diabetes. That same work is going to support the lives of millions of Canadians living with diabetes, their caregivers, their families, their friends and their health care professionals, with better access to diagnostic services, treatment and prevention services.

We are going to support the work of all those who help people living with diabetes and all those who care for them.

• (1510)

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, Nunavummiut deserve a government that takes indigenous mental health seriously. It is not enough for the government to announce only \$11 million for the national Inuit suicide prevention strategy, despite committing to \$228 million for indigenous mental health. Indigenous people rightfully expect more from the government, which continues to be all talk with no action.

Will the government finally commit to the culturally appropriate indigenous mental health funding it promised?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her constant advocacy for equity and for indigenous-led and indigenous-designed mental wellness strategies. In fact, that is what we were announcing today with Natan Obed, president of ITK. We announced an additional top-up of \$11 million for the work ITK is doing with partners across the territories.

I will say that promise is being shown in these indigenous-led approaches. It was an honour to be with ITK president, Natan Obed, today to announce that the federal government will top up the funding ITK has by \$11 million.

\* \* \*

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this year we learned that the cost for the Trans Mountain expansion project had ballooned to \$21.4 billion, more than double the cost that was estimated when the government bought the pipeline in 2018. At the time, the Deputy Prime Minister assured us that the government would spend no additional public money on the project, yet a new report out today shows that Canadians are being

misled. Trans Mountain is not commercially viable, and \$17 billion in TMX debt owed to Canadians will not be repaid.

When will the governing party stop wasting Canadians' money on this climate-killing project?

**Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as Canadians, we all know how important it is to get our resources to market and to get fair value for them. Putin's illegal war in Ukraine and OPEC's actions this week have further underscored that essential truth. The government does not intend to be a long-term owner of the project. A divestment process will be initiated once the project is more advanced and de-risked, and essentially, when consultations with indigenous partners have been concluded.

**Mr. John Brassard:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In Ontario, the government funds a program that provides free preventive routine maintenance and emergency dental services for children and youth 17 years old and younger. It is the healthy smiles program, and it is for low-income households. With the House's permission, I am seeking unanimous consent to table the documents, in both official languages.

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

**Some hon. members:** Nay.

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**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

[*Translation*]

**COST OF LIVING RELIEF ACT, NO. 1**

The House resumed from October 5 consideration of the motion that Bill C-30, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act (temporary enhancement to the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax credit), be read the third time and passed.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:12 p.m., pursuant to order made on Monday, October 3, the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the motion at third reading stage of Bill C-30.

• (1515)

[*English*]

Call in the members.

• (1525)

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

(*Division No. 188*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultair

Aitchison

*Government Orders*

Albas	Aldag	Johns	Jones
Alghabra	Ali	Jowhari	Julian
Allison	Anandasangaree	Kayabaga	Kelloway
Angus	Arnold	Kelly	Khalid
Arseneault	Arya	Khera	Kitchen
Ashton	Atwin	Kmiec	Koutrakis
Bachrach	Badawey	Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Bains	Baker	Kusie	Kusmierczyk
Baldinelli	Barlow	Kwan	Lake
Barrett	Barron	Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste	Lametti	Lamoureux
Beaulieu	Beech	Lantsman	Lapointe
Bendayan	Bennett	Larouche	Lattanzio
Benzen	Bergen	Lauzon	Lawrence
Bergeron	Berthold	LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Bérubé	Bezan	Lehoux	Lemire
Bibeau	Bittle	Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Blair	Blanchet	Liepert	Lightbound
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney	Lloyd	Lobb
Block	Blois	Long	Longfield
Boissonnault	Boulerice	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
Bradford	Bragdon	MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
Brassard	Brière	MacKenzie	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe	Maguire	Maloney
Calkins	Cannings	Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Caputo	Carr	Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
Carrie	Casey	May (Saanic—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
Chabot	Chagger	McCauley (Edmonton West)	McDonald (Avalon)
Chahal	Chambers	McGuinty	McKay
Champagne	Champoux	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)	McLean
Chatel	Chen	McLeod	McPherson
Chiang	Chong	Melillo	Mendès
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cooper	Mendicino	Miao
Cormier	Coteau	Michaud	Miller
Dabrusin	Dalton	Moore	Morantz
Damoff	Dancho	Morrice	Morrison
Davidson	Davies	Morrissey	Motz
DeBellefeuille	Deltell	Murray	Muys
d'Entremont	Desbiens	Naqvi	Nater
Desilets	Dhaliwal	Noormohamed	Normandin
Dhillon	Diab	O'Connell	Oliphant
Doherty	Dong	O'Regan	O'Toole
Dowdall	Dreeshen	Patzer	Paul-Hus
Drouin	Dubourg	Pauzé	Perkins
Duclos	Duguid	Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Duncan (Etobicoke North)	Dzerowicz	Plamondon	Poilievre
Ehsassi	El-Khoury	Powlowski	Qualtrough
Ellis	Erskine-Smith	Rayes	Redekopp
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)	Reid	Rempel Garner
Fast	Fergus	Richards	Roberts
Ferreri	Fillmore	Robillard	Rodriguez
Findlay	Fisher	Rogers	Romanado
Fonseca	Fortier	Rood	Ruff
Fortin	Fragiskatos	Sahota	Sajjan
Fraser	Freeland	Saks	Sarai
Fry	Gaheer	Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Gallant	Garneau	Scheer	Schiefke
Garon	Garrison	Schmale	Seeback
Gaudreau	Gazan	Serré	Sgro
Généreux	Genuis	Shanahan	Sheehan
Gerretsen	Gill	Shields	Shipley
Glada	Godin	Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Goodridge	Gould	Simard	Sinclair-Desgagné
Gourde	Gray	Singh	Small
Green	Guilbeault	Sorbara	Soroka
Hajdu	Hallan	Steinley	Ste-Marie
Hanley	Hardie	Stewart	St-Onge
Hepfner	Hoback	Strahl	Stubbs
Holland	Housefather	Sudds	Tassi
Hughes	Hussen	Taylor Roy	Thériault
Hutchings	Iacono	Therrien	Thomas
Idlout	Ien	Thompson	Tochor
Jaczek	Jeneroux	Tolmie	Trudeau

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Webber  
Wilkinson  
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**The Speaker:** I declare this motion carried.

(Bill read the third time and passed)

**The Speaker:** I wish to inform the House that, because of the deferred recorded division, Government Orders will be extended by 11 minutes.

\* \* \*

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the traditional Thursday question.

As this is the Thursday before Thanksgiving, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you, Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleagues from all sides of the House, the House administration, the staff and the pages a happy Thanksgiving.

For most Canadians, this will be the first Thanksgiving in a long time that everyone will be able to get back together. I know it will be especially meaningful for families from coast to coast. We have so much to be grateful for in Canada and it is a great time to reflect on that. Even as parliamentarians debate how we can make things even better, it is always worthwhile to take a few moments to appreciate what we do have.

The things we do have are getting more expensive. To help put food on the plates of Canadians, we would like to know if the government House leader will tell the House if, after the Thanksgiving break, we can expect any legislation that would cancel the Liberal tripling of the carbon tax to help make the essentials that Canadians need to enjoy Thanksgiving more affordable; and if he could inform the House of the calendar of what parliamentarians might be expected to debate when we come back after the break week.

**Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me echo the comments of my hon. colleague. Thanksgiving is one of my favourite times. It is an opportunity to be with family and friends. As the hon. member said, we have not had that chance in a very long time, so it makes this a very special Thanksgiving. As the member correctly stated, and we

*Business of the House*

should reflect on this, we really do have an enormous amount to be grateful for in our country. It is a special occasion to give thanks and to be with the people I love. I hope every member has a wonderful time with their family and friends, and with their constituents, over the upcoming constituency week.

With respect to the member's question about when we come back, I will be talking about what we are going to be doing, but first, in answer to this question, we absolutely cannot, and I will say it every time he asks me this question, give up on action on climate. While we take action to make life more affordable, and in a minute I will talk about what we will do over the next coming weeks, we cannot afford to make pollution free again.

We cannot allow pollution to be something that spews into the environment without consequence. We will continue to return that money to Canadians. Eight out of 10 Canadians will see more back. We can fight climate change, we can do affordability and we can do those things at the same time.

I am proud to say that our agenda to make life more affordable for families continues. It continues tomorrow when we take action, again, on the environment with Bill S-5, making important amendments to the Environmental Protection Act to improve and protect our environment, and at the same time take essential action to move forward with Bill C-31, which would provide families right across Canada the opportunity to ensure they have dental care, that this is not something, as life gets globally more challenging, that is left to the wayside. We know how important dental care is to health. I hope the member opposite will be supporting us in that as it comes forward.

On the Monday, when we return from our constituency week, we will continue with debate on Bill C-31, as I referenced earlier, with respect to dental care and support for housing.

On Tuesday, we will move forward with Bill C-22, the Canada disability act, which is critical support to help lift hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are disabled out of poverty. This is essential action to help them, and I hope the Conservatives would support that. I know other parties are.

On Wednesday, we will return to Bill S-5.

Thursday will be an allotted day.

On Friday, we hope to make progress on Bill S-4, which is an act to amend the Criminal Code and the Identification of Criminals Act, COVID-19 response and other measures. We also look forward to advancing Bill C-9, with respect to the Judges Act.

*Business of Supply*

Last, I would like to inform the House that the Wednesday, following question period, there will be a really important opportunity to pay respects and tribute to our friend and former colleague, who we are all mourning, the late Bill Blaikie.

\* \* \*

• (1530)

**BUSINESS OF SUPPLY**

## OPPOSITION MOTION—HIGH FOOD PRICES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, once again I am pleased to rise in the House and bring the voice of the people of Vancouver Kingsway to this chamber, particularly as we discuss this very critical and important New Democrat motion that would make such a difference to so many Canadians' lives across this country.

I might add that I am going to be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay, who will once again provide the powerful view of people from northern Ontario.

In short, this motion calls on the government to recognize that excessive corporate profits fuel inflation. It would force CEOs and large corporations to pay what they owe by closing tax loopholes. It would request the Competition Bureau to launch an investigation into the behaviour of chain grocery stores, and it would support the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in its investigation of high food prices and obscene profits in chain grocery stores.

The context in which this NDP proposal arises is very important. People in every corner of this country are frustrated and hurt that they are paying excessive, historically high prices for their food while the huge food chains are making massive, unprecedented profits and their CEOs in particular are getting huge bonuses off the backs of hard-working Canadians.

After seven years in government, the Liberals are still protecting the profits of the wealthiest in this country by refusing to toughen the Competition Act to punish corporate CEOs who are gouging consumers and, in this case, also agricultural producers.

For their part, the Conservatives played their role in the current crisis when they were in government by cutting the tax audits of the wealthiest Canadians and prioritizing excessive CEO profits over the interests of working men and women. The Conservatives refused to toughen the Competition Act when they were in government as well.

Only the NDP members are standing in this House fighting for the people who are suffering from these high prices. We will continue to pressure the Liberals to make sure that the wealthiest CEOs in the largest profitable corporations in this country pay what they owe and stop the price gouging that they are inflicting on people.

Let us review some of the basic facts. It is absolutely crystal clear that the inflation being experienced today is greedflation. It is not caused by governments or deficits. It is not caused by workers' excessive wages. It is caused by excessive prices. In particular, it has been caused by price gouging by corporations who have used

the cover of the pandemic and the war to jack up prices and, in turn, their profits.

Let us review the facts. In August of this year, the price of the grocery basket rose 10.8% in one year, more than twice as fast as people's wages. Where did that come from? As people pay the price for the biggest increase in the grocery basket since 1981, the Sobeys' CEO has been given a total compensation package of \$8.6 million in 2022. His increase is more than 15.5% over 2021. While a quarter of Canadians, which is nine million Canadians plus, are cutting back on food spending, a necessity of life, Metro's CEO boosted his company's profits to \$275 million just in the last reported quarter, which is 9% higher than the same point in 2021.

I am going to stop here just for a moment. I am sure members are noticing a pattern: 9%, 15.5% and 10.8%. These are all numbers over the inflation rate of 8% today and they are all caused by CEO increases, massive compensation increases and price gouging by food producers. Do we wonder where inflation is coming from?

While Canadians pay the price for rising food prices, billionaire Galen Weston, chairman of Loblaw, has increased dividends to shareholders from \$118 million to \$125 million, just in 2022. Who is paying the price for this? A new survey shows that nine out of 10 Canadians are now tightening their household budgets because of continuing high prices. Another survey found that 23.6% of Canadians have had to cut back on the amount of food that they buy. Imagine that. Almost one in four Canadians is reducing their caloric intake in this country while rich, wealthy corporations make massive profits and reward their corporate masters for doing so.

• (1535)

Despite a slight deceleration in the rate of inflation recently, food prices continue to rise at a rate of over 10.8%, so in 2002 Canadian families are expected to pay almost \$1,000 more for groceries than in 2021. This is a crisis. This is a problem. People are being hurt every day by this price gouging.

What do the Conservatives say? They say to cut the deficit and cut taxes. That is their solution, but they refuse to say a word in this chamber or outside the chamber about the cause of this problem being corporate greed. Why? It is because the Conservatives are the party that represents Bay Street and the party that represents large corporations and CEOs in this country. While they claim to support the little guy and working people, their silence on issues like this speaks volumes.

For the Liberals' part, they claim to care as well, but their policies, in truth, on these economic issues are really no different from those of the Conservatives'. While people are paying the price for the biggest increase in the grocery basket in over 40 years, we find ourselves at this juncture in history.

*Business of Supply*

What is the NDP saying we should do about it? We are saying, let us take action. That is because we know it is not people's wages that are causing the cost of living crisis, but again the obscene profits being made by corporations and CEOs. Indeed, corporate profits, along with prices, have reached their highest share of Canadian GDP ever, and now I am talking about across all sectors. Corporate profits have increased by \$22.9 billion this year, which is about a quarter of the increase in costs to consumers.

The contrast between these profits and people who suffer the price gouging is not new. As far back as 2018, Loblaw, run, again, by the billionaire Weston family, admitted to participating in a cartel from 2001 to 2015 with other major grocery chains to artificially inflate the price of bread. This potentially, what I would call, prima facie criminal practice is reportedly still under investigation by the commissioner of competition.

If someone stole a loaf of bread in this country today, the person would have been tried, convicted and punished by now, but when billionaires defraud millions of Canadians, it takes years to even investigate. That is under the legal scheme that has been devised by successive Liberal and Conservative federal governments over decades and decades. Therefore, it is no wonder that corporations are price gouging. They have been given the green light by Conservatives and Liberals for years. Where is the penalty? The Conservatives, who like to talk about being tough on crime, do not seem to be too tough on Loblaws right now.

The commissioner of competition recently called for greater enforcement of Canada's competition laws to combat rising prices, and he noted the federal government is ill-equipped compared to other countries. For example, under European competition law, companies can be heavily fined for abusing their dominant positions in the market to exploit consumers, including the imposition of unfair purchase prices.

Recent cases handled by them include pharmaceutical companies that raised their price of off-patent cancer drugs, of all things, by a percentage in the hundreds, and Gazprom, which has been accused of setting unfair prices for gas. These companies will take advantage of crises, even of cancer patients and people suffering from the Ukraine war, to gouge and pad their profits. It is time the Liberal government put an end to this.

The NDP stood in this House today and moved a motion to do exactly that. It will be interesting for Canadians to see how these two parties vote on this, because that will tell the tale. It is easy for them to say they support working people, but we will see who stands up in the House, attacks these corporate profits and stands up for working people when this motion is voted on.

• (1540)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am not sure if the NDP member has been following the debate that has been going on in the House today, but I have said on at least one occasion, along with other Liberals I believe, that I really like this motion. To draw the conclusion that perhaps Liberals are just going to be against it is disingenuous, at least to the process of what goes on in here.

I think this is a good motion and I like the wording of it. There are a couple of words that perhaps I would have phrased slightly differently, but, nonetheless, I appreciate the intent. The motion focuses primarily on grocery stores. I am wondering if the member can inform the House of other sectors and industries, other than oil, which is the obvious one that we know of, that might also be practising this and if there should be further investigation into those as well.

**Mr. Don Davies:** Madam Speaker, I would be pleased if the Liberals voted in favour of this. I hope they do, but one vote today is not going to make up for decades of inaction and refusal to make corporations and companies pay their fair share. There absolutely is a comprehensive corporate gouging across all sectors of this country.

My colleague asked what other sectors are doing it. The oil and gas sector is doing it. In fact, some of the biggest oil companies have recorded the highest profits in the history of their companies in the last 12 months. The so-called FIRE sector, which is finance, insurance and real estate, is recording double-digit profit increases, as are other companies across this country.

This corporate gouge is not limited to the food sector, for sure. That is why we need fair corporate taxation, something the NDP has called for over a long period but both the Liberals and the Conservatives have refused to do.

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the intervention by the member for Vancouver Kingsway. I may not agree with everything he stated, but I agree with the intent behind this motion. We have to address high food prices in Canada.

My question to him is this. Why did the motion not include talk about the costs of inputs and how they impact high food prices? I think that would have made it even more clear. That additional cost is driving up food and making it so expensive for so many Canadians.

The second thing is that I know the member mentioned Loblaws. I and other Conservative members have pointed out the hypocrisy of the Liberal government over the \$12 million that it gave to Loblaws. I did not hear anything about that in his speech, and I am just wondering why.

• (1545)

**Mr. Don Davies:** Madam Speaker, it was a pleasure to serve with the member on NSICOP. The motion is, I think, very well crafted. It identifies the problem in a very pithy way, and it identifies four concrete solutions. I suppose there are always things to add, and the Conservatives could have added an amendment if they had wanted to.

*Business of Supply*

In terms of inputs, what we are talking about here is plain gouging. It is my assertion that corporations, including food companies, are using the supply chain problems as a cover to gouge consumers. There is no question about that, because their increases bear no resemblance whatsoever to any of the input costs, including wages, which is usually the single largest component of any product, like a food product. They are gouging agricultural producers as well. It is certainly not our farmers who are reaping the benefits of these prices. It is the food companies themselves. That is why we are zeroing in on them.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Surely no one could oppose a motion that denounces greed. I wonder, however, whether it needs to go a little further. We know that Canadian companies managed to hide \$381 billion in 12 tax havens this year. We know that tax avoidance goes relatively unpunished by Ottawa.

I know it is more dramatic to talk about retail and grocery store profits, but I would like to know what my colleague thinks about going further and looking at tax havens.

[*English*]

**Mr. Don Davies:** Madam Speaker, I think the NDP has been the loudest, strongest and longest voice in this House on going after tax havens. We have been raising that in every election I have run in since 2008. We were doing it before that as well. In fact, this motion does talk about forcing CEOs and big corporations to pay what they owe, by closing loopholes that allowed them to avoid \$30 billion in taxes in 2021 alone. That results in a corporate tax rate that is effectively lower now than when the government was elected.

Part of closing loopholes is going after that money that is parked in offshore tax havens as a means of extracting the wealth from Canada and parking that capital offshore to avoid taxes. That is immoral and should be illegal, and only the NDP has consistently called for effective action to close those loopholes.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, as always it is a great honour to rise and speak on behalf of the people of Timmins—James Bay, particularly at this time of incredible uncertainty. We noticed and are very pleased to see the Russian army suffering defeats in Ukraine, but we are in a time of major global uncertainty. We are in a time of crisis in prices and crisis in supply chains. Workers are being told, with respect to their lack of ability to get higher wages, that if they somehow got a more level playing field, it would exacerbate the inflation crisis.

What New Democrats are calling for today is to focus in on where these inflationary problems are being driven. They are being driven by gouging by some very major and powerful corporate interests. On the oil sector, around the world there are questions being raised about the massive profits coming out of the pockets of ordinary consumers, who cannot even afford to heat their houses.

The other really disturbing issue we are seeing is the crisis in the affordability of food, and that is directly tied to the price gouging that has been under way throughout this crisis. What we are asking for is very straightforward. We are asking the Competition Bureau

to launch an investigation into grocery chain practices, to increase the penalties for price fixing and to strengthen competition laws to prohibit these companies from abusing their dominant positions in the market, which exploit both consumers and agricultural producers.

We are also calling for the House of Commons Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food to look into this, because we want to make sure we are dealing with issues of fairness, as people are being gouged and cannot afford to pay their bills.

It is very interesting and indicative that we are debating this today, when the New Democratic motion on doubling the GST tax credit has received support from this House, because we came into this Parliament saying we were going to fight for people who are being left behind in this time of uncertainty.

We brought forward three major initiatives for the fall. First, the doubling of the GST tax credit will get money right back into the hands of people, families and seniors so they can buy their groceries. Second, for low-income renters, the \$500 supplement is essential support at this time of gouging and particularly high housing prices. Third, of course, is the initiative the Liberals have now moved to agree with us on, which is a national dental care plan. If a person cannot afford to get their kids' teeth fixed, all other issues pale in comparison. A mother or a father who cannot afford to get their child's teeth fixed is in a situation that should not be allowed to happen.

My friends in the Conservative Party have been very much against these initiatives. I appreciate the flip-flop on the tax credit, but the word they have been using is that actual steps to help people in this crisis would somehow be “vaporized” by inflation, as though inflation is some kind of magic thing. I am interested in the term “vaporizing”, because the only thing I noticed that vaporized over the summer was the price of cryptocurrency after the leader of the Conservative Party told us that he gets his financial advice from a conspiracy blogger on YouTube.

I know they got a lot of their medical advice from anti-vax conspiracy bloggers on YouTube, but the idea that the leader of the Conservative Party was promoting cryptocurrency, which dropped 70% in value after he began promoting it, is something we should think about for a minute. I know a lot of working-class people in northern Ontario who do not have savings, who are insecure and who thought maybe crypto would be a way of allowing them to get some kind of savings. They listened to the Conservative leader. Seventy per cent of that value vaporized.



*Business of Supply*

I will tell members what is not going to vaporize, which is getting that \$500 cheque if someone is a low-income renter, or getting the \$460 to \$600 GST rebate so people can pay their rent. What is not going to vaporize is the hopes of children to get dental care. That is what New Democrats came to Parliament to do. It was to get results for people.

What we need to do is strip off a lot of the mythologies and misrepresentations on what is causing inflation. Now, I mentioned the Russian war at the beginning, and we know that has destabilized the situation globally, but when we drill down on the numbers in Canada, it becomes very clear that certain powerful interests are using the fears of inflation to drive up their profits and their corporate lines.

• (1550)

The CEO of Sobeys was paid \$8.6 million in compensation this year. What does this guy do to deserve this? Groceries rose nearly 11% in that time. It is supposed to be inflationary growth that caused the 11% rise, but the profits we saw from Sobeys, Loblaws and Metro are much higher than the rate of inflation. The rates of wage earnings are much lower than the rate of inflation, so workers who got an increase this year did not contribute to inflation; it is the gouging that is going on. The CEO compensation at Loblaws was \$5 million; at Metro it was \$5 million, and at Sobeys it was \$8.6 million.

I want to focus in a bit on the Weston family, on Galen Weston, living in his gated community. He was found guilty of price-fixing with respect to bread, for crying out loud. I want to thank Irene Breckon, a good northern Ontario woman from the mining town of Elliot Lake, who led the class action lawsuit. Does anyone think that Galen Weston is ever going to be punished for ripping off families with respect to bread? That is not what happens to the super rich. They get free gifts, for example, \$12 million to fix Galen Weston's fridges.

My mom, and I am thinking of Loretta Lynn today, is a coal miner's daughter. I had to explain this to her. She called me to ask what was going on with the Liberal government fixing Galen Weston's fridges, and whether it would fix her fridge. I told her that I knew it was really not right and that we were trying to deal with it. Then she came home and told me about the grocery prices she is having to pay and asked about Galen Weston and all the money he is making. I told her not to worry, that we are going to make this right.

That is why we are in the House today. Across party lines, we need to start saying to these CEOs that they cannot use inflationary fears anymore to gouge working-class families that have no choice but to go to the grocery store and pay for the food they need for their children.

In our motion today we are not talking about the oil price gouging that is going on, but that has been one of the other massive drivers of inflation. At the beginning of October, when the price of a barrel of oil was \$80, prices were still 13% higher than they were the last time the price of a barrel was that high. I am sure other people in the country know this too, but anyone in northern Ontario knows that the second a hurricane hits the southern Gulf coast the price of gas at our local pumps jumps up 30¢ overnight, but when

everything is going fine that price does not come down. There is consistent gouging.

Members do not have to believe me. I know people think I am the wild New Democrat from northern Ontario, but I would say that my good friend the CEO of Shell agrees with me, because he is saying that the situation around the world is so unstable due to the gouging of the oil companies that this crisis can no longer be left to the markets. He says it is time we started to tax that windfall back.

We are not saying it is wrong to make profit. Profit is good. It is what drives industry. However, companies are gouging people over their fears of inflation and using the Russian war to pad their pockets. How are they padding them? Let us talk about the \$52 billion in the second quarter of this year, which is an increase of 235%. That is the kind of gouging that is going on.

The United Nations, California, the EU and even President Biden are talking about the windfall tax that is necessary to pull some of that gouging back and restore it to ordinary Canadians. That is our job in the House of Commons, to stand up for the people who do not have a voice in the back rooms of power, who do not have the lobbyists and who do not have the Cayman Islands to hide their tax accounts. They have to go and feed their kids. They deserve dental care. They deserve an investigation into the gouging that is going on in the grocery stores right now.

• (1555)

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):**

Madam Speaker, I will ask my question, picking up on the last comment the member made. He talked about dental care in particular. I am not sure if he caught it, but during question period the Prime Minister basically asked the Leader of the Opposition why he would not support dental care and help put smiles on children's faces. The very odd response was that they will not be smiling if their parents cannot buy them a bit of pumpkin pie, as if to suggest that parents would rather give their kids pumpkin pie than provide dental care. Is it just me, or are the Conservatives completely out of touch with what the most vulnerable in our society need?

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, to those who say there is no such thing as miracles, I note that my hon. colleague from the Liberals, who until just recently was dead set against a federal dental care plan, has seen the light. I appreciate that. When someone has seen the light, we have to welcome them into the light.

*Business of Supply*

As for the leader of the Conservative Party, he has nothing to worry about with his pumpkin pie this weekend. He does not have to worry about how much sugar is put in there for his kids because he has had free dental care since he was elected at 20-some years old. His family has free dental care. All the Conservatives have free dental care. They just do not want working class parents to get free dental care. That is the issue I have.

I do not care how many pumpkin pies are put on the table. Nobody is going to swallow that malarky.

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Madam Speaker, we do agree with much of the bill. The big thing is competition, and that looks at how companies are acting and what choice is there for consumers.

The member talked about people being gouged and what they cannot afford. Our farmers provide food, and if we are looking at the competition, we see there are 189,000 farms in Canada. They are paying, on average, \$45,000 each in carbon tax, and they are only getting back \$862. We are talking about that end of the industry.

Of course, we are also going to look at competition for our grocery stores. We are going to look at farmers' markets and the other ways that people get nutritious, healthy food. That seems to be about gouging. They are not finding relief at a time when farmers cannot choose other sources. We want them to use hydrogen and want them to use better fossil fuels or no carbon, but when it comes to that idea, they do not have a choice.

Why is the member not pushing for relief for farmers to get better, nutritious food for Canadian families that need it right now?

• (1600)

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, one thing that always strikes me about the Conservatives when we are talking about people not being able to pay their bills is that they are very concerned that big oil is not getting enough of a free deal. Nine billion dollars is the figure for one year of climate damage in British Columbia. How many farms were wrecked by climate damage? We never hear the Conservatives worry about that, because they are focused on big oil. They believe that pollution should be free and that the big oil companies should be able to jack as much CO<sub>2</sub> into the air as possible.

My issue with the carbon tax is that the Liberals do not seem to have a climate plan to go with it, so they are raising the money. I find it really concerning that when we are talking about price gouging and about bringing this forward so the producers are heard at the table, the Conservatives want to talk about the interests of big oil.

[Translation]

**Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from Timmins—James Bay for his speech.

He talked mainly about food prices. It is important that we not confuse all the causes of rising food prices. We do not think that CEOs are the only ones to blame for the price increase. A unique set of circumstances involving a multitude of external factors is

causing economic instability. These factors include rising operating costs related to COVID-19, higher input costs including more expensive staple foods, and poor harvests due to droughts and the impact of climate change in recent years.

Could my colleague comment on that?

[English]

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, I invite my hon. colleague to take a plane and go up to the north of her riding to see what people pay in the northern stores. They are ripped off consistently. Does she think that the northern stores are not making massive amounts of money? The northern stores' CEO is making millions as well. This is happening to her constituents.

Loblaws made \$901 million, up \$132 million. Metro made \$680 million, up \$49 million over the last year. Sobeys made \$744.8 million, up \$46.7 million. The member can talk about input costs and COVID, but we are talking about price gouging.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will start by saying that I am sharing my time with the deputy House leader to the government.

I have had an opportunity to read this motion and I think there is a lot of good in it. Quite frankly, I am inclined to support it and most likely will, to be completely honest.

It reminds me that just a few days ago, during a question and answer on a different issue, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie asked me specifically about this issue in the context of another bill that we were discussing. I can recall replying to him that I thought it was a very important issue to discuss. I did not realize that this exchange would lead to the NDP, just a couple of days later, introducing a motion to that effect, but I am absolutely delighted to see it. I think it will give an opportunity, if passed, for the necessary studies to be done.

I think there is quite a bit of anecdotal evidence out there to suggest that there are large corporations profiting off of inflation and the fear of inflation, and it is something we need to address. I look forward to, hopefully, this passing with the support of the House and to the opportunity to ensure that these practices are dealt with in a swift fashion.

I want to compliment the NDP on bringing forward a very reasonable motion, quite frankly, unlike my colleagues from across the way, the Conservatives. They bring in motions that are pretty much predicated on slogans like “triple, triple, triple” whatever.

*Business of Supply*

By the way, I do not understand this “triple, triple, triple” thing. It does not make any sense to me. When I hear them say “triple, triple, triple”, all I think of is that there have been three times in the last eight years that the population has rejected them. Maybe they are referencing “triple, triple, triple” because they have been rejected at the polls three times in a row. I am not sure. That is all I can really put together based on it, because otherwise it does not make sense. It does not even deliver well. In any event, that is what I assumed.

The Conservatives have policies that are completely out there, as opposed to coming forward with stuff like what we are seeing today, which is very reasonable, in my opinion. We obviously know their position on cryptocurrency. That is becoming very well known in the House. The Leader of the Opposition is a big fan of cryptocurrency.

As a matter of fact, and I am not sure if the public knows this, there is a private member's bill in the name of the member for Calgary Nose Hill on cryptocurrency. We were actually supposed to debate that private member's bill during the first sitting of the House, when we resumed in September, but guess what. The Conservatives punted it forward. Do members know when it was punted forward to? It was today. We were actually supposed to discuss that bill today at 5:30 p.m., but guess what the Conservatives did. They punted it forward.

The Conservatives seem to be very scared about the issue of cryptocurrency. If they are not, why will they not let the member for Calgary Nose Hill bring forward her bill? Free the bill. Free her bill. Allow it to come to the floor.

The Conservative leadership, run by the member for Carleton, the Carleton crypto king, is purposefully preventing this bill from moving forward in the House. Let us have a discussion on cryptocurrency. Allow the member for Calgary Nose Hill to bring her bill before the House. The Conservatives need to stop holding it back, because, quite frankly, it is unfair to Canadians to not let us have the opportunity to discuss this very important matter.

That is the contrast I am trying to show here with the reasonable motion we see today to look into a very important matter. The NDP clearly accepts the global reasoning that has been supported by economists throughout the globe as to why we have inflation. No, it is not the Prime Minister of Canada who caused inflation. It is a global issue. The NDP knows that and I am fairly certain the Bloc knows that too.

• (1605)

The Conservatives are set on trying to convince the Canadian population that it is actually the Prime Minister who caused global inflation. If he had the ability to do that, I would be really impressed, quite frankly, especially considering that the Conservatives routinely accuse the Prime Minister of being incapable of doing just about anything. Now suddenly they are willing to give him credit for being able to control global inflation.

Nonetheless, those are the kinds of issues the NDP is trying to look at in a realistic way, rather than saying that we do not want to spend money giving GST rebates because that is going to cause inflation. Members might note that this is one of the original argu-

ments that came from the Conservatives before they flip-flopped on it. They have now decided that it is maybe not in their best interests to vote against that, so maybe they should support it. Rather than taking the approach of the Conservatives and saying we are not interested in inflation because we know where it comes from, the New Democrats are actually trying to get to the root cause of it, and I think their main complaint here has a lot of merit to it.

We have seen a lot happen today. It has been a pretty revealing day for the Leader of the Opposition. We have learned this morning that he was actively using misogynistic tags on YouTube to get users to go to his YouTube page. For people who do not understand how this works, there is a particular hashtag, #mgtow, which is “men going their own way”, from a group that is specifically based around anti-feminism and misogyny. There are primarily and pretty much only men in this group. What the Leader of the Opposition was doing was using that hashtag—

• (1610)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Battlefords—Lloydminster is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Rosemarie Falk:** Madam Speaker, I understand that we are debating an opposition day motion today from the NDP about food supply. I am unsure of the relevance of what the member across—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member does know there is a lot of latitude in the way we get to the object of the debates, and I will let the member get there.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Charlie Angus:** Madam Speaker, in response to that, because we do have a tradition in Parliament, I would like the hon. member to clarify whether he thinks the member for Carleton was just trying to attract incels in general, or maybe even some on the back bench.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Can we wait until questions to ask questions of the hon. member making the speech? The hon. member has addressed the issue of the motion. He has started his speech on it and has spent most of the time so far on the issue of the motion.

The hon. member for Prince Albert is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, the member for Battlefords—Lloydminster was very clear that she would like to see the member stick to the topic at hand. Also, the fact is that our leader has been very clear on this issue. He condemns it and condemns all the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** That is debate. Let us allow the hon. member to finish his speech.

*Business of Supply*

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the member is trying to bring me back to relevance and immediately starts to argue the point with me. I would say to him, based on his last comment, that no, the Leader of the Opposition has not been clear. He can look at the tape from earlier today, at just after 10 o'clock when he made his speech. I asked him a question, point blank. In a very polite way, I said I would like to give him an opportunity to explain to Canadians what exactly he was doing with his YouTube channel and how he is actively working to prevent that now. I asked him to do that and he would not do it.

I can see all the points of order, and I wonder why—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** The hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes is rising on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, with respect to relevance, the member for Kingston and the Islands denied unanimous consent to condemn blackface. I am wondering if he would like to do that now.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Does the hon. member have unanimous consent?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Is he asking for a unanimous consent motion or is he asking for me to say something?

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** He is asking for unanimous consent to condemn blackface.

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, I am asking for that member to condemn it.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** My apologies.

As I have been advised, that enters into matters of debate, so I would encourage the hon. parliamentary secretary to conclude his remarks on the motion at hand so we can start questions.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, I guess this is an issue the Conservatives do not want to talk about. I do not blame them. They are getting up time after time, interrupting me with points of order and trying to prevent me from continuing because they do not want to talk about this issue. We can see that.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, they are heckling me. They will not stop, and I realize that at the end of the day, the Leader of the Opposition will have to answer for it one way or another. I would encourage him to come forward to this House and explain to Canadians his position on using misogynistic and hurtful hashtags in order to generate views on YouTube.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

With regard to possible collusion in the food distribution industry, we know that the industry is an oligopoly of five giants that control 90% of the market. These giants can easily agree amongst themselves to negotiate for low prices with agricultural producers or set high prices when selling to consumers. The motion alludes to this indirectly.

I believe my favourite part of the motion is the one about asking the Competition Bureau to launch an investigation of the industry, of these giants, to check for collusion and excessive profits, a bit like what was done in England with the British Parliament.

What does my colleague think of that?

• (1615)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, this is the third speech in a row where this has happened. Obviously the first opportunity to ask a question goes to the Conservatives, but not one of them has stood up to ask me a question. I appreciate that. I understand if they are afraid to do that.

I will answer the question from the member of the Bloc, and he makes a very good point. Not only can that monopoly develop through collaboration, but, looking at game theory, that collaboration can also happen through the practice of different companies making certain moves without actually having a verbal discussion about it. These are the things that we need to look into. This motion particularly calls on finding out if it is happening and, if so, how that increase has occurred, specifically as it relates to prices going up based on the monopoly.

**Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP):** Madam Speaker, a report came out at the beginning of the year saying that CEOs in Canada are now making 191 times more than their average worker. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the grocery industry. I would ask again what some of my colleagues have asked: Why would the Liberal government not close the loopholes to make those who are making the most money, the wealthiest of the wealthiest Canadians, pay their fair share?

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely correct. The spread between the haves and the have-nots has only gotten larger and larger. The reality of the situation is that not only is it not good that CEOs are being paid 191 times more because of the difference between those who are making incredible sums of money and those who are making very little bits of money, but it is also generally not good for our economy as a whole when we do not have a strong middle class. We need a strong middle class because they are the ones who actually drive the economy.

The member's question was about why the government will not move forward on it. In this motion the NDP calls for that, and I just told her that I am going to support the motion. Therefore, I do support the call that is in the motion.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the NDP for bringing this forward. I look forward to seeing the study. I hope they have not predetermined the outcome of the study and will actually let witnesses bring forward the truth.

When it comes to the government, does it really understand what is going on in Canada? Does it actually comprehend the fact that people are hurting?

As an example, I was talking to a taxi driver this morning. He basically works two jobs. He works at a bank and in a taxi, just so he will be able to get enough money scraped together to have a Thanksgiving dinner. Does the member understand there are single mothers actually watering down the milk they feed their kids so the kids are not going hungry? Does he not understand that there is hurt and need in this country?

What is their proposal? They are going to give them \$500 more. The Liberals need to do more. Does the member not understand that there is more that needs to be done? They are not presenting anything more.

**Mr. Mark Gerretsen:** Madam Speaker, the member says that we are not presenting anything more. Let us look at all the legislation we have brought forward to ease the financial pressures on those who actually need it the most. We can look at \$10-a-day child care, the GST rebate and the countless number of initiatives out there that this federal government has brought forward. For this member to say it is just \$500, where does that even come from?

I realize that the member has not voted in favour of any of it. However, there is a real opportunity here. The Conservatives identified their error with the GST rebate bill, and they did vote in favour of it. Now they have another opportunity to recognize their error with respect to this motion and flip-flop on it as well. I hope they will come forward to vote with the NDP and, at least, me when we come to vote for—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine has the floor.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member from the NDP for bringing forward this important motion.

We are at the tail end of three weeks of sitting in this Parliament, and we have been talking a lot about what Canadians are going through, and we hear them. We know, through all of us talking to the citizens in our respective ridings, that people are hurting. They are concerned about the increase in the cost of living and inflation, and they want to know that we are working together to make sure we are there for them. While some members will focus on who did what and who did not do what, I want to focus on what we can do together to help Canadians.

This weekend, a lot of folks will be going to the grocery store and maybe getting food for Thanksgiving dinner. Whether it be a turkey or ham, folks know that the cost right now for food has increased a lot, and Canadians are hurting.

Since we came back in September, along with the measures we have put in place through legislation that we have been putting forward, we have also put forward legislation for a GST credit, which will help a lot of lower-income Canadians. I know for a fact that a lot of Canadian seniors depend on the GST quarterly payments. They will be able to use that additional fund to help offset some of the costs they will be incurring. I want to thank everybody for supporting that piece of legislation, and I know that Canadians appreciate it.

I also want to talk about dental care and rental supports.

### *Business of Supply*

• (1620)

[*Translation*]

We know very well that the price of housing has increased enormously in Quebec and that it is hard for young families and seniors to pay their rent. Therefore, I hope that we can find a way to support this measure to help people.

[*English*]

When my mother first met our then minister of seniors, she said, “You know what seniors need? Seniors need dental care. They need good teeth.” I am sure our former minister of seniors is laughing because she probably remembers this. However, I was really happy that the NDP worked with us to bring forward a dental care program.

[*Translation*]

It is a very serious problem when seniors cannot afford dental care.

[*English*]

With respect to this piece of legislation, I agree that there is a huge discrepancy between CEOs making millions and millions of dollars and Canadians who are struggling. In fact, in the last Parliament, the 43rd Parliament, I chaired the industry, science and technology committee, and on June 16, 2021, I tabled its sixth report with respect to grocery stores and price-fixing in the House. If this motion does get accepted and sent to the agriculture committee, I urge its members to review that report because there was some really good testimony and there were good recommendations that would be very beneficial.

I looked through the motion before us very carefully, I agree with most of it, and I want to put it on the record that I will be supporting it. It is important that we put partisan politics aside. It is important that we are there for Canadians in their time of need, and it is important that the issue of price gouging, the issue of food security and the issue of food affordability in this country be studied at the agriculture committee, which is the best place for it to go.

[*Translation*]

Since being elected in 2015, we have been there for Canadians. Thanks to the work that we have done together, bills have been passed and measures have been adopted. We have done good work together since 2015. I hope that will continue.

I know that the bills and motions are not always perfect. However, there is a way to work constructively and make improvements to the bills and motions in order to find the best way to help the people we serve.

*Business of Supply*

[English]

With the Canada child benefit, which is tied to the cost of living, I know Canadian families are getting some additional supports.

[Translation]

I am quite pleased that Quebec's child care model was adopted for the rest of Canada. We were real leaders in the area of child care and early childhood centres. I want to commend my colleagues from Quebec, because we have been proud of this program for a long time. In fact, I benefited from it when I was young.

Honestly, this program was a real game-changer for families. I hope that the other provinces will benefit from it like we have in Quebec.

• (1625)

[English]

With respect to the OAS, we have increased the OAS and the GIS for Canadian seniors. There is still more to do, and I agree there is a lot more to do.

When the pandemic hit, we all came together. It was a crazy time two years ago. We came together as a collective and said we needed to make sure people were able to put on their tables and pay their rents to ensure they did not end up in severe debt. We were there with CERB. We were there with wage subsidies. We were there to make sure people were able to pay their everyday costs.

We are now facing a global inflation crisis. If one thinks about it, it is almost a perfect storm. During COVID, supply chains were cut off. We had ports that were unable to continue to operate because of zero acceptability regarding infections. We saw a huge slowdown in the supply chains, and it has absolutely affected inflation across the world.

We also know a lot of folks decided to change jobs over the course of the pandemic, which also caused a lack of manpower. We also know a lot of folks have decided to go back to school, which again reduced manpower. We need to figure out together, as a collective, what we can be doing to make sure Canadians are supported. That is what we are focusing on, and we are focusing on that together.

With respect to competition, again, the industry committee looked at this in the last Parliament, the 43rd Parliament. If this motion passes, I urge that the agricultural committee look at that IN-DU report and perhaps bring back some of the expert testimony regarding what happened, what they are doing since then, because we are now a year later, and if anything has improved, that would be something very beneficial.

We need to look at the Competition Bureau to make sure Canadians are paying fair amounts. We are concerned about the offset of credit costs to Canadians, which I believe come into effect today. That is something we are going to look at as well.

Again, I want to thank the member from the NDP for bringing this forward. This is a motion that, once it is reviewed and looked at in committee, can really bring some different ideas to the table that we can all get behind. I urge everyone in the House to support this motion.

**Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I guess the issue for me is the massive disconnect that is happening as people are struggling and we are seeing announcements of massive profits. Yesterday, I was watching the news and Loblaw's was bragging about its newest innovation, which is that it is not going to bother having drivers in its vehicles. It is going to have driverless vehicles. People are standing in the grocery line because they have to do their own checkout now, working for Loblaw's for free.

The message Loblaw's is sending is that not only is it making record profits, and not only is it gouging us, but it is also going to fire its drivers and go to driverless so Galen Weston's gated community can have more money coming in. At a time when we need good jobs, a good solid economy and good corporate behaviour, what kind of message is Loblaw's sending us?

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Madam Speaker, when I go to my local IGA, I too notice that three or four of the checkout counters have now been replaced by self-serve checkout counters. I asked the local manager why and I was told it was due to a shortage of manpower that he had to cut down on the number of cashiers. I too would prefer to speak to a cashier.

When the committee looks into what is happening with our grocery chain executives, that is something it can look at in terms of what the cost savings are based on reducing manpower at the checkouts.

• (1630)

**Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will build off the last question a little and maybe pick on Loblaw's. Considering the record profits that this motion talks about and the price gouging the member talked about in her speech, why did the government think it was okay to give \$12 million to Loblaw's for refrigerators?

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Madam Speaker, coulda, woulda, shoulda: there are a lot of things that happened in the past, but we know that right now Canadians are suffering. Canadians need us to come together to bring forward measures that are going to help them today.

I do not agree that multi-million dollar companies should be allowing their executives to get away with bonuses when people are suffering. That is something that absolutely needs to be looked at. Quite frankly, I would hope that organizations and companies would kind of clue in that maybe it is time they gave back a little and actually adjusted their policies.

[Translation]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by telling my colleague that we are also very proud of the success of our early childhood centres, a big success of a competent and pro-independence Quebec government.

However, in her speech, there is one thing that I did not understand. She spoke of the need for dental care for seniors. However, her government's proposal is for children aged 11 and under.

Could she explain that?

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the excellent work of the Parti Québécois in establishing the early childhood centres. I support this program, which all Quebecers are proud of.

With regard to dental care, our program aims to offer it first to young children aged 12 and under, and then, later, to seniors who need it.

[*English*]

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have a chance to rise and ask a question of my colleague from Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine. I have not had a chance to take the floor today. It is difficult when the rounds are 10 minutes and five minutes for questions.

I want to put on the record that I plan to vote for this motion and I am grateful that it has been put forward. I am particularly concerned with an aspect that, as the member for Timmins—James Bay noted, is not mentioned, which is a real driver of inflation, and that is the war profiteering of the big oil and gas companies. Their profits are entirely due to Putin invading Ukraine, and they are astonishing. The big five, ExxonMobil, BP, Chevron, Shell and Total S.A., in one quarter, the second quarter of this year, made \$55 billion U.S. As Eric Reguly with The Globe and Mail noted, it is not as if they showed any business acumen to get this money. They got it because of war.

Does my hon. colleague know if her government is prepared to put a tax, as recommended by the UN Secretary-General, on these excess war profits and distribute that money to the people who need it?

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Madam Speaker, the reality of war has absolutely impacted inflation, the costs and availability here in Canada of oil and gas, and so on. There are definitely questions to be asked with respect to the profits that oil and gas companies are making in terms of what is happening in Ukraine.

My son deployed as part of Operation Unifier, so I am absolutely terrified about what is happening right now in Ukraine.

\* \* \*

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** I have the honour to inform the House that messages have been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bills to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-208, an act respecting the Declaration on the Essential Role of Artists and Creative Expression in Canada; Bill S-222, an act to amend the Department of Public Works and Government Services Act (use of wood); and Bill S-224, an act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons).

• (1635)

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 Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Health; the hon. member for Calgary

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Centre, The Environment; the hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge, Taxation.

\* \* \*

#### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

##### OPPOSITION MOTION—HIGH FOOD PRICES

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP):** Madam Speaker, this Thanksgiving weekend, Canadian families will be getting together from coast to coast to coast. They will be getting around the table in my community of New Westminster—Burnaby and in many other communities. They will be joining together to sit down to have the traditional Thanksgiving dinner, but for so many of those families they will be eating a lot less or a lower quality of food than they have in previous years because of the impact of greedflation on those families. That is why the NDP has put forward this motion today.

The motion directs the government, through the House of Commons, to ensure that we are tackling the corporate greed that is taking place in the grocery sector, which includes asking the Competition Bureau to launch an investigation of grocery chain profits, increasing penalties for price fixing as we have seen in the grocery industry and in other sectors, and strengthening competition laws to prohibit companies from abusing their dominant positions in the market. We are also calling upon the government to support the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food in investigating high food prices. That was a motion brought forward by the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. It was successfully adopted yesterday.

Also, we are directing the government through this motion to force CEOs and big corporations to pay what they owe. The estimate for last year alone was that over \$30 billion in tax money, taken to overseas tax havens with impunity or through a variety of tax loopholes, was not paid. That is on the existing tax rate. It is \$30 billion that was essentially taken from Canadians, so this motion directs the government to take action and force the CEOs and big corporations to pay those amounts. We are presenting this motion today, but the vote in the House will be taking place after the Thanksgiving break that we will be taking in our constituencies.

If the Canadian public want their members of Parliament to vote for this motion, if they believe that the type of greedflation we are seeing, with companies gouging Canadian families at a time when they are struggling the most, should not be, then they should urge their members of Parliament by sending an email, making a phone call or catching up with them at events next week. They should tell them to vote for the NDP motion as they want to see the House of Commons direct the government to take action in those areas.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I ask Canadians to do that in the coming week and make sure that their members of Parliament are held accountable for the greedflation, the increased costs that are happening right now as a result of corporate greed. I will come back to that in just a moment.

*Business of Supply*

[Translation]

We have a responsibility to direct the government and to urge it to put an end to tax havens, which are costing us \$30 billion a year. It is imperative that the Competition Bureau investigate the extent of the price increases. Companies took advantage of inflation to increase their profits and the bonuses of CEOs. We are asking that the investigation launched by the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food also have the support of this government.

I am appealing to all Canadians who agree with this proposal and agree that the House of Commons direct the government to do what it has avoided for years but which is becoming increasingly necessary in this time of crisis. I invite them to contact their MPs in the next few days and weeks and ask them to vote in favour of this motion. The vote on this motion will be held the week after next, which is a constituency week.

● (1640)

The vote will take place the following week.

[English]

Canadians will hopefully be speaking in the coming days and letting their members of Parliament know that they should be voting for these important measures the NDP is proposing.

I would like to say that there is no doubt that these measures need to be taken. Canadian families are paying more and more for food, yet, at the same time, as so many of my colleagues have mentioned, we are seeing skyrocketing profits from the big grocery chains.

For the CEO of Sobeys, for example, to go after the NDP after what we have seen with Sobeys and the increase in profits and, of course, an increase in his bonus as well, for him to attack the NDP for bringing this subject forward rather than accept that what he is doing, the kind of unfortunate profiteering that is taking place when families are struggling so desperately, shows how disconnected the CEO of Sobeys is from the reality that Canadian families are facing.

A quarter of Canadian families are struggling to put food on the table. Fifty per cent, half of Canadian families, are within a couple of hundred dollars of insolvency, yet we have the Sobeys CEO saying, "Oh gosh, we want our increased profits. We want our bonuses. The NDP should not be raising this issue in the House of Commons." Quite frankly, that shows a disconnect that is profoundly disturbing and should be for Sobeys' shareholders as well.

This is a company that is paying executive bonuses but has eliminated the hero pay. We had frontline workers during COVID who, at great cost to themselves, showing great courage, stepped forward to make sure that the food stores were open, that the grocery stores were open, so that we could get those essential foods, even at the height of the pandemic. As we know, they were doing this at risk to themselves and risk to their families, and that modest hero bonus that the NDP pushed for, and that the companies grudgingly decided to put into place, was promptly revoked, even though COVID is still present and even though there continues to be a risk.

This is why, I think, Canadians have been so exercised by what they see: companies and company CEOs bragging about increased profits at a time when families are struggling so much.

As we well know, the food bank lineups have doubled over the past few years. What we have seen is more and more Canadian families struggling to keep a roof over their heads. We are seeing more and more homeless. That is why the NDP has been pushing so strongly for measures that help to counter that crisis.

The first real NDP bill in this Parliament is the NDP bill that brings dental care for families with children 12 and under and allows for that expansion of dental care in the following year to seniors and people with disabilities and, in the final year, to all families who have modest incomes of less than \$90,000.

These are the kinds of measures that make such a big difference. It is the NDP and the member for Burnaby South, our leader, and the terrific member for Vancouver Kingsway, who is our health care critic, who have led the charge of putting in place the dental care program that will help so many families. That initial payment is going to make a big difference. It will mean that children who would not otherwise have access to dental care will have access. It will then expand into a program that provides supports right across the spectrum.

Ultimately, it means that, in each and every riding, 30,000 Canadians are going to benefit. In each riding, on average, about 30,000 Canadians will benefit from the NDP's initiative. The NDP pushed in that regard. I certainly thank the member for Burnaby South and the member for Vancouver Kingsway for doing that on behalf of all Canadians.

The housing benefit and the NDP drive to get affordable housing in place, something we have not seen in half a century, which has contributed enormously to the crisis that is growing across the length and breadth of our country, that, again, is an NDP initiative.

● (1645)

The member for Burnaby South pushed for months the idea that the GST credit, the GST rebate, needed to be doubled to provide immediate supports for Canadian families, and a benefit that will reach 12 million Canadians has just been passed by this House. Thankfully all parties in all four corners of this House agreed that this was a priority, but it was NDP-inspired and NDP-pushed.

These are the kinds of things that we believe need to happen to benefit people, where we stay focused on the needs of people right across this country: the need for affordable housing, the need for an expanded health care system, including dental care, the need for money in Canadians' pockets at a time when we are seeing costs increase, and the need for a federal government to no longer say to the CEOs that they can do whatever they want, but rather a federal government that bolsters the type of legislation that would ensure that the Competition Bureau can play its role and crack down on price fixing, on profiteering and on corporate greed.



*Business of Supply*

These are the responsibilities that we in a civil society give to our government, to those who were elected to represent us. We do not elect people to support the banks and the corporate CEOs. They have enough tools at their disposal. The great progress of government is to counteract that, so there is a level playing field on which all Canadians can benefit.

This brings me to my point. The member for Carleton, a little earlier today, said something to the effect that the NDP is identifying greed in the private sector that is really hurting Canadians, but that we did not know anything about government greed. Quite frankly, I found that a bit insulting, because I lived through the dismal decade of the Harper government. There is no better example of government greed than the 10 years that we lived under Stephen Harper.

I will just recall the facts. What we saw under the Stephen Harper government that the member for Carleton was such a close part of and obviously wants to replay was a dismal decade. I would say to all Canadians that he will replay that dismal decade over my body, because there is no way we are going to see what the Harper government did to our institutions happen again. If the member for Carleton wants to replay that, he will have a reckoning with New Democrats. We will be standing up against that at all times.

That decade of government greed saw unprecedented handouts to the banking sector, unprecedented handouts to the oil and gas sector, and unprecedented handouts to lobbyists. We can recall there was \$116 billion in liquidity supports given to banks, because they needed to maintain their profits. With the signature of all these agreements with overseas tax havens, the ability of those taxes to be paid by everybody collapsed under the Harper government. The meaningful, real tax rate for corporations fell into the single digits. Can members imagine that? It was in single digits.

In terms of the corporate sector paying its taxes, well, with all of the overseas tax haven treaties that were signed by the Harper government, we simply saw a complete collapse of the tax system for the ultrarich and for big corporations. They did not have to worry anymore, because the Harper government, with its greed, was more interested in giving money to them than to regular Canadians.

What did it do for regular Canadians? We saw that; we were in the House as the Harper government gutted pensions, as it ripped them away, as 65- and 66-year-olds were told no, they did not have a pension anymore and were not eligible for a pension. I was in the House when it was in Centre Block. I recall speaking for 14 hours as I received emails and texts from Canadians from coast to coast to coast, talking about what it meant to them.

• (1650)

Carpet layers who had worked all their life and whose health was suffering were being told by the Harper Conservatives and the member for Carleton that they could not retire and would have to keep working because they were not going to be given a pension. How did that impact them or the people who were engaged in physical labour? I gather there are not too many Conservatives who have been engaged in physical labour. I worked in a factory for many years, and I can say that when people are reaching that stage of decades of intense physical work, sometimes they cannot keep working for a few more years because of the greed of the Harper

Conservatives. We saw that. We saw cutbacks in everything, all kinds of supports, including housing.

Of course, the most egregious cutbacks were made by the Harper Conservatives because they were so greedy about giving money to lobbyists, oil and gas CEOs and the banks. They even stripped the health care system. Tragically, the Liberals today have never restored that funding, so a pox on both their houses. They stripped all of that away. Therefore, when the member for Carleton says that we do not know about government greed, I say Canadians lived that first-hand for a decade, and we are not going to live it again. The NDP is still pushing to rebuild the institutions that were gutted by that government greed, by the government saying that what mattered was the ultrarich, overseas tax havens, massive handouts to oil and gas CEOs and the banks.

Canadians did not matter to the Harper government or to the member for Carleton, and we all remember that. It is very important that we never forget that. We cannot let the gang that was around Stephen Harper, with all of the impacts that had for regular Canadians, and we cannot let the greed of the government result in massive handouts to its friends, the ultrarich and the lobbyists, rather than providing supports for pensioners and for the carpet layers who have worked for decades and whose bodies are no longer able to continue that intense physical work. Stephen Harper and the member for Carleton ripped that pension away from them. We will not forget that.

We are seeing a very similar approach from the CEOs. We see the current Liberal government maintaining those health care cuts, but we also see that network of overseas tax havens that have now cost us \$30 billion last year in money that could have gone to support seniors. It could have supported access to post-secondary education. It could have supported housing. It could have been invested in the health care system to expand it so that, as the member for Burnaby South likes to say, it really provides coverage from the tops of our heads to the tips of our toes. Those are all things that the \$30 billion could have provided support for, as well as good Canadian jobs. It could have made a difference with respect to a whole range of things.

This is why we say that when the Liberals and Conservatives claim there is no money for something, it is quite a different story when it comes to the banks, the CEOs and the oil and gas companies. Then the spigot is turned on and the federal government largesse has no limits.

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We differ in this corner of the House. I think part of the reason we are seeing the NDP rising in the polls is that Canadians perceive there is one leader in this House, the member for Burnaby South, and one caucus in this House, the NDP, that are fighting for regular people each and every day. That includes when the grocery chains stand up and say they want to have record profits, record bonuses and increased prices, but are not batting an eye with respect to how Canadian families are struggling. In this corner of the House, those families have strong allies who will not stop fighting. We are bringing this motion today because we are standing for Canadian families. I hope it receives support from everybody.

• (1655)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate many of the words the member has put on the record. I think of the children in Winnipeg North, or just people in general in Canada, and we all recognize inflation is in fact very real. We might be doing better than other countries around the world, but it matters here.

The price of food is of great concern. We all want to try to do what we can to assist Canadians in fighting inflation. One of the things we just did is pass Bill C-30. We also now have Bill C-31. Before us is a motion for it to go to a committee. The committee will no doubt be able to do a lot of fine work in dealing with this, but there is more we can do.

I am wondering if the member can provide his thoughts on the passage of Bill C-31. Unfortunately, it is not going to pass, by the looks of it, before the end of the week.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, it is absolutely essential that Bill C-31 pass. As I mentioned earlier, each MP in the House of Commons has 30,000 constituents who would benefit from our putting in place dental care. That is each MP. If members of Parliament are really listening to their constituents, they will vote yes for this first phase, and they will vote yes for the subsequent phases, so we have dental care in this country from coast to coast to coast for all families who need it. That is fundamentally important.

The other thing he asked me was what more the government can do. The government can close the tax loopholes established by both the Paul Martin government and the Stephen Harper government. They could stop the hemorrhaging of \$30 billion each and every year and \$25 billion previous to that. Stopping that hemorrhaging means funding for hospitals. It means funding for schools. It means funding for jobs. It means funding for the clean energy transition I know the member for Timmins—James Bay is such a champion of. It would make a difference for all Canadians, so our next direction and what we have been saying to the Liberal government is to stop the hemorrhaging to overseas tax havens.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I listened to my friend from New Westminster—Burnaby, and it just shows a sad attempt at relevance. The NDP is not even relevant enough in Saskatchewan to be invited to a Saskatchewan NDP convention, because it is not viewed any longer as a credible NDP party.

In Saskatchewan, we have had NDP governments in the past. The saving grace for us is we had Alberta. We could go to Alberta

to work. When we have an NDP-Liberal government here in the federacy, where do Canadians go to get a job? That is a real problem facing Canadians at this point in time.

As we look at this motion and the context of this motion, some of it is correct. It is fair to look at the motion itself, and it is fair to study exactly where the price increases in food are happening and why. We should look through the entire chain, right from the farm gate all the way through the supply chain and to the end users. We need to look and examine what is there.

What concerns me here is the fact that members predetermined the result. Will this member give the committee the chance and the credibility to do a thorough a study, and will he accept the results? When it comes back and members realize it was carbon tax that created the increase in the price of food and it is the government's bad policies that they have been supporting, will they vote against it and bring the government down?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, there is so much rich material here. First off, where does one go for a job? One goes to British Columbia, because the B.C. NDP government has the best track record of economic growth and jobs in the entire country by far, and much better than Alberta and Saskatchewan. If members are asking where their constituents should go, they should go to an NDP province. That is where the jobs are being created.

Secondly, on dental care, in Prince Albert there are 30,000 people who need dental care. Why does the member not vote for his constituents and vote in favour of the dental care bill?

Finally, and as I said, there is so much rich material but I only have a few seconds, there is the impact on producers of this concentration of grocery chains. It would be great to have MPs stand up against what we are seeing with this concentration, which impacts producers in Saskatchewan, but not a single Saskatchewan MP will stand up for Saskatchewan producers. That will change in the next election—

• (1700)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank the NDP House leader for his speech. The cost of groceries is going up, but some members of society are having a much easier time of it. We know that the highly subsidized oil industry is raking in the profits. The banks are, as well.

The government is doing nothing for those who are struggling the most, nothing to deal with the housing crisis, nothing for seniors and nothing to tackle tax havens.

Here is my question: How and why is the NDP putting itself at the service of the Liberal government, which is at the service of the ultra-rich?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, indeed, thanks to the NDP, the government is now taking action on GST rebates. That will benefit the people of Quebec as well as people across Canada. Thanks to the NDP, the government is now forced to deal with the housing issue. After 50 years, it is finally looking into the affordable housing issue. It will offer support to tenants. Thanks to the NDP, the government is taking measures to expand our health system and establish a dental care program.

It is thanks to the NDP that all these things are happening. The question, therefore, is rather why the other parties are not doing anything to help ordinary Canadians.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, many in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith are reaching out after feeling the impacts of living with lower incomes and rising costs. Lone-parent families, seniors, those living with disabilities and their children are feeling hopeless as rich CEOs continue to profit off the backs of everyday working Canadians.

I wonder if the member could expand a bit on the importance of systems being put in place to address abuse and exploitation by rich CEOs in their positions so they are held to account to prevent this from happening again. What would that look like?

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, I really want to praise the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith. She is a new member, but she has done such an effective job of standing up for her constituents. Nanaimo—Ladysmith is better represented than it has been in years because she is so outspoken. She has pushed for dental care, for ensuring we have housing supplements and for the GST rebate. These are all important measures that she has helped to bring about, and I want to compliment her on her amazing work.

The reality is that in Nanaimo—Ladysmith, and in fact throughout this country and across Vancouver Island, we are seeing grocery chains raising prices more than they should be. Yes, there is inflation, but it is very clear that we need a government that can step in and say, “Whoa. They have these huge bonuses, they have these huge profits and Canadian families are struggling. There needs to be a balance here.”

That is why we are calling on the Competition Bureau to launch an investigation, with enhanced supports from the federal government. We really need much more robust Competition Bureau legislation to ensure that these kinds of things do not happen anymore.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for highlighting that Saskatchewan has only Conservative MPs, because they are the ones standing up for their constituents and Canadian farmers. I would be remiss if I did not say that we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the end of the Canadian Wheat Board, which I know my constituents are very happy with.

The hon. member, in his presentation, talked a great deal about price gouging, specifically the price gouging going on in the Canadian supply chain, and the impact it is having on food costs. Price

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gouging is an issue for the member, so if the average Canadian farmer is paying \$48,000 a year in carbon tax and, according to the Department of Finance, is getting about \$860 back, would he not agree that there is price gouging on Canadian farmers by the Liberal government, supported by the NDP?

● (1705)

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, of course, in the oil and gas sector, we have seen price gouging play out continuously. As the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives revealed in a study it did about oil and gas price gouging in this country, the reality is that oil and gas companies increase the price on old stock whenever there is an international event. We have certainly seen this with the deplorable Russian invasion of Ukraine. The oil and gas companies profited and benefited by raising the price on old stock. We know as well that as the new stock comes in at a lower price, they will keep the prices high.

This is the price gouging the member should be speaking out against, because it has an impact on his constituents. However, the reality is that the Conservatives—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Prince Albert.

**Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

It has been an interesting day of listening to everybody talk about Bill C-31 and the reasons for the increase in the price of food. Going back to Saskatchewan to the riding of Prince Albert and going to a small town like Tisdale or Carrot River, or coming into the city of Prince Albert, one thing that becomes very clear is that food has definitely gotten more expensive. Whether people are buying hamburgers, steaks, potatoes or macaroni and wieners, everything has gotten more expensive. When they go through the process of buying groceries, they have a \$100 bill in their wallet, but when they look in it after, they say, “Holy cow. Where did that go?” It is gone.

We have seen huge increases in the price of food. We can blame the war in Ukraine. We can blame a variety of things, but it really is the long-term policies of the government that have brought up the price of food items.

NDP members want to do a study and I agree with them on the study. It is a good idea. It is important to actually look at this and understand what is going on in the sector so we can have good policies to make sure that Canadians can take advantage of the great produce that is grown here in Canada.

*Business of Supply*

We make the best food in the world. We grow the best animals. We grow the best vegetables, the best fruits, the best durum and the best canola. We have it all here. It is here in Canada. It is available for Canadians to take advantage of. We are blessed in so many ways, but then we look at things and ask how it can be this way. What has happened? What has made it so that it is so expensive to buy food when we have such an abundance of it?

Saskatchewan is a trading province. We have to export. We grow so much and we cannot consume it, so we export it around the world. That is when the trains run and the railcars show up. Of course, that is a problem with transportation and a problem with policy that comes back to the government. There are frustrations for sure, but there should be no reason to see this type of inflation in food. If we had the right policies in place, we would be able to see this scenario and be in a better situation.

When I was on the farm, I used to get frustrated because it cost me \$250 an acre and the market paid me \$200 an acre, so I took a \$50-an-acre hit. It happens. The markets go up and the markets go down. In the good years, we put away enough money to ride through the bad years. Farmers are price-takers, not price-makers. We actually take our price from the market, so whether it is based on production around the world or production in Saskatchewan, there are many factors that will determine the price of grain, the price of beef or the price of a variety of other commodities. What we do is manage our costs. That is what farmers do in Canada.

They were the first to embrace zero tillage, which is one of the most advanced methods of growing crops in the world. That technology actually came out of the Sparrow report in the Senate, when we said we had to work on soil conservation and soil degradation. What did we do? Not only did we fix that, approve it and increase our organic matter, but we actually got more efficient. We produced cheaper products because we reduced the number of passes in the field. We became more and more efficient, and we took that knowledge and shared it around the world. However, we got zero credit for it from the government.

What has happened from the government as we look at this now? The government has hit us with a \$50,000-a-year carbon tax. The Liberals say, "Don't worry. Be happy. Here is \$800 back." How can that be fair? How can that be neutral? Where did the rest of that money go? How do I take the \$46,000 or \$48,000 that I am short and reinvest it to become environmentally friendly? I have given it to Ottawa and what did I get back? I got tiddlywinks.

As we go through the process of looking at the cost of food, what happens? We get fewer farmers. We get bigger farms. We get huge farms. We do not have the small towns anymore so there are no thousand-acre farms. If they are not 2,000 or 5,000 acres, a lot of farms are 20,000 and 30,000 acres. They had to go that way because of the costs that were put on them by the federal government.

A carbon tax on food is immoral. Any tax on food is immoral and that is what the Liberals have done. Producers pay tax on fertilizer when they get it to the bin to put it in the ground. They pay tax on the diesel fuel to put it in the ground. They pay tax on the trucking to get it to the elevator. They pay tax on the rail to get it to the mill. They pay tax at the mill to get it to the grocery store. All that goes to Ottawa, and what does Ottawa do with it? Show me the

mitigation the government has done with regard to the environment. Show me the bridges it has built. Show me the culverts it has put in and the lift stations. Where is the infrastructure?

• (1710)

We have seen flooding at historic levels in B.C. that shut down our transportation system. Where is the preparedness in the Liberal government to take on those types of things? Some were saying this was going to happen, and it did happen, but they did nothing to prepare for it. What did that cost our economy? What does their ignorance do to this economy and the abundance in this country called Canada, where we have so much to give?

We see around the world the war in Ukraine. We see that our friends in Europe could use our help again. We should be in a position to do that, and we are not. Why are we not? It is because we have neglected things here in Canada. We have not put in the infrastructure to take care of the export requirements for the variety of sectors that would be utilized in Europe at this point in time. Whether it is oil and gas, food or forestry products, we should be able to come in and fill those needs, but bad policy and planning by the government mean we cannot do that.

When we look at what is going on here in Canada and bring it back to the price of food, it is not just the price of food that is hurting Canadians; it is the price of everything. Everything they do, like going to Canadian Tire to buy some things for their kids, costs 30% or 20% more. When people get groceries, food costs that much more money. It just never goes far enough anymore.

Then we hear the government say that we need to pay more taxes, step up and pay for pollution. The Liberals are right. We do not have a problem with paying for pollution, but there is a problem I hear in my riding. A lot of people say they do not mind paying their share, but they ask what the government is doing globally to make sure that residents in high-emitting countries are paying their share. What is it doing to level the playing field so that when I pay for this on my farm in Saskatchewan, a farmer in Alberta, the U.S., China or Australia is paying the same amount so that the playing field is level? The Liberals have done nothing.

*Business of Supply*

They have zero influence on the world stage, and we could go into debate on why that is. It could be a combination of things, like the trip to India or the trip to the U.K. that we just experienced. It could be the way the Prime Minister has conducted himself around the world. It would probably be better if we took away his passport, let him stay here and sent somebody else, because I think it would do our country more honour.

Let us come back to what this motion is talking about. It is talking about food; there is no question about that. However, what is hurting our economy and hurting Canadians is not just food. It is a variety of things they are experiencing right now and a government that just does not care or understand. When we start talking about the economy, those members give a blank look. They just do not get it. They do not seem to say they hear us and that they do not know what to do. They do not look at the options sitting in front of them, things like cancelling some tax increases for a period of time.

If we look at the tax increases the Liberals are proposing, the carbon tax is meant to change people's conduct with regard to the environment. We have just gone through record fuel prices in North America, Canada, B.C. and Ontario, and the prices are going up again. Should that not have had the same effect as a carbon tax? If the price of fuel is higher, I cannot drive as much. However, I live in rural Saskatchewan, and when I have to go for groceries, I still have to put gas in the truck because I do not have an alternative; I do not have an option. When taxes are increased on me because of that, the government has penalized me. When they take my \$50,000 and make it \$75,000, they have taken my ability to improve my operations to become more environmentally friendly. They have done worse.

Not only that, but I have been weakened in such a way that I cannot provide that cheap food Canadians have come to rely on. Who pays? The most vulnerable pay. Those who have the smallest paycheques pay. They do pay; they pay the most. The percentage of their food bill goes from 50% to 75%, so they do not have a chance to buy new clothes for their kids. They go to shelters and buy there.

If we look in Prince Albert and Saskatoon, the food banks have a record high number of people attending them. That is the direct result of bad policy, and if the Liberals do not get that now, then they are not listening. They cannot come back to Ottawa, go to their caucus and say they are dealing with a bunch of people who are in really bad shape and need a break, and then answer with a \$500 GST tax credit. It sounds good, but it is not enough. We have to look at the other alternatives and levers we have at our disposal and bring the costs down. That is the same for farming, manufacturing and a variety of industries. We have to get the costs down and back to a relevant number so that we can compete throughout the world, hire Canadians and actually let families feed themselves.

• (1715)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, talk about being disappointed. Most of the things the member has said are somewhat misleading at best, and that is being about as parliamentary as I can be. When he talks about the farmers or the Prairies, I was in opposition when Stephen Harper got rid of the Canadian Wheat Board. He did not have the courage to have a

referendum when the legislation dictated there should be a referendum.

Today's government is supporting our farmers with hundreds of millions of dollars in a just transition regarding environmental issues. There is so much more the government is doing, yet the member tries to give a false impression that we are not there for the Prairies. It is just not true.

What does the Conservative Party truly believe today on the price on pollution? He seems to be a bit offside with his leader who has said that climate change is not real and we can get rid of the price on pollution. What does the member believe?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member has a hearing problem because our leader did not say that at all. In fact, he said the total opposite. He said that there were different ways to attack climate change.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** For example?

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, he talked about nuclear energy as one example. I heard it right here in the House. Therefore, if we want to look at different options and alternatives, we should at least have an open mind to consider them.

When the member talks about the Canadian Wheat Board or the other things he mentioned in his question, he is so out of touch with the farming community. Does he not realize that net incomes at the farm gate went up substantially when the wheat board was repealed. If we went to the farming community today and said we wanted to bring the wheat board back they would kick us out. They want nothing to do with a marketing board of any type. That is the reality. If the Liberals think they can do that, then they can do it—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am curious. I know the member speaks quite passionately about helping people. However, that is not what we have seen historically. I wonder if the member wants to put his words into action today and support this motion to start calling to account the ultrarich CEOs who continue to line their own pockets at the expense of everyday families. Actions speak louder than words. The member and the Conservative Party have shown that they are not there for people.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, we are going to vote in favour of this motion I will repeat again. The member has probably heard it 30 other times today. Did I say it clear enough?

*Business of Supply*

I have reservations and concerns. My concern is that the NDP have prejudged the outcome before the committee has had the chance to do the study. That is a fair and reasonable concern. Let us bring the witnesses to committee. Let us let the committee actually do the work it is supposed to do. If the results show that the carbon tax or other items in our supply chains are responsible for the higher food prices, fair enough.

I challenge the New Democrats. If it is the carbon tax, if it comes out that way and that is the factor, will they bring these guys down? Will they quit supporting the Liberals? Will they actually take—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Questions and comments, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

• (1720)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am happy to see my colleague defend his constituents in Saskatchewan so passionately.

I have been listening to this debate. Like the member, the Bloc Québécois will support the motion. However, there is one thing I would like to know.

Other than the carbon tax reduction, which seems to be a big deal here, are there other measures that could apply and that would help Quebecers?

[*English*]

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, there are quite a few. Quebec has a strong agricultural base. It has some strong marketing boards. It has some great farmers and agricultural operations. Using more local food is definitely one of the options, when we can provide it from the farmyard to the grocery stores. That means making sure that there is shelf space for that locally grown food, and having the resources to see the manufacturing of our food products here in Canada or in Quebec instead of chasing them out of Canada because we have made it too expensive to do that production here.

What are we going to do? We are going to export the grain and all the resources to make the product and then we are going to import it back into Canada and buy it at retail. Does that make sense? That is the policy we are facing right now with the current Liberal government.

**Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP):** Madam Speaker, I am going to reflect on the loss of the wheat board and its unintended consequences, such as the failure to organize grain shipments properly, which is causing the long delays that have been very difficult for grain farmers, and the fact that the residual assets of the wheat board are now owned by Saudi Arabia.

For my constituents in Saanich—Gulf Islands, the inefficiencies in delivering grain to the Port of Vancouver are leading to anchorages, which is basically free parking, in my riding while the freighters that come to pick up the grain are cooling their heels waiting because of the inefficiencies created by the loss of the wheat board, which is hurting farmers, shippers and those who need the grain delivered.

**Mr. Randy Hoback:** Madam Speaker, again, it shows why there are no Green members elected in Saskatchewan, because they are not in touch with the agriculture community in Saskatchewan.

If the member is concerned about what is going on in the Port of Vancouver, I am too. When they are ranked second last out of 400 as a port for Canada, that tells us they have had bad policies and are not putting the infrastructure in place that is required for Canadian shippers, and the member is paying for it in her riding. There is no question about it.

If the government had actually put in the processes, had actually modernized the ports and spent the money in an appropriate manner, made it capable of taking on the next generation of ships that might be hydrogen-based, if it would do things like that, then we would actually see some results, but it has done nothing and the—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Resuming debate, the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

• (1725)

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be able to rise following the great comments from my colleague for Prince Albert who was able to offer an education to some members on the government benches and their coalition partners on how the policies of this government are hurting Canadians and hurting farmers.

The member raised a very interesting question about affordability and the impact of this carbon tax as it affects food prices in Canada and as it affects the affordability crisis that Canadians are facing. The cost of this Liberal government is driving up the cost of living for all Canadians and at a time of year when demands on food banks are particularly high in a regular year. We are seeing, real time, the effects that the inflationary crisis, the made-in-Canada Liberal inflationary crisis, has on our food banks, which is that they do not have enough food to support the people who are there looking for their help. I will take a quick second to say to anyone who is watching and is able, who maybe has put off a donation to their local food bank, that now is the time to dig deep, because our neighbours, people in our communities, are hurting.

This affordability crisis is also being driven by the carbon tax, which is a tax on everything. We have heard, in recent days, what the effects are of that increase that is projected to come, the tripling of that carbon tax. It is going to raise the price on people's shelter costs. It is going to raise the prices on people's ability to clothe themselves. It is going to raise the prices on people's ability to feed themselves.

We know that when the input costs go up that it is going to raise the prices all the way from farm to table. I know that some members might be surprised to learn that food does not originate in the stockroom at the grocery store. It comes from Canadian farms.

We need to get serious about tackling this inflationary crisis, get serious about bringing down the food costs that Canadians are dealing with. The best way and the immediate way we can do that is for this government to commit to Canadians that it is not going to triple the taxes on Canadians.

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 5:26 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forth with every question to dispose of the business of supply.

[English]

The question is on the motion. Shall I dispense?

**Some hon. members:** No.

[Chair read text of motion to House]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes to request a recorded division, or that the motion be adopted on division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Mr. Peter Julian:** Madam Speaker, this is an important issue. Canadians need to know how MPs stand and that vote will be taken after the Thanksgiving break, so I would ask for a recorded division.

[Translation]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, the recorded division stands deferred until Monday, October 17, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

The hon. deputy House leader is rising on a point of order.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado:** Madam Speaker, I am sure that if you canvass the House, you will find consent to see the clock at the time for the beginning of Private Members' Business.

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

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** It being 5:41 p.m., the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

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## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### COPYRIGHT ACT

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC)** moved that Bill C-294, An Act to amend the Copyright Act (interoperability), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

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He said: Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to rise in the House today and speak to my first-ever Private Member's Bill, Bill C-294, an act to amend the Copyright Act as it relates to interoperability.

It has also been unofficially called the “unlocking innovation act”. The pathway for putting together this bill began in the winter of 2019-20 as the federal government was finalizing the new NAFTA deal, which is now officially known as CUSMA. For my part, it started with working on the industry committee. We were studying the legislation which would implement the new trade deal. Some of my own constituents from back home in Cypress Hills—Grasslands appeared as witnesses to give their feedback on it. They were representing Honey Bee Manufacturing, and I will say more about them in a moment.

During the meeting, while expressing their support for having a free trade agreement in place, they pointed out a threat to their industry. This is what they laid out in their opening statement:

The challenge we face is interoperability. Recently, with technical protection measures and so on, companies have started to use digital locks and keys to prevent us from allowing our equipment to interoperate with these major OEM brands. It's a form of protectionism that allows them to own and operate the entire value chain at the exclusion of independent manufacturers.

In Canada we have 1,400 manufacturers of implements that are attached to agriculture, mining, forestry or construction equipment. Of those manufacturers, 500 are for agricultural equipment. That agricultural equipment is primarily manufactured adjacent to small communities in Canada, rural communities, where the majority of that type of manufacturing takes place. It's a challenge for us to achieve the ability to continue to legally manufacture our product and sell it onto these platforms. The copyright act in the United States has provision for circumventing for the purpose of interoperation. The Canadian Copyright Act does not have this same term in the agreement.

We would like to see that ratified prior to the signing of the trade agreement so that we're not on that uneven footing that prevents us from competing legally in the marketplace here and abroad.

That is the main problem in a nutshell, and it is the type of challenging situation that this bill would correct. The requested change did not end up happening around the timing of CUSMA, or in the time since then, but it has brought us to today as we debate this bill. Bill C-294 seeks to move ahead with a change to the Copyright Act that would help to put interoperability back in its rightful place in the Canadian marketplace.

This is the right thing to do on a number of fronts, because interoperability means support for innovation, consumer choice and protection, competitive markets, small business and job creation. Before explaining in a little more detail what it is, I am going to tell a story about why interoperability is important.

Two farmers from southwest Saskatchewan, Glen and Greg Honey, out of a desire to have a product that worked better and more efficiently on their farm, took the initiative to engineer and build a 425-horsepower tractor. They then went on to make a self-propelled swather, as well as the grain belt header that has become the standard in the marketplace for how headers are built.

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As farm implements and attachments, it was easy to use them with something else, such as a tractor or a combine, which they would have already had. At that time, interoperability was generally open and achievable because of the simplified nature of the equipment. All one needed was a common hydraulic hose connection and a PTO shaft, and they would be ready to go. It did not stop there.

As local farmers around the area began to see the equipment the Honeys were using on their farm, they began to want the same kind of swather and header as well. Over the course of a decade, they eventually moved their new manufacturing outfit from their farm to the town of Frontier.

There they were able to set up in the shop in the space vacated by Flexi-Coil when they bought out Friggstad Manufacturing, another family-owned and operated farm equipment manufacturer in Frontier. Friggstad had a similar operation that had built a superior product of its own. However, it was a victim of rapid inflation and market instability in the 1980s which unfortunately put it in receivership. It was eventually bought out by the bigger competition. The sale of Friggstad Manufacturing to Flexi-Coil was devastating to the community because they moved the operation up to Saskatoon, cutting the population of the town almost in half, from over 500 people down to around 300.

However, the move into town in 1987 by the Honey brothers became a new opportunity for the community, and soon Honey Bee Manufacturing became the largest source of employment for the region. They created a future for the community once again. It really shows how crucial and how much of a difference these short-line manufacturers can make in rural communities when they are in business and are allowed to succeed. The success story of Honey Bee is not unique just to Frontier. There are hundreds of companies across the Prairies and this country that share a similar success story of innovation that was born out a need to create either a better product or a new one altogether.

• (1730)

Whether it is a company such as Schulte in Englefeld, Bourguait in St. Brieux or Väderstad north of Langbank, these are companies in Saskatchewan who are driving innovation in their industry. While doing it, they are making an absolutely essential contribution to the livelihoods and the social fabric of our small communities and rural area.

Sadly, Honey Bee Manufacturing's level of early success 40 years ago would likely not be possible right now. This innovative industry has long been losing ground to large companies that are pushing them out of the market. It might sound hard to believe, but our copyright law seems to be helping large companies and providing them the tools to do just that, which is actually the opposite of what the Copyright Act was originally intended to do. I will offer some support for this common sense principle from a book on Canadian copyright law by David Vaver, who published it while serving as an Oxford professor of intellectual property law and a director for the Oxford Intellectual Property Research Centre.

It reads:

patents and copyrights are supposed to encourage work to be disclosed to the public and to increase society's pool of ideas and knowledge.

Keeping a broad public domain itself encourages experimentation, innovation, and competition—and ultimately the expectation of lower prices, better service, and broader public choice.

Those are the known benefits of an open and competitive market against a monopoly. Interoperability has been a key part in that for the agriculture sector as long as anyone can remember and that is what it is still doing in other areas of our lives. At a basic level, interoperability is something that is actually quite broad.

It happens whenever different devices, machines or pieces of equipment can connect and work together. There are many examples of this, including how people use simple tools or digital technology that we simply take for granted in our daily lives. It is something that we do not usually notice, and there is a good reason for that. That is because most of the time we do not actually have a problem with interoperability and there is usually not a barrier to prevent it from happening.

However, today, I am talking about where a barrier does exist and how a simple update to the Copyright Act would get us back on track for supporting innovation and consumer choice. A new barrier comes from technological protection measures, or TPMs for short. They are a legitimate tool designed to protect intellectual property, including things like movies, music or software, and they have been enforced by Canadian copyright law for over 10 years.

The bill introducing legal recognition for TPMs into the Copyright Act had this to say in its preamble:

Whereas the Government of Canada is committed to enhancing the protection of copyright works or other subject-matter, including through the recognition of technological protection measures, in a manner that promotes culture and innovation, competition and investment in the Canadian economy;

That is exactly how they should be used in line with the principles of copyright. At that time, copyright law in different parts of the world was catching up to significant changes in technology and industry. We have reached the point again where there is a critical need to do the same thing in our own time. Technology has advanced into new areas. Everything is increasingly digital. This enables new features in our homes, our vehicles and our machinery.

However, in some ways, this has also created a catch when it comes to the Copyright Act. The digital aspect of machinery means that it is operating with software to communicate as needed with a user interface or with other devices or attachments. Copyright applies to the software contained inside these products, and this has given the original manufacturers a new mechanism to control access to the entire product after it has been purchased.

This is what is happening with digital locks. If a user of the equipment wants to attach a piece of equipment to a tractor, but it was not made by the same major brand, if we keep down the path we are on, it will be locked out and will not be used. Good luck keeping customers for innovative SMEs.



The digital lock also prevents a short-line manufacturer from reverse engineering to make their products compatible in the first place, since the OEMs own the software in the machine, as per the terms and conditions that must be accepted every single time the machine is started after purchase.

Clearly, there is movement toward a monopoly, and it is partly being done in the name of copyright. While the current version of the act explicitly mentions interoperability of two computer programs as a non-violation of TPMs, the language in place does not capture what is happening right now. As it is, there is enough ambiguity to allow for some OEMs to take advantage of it and hold it over their customers and their competitors.

There is more reason to be uneasy than having a vague fear in the face of an unknown. Back in 2017, the *Nintendo v. King* decision came out from the Federal Court. It is one of the first decisions to apply to Canada's TPM provisions and, since then, has been cited in several other cases.

• (1735)

For the larger issue of interoperability, the main point is not really about how Nintendo games were used in the particulars of this case. The case set a precedent in which a piece of physical hardware was considered copyrighted material. That is how the current law has been interpreted, and it means there is one more way to stop reverse engineering for legitimate reasons.

It is easy to see this becoming a bad trend across various industries if it were left unchecked, but right now the battle line seems to be in agriculture. There is still some time to clarify the law in line with its spirit and intent, but there are already some signs of damage.

A 2021 report released by what was then called Western Economic Diversification outlines industry data for the agriculture manufacturing sector in Canada and organizes it for us to get an idea of the economic impact. It starts out by presenting a financial picture:

Nationally this sector accounts for total revenues over \$4 billion with western Canada accounting for a dominant share, 65.9 percent, of Canadian agricultural equipment manufacturing. In 2018, agricultural equipment manufacturing in Western Canada contributed an estimated \$2.6 billion in revenue with total salaries and wages accounting for \$488 million.

For the breakdown of employment, the report found that 87% of the businesses are micro, meaning they have 1 to 4 employees, or small, with 5 to 99 employees. Regardless of their size, they are productive in their own right. The report continues, “Based on 2018 data for small and medium sized enterprises, industry averages for revenue was \$996,900 with 72 percent of establishments being profitable. Financial performance data was reported for 311 businesses with an annual revenue range of \$30,000 to \$5 million.”

Besides showing these numbers, the report later states:

Impacts of interoperability will be affecting the industry in 2020 as one OEM's starts restricting access to short line manufactures equipment. A survey of implement dealers has indicated a significant drop in orders of short line manufacture combine headers for the coming year and in to the future.

From table 4, dealers of agriculture equipment have indicated a reduction in intentions to purchase headers from short line manufactures base on the past five-year average. The current sales, specifically in OEM 1 mainline dealers, could see sales

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numbers decreasing by as much as 60 percent this year over the five-year average. A further reduction in future sales is predicted moving forward.

Again, so many of our SMEs are independent from major brands. They tend to make their own innovative pieces of equipment that are meant to connect with others produced by different companies, which are often the bigger players. If restrictions tighten on equipment users and engineers with the expanding use of digital locks, these small competitors and innovators will die out as time goes on. Everybody will lose. What has to be understood here is the nature of a rural economy and how it all works. Rural areas have small populations that are spread further apart. They cannot afford to lose the people or the jobs they have. It is nothing less than their survival that is at stake.

Section 92 of the Copyright Act mandates that it be reviewed every five years, and we have reached that designated time for reviewing it. Both Parliament and the government have been taking steps toward updating our copyright laws, and this bill is exactly in line with what needs to be done to improve it. The work has been done and the change is ready to be made.

Bill C-294 will provide a clear, limited exemption for consumers and innovators who simply wish to enable their devices or machinery to interoperate with other equipment, as they were always able to do in the past. My conversations with other members across party lines has been encouraging, and I look forward to discussing it with more of my colleagues.

This is a simple update to make sure that our Copyright Act is fair for everyone, while also making sure that it is in line with our international commitments and our international trade agreements with other countries, while in the meanwhile making sure that we are on the same level playing field as other signatories in the CUS-MA deal.

I believe that as a Parliament we can work together to see this bill gets it done.

• (1740)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I must say that the Bloc Québécois is very much in favour of Bill C-294. One of the reasons we support it is that it also addresses the problem of planned obsolescence, which means that devices must constantly be updated and upgraded. We can finally break the “buy-use-toss” cycle, where scientists are asked to put all their efforts into innovating products designed to become obsolete quickly, so people have to get a new refrigerator every seven years and a new cellphone every two years, and so on. Apparently there is a light bulb in a fire station somewhere that still works after more than 100 years. This is a sign that there is a way to make things that last.

*Private Members' Business*

Quebec has passed legislation that takes aim at and directly prohibits the system of planned obsolescence, although the act is not yet fully in force. We welcome the fact that Bill C-294 does not interfere with it.

Could my colleague comment on the need to explicitly tackle the “buy-use-toss” cycle that is actually preventing sustainable growth?

• (1745)

[*English*]

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, this bill is tackling a very specific problem, which was brought forward to me by some valuable members of the manufacturing community. This is an issue that impacts all of Canada and it is something that is going to bring about more opportunities for people to innovate

As I alluded to in the title of it, this is an act to innovate. We want to see that innovation go forward. I suppose it would address the issue that the member has brought up, making better products that will last longer, so that consumers have high-quality products that do not just break down all too easily and then they are forced to buy other things or something that they may not necessarily want because what they had was working so well.

I do think that it would address that in the long run, maybe not quite as directly head-on as the member alluded to, but I do think that this is a very positive bill and it is one that I think we should all support.

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for bringing forward this bill. I know that we worked together on the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology last Parliament, so I am really interested to hear more about his bill.

I just wanted to know if he could elaborate a little on what the difference is between his bill and Bill C-244, which just passed in the House, in terms of right to repair. It is not clear to me as to the difference between these two pieces of legislation.

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, the hon. member was a great chair of the committee, so I really enjoyed working with her.

What I will say is that they both, in principle, address the Copyright Act in a very similar way but in a very different way. I have a different section of the act that is being amended and there is another exemption that is being included.

The reason for it is that, down in the United States, for example, they have a very clear exemption for interoperability. Here in Canada, we do not. What this bill is trying to do is make sure that we have the same operating field that the Americans do. It is in line with our trade deal with the European Union. We are seeing moves by other countries around the world, Australia, in particular. France, as well, is leading the conversation on this issue.

This is something with which we have an opportunity to match what other people are doing, and this bill does that with the amendment to the section of the Copyright Act.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, if this bill is able to make it to committee, what does my colleague anticipate will be some of the big issues that come up from witness testimony? Does he foresee any possible

improvements coming that way, or anything he can anticipate from that stage of the bill?

**Mr. Jeremy Patzer:** Madam Speaker, I think there is always the question around proprietary software. I think that will be where some of the push-back might be, but what this act clearly does is say that the exemption we are going to allow for only allows for making a product interoperate. It leaves the protection in there for the developer of proprietary software, because the usage of the act is only for that very specific purpose.

We made sure to make sure that this was focused clearly on interoperability and no further than that, because we do want that certainty there for innovators. However, in the same breath, we have to make sure that we have the ability for people to build the short line or the secondary pieces onto mainline platforms.

**Mr. Wilson Miao (Richmond Centre, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-294 tackles a public policy challenge of importance to Canadians. I believe that we need to do more to facilitate the interoperability of products. An interoperability-friendly environment means empowering Canadians to adapt the products they own to their needs. For example, it means giving the ability to farmers to install different add-ons to their tractors so that they can do a number of different tasks with the same piece of machinery. It also means giving Canadians the ability to render compatible their old electronic devices with new technological standards to address the accumulation of electronic waste on our planet.

Many of the current obstacles to interoperability have arisen as a result of new market dynamics created by digital technologies and the increase of embedded software in products such as smart phones, televisions and vehicles. Removing these obstacles will require a variety of measures in both federal and provincial areas of responsibility. At the federal level, there is one particular marketplace framework that comes into play when discussing interoperability, and that is the Copyright Act, which is the subject of amendments proposed in Bill C-294.

The Copyright Act, as it currently reads, represents an obstacle to the ability of Canadians to extend the life cycles of their software-enabled products protected by digital locks. The Copyright Act prohibits Canadians to circumvent digital locks protecting copyrighted content like software. An exception to this prohibition already allows the circumvention of digital locks for the purpose of interoperability, but it is limited to the making of two computer programs interoperable. Bill C-294 seeks to expand this exception to allow Canadians to also circumvent digital locks to make their software-enabled products interoperable with other devices or components. This bill will work in conjunction with my private member's bill, Bill C-244, which was just voted on, to allow Canadians an increased autonomy over their purchased goods.

Because of the complexity of copyright policies and the issues related to interoperability, it remains that an expanded interoperability exception, such as the one proposed in Bill C-294, should be carefully considered so as to prevent any unintended consequences. Without prejudging the outcome of Bill C-294, I look forward to working with my colleagues to constructively scrutinize this bill.

Last year, the government conducted a number of consultations on copyright, one of which discussed the interoperability issue. The government's consultation on a modern copyright framework for artificial intelligence and the Internet of things highlighted some of the challenges for Canadians in rendering their products protected by digital locks interoperable with other products. The comments provided by stakeholders in response to this consultation are publicly available and they will greatly assist in our work.

First, some stakeholders pointed to the importance of ensuring that exceptions allowing the circumvention of digital locks respect Canada's treaty obligations. Canada must provide legal protections for digital locks that, notably, respect the terms of the World Intellectual Property Organization's Internet treaties. Canada also needs to comply with the additional requirements to protect digital locks that have been integrated into CUSMA, the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement, which limits our flexibility to enact new exceptions allowing for the circumvention of digital locks or to expand the existing ones.

• (1750)

It will thus be important to ensure that the measures proposed in Bill C-294 and their effects on the Copyright Act comply with Canada's international obligations.

Second, I urge us to consider the perspective of a broad range of stakeholders in studying Bill C-294. The diversity of views will enrich the policy debate and lead to a more effective balancing of the various interests at play. The stakeholder submissions received in response to the government's consultations attest to this diversity of views.

Particularly, manufacturers have expressed concerns that expanding the scope of exceptions allowing the circumvention of digital locks could introduce personal safety and security risks for consumers. They have also noted potential cybersecurity and privacy risks, especially for products that connect to the Internet. Moreover, copyright holders argue that expanding these exceptions would expose them to piracy of their content and potential economic losses. We need to ensure the amendment sought in Bill C-294 does not negatively impact the ability of manufacturers and copyright holders to market their products and innovate.

Despite these considerations that will need further exploration, I want to reiterate the important issue Bill C-294 brings forward to us as it seeks to remove an important barrier to the interoperability of products. I look forward to continued discussions on this important matter.

• (1755)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak today to the bill that would amend the Copyright Act. The sponsor of this bill, the member for

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Cypress Hills—Grasslands, will be pleased to know that the Bloc Québécois supports what is proposed in his bill.

If Bill C-294, which has only two clauses, is passed, the Copyright Act will be amended to “allow a person, in certain circumstances, to circumvent a technological protection measure to make a computer program interoperable with any device or component, or with a product they manufacture”.

In other words, it allows the owner of a software-enabled device to bypass the lock in order to make it compatible with other applications, even if they are not developed by the original software developer. Ultimately, the Copyright Act is essentially about protecting literary and artistic property rights and encouraging fair compensation for the work that is done.

For example, like Bill C-244, it does not allow anyone to break digital locks in order to copy or alter the work of an artist or a copyright holder without their consent. Authors have been protected by the act since 2012. This bill will allow people to break digital locks solely so the program can be used with another platform. This is called interoperability, and it is a good thing.

This bill is a good thing for consumers because it frees them from the limitations that many companies place on their customers, effectively making them prisoners to whoever holds the original software. I applaud companies that do not use the act and that allow interoperability instead of preventing it. If this bill makes its way through all the stages, that will be the norm for everyone.

Many businesses come to mind as examples of best practices and benefits for consumers. I want to emphasize that interoperability opens the door to infinite opportunities to do better things with the technological tools available to us.

We need to think about the enjoyable and user-friendly tools people want to work with. That is what the bill addresses. Take a cell-phone, for example. It is much more than a telephone; it is a pocket computer that can be used for all kinds of activities. To make it even more versatile, we can download many different apps that get added to the operating system and add new functions to it. Without interoperability, would the use of this device be so widespread? The answer is obvious.

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In Quebec, many apps have been developed in record time, and because they were interoperable, everyone could use them, no matter what kind of smartphone they used. There is VaxiCode, the vaccine passport app developed by the Quebec government at the height of the pandemic, the Transit app that gives us public transit schedules in real time, or even a financial app that allows us to access our credit union accounts in one click.

Although the operating system designers did not choose to invoke the Copyright Act to prevent us from downloading all these apps, the act would give them the power to do so. Our devices would be less versatile and would become outdated more quickly, and a new technology developer would be excluded from the market, restricting competition and innovation. Fortunately, they understood the benefits of interoperability.

Interoperability is considered to be very important, even critical, in many areas, including information technology, medicine in the broad sense, rail, electromechanics, aerospace, the military and industry in general. The different systems, devices and elements must be able to interact seamlessly.

Even if cellphone designers chose not to invoke their copyright to exclude competitors, other businesses did choose to do so, which is unfortunate. The idea here is to encourage and clarify the option that legislators wanted to put forward in the act, that is interoperability. I salute the member for La Prairie. That is the kind of word that he would have made me repeat and that I would have mispronounced again.

Even though Quebec has not codified the circular economy, it applies the principles of the circular economy in many of its policies, and most of its major industrial strategies are now developed in accordance with the principle of reclaiming the materials and energy used to produce goods.

● (1800)

It is high time we reconsidered the linear economic model and, in conjunction with Bill C-244, adopted the principle of interoperability for the goods we consume.

The idea is to dissuade businesses from developing products in a vacuum. I will repeat the same message: We need to shift to a new paradigm and stop throwing money away. Repairability and interoperability are principles that need to be enshrined in the Copyright Act. We have to do much more with fewer resources. This realization is already reflected in Quebec's new laws and policies.

Recently, the National Assembly of Quebec unanimously adopted Bill 197, which will completely ban planned obsolescence and force companies to label their products with a sustainability and repairability rating. An ambitious update to the Consumer Protection Act is needed to make companies change their practices in ways that benefit consumers.

With the recent election, the Government of Quebec has not yet adopted the order to bring the new legislation into force, but it has clearly indicated its intention to do so swiftly.

Far from interfering in the work of the National Assembly of Quebec, passing Bill C-294 would prevent manufacturers from invoking federal copyright law to counter the work being done to

make Quebec the place where consumers will be best protected against this practice.

A World Bank report entitled "What a Waste 2.0" identifies several initiatives around the world to reduce the volume of electronic goods ending up in landfills. Members will understand why I am so excited. Very soon, probably in this parliamentary term, great strides will be made in laying the foundation for the circular economy.

I encourage members to follow the work of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, specifically in November, for I am sure they will find our study on the electronics recycling industry very interesting. It will be in November at the earliest, but this subject is very important to me.

The objectives are clear. We have to break free from disposable plastic, better inform consumers, fight waste and promote social enterprise in recycling, take action against planned obsolescence and improve manufacturing quality. This is our future.

I am encouraged, because the movement is taking hold, although several pieces of legislation still need to be modernized. This societal shift is being led by ordinary citizens and is gaining momentum. All levels of government must act, because not only is waste a health issue, but it is also key to the green transition, since the resources needed to produce these goods are not available in infinite quantities.

E-waste is a growing environmental concern, and there are several laws that should be amended to address the issue. Today's debate represents a small part of this burden, but we must redesign our laws to allow interoperability. Slowly but surely, everyone will come to see the benefits.

In conclusion, it makes sense to be able to repair our own belongings, but it does not make sense to keep supporting throwaway culture. The message must be clear: Let us put an end to schemes that encourage consumers to throw items away because they cannot repair them.

Regulatory progress is slow, but I remain convinced that this bill will make its way to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology very soon. I still hope the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry will introduce a bill to modernize the Copyright Act as soon as possible, like this fall. We are running out of time to clean up our manufacturing methods and our consumer habits.

• (1805)

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise to join debate on Bill C-294. I would like to congratulate the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands on bringing forward a bill for debate. We know the lottery system has its winners and losers, and to have a spot to be able to bring forward a piece of legislation for debate is a pretty big honour.

Bill C-294 is an enactment that would target the already existing statute of the Copyright Act to essentially allow a person, under certain circumstances, to circumvent what is known as a technological protection measure, also referred to as a TPM, to basically make a computer program interoperable. Let us see how many times I can say that word quickly without stuttering over it, but basically it would be to make it interoperable with one device or component or with a product they manufacture.

Just so we can understand the section of the Copyright Act this bill would be amending, the existing text of paragraph 41.1(1)(a) specifies that “no person shall circumvent a technological protection measure”. That is a pretty solid barrier to any kind of progress in this specific area.

Before I go much further, I have been pleased to be the agriculture critic for my party now for four and a half years. I recall an important study we did back in the 42nd Parliament on the pace of technology and innovation in agriculture in particular. As a part of that study, our committee travelled right across Canada. We stopped in several different locations and met with some of our leading agricultural producers, manufacturers, researchers and scientists, who are really pushing the envelope in so many different areas and lending themselves to establishing Canada as the agricultural powerhouse it is. We got to see some of the amazing crop breeding technologies going on, but also the equipment.

One thing that became abundantly clear is that, with the manufacturing of agricultural equipment, the pace of technological change, particularly in how advanced the computer programs operating this equipment are, is going ahead at a speed that leaves one's head spinning. It is still quite a competitive field, but it is also one dominated by several big players. We heard in other speeches about the fact that because they want their equipment to be used with other pieces of their equipment and are basically trying to corner consumers into sticking with their line of products, they are increasingly resorting to what is known as digital locks. Those locks do not allow for different pieces of equipment to operate with one another. It has long been identified as a frustration among farmers, but this also goes beyond the agricultural sector.

This can be applied to many different areas of business, where they are increasingly having to use different computer programs that do not always mesh well with each other, and it can cost a lot of money for a business to have to switch gears and maybe dump one computer program and adopt a whole new system. This is really an important change to basically allow a bit more consumer choice but also to allow some of those small and medium-sized enterprises that are really trying to get their foot in the door to compete on a level playing field, so they can go out into the market-

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place with confidence knowing that when they sell their products it is not going to put any pressure on someone to maybe disregard their product because it is not compatible operating with maybe a larger manufacturer. In that sense, this is very noble intention in this bill.

When we speak of the word “interoperability”, that basically is what it is. It is going to allow those different systems, devices, applications, products or whatever one may have to be able to essentially connect and communicate with one another in a coordinated way. This is something the user of the product ultimately wants all their stuff to do.

I heard one of my colleagues talk about the problem of e-waste. That is a very real problem in this country, and indeed around the world. We are generating so much e-waste and toxic chemicals that can leach into our landfills as a result.

• (1810)

If we want to try to stop that from happening, then we have to find ways in our policies and in our laws to encourage people to be able to use a product for as long as they possibly can. Interoperability is going to be a key component of that, so that people can feel confident they do not need to throw something away but can keep on using it with another product.

I want to also reference the fact that we in the House have already voted on a bill that was dealing with the concept of the right to repair, and now we are dealing with a bill that would also amend the Copyright Act to allow for interoperability. There is a slight difference between those two concepts, and I know the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands has taken some time to really delve into that from a previous question, but I think we can tackle both of them.

On the right to repair, I know at committee I have certainly had some manufacturers raise some concerns with it, so I certainly hope that at the committee stage, dealing with the right to repair bill in particular, they address some of those concerns. Manufacturers were concerned that some people might be able to tinker with their equipment to remove safety mechanisms. For example, a lot of forklifts require that an operator be sitting down in the seat, and the seat has to feel a person's weight in order for the machinery to operate. Manufacturers were worried that a person could tinker with that safety system, so that they could operate the forklift while standing beside it and outside the safety box, which, of course, would be incredibly unsafe were the load to tip over or something like that.

There have been some concerns raised on it, and I know the committee will do its due diligence in addressing those.

Returning to Bill C-294, we also have to set the context. This bill came about after an important report was issued by Western Economic Diversification Canada in February of last year. It essentially set the context of the fact that this is a pretty big issue within the agricultural field. It is a big issue because of new market dynamics that have arisen, created by those digital technologies.

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Ongoing policy in this area, because of the rapid technological change, has to really address a number of items. The first bullet point here was on copyright policy and whether there are exceptions in the law to permit circumvention of technological protection measures, TPMs, so that we can adapt to this and the reality in the marketplace.

I do not want to spend too much more time speaking to the bill. I know my colleague, the member for Windsor West, who sits on the industry committee, may want to say some words on this bill during its second hour of debate, but I know he is looking forward to getting this bill to committee so that it can be studied in further detail. It deserves to continue on its journey to committee. We can let that deliberative body take a closer look at it and really get that airing from witnesses who are directly involved in the field, so they can come and say in their own words why this initiative is so important and give the reasons parliamentarians should ensure that it continues on its journey.

I will end by just saying that I look forward to having the opportunity to vote to send this bill to the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology, and I would like to congratulate the member again on bringing forward this initiative for us to consider.

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to contribute to the debate on Bill C-294, and I want to thank my colleague for Cypress Hills—Grasslands for bringing it forward.

Interoperability is a lot more fun to say in English than it is in French. However, the bill seeks to amend the Copyright Act, specifically regarding technological protection measures, more commonly known as digital locks, and the interoperability exemption to those locks.

New provisions would be in effect such that, and this was brought from the Library of Parliament to be studied in committee, if a person has lawfully acquired an agriculture machine, for instance, and if this machine contains a copy of a computer program and this copy monitors and/or controls the functioning of that machine, then that person will be deemed to have a licence or use of that copy.

What does that mean? It means that in the agriculture sector when we have technological advances, such as new software that comes about to make farmers' lives easier or the advancement of AI and a lot of other technological advances that need to use software, when someone buys that equipment, they would be able to use that equipment with other systems that work with it. I can tell members that it is a lot more complicated than a lot of us can understand, but to make a long story short, it would help farmers save money in order to grow more crops, which is really important.

Also important, when we talk about industry in Canada, is that it would create competition. When we create competition, we ensure that not only are we looking after farmers and entrepreneurs, but we allow people to have a choice. When people have a choice, they can then make decisions that save them money and that are best for their businesses.

Of course, we are talking about farmers in a very rural part of this nation, and we have talked all week about farmers, who are so

very important. They are number one in this nation. We plant 89 million acres of crops, but the U.S. is about 10 times that and plants about 890 million acres. However, we have land that can be used for farming and we have technological advances that can make it into a greater reality. Fifty-three per cent of all of our land in Canada is used for farming, and as we have developments in DNA sequencing and genomics, we are able to grow corn farther north almost every year. We are finding advancements in protein clusters. We are finding better ways to grow our food and to be more sustainable, and the world is going to need that.

By 2030, the world will need 50% more food, which means we have to produce 1.5 times the amount of food we grow now. Therefore, when we look at farming when it comes to Canada, it is tremendously important, and the bill before us would help out. At the end of the day, the bill would allow farmers to be more competitive, to find more technological advances and to make sure that when we develop the future of farming we have all the tools in place so that farmers can make the best choices and save money.

Farmers are so important. They grow the best food in the world here in Canada. We are the breadbasket of the world with a lot of our wheat as well as our protein clusters with our fisheries, farms and animals. At the end of the day, we need farmers to not just survive but to thrive. The bill, of course, would handle only one part of that. However, there will be more advances in the future. I will talk about a few them, and I think it is important to talk about what the advances are right now.

When farmers are looking to keep birds and pests away from their crops, they are now using laser scarecrows. We have Bee Vectoring, a new Canadian technology that uses software and bees to help keep pests away from plants. We have Harvest Quality Vision, which uses drones in the air and sensors in the soil to detect nitrogen, so that we can see the best weather and at what point we have to put certain nutrients into the soil.

Farmers will also be able to use technology to save on labour, because they cannot find labour anywhere right now. Finding someone to pick crops or work in the field has been increasingly hard. We are going to need technology because of some of our labour shortages. If we do not have labour, we cannot grow crops and we cannot pick our food. We are talking about an industry that is so important that we will need 1.5 times of it in the next eight years. We will need technology to solve some of those problems.

● (1815)

On crop and soil monitoring and management, as a colleague mentioned earlier, we have zero tillage happening right now. This means we can plant seeds and harvest crops without touching the soil, which saves the soil. We used to have to do fallowing. This is a new technology that is really amazing for our farmers.

There are a lot of other different things being developed. This week, Loblaws, which I know is a dirty word in the House today, launched its first automated vehicles. There is GPS-controlled and automated farm equipment that will be able to manage literally thousands of acres for farmers and do the work that is needed. I do not know if members have seen the movie *Interstellar*. It had equipment operated by GPS. Let us hope we have a better future than what was in that movie.

We need to make sure this is a good bill, and I think it does the bare minimum, which is to ensure that we look at how technology is used on our farms and at how we can support our farmers with control.

There is a lot of other help we could give our farmers, and we have talked about it this week. They have a triple threat happening right now. Farmers have increased interest rates, which are really hurting them. There are increased costs when it comes to fertilizer tariffs, which no one else in the world has. Somehow Canada is the only one to have these tariffs on fertilizer, which are going to affect farmers' costs by up to 35%. Third, we have a triple increase to the carbon tax. I will not say it three times, as that has been done enough today, but these are real hardships for farmers.

We talk about farmers in Canada, but how many farms do we have? I talked about 89 million acres. There are 189,000 farms in Canada and that is not including hobby farms. I have a lot of hobby farms in my riding.

Just a few weeks ago, an ostrich farm opened in my riding. Ostriches look kind of neat and they are delicious. They are also great for the kids. When we were there, they fed them. What is really neat, from an environmental standpoint, is that ostriches use one-fiftieth of the land that cattle do, they let off one one-hundredth of the waste and their tenderloins taste just like beef. It is unbelievable. I am going to bring more people to see them this week. They are trying to scale and grow. They are already using technology as well. They are using technology for feeding and breeding them. It is quite a new industry. Those are the hobby farms outside of the other farms.

Another great type of farm in my region is dairy. We have quite a few dairy farms. One of them is Lee Nurse, which is doing robotic milking. All the milking is done by computers. When we talk about interoperability and dairy farms, it is about how they are going to be able to service, upgrade and manage those systems as the technology is advanced, which is really amazing. When it is time to milk, the cows all line up together. I guess they go because there is a cookie with protein that attracts them. With the computer, the robot milks the cows and away they go. It is unbelievable. They have about 180 head of Holstein, and at the end of the day they are doing something really amazing. Of course, this bill would help them, which is really great.

It is natural for other companies in the marketplace to try to innovate with new products and develop new marketable items that would make life easier. We want to make sure there is control and that we have given copyright protection to farmers so they can better our lives, grow the food we need and make sure we grow the farming community and economy here in Canada. More competi-

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tion means more progress. Let us help our farmers, at least in this way.

• (1820)

**Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when we have private member's hour and we are debating, we sometimes pay attention and we sometimes do not. This has been a really interesting conversation. I actually want to thank the member for bringing this forward because, while we have had a bill that was very similar with respect to the right to repair, this one seems to narrow in on another aspect of the Copyright Act.

There is, sort of, a loophole that is preventing farmers, in this case, from being able to use the equipment they have rightfully purchased and leverage it and adapt it. I want to thank the member for educating us on this issue, and I think that it is definitely an important concept that merits further study to understand it more.

As the member knows, often when members bring forward private members' business, they will then reach out to members across the aisle to meet with them, to explain the bill and to solicit support, so I do look forward to meeting with the member to learn more about this bill.

The intent of the bill, Bill C-294, is to allow consumers to repair a product on their own without violating the Copyright Act. I think that, with consultations under way right now to inform the modernization of our copyright policy framework, including the facilitation of repair and interoperability, Bill C-294 actually presents a unique opportunity for us to build a strong foundation for the work ahead.

When I hear of interoperability, and I can say it quickly, I always think defence, because I worked in the defence field previously. Therefore, when I think of interoperability, I am always thinking of the defence industry. It has actually been quite interesting for me to hear tonight about the application in the farming industry.

The member opposite and the previous speakers talked about innovation in terms of farming and doing things quicker, smarter, faster, cheaper. I really am interested to hear more about how the change in this legislation could benefit farmers but also other industries. I actually think it would be quite interesting once this goes through the process, if it does get to committee, to see how this can actually apply to other industries as well and benefit other industries that are looking to innovate.

• (1825)

[*Translation*]

As a member of the Standing Committee on Industry and Technology in the last Parliament, I learned that industries have many issues with change.

*Adjournment Proceedings**[English]*

A lot of industries do not want to change. A lot of industries are not ready to change.

I think that this bill actually brings a unique opportunity for us to do things differently and, as I have said previously, I do look forward to hearing more about this bill. I think it is quite interesting and I think that there is a good complementarity with Bill C-244, the right to repair act, which has been sent to the industry committee.

I will conclude by saying that I am quite interested in hearing more. I am not quite sure what my position is in terms of supporting it or not. I would like to meet with the member and get his perspective on a couple of questions.

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Madam Speaker, it is a real pleasure to rise today in debate.

I wanted to pick up on an important point that the member for Bay of Quinte was talking about. Although he said it had not been said enough times in here today, I did want to emphasize the real burden the government's plan to triple the tax on Canadians is putting on them.

We are going to keep listening to Canadians because they are giving us these heartbreaking stories, as we come up on this Thanksgiving weekend, about the rising food prices that they are experiencing, the tax burden and the cost of living crisis. Frankly, it is a made-in-Canada Liberal inflationary crisis that has driven up the cost of everything and has driven Canadians to food banks in record numbers.

I want to take a quick opportunity, with my remaining time, to just remind any Canadian who is able to make a donation to their local food bank of goods or cash, which our food banks are able to make go a little further, to make that donation because they are really struggling to help Canadians out as we head into this Thanksgiving weekend.

Canada's Conservatives are going to continue fighting for Canadians on the matter of affordability. We know that rising taxes are a concern. That is what we are here to fight.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The hon. member was not quite speaking to the bill, but he will have nine minutes left the next time this bill is before the House. I would just ask him to speak to the bill and not to other issues. It has to be relevant.

Therefore, the time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

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

• (1830)

*[English]*

## HEALTH

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I want to talk about an issue that Canadians have been dealing with for some months now. In the face of restrictions having been lifted all around the world and right across our country, the top doctors in the provinces and territories deemed that the risk to Canadians was such that they did not need to have the restrictions they had had in place early on in 2020 and through 2021, but the government was determined to keep the ArriveCAN app in place.

Now, over the course of summer months, throughout the spring and into this fall, we have challenged the government to demonstrate to us what the rationale was. What were the epidemiological facts they were using to continue the use of this app? Every time we had officials at committee, they were unable to give us a scientific rationale. Was it that waste water levels were too high? Was it that community transmission linked to cross-border traffic was too high? Every time we raised it, they were unable to tell us why they were keeping it in place.

All the while, family reunification was delayed. People were unable to experience the birth of a family member, or unable to bury a loved one, because of the ArriveCAN app and the unscientific border measures that were in place. We learned today that the government has been lowballing the amount of money this ArriveCAN app cost, this unscientific ArriveCAN app.

A lot of questions are being raised in the Globe and Mail today about the ballooning cost of this app, which is shrouded in secrecy by the government. While the government was spending tens of millions of dollars on this app, it was also fining Canadians who were experiencing challenges using it at the border. These were people with the right of entry into Canada, Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

The government collected more than a million dollars in fines from Canadians. It seems very clear that the app erroneously put people under house arrest. People who were not COVID positive and had followed all the rules were put under quarantine by a broken app. These people should not be made to pay for the failures of the government. The government should refund the million dollars, and cancel the collections and fines that it levied. The government should make a commitment to Canadians that it is not going to use these types of measures again. They were coercive measures, as the health minister described them, and there was no scientific basis for the government to do that. The government also needs to undertake being honest with Canadians because the price is double what it told Canadians the cost would be. It has refused to be upfront about the details of all of those contracts.

Canadians deserve their money back. Canadians deserve an apology, and they deserve a commitment that they are not going to be subjected to this again.



**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, for over two and a half years we have been taking action at the border in an effort to protect the health and safety of Canadians. This about saving lives. Our border measures have been effective in monitoring and reducing the risk of importation and transmission of COVID-19 and new variants of concern in Canada.

In recent months, the pandemic situation has evolved. We have increased immunity against COVID-19 within the Canadian population, and we are seeing lower hospitalization and death rates. We have high vaccination rates. More than 82% of Canadians have been fully vaccinated. We also have increased the availability of rapid tests, treatments and vaccines, including the new bivalent formulation. That is why, effective October 1, we removed all COVID-19 border measures for all travellers entering Canada. Travellers arriving in Canada no longer have to be vaccinated against COVID-19 to enter, and in addition, travellers are no longer required to meet COVID-19 testing, quarantine or isolation requirements.

Also since October 1, masks are no longer required on planes or trains. However, even though we have ended this requirement, we still strongly recommend that people continue to properly wear a mask that is well constructed and well fitting while travelling. Additionally, travellers no longer have to submit their public health information through the ArriveCAN app. However, if they choose to, travellers can continue to use the optional advance CBSA declaration feature in the app before arriving at the Toronto Pearson, Montréal-Trudeau or Vancouver international airports. Travellers choosing to do this can use either the free ArriveCAN mobile app or the website.

The government is maintaining capacity to reinstate some border measures, including testing for monitoring purposes in the event that they are needed to protect Canadians from new significant COVID-19 variants of concern or other emerging public health threats. Travellers are encouraged to review the travel health notices at [travel.gc.ca](http://travel.gc.ca) to help them make informed decisions when considering travel outside of Canada. When travelling within Canada, travellers should check with the province or territory of their destination to see what, if any, COVID-19 requirements may apply.

The COVID-19 pandemic is not over. There is still the possibility of a resurgence in cases or of a new variant of concern in the future. That is why it is important for individuals to remain up to date with the recommended vaccinations, including booster doses, when eligible. Individuals should not travel if they have symptoms of COVID-19. If travellers become sick while travelling and are still sick when they arrive in Canada, they should inform a flight attendant, crew staff or border services official upon arrival. They may be referred to a quarantine officer, who will decide whether the traveller needs further medical assessment, as COVID-19 remains one of the most communicable of many communicable diseases listed in the Quarantine Act.

Travellers are also reminded to make informed decisions when considering travel outside of Canada, to protect their health and safety. They are encouraged to review the Public Health Agency of

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

Canada's online travel health notices for more information on safe travel.

• (1835)

**Mr. Michael Barrett:** Madam Speaker, we have heard the government's rationale for its implementation of the app before, but what we have not heard is an admission that it continued to use the app solely for political considerations. We have even had members of the Liberal caucus say that last year, in the election the Prime Minister called during the pandemic, he used it as an opportunity to stigmatize and divide Canadians. This is not what Canadians need from their government.

Now we are in a time when Canadians want to recover from the two years that we have had. They are experiencing very hard times financially because we have this made-in-Canada Liberal inflationary crisis, and they want to hear from the government, frankly, that it is going to atone for what it has done, that it is going to cancel those fines and that it is going to commit to Canadians that it is not going to take these kinds of coercive measures again. It needs to come clean with Canadians about why it has spent twice as much on this ArriveCAN app than it told them it would, and be transparent about all the contracting around it. We are looking for honesty, transparency and integrity.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Madam Speaker, both domestic and international epidemiological situations, as well as long-range modelling, continue to evolve. These, as well as hospital and ICU capacity and the effectiveness of other public health measures to keep Canadians safe, are taken into account when public health experts provide guidance.

As I said earlier, the pandemic is not over, and staying up to date with vaccinations, including booster doses, is critical, because immunity wanes over time. Individuals in society are at potential risk of a further resurgence without significant booster uptake. Our government will continue to work with provinces, territories, indigenous communities and stakeholders to examine vaccination strategies for both the short and long term.

### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Madam Speaker, some months ago, back in the spring, I asked the government about carbon capture, utilization and storage and its position on this. Sixteen months ago I introduced a bill into the House of Commons that was proposing a carbon capture, utilization and storage system for Canada that matched what happens in the U.S. Our trade partner in CUSMA actually has a 45Q regime that incents carbon capture, utilization and storage.

Finally, after much consultation, the government decided to move forward on this incentive to decarbonize Canada's economy by including it in its annual federal budget last spring. Here we are, six months later, and where are we on carbon capture, utilization and storage in this country? We are in the same place, really.

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In July, the government proposed its latest words on moving these measures forward. I say “words” because the proposal includes new, novel and undefined measures such as a knowledge-sharing agreement requirement, which is undefined and yet incurring penalties of up to \$2 million per occurrence if not obeyed. It is a document written without seriousness.

The government has repeatedly shown its lack of gravitas in its approach to this technology and its development, which the rest of the world has addressed more quickly, recognizing, as the International Energy Agency does, that the world's path to a decarbonized economy and decarbonized future is not possible without carbon capture, utilization and storage. It is a Canadian shame.

Canada was, until recently, the country where the technology had advanced most quickly. Industry had spent billions advancing the technology. Governments, provincial and federal, had contributed significant amounts to this advance. What changed? What took away Canadian technology leadership in carbon capture, utilization and storage development? It was tax incentives by our two main environment competitors, which are the United States and Norway, both of which produce a significant amount of hydrocarbon.

Since the U.S. instituted its 45Q regime to incent CCUS technology development, our Canadian corporate leaders have moved their developments to opportunities in the United States. Carbon Engineering, the world leader in direct air capture, now works primarily south of our border. The world does not stand still or even stall the way the current government does.

The 45Q regime in the U.S. has recently been updated in the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act so that tax incentives further encourage technological advances and decarbonization. That is the goal. The current government is still ragging the puck.

One key difference in structure between the design in the rest of the world and the approach the government is proposing is the inclusion of enhanced oil recovery. Here is what the government is missing in this ideological, wrong-headed, prejudicial approach to CCUS: Enhanced oil recovery produces hydrocarbons with a full life-cycle carbon footprint lower than newly drilled wells. There is an internal mental block holding the government back from decarbonizing our energy in Canada. It cannot continue to pretend it is even concerned about decarbonization.

I call on the government to stop sitting on its hands and to move forward with a revised, effective and accountable CCUS incentive mechanism.

• (1840)

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, Canadians know that climate change is real. Canadians also know that climate action is hard. In Canada and around the world, climate action is no longer a matter of political debate or personal conviction. It is an existential challenge. That means it is also an economic necessity.

Our climate plan is driven by our national price on pollution, the smartest and most effective incentive for climate action, and by a new Canada growth fund, which will help attract the billions of dollars in private capital that we need to transform our economy at

speed and scale. Smart climate investments today are good for Canadian workers, good for the Canadian economy and good for the planet. With the largest mobilization of global capital since the industrial revolution already under way, Canada has a chance to become a leader in the clean energy of the future.

Climate change is the greatest long-term threat of our time. Taking action on climate change is the greatest opportunity for our economy, and we can create well-paying sustainable jobs across our country. Carbon capture, utilization and storage is about reducing emissions. CCUS also plays a critical role in Canada's economic and environmental future as we strive to meet our objective of net zero by 2050. However, I want to be clear that it is not the only tool to be used; it is one of the tools in our tool box.

In budget 2021, our government proposed an investment tax credit for CCUS projects with the goal of reducing emissions by at least 15 megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. Then, after consulting with the public, stakeholders and the provinces on the design of the investment tax credit for CCUS, budget 2022 proposed a refundable investment tax credit for businesses that incur eligible CCUS expenses, starting in 2022 to contribute to our goal of cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 45% below 2005 levels by 2030.

The new investment tax credit is intended to be available for a broad range of CCUS applications across different industrial sub-sectors, such as concrete, plastics and fuels. They include blue hydrogen projects and direct air capture projects. It is not intended that the tax credit be available for enhanced oil recovery projects.

A CCUS strategy for Canada will ensure Canada is well positioned to enable meaningful climate action, to ensure we create well-paying sustainable jobs for communities and people and to support a more circular economy.

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• (1845)

**Mr. Greg McLean:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure that addressed anything I talked about in my points here today. We are talking about moving forward with a regime that matters to the world and that actually matters to our economy and environment more than anything else, yet the government stalled on it. It has been stalled, for as long as I have been in Parliament, on moving forward with decarbonization mechanisms. The government has all kinds of programs, none of which are effective at decarbonizing our economy, but this is a pretense, and a pretense it continues to hold.

I will note another pretense, from a document the Minister of Environment and Climate Change put out this summer: “Options to cap and cut oil and gas sector greenhouse gas emissions to achieve 2030 goals and net-zero by 2050”. It is a discussion document. That discussion document is effectively premised on the government saying that it had guiding principles that were brought forward by the Standing Committee on Natural Resources, of which I am a member. I assure the House that it is a pretense. Our committee never brought that forward. This document is premised on a lie, and the government has to address that.

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Madam Speaker, our government is committed to making smart climate investments to reach net zero by 2050 and build a stronger, more vibrant economy for all. Canadians understand quite well that without a serious climate plan, Canada has no economic future. Our government will help Canada continue to lead in global efforts to fight climate change, to protect our nature and to build a clean economy that will create the well-paying and sustainable middle-class jobs of today and tomorrow.

## TAXATION

**Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC):** Madam Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I asked the government if it would commit to cancelling its planned payroll tax increases, which will shrink paycheques starting on January 1. In response, the government admitted that some Canadians may be struggling with the high cost of housing, but it went on to do what it always does. When asked about the affordability crisis in housing, it patted itself on the back for its half-baked plans for the one-time payment it is proposing, which will be equal to about one week's rent in major Canadian cities. We are in the throes of the worst inflation in 40 years, while an entire generation of Canadians gives up on the dream of owning their own home.

My specific question arose from a conversation I had with a former business colleague in Calgary who told me about the price jump in a particular condo development. It occurred to me that when we consider the price increase and also factor in the recent and predictable spike in interest rates resulting from the government's deficits and facilitated by printed money, as well as its increase on property taxes, condominium fees and heating costs, which are also rising, the income necessary to qualify for this basic, bare, entry-level condominium had nearly doubled in one year according to the formula used for mortgage qualification by lending institutions.

This is heartbreaking for young people. Too many young people think they will never be able to move out of their parents' homes. Too many people wonder if they will ever afford anything beyond a tiny apartment. Too many young people despair over whether they

will be able to start their own families, and the government offers no solutions. It offers only a commitment to shrink Canadian paycheques by increasing payroll taxes, shrink the purchasing power of the money Canadians have left after tax by tripling the carbon tax, and shrink the value of any savings they might have by continuing to fuel inflation.

The current cost of living crisis was a long time in the making. The government added \$100 billion to the national debt before COVID, squandered the balanced budget it inherited from the previous government and broke all of the 2015 election promises upon which it was elected during a time of a booming world economy. It allowed structural deficits to creep back into Canadian public finances, undoing 20 years of fiscal prudence instilled by both the previous Conservative government and the Chrétien-Martin government before it. Then COVID hit. It added hundreds of billions of dollars more in further debt for \$200 billion in new non-COVID spending, funded with printed money, triggering a spiral of rising costs, rising interest rates and a rising level of debt servicing costs.

If the government wants to give young Canadians hope for a future with a home they can afford, it will have to stop making things worse. It has to get serious about dealing with the barriers that prevent housing construction from meeting housing demand. It has to get serious about economic growth resulting from real people building real things that supply real services to real consumers, not the crony capitalism that has crept into the government in everything from its infrastructure bank to its supercluster system and corporate giveaways.

It can stop the planned payroll tax increase. It can stop the planned tripling of the carbon tax, which increases the price of food, transportation and home heating. Canadians cannot afford higher prices and higher taxes with smaller paycheques.

• (1850)

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, we are seeing higher inflation rates and higher costs of living in Canada and, frankly, right around the world as a large 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.

This is something our government is concerned with, and I can reassure my colleagues that we are working on solutions to support Canadians day in and day out. Canadians are facing the pressure when they reach for items at the grocery store and when they pull into a gas station. However, inflation is actually less severe here than it is among many of our peers. It was 7% here in August, while it was 8.3% in the United States, 9.9% in the United Kingdom, and 7.9% in Germany. We recognize the challenges.

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The opposition would like us to drop the GST on gasoline and get rid of our pollution pricing system. Quite frankly, this would be a terrible idea. It makes much more sense to support Canadians who need it the most with targeted measures, such as those included in our \$12.1-billion affordability plan. Gas taxes represent only a small portion of the total price that Canadians pay at the pump, so cutting them would be ineffective in protecting consumers from powerful global market forces.

It is important to understand that these market forces are driving daily changes in gas prices that are often substantially greater than the proposed 5% tax cut. This means that any positive impact on the price of gas would be wiped out in a day. The government would also be in the uneasy, unfortunate position of having spent tens or hundreds of millions of dollars trying unsuccessfully to fight market forces over which it has little control.

Putting a price on pollution is the most effective and least costly means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It is important to note that Canada's approach is flexible. Any province or territory could design a pricing system that meets its needs, as long as it meets the federal benchmark. The federal backstop only applies in jurisdictions that do not have a pricing mechanism that meets the federal benchmark. The federal fuel charge is part of this, and one thing is clear, it does not make life less affordable for the large majority of people.

In provinces that do not meet the federal benchmark and where the federal fuel charge has been implemented, approximately 90% of direct proceeds are being directly returned back to households. In 2022-23, these climate action incentive payments mean that a family of four would receive \$745 in Ontario, \$832 in Manitoba, \$1,101 in Saskatchewan and \$1,079 in Alberta. In addition, families in rural and small communities are eligible to receive an extra 10%.

The reality is that, as part of the climate action incentive payments, most households are getting back more in payments than they pay in increased costs from the federal carbon pollution pricing system. Also, dropping the federal fuel charge in these provinces would mean smaller climate action incentive payments going back to the individuals in those backstop provinces. It would

mean less money in the pockets of many people, including those living in the member opposite's own riding.

**Mr. Pat Kelly:** Madam Speaker, tonight we see a continued doubling down on the same points we have heard from the government. I did not hear much about housing in that response, even though that is really what the question we are debating tonight was centred on.

We see the same old splitting of hairs over whether or not Canada's inflation crisis is really the worst among peer countries. Other countries that engaged in destructive financial practices, which ran enormous deficits on printed money, are also suffering the same effects that we are having here in Canada.

Tonight, yet again, we have a defence of the carbon tax and the claim debunked by the Parliamentary Budget Officer that the majority of people are somehow better off with this tax.

• (1855)

**Ms. Julie Dabrusin:** Madam Speaker, our government understands quite well that Canadians are feeling the effects of elevated inflation, particularly at the gas pump and when they reach for items at the grocery store.

However, dropping taxes on gasoline is simply not the right solution. We have developed an affordability plan that provides more money to Canadians who need it the most when they need it the most. Our plan is a suite of targeted measures in new support in 2022. In fact, some of our measures are already putting money back in the pockets of the middle class and those working hard to join it this year.

Canadians can count on us to continue to support them through this inflation crisis while remaining prudent fiscal managers.

[*Translation*]

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:56 p.m.)

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