



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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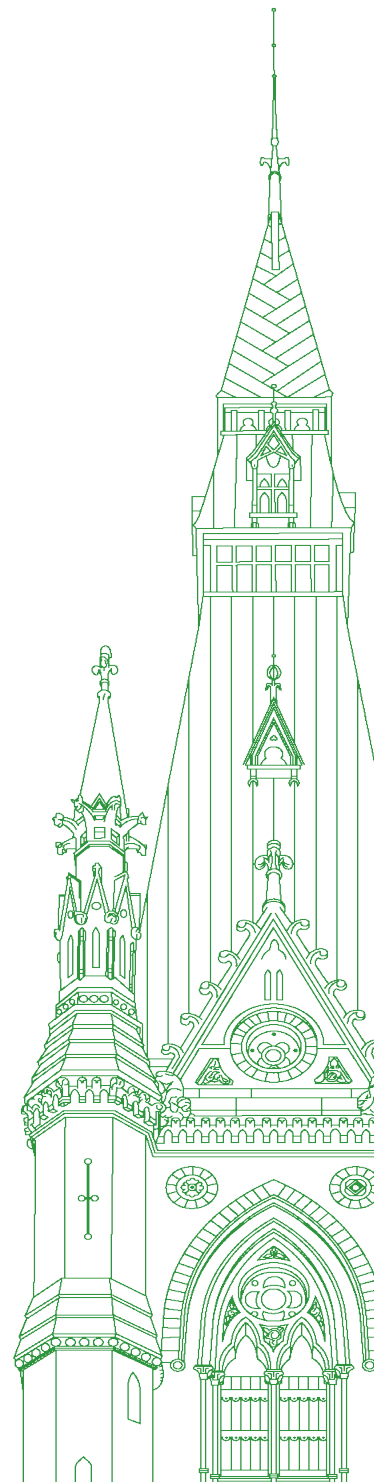
House of Commons Debates

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Tuesday, April 18, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1000)

[*English*]

FEDERAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES COMMISSION

The Speaker: It is my duty to lay upon the table, pursuant to subsection 23(2) of the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act, a certified copy of the report of the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for the Province of New Brunswick.

[*Translation*]

Pursuant to Standing Order 32(5), this report is deemed to have been permanently referred to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

* * *

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the first report of the Standing Committee on Official Languages on Bill C-13, an act to amend the Official Languages Act, to enact the use of French in federally regulated private businesses act and to make related amendments to other acts.

The committee has studied the bill and has decided to report the bill back to the House with amendments.

TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, entitled “Strengthening Air Passenger Rights in Canada”.

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

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Conservative members support the general direction of the report, we believe it does not go far enough in advancing the principle of shared accountability in the aviation ecosystem. Further, the report does not hold the Minister of Transport accountable for his complete absence in the face of significant failures in Canada's air travel system during the Christmas travel season of 2022. Conservative members believe that ministerial accountability required the minister to play a more active and visible role in addressing this crisis and to address why, despite his promises that the system was fixed, Canadians were subjected to consecutive disastrous travel seasons.

Conservative members believe that the recommendation for establishing transparent service standards for all members of the aviation sector is a good start but does not go far enough. We agree with witness testimony in the committee report calling for a reimbursement regime for all groups that provide a service that can result in delay or cancellation. We believe that ensuring federally regulated entities responsible for delays and cancelled flights are held responsible will incentivize all entities in the aviation ecosystem to ensure a better travel experience for air passengers.

• (1005)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting, in both official languages, the 10th report of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, entitled “Protection and Coexistence of the North Atlantic Right Whale in Canada”. Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

While I am on my feet, I thank all members of the committee for their work on this report, as well as the clerk, analyst, translation team and all the support staff who make our meetings possible.

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the eighth report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, entitled “Feeding the World: Strengthening Canada's Capacity to Respond to Global Food Insecurity”.

*Routine Proceedings**[English]*

The committee requests that the government table a comprehensive report.

Like my hon. colleague for Avalon, I thank all members on our committee for their tremendous work, the witnesses who appeared before us, and indeed our administrative staff and translation team for their continued excellent service.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour of presenting, in both official languages, the following two reports of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

In relation to Bill S-245, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, granting citizenship to certain Canadians, I have the honour of presenting the 14th report. The committee has studied the bill and, pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(1), requests a 30-day extension to consider it.

I also have the honour of presenting the 15th report. The committee has studied the bill and recommends to the House that it be granted the power during its consideration of Bill S-245, an act to amend the Citizenship Act, granting citizenship to certain Canadians, to expand the scope of the bill such that the provisions of the bill be not limited to an application to retain his or her citizenship under section 8 as it is read before April 17, 2009.

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 97.1(3)(a), a motion to concur in the report is deemed moved, the question deemed put and a recorded division deemed demanded and deferred. Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 19, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

PETITIONS

BUSINESSES IN LYTTON

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to table a petition signed by residents of Lytton, British Columbia. On June 30, 2021, wildfires engulfed the village of Lytton and surrounding areas, destroying the town and displacing hundreds of residents. With building yet to begin, the businesses in Lytton that accepted CEBA loans have no means of reopening and of repaying those loans.

Residents of Lytton are calling on the Government of Canada to recognize these extraordinary circumstances and forgive any amounts owed by Lytton area businesses on Canada emergency bank account loans. This is an exceptional circumstance and these petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada in good faith to forgive these loans. They really do not have the ability to pay them back. They want to pay them back but they cannot.

I present this petition on behalf of my constituents.

● (1010)

LAKE SIMCOE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have two petitions today. The first concerns Lake Simcoe.

I am very proud to present a petition that was brought to me by the organization Youth for Lake Simcoe, spearheaded by Zoe Bystrov, who was driven to launch the petition after paddleboarding on the lake and seeing waste floating and accumulating along the shoreline. In 2021, Zoe was awarded the Ernie Crossland Young Conservationist Award by the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

Petition e-4278 was signed by 835 residents, many of whom live within the Lake Simcoe watershed. It calls on the government to follow through on the promises made by the Liberals in the 2019 and 2021 election campaigns to provide new, direct funding for the Lake Simcoe cleanup fund. I support this petition and thank Zoe and Youth for Lake Simcoe for their tireless efforts in their campaign to gather signatures for this petition.

It is my hope that the government does finally keep its promise to support the work of many organizations, stakeholders and those who generally love Lake Simcoe to maintain it for sustainability and health for generations to come.

FIREARMS

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to stand to present petition e-4221 from Barrie—Innisfil resident Bob Dowdell, which asks the government to withdraw the amendment tabled at committee in November 2022. The petition was signed by 13,964 Canadians who agree the amendment and the evergreen definition were an overreach, unfairly made law-abiding firearm owners and sport shooters criminals, and infringed on the treaty rights of indigenous firearm owners.

Mr. Dowdell was very concerned about the prohibited firearm definition, as it is an item currently contained within a federal court case concerning the order in council of May 2020. The amendment could directly affect the outcome of the federal court case.

I support this petition. I thank Bob and the close to 14,000 Canadians who are residents of Barrie—Innisfil and signed and supported petition e-4221.

OPIOIDS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to table this petition mere days after the seventh anniversary of British Columbia's announcement of a public health emergency regarding the toxic drug crisis.

This petition was led by Moms Stop the Harm. I want to thank the moms. I want to thank the dads, aunts, uncles, grandparents, children and community members of those who have lost loved ones due to the toxic drug crisis. They are calling on the government to act, to join British Columbia in taking action in what is one of the most deadly public health emergencies in our lifetime and which is claiming approximately 21 deaths and lives every day.

The undersigned call upon the Government of Canada to declare the toxic drug crisis a national public health emergency. They want the government to take steps to end the toxic drug deaths and overdose injuries immediately and collaborate with provinces and territories to develop a comprehensive pan-Canadian overdose action plan, including treatment on demand, decriminalization, provision of a safer supply of substances and investments in education recovery. They want to ensure this emergency is taken seriously with adequately funded programming and supports.

[Translation]

JUSTICE

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table two petitions in the House today.

The first comes from hundreds of people who are very concerned by the lack of civic participation in the admissibility and consideration of complaints from the public regarding federally appointed judges. The Canadian Judicial Council is made up exclusively of judges. A number of studies question whether their professional ties prevent the judges from being completely impartial when they review complaints.

These citizens are calling for a joint committee composed of citizen representatives and judicial representatives to be created to study the admissibility of any complaints filed and follow up on them. They also want us to ensure that the appointment process for citizen representatives on the various committees of the Canadian Judicial Council is transparent and to create an appeal procedure for the complaints review committee.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, the second petition is related to extremely concerning events happening abroad. In September 2021, Azerbaijani forces initiated an invasion and attacked the Republic of Armenia. Several hundred people have died, thousands of civilians have been displaced and prisoners of war have been captured. There have been constant human rights violations and attacks on Armenia's national sovereignty. An area covering 130 square kilometres of Armenian territory is occupied at the moment.

Thousands of people are calling on Canada to assume a leadership role in defending the victims of human rights violations, urgently impose economic and military sanctions against Azerbaijan to pressure it to withdraw from the Republic of Armenia and demand that Azerbaijan return all prisoners of war, detainees, and the remains of fallen Armenians.

Routine Proceedings

• (1015)

[English]

BUSINESSES IN LYTTON

Mr. Todd Doherty (Cariboo—Prince George, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to present a petition on behalf of the village of Lytton and the businesses in Lytton, British Columbia.

As has been mentioned previously, the village of Lytton was decimated by fire on June 30, 2021. The village remains under an evacuation order, with construction not yet started on homes and buildings. Since rebuilding has yet to begin, doors cannot open and businesses have had no revenue for nearly two years. Already incurring large deficits due to the pandemic, businesses destroyed by the fire will not be in a position to repay the CEBA loans when due on December 31 of this year.

Almost 100 business owners in the village of Lytton signed this petition, calling upon the Government of Canada to recognize the extraordinary circumstances of the businesses of Lytton and to forgive their amounts owing on the Canada emergency business account loans. Due to the magnitude of the disaster and consequential bureaucratic delays, businesses have been unable to rebuild for nearly two years. Forgiveness of the CEBA loans for Lytton businesses would help them to empower economic development and restore the destroyed community. This impacts both first nations and non-first nations.

I know what they are speaking of, because in my riding of Cariboo—Prince George, many businesses and farms are still waiting, since the 2017 wildfires, to rebuild, and they are in the same boat.

The petitioners are pleading with the government to forgive these loans.

NATIONAL BUILDING CODE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I rise in this place, on the territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people, with the following petition.

The petitioners identify that, in the effort to address the climate crisis, our built infrastructure plays a large role. Seventeen per cent of all energy used in Canada is used in various forms of energy for our homes, and the result of wasteful consumption of energy is a barrier to climate action.

The petitioners are calling on the Government of Canada to work with the provinces and territories to develop a new national building code to reduce overall energy demand by 15%. This is doable, but, as we all know, the national building code takes a long time to develop, and the petitioners are asking that the government address the energy efficiency issues in our homes with urgency.

FRAUD PROTECTION FOR SENIORS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is with pleasure that I table a petition today.

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I want people to imagine working 30 or 40 years of their lives, accumulating perhaps \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000 in savings, and those savings being taken away. Retirees are increasingly becoming targets of fraud, given that they have built up wealth over their lifetimes to help support their retirement years, and they are vulnerable due to the lack of controls and protections in the transmission of money within the Canadian banking system. Seniors are seeing the savings they have built up over the years removed due to sophistication, deceit and trickery foisted on them by professional fraudsters to exploit them and the current Canadian banking system.

Petitioners are calling upon the House of Commons to undertake a serious and comprehensive review of the current transit system of Canadian citizens' money, with the aim of putting more stringent procedures, protocols and safeguards in place to protect seniors, in particular, from losing their life savings.

* * *

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from April 17 consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux (Edmonton Riverbend, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in this place, the House Commons, and particularly to speak to budget 2023 today.

Before I start talking about the budget, I would like to first bring some good news to the House. Some of our very good friends, Carl Brown and Veronica Dubak recently had a little baby boy, Sterling Vesely Dubak Brown, on March 17. I look forward to spending lots of time with him. He is happy and healthy, and we could not be happier for them and their family. I note the applause for Hansard.

On a more sombre note, this is the first time I have been able to rise in the House since the tragedy that hit Edmonton more recently, where we have now lost three frontline police officials. First it was Constable Travis Jordan and Constable Brett Ryan, and more recently Constable Harvinder Dhami. I cannot imagine the amount of grief their families are feeling right now, and I wanted to make sure to send my condolences out to them. It certainly has gripped our town of Edmonton very strongly as we come to terms with the loss

of three lives in our community, of those who put their lives in the way of fire every single day.

I do want to get to the budget. First of all, I want to address three or four items that I found to be of particular interest to me, mental health being the key one. In the lead-up to the budget, we heard a lot of talk about mental health and the supports that may or may not be in the budget. Unfortunately, it was the latter. A number of mental health committees I have spoken to over the last number of weeks talked about how disappointing this budget has been to them. It is unfortunate. We are going through an incredible mental health crisis right now. It is something I know every member of this House ends up supporting. However, it did not seem to make it to that final step and get into the budget.

These are not just my thoughts. I will give a quick rundown of what the Canadian Mental Health Association stated. The headline of its press release the day of the budget says it all: "Budget 2023 out of touch with mental health crisis". The press release goes on to say:

The Canadian Mental Health Association...is profoundly concerned that Budget 2023 did not include the promised Canada Mental Health Transfer.

Failing to establish the Transfer is an abdication of responsibility on a long-awaited policy and mandate priority.... The promise of federal funding starting in 2021 with an initial investment of \$4.5 billion over 5 years never materialized.

The press release then quotes the CEO: "The budget is out of touch with the reality of Canadians' well-being and their ability to afford mental health services. I believe that the government has missed the mark, and that there will be deep human and economic costs to pay."

Mental health is something I know a number of these organizations have spent a lot of time coordinating, and they have been reaching out to the government about trying to get that support.

This is an opportunity to highlight some of these serious mental health aspects. There is an awareness event that I do each year with members of this House. With the Liberal member for Richmond Hill and the NDP member for Courtenay—Alberni, we do an event called Father's Day on the Hill every year. It raises awareness of men's mental health, because 75% of suicides in this country are of men. We have even seen some more statistics come out that an average of 50 men are dying by suicide per week and that 81% of the drug overdose deaths are also of men.

● (1020)

I am always pleased to raise awareness of this event. We are now in our seventh year of doing this, but the numbers continue to climb and it is something that I know most members of the House are concerned about. To drive this home, in terms of just how important the support for mental health is, not seeing that tied into the budget has been disappointing to see.

Before I move on to the next topic, on men's mental health, we have even seen, this year, the Bloc Québécois join us in putting together this event. We started a foundation through it last year, which is going to promote research and programs throughout the year. Ultimately, what I would love to see in this budget, and going forward in future budgets, is not just support for mental health as a broad budget number and a lump sum of money, but for a lot of that to be dedicated to the people and the issues that need it most, whether it be the overdose deaths or the mental health of men struggling with suicide. Those sorts of supports are what Canadians are asking for and what Canadians need right now.

I want to move on to the other topic that jumped out at me in the budget, the supply chains. It is something that I take on in this caucus, as our shadow minister of supply chains. There was a lot of reaching out and advocating for supply chain issues in the lead-up to this budget. However, unfortunately, we saw even more movement in the opposite direction.

I will just read a quick quote from the Railway Association of Canada, which was not pleased with what happened in this budget: "The Railway Association of Canada...calls the federal government's move to resurrect the failed policy of extended regulated interswitching misguided and harmful to Canada's supply chains." Its CEO goes on to state, "The measures announced today will not improve the efficiency, capacity or reliability of Canada's supply chains. They will do the exact opposite, as we saw under extended regulated interswitching that was in place from 2014 to 2016."

• (1025)

The supply chain issue is something that I know has gripped many Canadians, particularly in my community. Since the pandemic, I have been hearing a lot about what supply chains have meant to this country, and I think that more and more people are paying attention to the supply chains now too. In downtown Vancouver, if people see a barge out on English Bay, they might be wondering if maybe that is their Amazon package delivery or the IKEA bench they were hoping to purchase over the weekend. I think that more Canadians are looking at what governments are doing when it comes to supply chains.

It touches each ministry over there, yet there is not a lot of coordination between the ministries. I think this is partly why it was astute of our leader to put that focus on supply chains. If we can get a coordinated approach where we can bring forward those solutions, whether it is reducing red tape or providing efficiencies, I think we will see a lot more success at the federal, provincial and municipal levels when it comes to supply chain management.

There is one last topic I want to briefly touch on. I sit on the parliamentary aerospace caucus, and I co-chair that with a member of each party in the House. I have been on it for five or six years now. What we do is raise awareness for the aerospace industry and the aerospace sector. They were also disappointed in this particular budget.

For example, immediately following the budget, they said, "This budget was a missed opportunity for the federal government to support the development of a national aerospace strategy, increase resourcing in Transport Canada's certification capabilities and exclude aircraft from the Select Luxury Items Tax Act to mitigate the

significant negative impacts we are currently seeing on Canadian manufacturers and workers."

The reason why that is important is that the aerospace sector has been advocating for a national aerospace strategy since I got here, since 2015. It is too bad to see that it keeps getting pushed down the aisle.

These are just three items that I got to talk about, but I do not think I have seen, in my time here, a budget that has been criticized by so many different associations and organizations. I think that should be a wake-up call for the government on the other side to think about when it is looking at future budgets or future legislation in this place.

• (1030)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member across the way cited in his speech several media references. I wonder if any of those media references were from the CBC, and whether the CBC reporting on our budget gives us the critical input we need to see the benefits and downfalls of the current budget.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, I think my good friend across the aisle is trying to set up a trap on the CBC side, but he is mistaken. I did not actually quote from any media articles. I quoted from the association's press releases. It came out and sent out its own responses. I am certain there is a lot of CBC criticism of the budget. I am happy to find that for him and send it his way.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, the budget has several important elements. However, the fact remains that it meddles in the jurisdictions of Quebec and the Canadian provinces.

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on this. Does he have any concerns about the fact that part of the budget does not respect the jurisdictions set out in the Constitution?

[English]

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, it is important, in this House, that the government reflect all aspects of this country. I am hearing that my Bloc friends are also disappointed in this budget. We are disappointed in this budget. They are disappointed in this budget. If only we could get one more party on side to be disappointed in this budget, we might end up with a confidence vote and we might have an election. We might have somebody else in the chair to put forward a better budget that would be better received across the country.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I work with my colleague on many different items, like mental health, pensions and whatnot. We know that one-third of single women in this country are living in poverty. It is completely unacceptable. We know that pensions need to be increased.

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One thing he talked about in his speech was around British pensioners who have retired in Canada. Public servants who worked in Britain and who receive a pension are restricted. They do not get the rate of inflation increase that Canadians get when they retire in Britain, for example. It is basically pension theft. It is leaving many British expats who live in Canada vulnerable to the costs of inflation.

Can my colleague speak about the importance of Canada and the British government working on a collective agreement? When we come forward with a trade deal, we want to ensure those conversations are part of it so that we do not leave British pensioners here in Canada in poverty, and so that we call out the British government for abandoning its own citizens.

Mr. Matt Jeneroux: Madam Speaker, that is a very timely question. I thank my friend from Courtenay—Alberni for raising it.

British pensioners are actually here in Ottawa this week. There are over 150,000 members who are not receiving proper British pensions. This is not a partisan issue. My friend from Courtenay—Alberni and members from the Liberal side have been advocating for this for years. I think it even goes back to former prime minister Jean Chrétien and Tony Blair sitting down and discussing this. It is unfair treatment of Canadian citizens.

They are here this week to push this issue. They are here this week to raise awareness. They are also here this week to flag the issue with the Minister of International Trade to make sure she is aware of the urgent need to see a change and see this reflected for the many pensioners being treated unfairly in this country.

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to participate in the budget debate this morning.

It has been eight years since the Liberal government has been in office, which is ample time for people to step back and take things into perspective. Imagine for a minute a typical Canadian family that is driving an eight-year-old car. Let us say they decide it is time to buy a new car, so they head down to the local car dealership to walk through the showroom and maybe take a car for a test drive. What are some of the new features they would notice in a 2023 car that were not there in 2015?

For starters, the entertainment system has improved by leaps and bounds, with features like Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. It has never been easier to parallel park or fit into tight spots, with rear-view cameras, dash cameras and even 360° bird's-eye view cameras. Gas-powered cars have never been more fuel-efficient, and more options for electric or hybrid vehicles are showing up in showrooms every year. Safety features have improved immensely as well, with motion sensors to tell us if another car is in our blind spot or if we are following the car in front too closely.

With all these improvements in cars that we have seen over the last eight years, I cannot help but wonder if we have also seen any similar improvements in the federal government. What does the federal government do today that makes the average Canadian pause and say that it is a big improvement from eight years ago?

Let us look at the passport office. I remember that just a few years ago, when I had to renew my passport, I was in and out of the

passport office in maybe half an hour; my passport arrived in the mail in a couple of weeks. However, over the past year, the passport office has been a national embarrassment. People have been camping out in front of passport offices for days, only to be turned away because their travel plans have not yet been finalized. To this day, my constituency office still gets phone calls and emails from people asking for advice about how to apply for a passport so they do not have to cancel their vacation plans or camp out in front of a passport office for days on end.

Let us look at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the IRCC. If someone wants to sponsor a friend or family member to come to Canada and that person needs a visitor's visa or a permanent residency card, it used to be a relatively simple process of filling out and rubber-stamping a few forms. Now it takes many months or even years of waiting. Literally every day, my constituency office receives multiple phone calls and emails asking what the problem is with the IRCC, why their cases are past their processing times, why it will not return their calls and when their loved ones will be allowed to come to Canada.

What about inflation and the cost of living? It used to be that anyone with a full-time job could at least put food on the table without having to turn to the local food bank for help, but that is not the case in Canada anymore. With the carbon tax pushing the price of groceries higher, more fully employed working families are turning to food banks for help. In my home province of Saskatchewan, food bank use was up 35% last year.

How about openness and transparency? The current Prime Minister once tweeted, "It's hard not to feel disappointed in your government when every day there is a new scandal." Today, the current government has been found in violation of Ethics Commissioner rules on five separate occasions and counting. However, that will probably slow down a bit now that the sister-in-law of a Liberal cabinet minister has been appointed as the new Ethics Commissioner.

Has the government at least made our streets safer? Are dangerous criminals being kept behind bars, or are tougher penalties deterring these criminals? Sadly, the answer is no. Year after year since the Liberal government was elected, violent crime rates have gotten worse than the year before. It is no longer uncommon to hear of a fatal stabbing on public transit or in front of a downtown Starbucks in broad daylight.

To continue our car shopping analogy, by any objective measure, the government has been a major downgrade compared to what Canadians had just eight years ago. Unlike that Canadian family that is shopping for a new car and checking out all of the new whistles and bells that did not exist eight years ago, Canadians are left wondering why the Liberal government cannot perform the basic functions that governments should. How is it that Canadians traded in a safe, reliable, dependable vehicle for a lemon that is always breaking down?

● (1035)

I think it is fair to ask this: If we are consistently getting so much less from the government, then are we at least getting what we paid for? Is the deterioration in government services the result of massive spending cuts and massive tax cuts?

If one takes a closer look at the numbers, that is not the case at all. Indeed, the Liberal government continues to implement higher and higher taxes. The carbon tax was raised yet again to \$65 per tonne and will continue to increase up to \$130 a tonne by the end of the decade. The excise tax on beer, wine and spirits was raised again by 2%. If that were not enough, in the budget, the government has also decided to implement a global minimum corporate tax, a share buyback tax and a tax on dividends held by financial institutions.

Therefore, the government is not getting taxes under control; in addition, it is not getting spending under control. Total expenditures for this budget would be just under \$500 billion. That compares to a budget of just under \$300 billion only eight years ago. This means that annual spending by the federal government has increased by nearly two-thirds over the past eight years.

When one looks at the details of where exactly these expenditure increases are coming from, the picture becomes much more troubling. This year, \$44 billion, or almost 10% of the government spending, will go towards interest payments on the federal debt. In the past, the Liberals have said that the government's massive debt burden was nothing to worry about because of record-low interest rates. Sadly, the days of record-low interest rates are over, and Canadians are left paying the bill.

What is also troubling is the ever-growing size of the federal civil service. During the last term of Stephen Harper's government, with a consistent focus on efficiency, the size of the civil service was gradually reduced by 25,000 employees. Since coming to power eight years ago, the Liberal government has hired back more than triple that number. Perhaps if the government were not so obsessed with regulating social media newsfeed algorithms, confiscating hunting rifles and shotguns from law-abiding firearms owners, restricting fertilizer use by farmers or sending COVID cheques to dead people, we would not need this small army of federal civil servants.

While these times may be difficult, it is important to stay optimistic. For the 1.5 million Canadians who had to use the food bank last year, the thousands of Canadians whose vacations were ruined because they could not get their passports renewed and the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are trying to sponsor a loved one to come to Canada, I would say that they should not lose hope. This latest Liberal budget shows that it is time to trade in this old,

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broken-down, rusted-out clunker lemon of a Liberal government for a shiny, new, reliable, dependable Conservative government that people could depend on.

● (1040)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, towards the end of the member's speech, he talked about the size of the public service and the individuals who work for the federal government to deliver the services that we provide to Canadians.

The member talked with great pride about Stephen Harper's legacy of reducing the public service size. I am curious as to where he thinks the best places to start eliminating jobs within the public service would be. Could he inform the House about that?

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I would say Bill C-11, with the new government policy of regulating social media newsfeed algorithms, is a very clear example of something the government has no need to do, no business doing and no need to even contemplate doing. If we were not so focused on Bill C-11 and social media newsfeed algorithms, a lot more federal civil servants could focus on issuing passports and doing the things that government should be doing.

I would also add the confiscation and buyback of hunting rifles and shotguns and the fertilizer restrictions on farmers. There are lots of things the government does that it does not really need to do.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague spoke against a number of government expenditures.

There is one expenditure that the Bloc Québécois is opposed to, and I would like to hear his comments on this subject. Billions of dollars are being allocated in a crafty scheme involving grey hydrogen and carbon storage. Around the globe, 100 carbon capture and storage projects have been abandoned. The U.S. is eliminating government incentives.

Why not do likewise and eliminate the incentives included in this Liberal budget?

● (1045)

[English]

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I am of the view that the natural resources sector is best left to provincial governments. The Constitution in this country is very clear, under sections 91 and 92, that natural resources are the jurisdiction of the provincial governments. In my home province of Saskatchewan, the natural resources sector is actually a major generator of revenue for the provincial government. It seems like a good idea, and it would make sense to me, if the provincial governments in this country were allowed to take the lead on managing their resource sectors. The federal government can best help by staying out of the way.

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Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to go back to a question from my colleague from Kingston and the Islands because the member really did not give an answer to the question. The question, as I heard it, was this: Which department in the civil service would the member cut jobs and fire people from?

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I believe I answered the question adequately: Bill C-11 and the regulation of social media and newsfeed algorithms—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: There are no jobs there.

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I see the member for Kingston and the Islands is chiming in.

I would also add the fertilizer restrictions on farmers that the government announced a couple of years ago. Those are totally unnecessary. There is no need for a single civil servant to spend one minute on any of that or the confiscation of firearms from law-abiding firearms owners and the money that the government would have to spend to buy them back. All of that is totally unnecessary, and those are things that the government does not need to be doing.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, I just came back from the association of Vancouver Island municipalities event. There, we heard from municipal governments, especially mayors and councillors who were in attendance, about their concerns over the federal government not supplying municipalities with adequate funds to cover the new increase in RCMP policing. I think we all agree in this place that RCMP officers have been highly underpaid, and we are glad to see them unionized.

Does my colleague agree that the federal government should have provided the top-up to local governments instead of downloading it on them, where they collect only about 8% of the overall taxes in this country?

Mr. Michael Kram: Madam Speaker, I think we need to support our law enforcement officials, including the RCMP. I would add that, as we have seen with the Mass Casualty Commission's report on the Nova Scotia shootings, we need to improve police and RCMP training in this country. I would also add that the RCMP Depot in Regina is the best place to do that. The proposal in the Mass Casualty Commission's report to shut down the depot in Regina is misguided, and we should be proud of our RCMP officers.

[Translation]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

We are entering an age of uncertainty, shrouded in secrecy and danger. Since 1989, some political thinkers have seen in liberal democracy the spirit of an unstoppable force that would conquer the entire world and bring prosperity, spiritual and material well-being, and safety to one and all. It was the advent of the advancement of enlightenment, the end of history. Peace and wealth would spread and we would not have any problems.

One has to admit that this narrative has been compromised on several fronts, first, because of the rise of authoritarianism in some areas of the world, both near and far from our borders, and second,

because this promised prosperity and progress seem to have come about to the detriment of our sustainability on Earth. Social tensions are also rising everywhere, even within our young democracy. That is not to mention a pandemic that put stress on public finances throughout the western world and elsewhere. There is also the return of war in Europe. In short, the reality of the past few years reminds us that the world is a tough place, where we need to fight for what we want and for our values.

Dealing with these uncertainties requires money, forward-looking and responsible financing, targeted investments and, finally, a lot of compassion. This budget brings all these qualities together. I would like to elaborate on those elements in the House, as this financial plan is our way of making the lives of all Canadians more affordable and of implementing an action and management framework for future generations.

First, in these uncertain times, we had to give direct assistance to families. Food is one of the main things people stress about. Thanks to the grocery rebate in our budget, 11 million low- and modest-income individuals and families across the country will receive financial assistance based on their circumstances.

People also stress about dental care. It is vital that our children not be judged by their smile in a G7 country. This is why funding for more affordable dental care, especially for younger children, is an important part of this budget plan. To make dental care affordable for more people in the country, the federal government is committed to covering the dental care of uninsured Canadians with a family income of less than \$90,000 per year, starting with children under the age of 12.

Mental health is another important issue that needs attention. Households in Canada are filled with families with children, as well as adults, who are seeking their place in this world, who are facing daily challenges that erode their happiness, or who are simply struggling, despite themselves, with mental health issues. That is why our budget will do more, including through \$5 billion in funding to the provinces and territories, to improve community-based mental health and addictions services.

In addition, a solid and effective public health system is essential to the well-being of Canadians and is an important pillar of a prosperous and growing economy. That is why the budget is implementing the federal government plan to provide an additional \$195.8 billion in health transfers over 10 years to the provinces and territories to ensure that all Canadians can receive proper care.

Let us now talk about housing measures. In the 2022 budget, the federal government announced significant investments to make housing more affordable, including by helping Canadians buy their first home, curbing unfair practices that are driving up prices and working with provincial and territorial governments, as well as municipalities, to double the number of new homes that Canada will build by 2032.

● (1050)

In the budget, the government is proposing new measures to continue this work and support its efforts to make housing more affordable from coast to coast to coast. These measures include, for example, new tax credits, homelessness reduction objectives and research and development in housing affordability.

In the budget, the government is also announcing that it will consult on changes required to remove regulatory barriers for homebuyers from diverse communities seeking access to alternative financing products.

This budget is also a thoughtful response to several international problems that are affecting Canada as well as other countries that have to deal with the challenges of climate change. The budget is an even more ambitious continuation of our climate policy.

To illustrate my point, I would like to talk about the G7 summit that was held in Cornwall, in June 2021. At this summit, participants were already talking about the need to implement internationally the concept of “the wealth economy” introduced by the Bennett Institute for Public Policy at Cambridge University. This institute claims that we need to invest in productive and sustainable natural capital to generate sustainable prosperity. That is what our budget 2022 did and that is what our budget 2023 will continue to do.

The report also mentions the need to shift from reaction mode to action mode in addressing the health crisis. This will ensure that government finances have the long-term resiliency needed to help address future problems and structural challenges. This includes resilient, inclusive growth for an effective response to future public sector indebtedness. The dilemma lies in the fact that these actions will create even more indebtedness, and the experts point out that nations will have to apply a macroeconomic lens to manage the temporary debt increase. This is what we are doing.

In the months and years ahead, Canada has to seize the outstanding opportunities arising from two fundamental shifts occurring in the global economy. The first is the race to build true 21st-century economies. The second is the increased push among allied nations toward friendshoring by building their vital supply chains around democracies like Canada's.

I cannot say whether the end of history heralded since 1989 will actually occur, or whether the obstacles facing Canada and the international system are merely bumps on the road in the long global march towards liberal democracy. One thing is certain, our government will always be there for Canadians. We will be there for the caretaker and the baker with two children who just want to take a vacation, for the firefighter who can no longer go to work because of an illness, for the single mother working two jobs and for the young girl who is a newcomer to Canada. We will look after them today and in the future.

I have two beautiful granddaughters, Livia and Leya. I want to be able to look them in the eye in a few years' time and tell them that we did the right thing on climate change, that we invested in the right places while there was still time, that we took smart, targeted action, that we did not shy away from these huge issues, that we faced them head-on. Under our leadership, Canada will always be the little light that shines through the darkest storms, guiding the

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way towards a future in which we may not have everything, but we have everything we need.

As the great theologian Reinhold Niebuhr said, “God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I cannot accept, and wisdom to know the difference.”

● (1055)

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the things we have been pointing out with the budget is that there is a \$43-billion deficit and deficit spending continues to drive inflation. I am wondering what my hon. colleague across the way has to say about the deficit and inflation.

[Translation]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Madam Speaker, I can say that there is no deficit in Canada. Our position is that we are investing in the well-being of Canadians.

Let us take the pandemic as an example. This government helped all Canadians from coast to coast to coast, so it is an investment. If we abandoned Canadians during the hard times, like the pandemic was, half the country could go bankrupt. The Canadian government did not abandon anyone.

That is what we did, and that is what we will continue to do to serve Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

● (1100)

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. His riding is quite close to mine. I have a question for him about his government's willingness to be there for Canadians.

As we know, there are some social programs that fall under federal jurisdiction, such as old age security and employment insurance. Can my colleague explain why there is nothing for seniors in the last budget, nor anything relating to EI, despite the promises his government made in 2015, 2019 and 2021 about looking after workers?

On the other hand, why is there more than \$13 billion in the budget for dental care, which is definitely not a federal jurisdiction?

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Madam Speaker, I can assure my colleague that this government's approach to providing support for Canadians across the country is very clear.

Let us first talk about the grocery rebate, which will help 11 million low- and modest-income individuals. For example, a couple with two children will receive up to \$467, a single person without children will receive up to \$234, and seniors will receive \$225 on average.

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I would also like to highlight something. Has my colleague forgotten our rapid housing initiative? Has she forgotten the \$10-a-day child care to help parents work without worrying about child care?

This all adds up. I believe that is a very clear answer.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, one thing we have heard loud and clear from many anti-poverty advocates in our country is that there is a need for a national school lunch food program. Lush Valley, an organization in my riding that supports local food growers to get food to people who have low incomes and challenges getting food, has been pushing for this program.

In 2018, the World Health Organization cited that one in five children in Canada is at risk of going to school hungry. That is not acceptable. We have been calling for the federal government to step in and fund a national school food program. We need federal funding, and school lunches could help take the pressure off of families right now.

Will my colleague speak to this important need? When will the government answer the call to action so children are not living in poverty, and so they get the best start in life?

[Translation]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Madam Speaker, financial assistance from the Government of Canada is available across the country.

Budget 2023 proposes new investments to ensure Canadians can count on fast measures and tangible services from the federal government and receive the benefits to which they are entitled. The Government of Canada will always ensure that Canadians have that right.

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is much I want to say and it really is my honour to rise as the representative of the people of the great riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill to address budget 2023, a budget that will benefit those living in my riding and all Canadians. It is a budget that defines the middle way.

We have heard a lot this morning already from people who want more in the budget, things we have missed, and people who would like us to spend less. Many members have criticized what we have, and it is easy to do that. It is easy to point out things that could be there. I listened to the member for Courtenay—Alberni and agree that a school lunch program is very important. However, we find ourselves in a time when we are facing serious challenges.

We are still in the postpandemic economy, as is the rest of the world. We are facing high inflation, we are facing high interest rates and we are trying to address serious issues that have been made clearer through the pandemic. We can maybe talk about new bells and whistles on a car, how perhaps we would like to have Apple play or a better sound system. I think perhaps that is what defines the difference between the Conservatives and Liberals: we are more concerned with every Canadian having a way to get to work than having bells and whistles on a car. This budget addresses the very important needs that are facing us today, while at the same

time trying to contain spending and being aware of the fact that our deficit has been large throughout COVID and we have to bring it down.

As I said, we are in a postpandemic economy. The shutdowns prompted by the pandemic have led to a reduction in production and imposed significant stresses on the global supply chain, as we all know. Although the opposition likes to blame actions taken by our government for this worldwide inflation, I know as well as they do that, as the middle power, Canada does not have the ability to create inflation worldwide. In fact, if we had that kind of economic power, we would be using it for the good of Canada and would probably be putting in place a lunch program and others that we would like, including employment insurance. However, that is not the case.

It is also not the case that the price on pollution has caused inflation. The price on pollution did not increase between April 2022 and April 2023, yet inflation was rampant. In fact, with the most recent increase, we have seen inflation declining. Even on a simple basis of correlation, it does not stand, never mind causality. Rather than talking about opting out of inflation through cryptocurrency and other things or cutting programs, we are investing in Canada. We are trying to build the economy, to continue on a program that has been in place since 2015 to make sure that our economy is green, that it is inclusive and includes all Canadians.

Speaking of crypto, just in the last two weeks, I have received emails in my riding from people who have lost their life savings after investing and using crypto as the way to do it. There is no redress, there is no way to follow it and they are out their life savings. In one case, it is almost \$1 million and in another case \$8 million. We cannot just opt out of programs like that. We have to be serious, not reckless, and follow this path.

We are not only dealing with global inflation. The COVID-19 pandemic also underscores fault lines in our society, in particular, around health care. We know the problems that were there before were exacerbated through the pandemic, so this budget focuses on health care. It is the largest part of the budget and is much needed. The provinces have been asking for increases in the Canada health transfer, so we have included bilateral negotiations with provinces to respond to their needs. There is \$25 million for mental health in those bilateral negotiations and the provinces can spend the money where they see it is most needed.

Health care was one of the very important things that we had to address. Given that, the affordability crisis is ongoing. As I said, we are in a postpandemic economy, so we needed continued supports, such as the new grocery rebate. However, that is in addition to ongoing programs that have been instituted since 2015, programs like the Canada child benefit and the dental plan, which is expanded in budget 2023 to people living with disabilities and seniors. There are programs in place like the Canada child benefit, which this government put in place and has been helping to bring people out of poverty.

• (1105)

When comparing a 2018 model to a 2023 model, Canada is much better in that we have decreased poverty among children significantly and among seniors. To me, that is far more important than the bells and whistles on a new car. Those basic things that we have done are making a difference to Canadians across this country.

In my riding of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, almost 2,000 children have been able to get the dental care that they were unable to get prior to having this dental plan in place. That is significant. It is clear to us that the health care system was in need of more transfers. We put that money in place and are working co-operatively with the provinces on that.

The other area we knew we had to continue with was the greening of the economy. We have programs in place to ensure that we do our part as a country to move Canada forward. Countries around the world are recognizing that things have changed and we have to change with them. We cannot be left behind. We know the price on pollution is the most efficient market mechanism to try and make some of these changes.

We are investing in clean tech. This budget has significant investments in clean technology to encourage businesses to invest. Through the Canada growth fund, we are working with the Public Sector Pension Investment Board to attract additional private capital to Canada to green and clean our economy.

We are laying the foundations for a made-in-Canada solution to tackle climate change. This is a federal responsibility. Members can say that we should leave these things to the provinces.

I was in an environment committee meeting yesterday listening to first nations in the region around the Kearl Lake tailings pond spill. It was heartbreaking to listen to them. We heard witness after witness talk about the provincial regulator that had not done its job and had not protected these communities from these spills from these tailings ponds, and this continues.

As a federal government, we have an obligation to protect Canadians, their health and safety, and I am not okay with leaving it to the provinces when it is, in fact, a federal responsibility. Cutting back our spending by exempting ourselves from our responsibilities and stepping back is not okay with me, and neither is slashing programs. We have to live up to our responsibilities, and we are doing that in this budget.

We know we cannot afford to maintain the status quo when the world around us is changing due to the climate crisis and the response of most advanced economies to it. We are making signifi-

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cant investments to ensure that Canada does not fall behind. We know that the Canadian economy will be stronger when all Canadians are able to fully participate in it and benefit from it.

We are continuing to ensure that indigenous communities, women, people living with disabilities, the 2SLGBTQA+ community and other under-represented minority groups are participating fully in the process of shaping policy priorities that support them.

Budget 2023 continues to implement the plan that was set out in 2015 by this government. We need steady progress on these goals, not knee-jerk reactions that slash programs and go to alternative methods. We must continue to do this and it is only by continuing on this path that Canada will reach its full potential, achieve greater prosperity and fairer responsible economic growth.

We are well positioned, as a country, to capitalize on the many advantages we have, and they are numerous. If we continue to support one another and work together, we will build an economy and society that will be second to none, one that will be shared by all Canadians.

At a challenging time, in a challenging world, there is no better place to be than in Canada.

• (1110)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the areas I want to focus on in the budget is specifically with respect to Lake Simcoe. I know the government has allocated a multi-million dollar fund for freshwater lakes and watersheds across the country.

One of the things that we are focused on locally, and I would consider the member to be part of that in central Ontario, is specific funding for Lake Simcoe and the reinstatement of the Lake Simcoe clean-up fund. As we know, a previous Conservative government invested close to \$60 million and saw measurable improvements in phosphorus and fish habitats were coming back.

There were numerous councils around the Lake Simcoe watershed that passed motions asking for direct funding for Lake Simcoe. Why would that not have been specifically indicated in the budget as a direct funding mechanism for Lake Simcoe?

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● (1115)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, in fact the Lake Simcoe watershed is in my backyard. I do live in that area and I am very concerned about it. Like I said, there were many things that were not included in this budget, but we have funded a clean water agency for the first time in the history of Canada and have put significant money into clean water. It is up to that agency to determine how that money is spent. There are many individual requests that were not met.

I would like to add, however, that the provincial government's decision to build on farmlands, wetlands and greenbelts, and to continue to build highways across farmlands that specifically affect Lake Simcoe is adding to this problem, not helping. We have to work together.

The Bradford Bypass was a disastrous decision and Highway 413 is going to follow in its steps.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague with whom I work on the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I really enjoy the work that we are able to do together, but when it comes to the budget, we have differences of opinion on the matter of the environment.

How does the government not see that carbon capture and storage is just a greenwashing campaign dreamed up by the oil and gas industry in an attempt to appear willing to work towards net zero? Over 400 experts and academics have criticized this technique and have urged the Minister of Finance not to fund it. Other countries around the world are gradually abandoning this technique. Even the United States is doing away with the financial incentives for it.

Why is Canada rushing headlong into a mirage?

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her work. We share a passion for the environment.

I would say what we are trying to accomplish is to meet our carbon targets, the reduction in CO₂. We are using many different ways to do that. We have been working together on a study to end fossil fuel subsidies. I am not a great fan of the fossil fuel industry, but I also recognize that we are going to continue to need fossil fuels in the transition. Putting in place carbon capture, utilization and storage that will help make that cleaner is a step toward meeting our international goals.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, as many of us in the NDP have indicated, we are very proud that certain key commitments are made in this budget around dental care and other key areas. However, one area that requires much more support and certainly with greater urgency is investment in indigenous housing. I represent many first nations that are facing a housing crisis. There is a housing crisis that particularly impacts indigenous peoples in urban centres. While this budget commits funding, much of that funding is flowing in the back end of the commitment, so not on an urgent basis as is required.

Does the member agree that urgent investments are needed to deal with the housing crisis in indigenous communities?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, yes, there is a dire need for housing in indigenous communities. I would say that in addition to what is in the budget and has been allocated for indigenous housing, there are also ongoing programs. Again, this is the first time we have had a national housing strategy in Canada and much has been accomplished through it. We have continued programs such as the rapid housing initiative and the housing accelerator program. All of these have funding for indigenous housing as well.

As I said, there are many things that I wish we could have funded in the budget, but the fiscal constraints led to a more limited scope.

I thank the member for that question and I agree.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a huge honour and privilege to be here on behalf of the residents of Courtenay—Alberni and to bring forward their concerns and thoughts around the budget. Some things in the budget are important to help relieve the pressure on Canadians and the people in my riding, in particular.

There is the largest expansion of health care in our country in over 50 years with the expansion of dental care. There is the importance of continuing the \$10-a-day affordable, accessible and quality child care, which will ensure that every child has the best start in life. It is certainly very important to the small business community, because it helps with the labour market challenges that many people face.

The GST rebate will help support people right now, as we see inflation skyrocket, especially at the grocery store. There is the promise of a reduction in merchant fees, and I look forward to more details on that issue. I have worked really hard on this for the last seven years, as well as my NDP colleagues. I hope we see that come to fruition, because it has been a long journey.

Also, there are investments in clean energy and a clean job centre, something my colleague from Timmins—James Bay has worked tirelessly around.

The budget would remove the interest on student loans and increase grants of up to 40% for students. These are things New Democrats have prioritized, and we were able to secure them for Canadians in this budget.

An area where we were able to get some success was getting \$4 billion for rural and urban indigenous housing over seven years, but it is so far from what is needed. We need that per year over the next 10 years just to make any headway.

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Obviously, many things are missing. I will not get into the long details around those. However, one thing I will say is that the Liberals really missed out on an opportunity to go after an excess profit tax on the oil and gas sector, on increasing the tax they put on the financial sector, and on grocery stores and big chains that have had excess profits. This is where there is not a lot of difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives. They continue this pathway of corporate welfare. We have seen Conservatives in Britain step forward with an excess profit tax on oil and gas, but we cannot get the Liberals to do that here.

I hear colleagues say that they cannot do everything and that there are too many bells and whistles. However, on a school food program, sending one in five kids to school hungry is not acceptable in a country where we have excess profits and record profits in an oil and gas sector. That is unacceptable. This could have been dealt with in the budget.

However, I am going to focus on two things that are absolutely critical, that are missing in the budget and that are impacting every colleague in my House, their constituents and all Canadians. Those are affordable housing and mental health.

I am going to tell a quick story about where I grew up.

I grew up in a co-op housing complex in Victoria. My dad was a transmission mechanic. My mom worked for the federal government as a clerk. They were lower middle class, but they were higher income earners in the co-op, where 30% of one's income went to rent. Rent was geared to income, but there were many people in the co-op: single parents, seniors, people living with disabilities and other families. One thing we all had in common was that we had safe, secure and affordable housing.

I cannot describe what that did for everybody, including for their mental health, but it gave everybody a fighting chance.

I can go back to that co-op in Victoria, British Columbia, and see the other kids with whom I grew up. I also see their children and grandchildren. I know the importance of investments in non-market social housing.

Back in the seventies and eighties, and in a minority government, the federal NDP under David Lewis was able to secure co-op housing, and it ranged from 18,000 to 25,000 units a year. That went on for two decades, and it made a significant impact on the distribution of housing in Canada. In fact, about 10% of our housing in the early nineties was non-market housing.

I want to point out that Europe has around 30% non-market housing. People there do not see the homelessness. Nor do they see people living the way we do. They understand housing is a human right and it is not a commodity. They allow the free market and the non-market to coexist so they can have some balance in their economy and in their country.

• (1120)

We do not do that. In fact, we have less than 4% non-market housing. One just has to go outside to see what it looks like in any community in the country.

I want to remind the House, Madam Speaker, that I will be splitting my time with the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith. I am really grateful for her work.

We live side by side. She has seen this crisis in affordable housing in her riding just like everybody else, but it has been exacerbated by many people moving to Vancouver Island. We are seeing an increase of our population and the pressure is forcing people out on the streets. We are hearing so many stories about that, but there are many solutions.

I was just at the Canadian Mental Health Association, which had its advocacy week. I actually frequent it very often on many different occasions. Katrina Kiefer, the president-CEO of the local CMHA branch in Port Alberni, took me on a tour of some of its non-market housing units. It has low-to-medium barrier housing. The changes in the lives of the people who were in their housing was transformational. It gave them all a fighting chance.

Many had come out of really difficult circumstances. Some were there for reprieve from situations at home or fleeing abuse. Some were in recovery from substance abuse issues. Ensuring that they had housing gave them the ability to connect with the important supports they needed, the mental health supports, the physicians and the support from the health sector as they were on their journey.

We know this works. What does not work is the free market. It will not solve an affordable housing crisis. I cannot find anywhere in the world where an affordable housing crisis has been fixed by the free market. It will not happen. In this budget, the Liberals completely miss the mark, as the Conservatives did before them. They keep pushing this problem down the road.

I very much support immigration. I know there are goals to expand immigration to 500,000 people a year for the next three years. I support that wholeheartedly, but we need to ensure there is housing for them to come here and find a place to live. We need to ensure that they can get to work, that we improve our transportation services and that we ensure they can get access to a doctor, but there is no cohesive plan.

The rapid housing initiative that the Liberals have rolled out is so small in scale. The 6,500 units they put on the table, when it comes to co-op housing, does not even make a dent in the lost 500,000 units that they did not build, Conservative and Liberal governments alike, over the last 30 years.

There is the continued corporatization of housing in our country. They are allowing these REITs to get a tax benefit that normal Canadians do not get and they are increasing their share of the overall ownership of housing. The Liberals need to put a stop to this. We cannot commodify everything in our country.

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Moms Stop the Harm hosted an event for the thousands of people who had died from the toxic drug crisis in Parksville, and I was able to join them. I really appreciated Jane McCormick, the brave mother of Jeffrey, who lost her loved one, for her courage in organizing that event and all the moms who showed up, and the fathers and family members who bolstered the courage.

I also met some young folks from Risebridge. They are trying to address the homeless issue on the ground level. What they are seeing is that the federal government downloads to provinces, the provinces download to local governments and some local governments do not have the aptitude or they do not feel it is their priority to address the homelessness issue. They are left with not enough resources.

We have people who are on the front line. Some of them are even traumatized by their own loss and they are driven by trying to ensure another family member does not get lost because of this.

I am calling on the federal government to scale up its investments in housing, in non-market housing specifically. This is critical to the mental health of all Canadians. Everyone deserves a place to live in our country, a safe and secure place.

• (1125)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there has been no lack of leadership coming from Ottawa with respect to housing in Canada, whether it is the hundreds of millions of dollars, a national housing strategy or a multitude of different programs. The key to dealing with housing costs and shortages is to deal with them in a joint fashion. Municipalities need to play a strong and more important role. The issue is that city councillors need to recognize and facilitate, for example, individuals being able to purchase their own lots or zoning issues.

I wonder if the member could provide his thoughts on the following. Yes, Ottawa does play a role, but without municipal and provincial support, we will not be able to deal with the issue.

• (1130)

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I sat in local government. I was a municipal councillor in Tofino, and the federal government continued to throw bread crumbs and trinkets and it did not work. In fact, if the Liberal government put money on the table, municipalities would access it and they would build non-market housing. They are waiting for a federal partner, and so are the provinces. B.C. is building half the non-market housing in our country, but provinces need a true, real federal partner that is willing to invest.

For my colleague, we need the government to step to the plate. It is absent. All we need to do is step outside and look around. Maybe if my colleague met with municipal government officials, he would get a real glimpse of what is going on.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, we heard the NDP boasting about some of the measures in this budget. However, I did not really hear them talking about what the budget does for culture, even though the cultural industry has made it clear to the government that it urgently needs help in getting through the pandemic. The cultural industry is having a hard time

recovering from the pandemic, but there is nothing in the budget to really help. I would like my colleague to comment on that.

[English]

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my colleague, who is always fighting for those important artists and cultural curators in our country. The government absolutely failed. This is the most impacted sector in our economy from COVID, which was left hung out to dry. We have even been asking for the CEBA loan to be extended for many of them, but many did not even qualify for it, so the government failed.

We know Bill C-11 will bring forward some important funds and resources to support those artists, but it is not quick enough. In this budget, the Liberals should have been bridging the gap with some resources for that.

I am disappointed to not get a question from the Conservatives on housing, because their free market approach has failed Canadians. It has left them hung out to dry.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will let that go by, saying a free market approach would not work. In Vancouver, just the red tape to build a house costs \$630,000. It is not the free market that is the problem. It is the government standing in the way of building the houses.

I want to go back to the deficit spending that the government is doing and the inflation that is driving up the cost of anything, more dollars chasing fewer goods. What does the member have to say about the \$43-billion deficit and that the government continues to spend after it promised back in 2015 it would only have four modest deficits of \$10 billion and then return to a balance? Does the member think the government will ever be capable of meeting a balanced budget?

Mr. Gord Johns: Madam Speaker, first, all my colleague needs to do is go out and get a development application in Vancouver and it will not cost \$630,000 in red tape. It is again more false information.

When he talks about the deficit, absolutely we have a solution to that. We have been calling for an excess profit tax on oil and gas, grocery store chains and the big banks that are having record profits. They are left untouched by Liberals and always supported by the Conservatives, who are their gatekeepers.

Again, Britain is charging an excess profit tax on oil and gas even though it also has petroleum based companies. We have a huge problem when it comes to the Conservatives and Liberals propping up the super wealthy in our country. They are putting it on the backs of everyday Canadians and not allowing them to get services and important supports like affordable housing. Instead, they support the corporatization of housing.

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Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise today to discuss this important topic and to talk about some of the ways in which we are seeing not only successes in the budget but also, of course, some serious gaps.

I would like to reiterate some of the wins in the budget that were just now mentioned by my colleague for Courtenay—Alberni. We have seen the largest expansion of health care in decades, and because of this expansion, we will see dental care for children under 18, seniors and people living with a disability. They are all getting access to vital dental care. This is something that has been missing for so long, and people are in real need.

We are seeing an increase of funding being allocated to child care. As a single parent, and after speaking to so many others in our community, I completely understand the essential need for increased child care across the country.

We also saw another doubling of the GST rebate, which is now labelled as a grocery rebate. This is the second time that we are seeing money going back into the pockets of those who need it most as a result of the work of the NDP, which applied pressure on the Liberals, and the result is this rebate. This is good news.

We have also seen that this budget includes the permanent 1.5% increase in tax for banks and insurance. However, this is nowhere near enough. We need to see a wealth tax, which is something we have talked about many times in the House, with the top 1%, who are making over \$10 million, paying more on their taxes as an excess profit tax. We also need to see those tax loopholes being closed. These are all mechanisms where we could see the profits, which are earned off the backs of everyday people who are working so hard, being reinvested back into people.

This is not the budget that an NDP government would have put forward, but there are some wins, as I have said, and some serious gaps. My hope is that all members of Parliament can agree on one thing, and that is that people are struggling. We need to see a budget that prioritizes building an equitable and healthy community all across Canada, which does not leave people behind.

We are also in a climate crisis. We need to see timely actions being implemented today for the generations of both today and tomorrow. It is vital that all in the House make decisions today that benefit people and our environment, and it is time for the Liberals to start putting people before profits within the budget.

An area I want to take a moment to talk about is housing. Specifically, we did see in this budget \$4 billion for a co-developed urban, rural and northern indigenous strategy, and there is an importance in us seeing housing that is for indigenous, by indigenous. There is no question that this \$4 billion is insufficient to meet the actual need, but it is a step in the right direction.

Members of the Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith recently reached out with some updated stats. They shared that, in 2021, one in five indigenous people in Canada, which is 18.8%, was living in low-income housing. The indigenous population living in large urban centres has grown, from 2016 to 2021, by 12.5%. Organizations such as this incredible friendship centre provide essential services and a space for

so many indigenous people, Inuit, first nations and Métis to come together to access the supports they need.

I am always happy to hear from the executive director of the Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Grace Elliott Nielsen, to hear more about the needs, and it is clear that housing for those both on and off reserve is essential and needs to be prioritized. This need is great, and it is due to the impacts of colonialism and continued racism of indigenous people. Funding for affordable housing for indigenous people who are increasingly living in urban centres is essential. The funding that we see in the budget is a start, but realistically, it is a drop in the bucket to begin addressing this crisis and the current status of housing for indigenous people.

It is clear, based on this budget, that the Liberals are not taking the action required to address the housing crisis being experienced by constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and across the country. In the last budget, we did see a move in the right direction, as a result of the pressure applied by the NDP, with 150 affordable housing units. However, in this budget, there is barely a mention of how we are going to move forward to address this crisis.

● (1135)

We are seeing the impacts of this on seniors in my riding, who have worked tirelessly their whole lives to contribute to the community and who are now unsure where they are going to live. They talk to me about the stress and uncertainty of not knowing where they are going to lay their head at night. This is a time where they should be comfortable and enjoying their lives. It is heartbreaking.

Families are unable to afford housing. I was talking with front-line service providers last week about children being taken from their families for the sole reason that their parents or caregivers could not find a safe, affordable place to live. I also heard from service providers about women who were fleeing or attempting to flee domestic abuse, and who were forced to stay in that situation because they had nowhere to go. This is a dire situation, and it needs to be addressed.

Last summer, I hosted a round table, along with the MP for Vancouver East and the NDP critic for housing. We had first nations chiefs, Métis leaders, leaders of local indigenous friendship centres, those from non-profits and community housing advocates. They all came together to discuss the impacts of the financialization of housing in our community.

As a result of this gathering, we had 15 signatures on a letter that went to the Liberal Minister of Housing. It was sent last October, and we have yet to receive a response. There has not even been a response to the constituents in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith about what actions would be taken to address the financialization of housing and to address this crisis, which so many are experiencing. I am unsure how that is justified.

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For too long consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments have allowed large corporations and rich investors to use our housing as a stock market, even incentivizing such behaviour through tax loopholes that continue today. This is why the NDP housing critic was in Nanaimo just a few days ago, and we were talking about this issue again.

I want to move on because my time is passing by quickly, and there are many other areas I would like to speak to. On mental health and toxic substances, despite it being evident that so many of our loved ones are dying in a toxic substance crisis. There is a dire need for mental health supports, but there have been no further announcements on mental health in this budget, despite the grand promise of the Canada mental health transfer in the 2021 campaign.

People in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith are asking where the funds are that were promised by the Liberal government, and why they are not seeing these funds being transferred, funds that could make real changes in our communities to support people at a time when we need it most.

The toxic substance crisis has killed 80 people in Nanaimo in the last year alone. These individuals are somebody's brother, sister, neighbour or friend. All were tragic losses that could have been avoided if we had implemented the recommendations being put forward by public health experts, including on-demand treatment, access to safer supply, housing and mental health transfers. All of these things are tangible items that would help begin saving lives in this toxic substance crisis.

On the Canada disability benefit, I had another constituent come by my community office last week asking about the status of this promised national disability benefit. I had to, again, share with him that, unfortunately, we are not seeing the funds in this budget that would go directly to those living with disabilities. We are seeing funds being allocated for continued consultation around this issue.

I have a really hard time wrapping my head around why it took just four days for the Liberals to bail out big banks at a time when they needed it, and how long has it taken for us to understand how to best provide for the basic human needs of those living with disabilities. If the Liberals are going to be dragging their heels on this much-needed funding, I hope that we would see some funds going to those with disabilities to support them in the interim while it is sorted out.

There are also gaps in addressing the environment. I will stop now, but I am happy to answer any questions.

• (1140)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, back in the 1990s, I had a town hall debate with NDP member Bill Blaikie. At that debate, he argued that the federal government had no role to play in housing. In the 1990s, every political party in the chamber argued that the federal government had no role. I say that because we need to put it in perspective.

Today, we have a Prime Minister and a government that are more committed to national housing. We even brought in a national housing strategy. We have invested billions of dollars in housing. We

have vested interests in rapid housing initiatives, housing co-ops and a multitude of housing supports in every region of the country.

Would the member not acknowledge that it is not just the federal government's responsibility? In fact, municipalities and provinces have to play a critical role. The national government's role is that of leadership, and we have demonstrated that hands down over the last number of years.

• (1145)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, I am quite envious that the member was able to host a town hall with Bill Blaikie. I, of course, was not present for what transpired during that town hall, but I am certain he had many important things to say on housing as a basic human right and not a stock market for large corporations and the ultrarich.

Prior to 1995, the CMHC, in partnership with provincial governments, built 15,000 to 20,000 units of affordable and social housing every year, but this stopped in 1995. We are looking at a deficit right now in housing as a result of the Liberal and Conservative governments not prioritizing non-market housing. That is where our priority needs to be, so people of all incomes are able to access a safe place to call home.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member is in the NDP, and there is a little coalition that has taken place between the NDP and the Liberals. I find it interesting that the member stands in the House today speaking out against components of the budget that she disagrees with, quite emphatically, and is able to rag against the government. However, in a few days from now, she will stand in the House to vote for that same budget, those same things she just railed against. That is a confidence vote, so her vote would mean that she has full confidence in the government to continue to rule. That means that her party must not want to form government, but rather, just substantiate this one.

I am curious as to how she can speak out of both sides of her face.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind members to be careful with how they characterize how people speak in the House.

The hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, when I ran for the first time to become a federal member of Parliament, I knocked on doors throughout my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith and talked with constituents about the needs in our community. One need that came up was dental care. Another need that came up was affordable housing, and another was addressing the toxic substance crisis.

When I spoke with these people in my constituency, I told them that I was going to come to Parliament in Ottawa to do the work that needs to be done to implement the solutions that would benefit everyday people, and that is exactly what I am doing. I am working, as we do in a minority government, across party lines to implement what is needed, with real solutions for people, and that is what I am going to keep on doing.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my NDP colleague, for whom I have a great deal of respect. However, I have serious concerns.

The NDP is proud of the dental care program. Whether it is their program or the Liberals' program, I have no idea, but one thing is certain: Dental care does not fall under federal jurisdiction. If a province or Quebec decides to bring in a plan to satisfy a public need, then that is up to them.

In its Sherbrooke declaration, the NDP always said that nothing that falls under Quebec's jurisdiction should be done without negotiation, without consultation, and that the principle of opting out with full compensation should be respected.

That is already a contradiction. This is not a federal program. Meanwhile, there is no NDP support in its agreement for a federal program that workers have been pushing for, namely employment insurance. Why did the NDP leave EI reform out of its confidence agreement?

● (1150)

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, I would like to reassure the member that this was most definitely the work of the NDP. We know the Liberals have voted against dental care on many occasions, and the Conservatives have as well. I can say that this is the work of the NDP, and we are very proud of this because of the fact that people across Canada need access to dental care. This is a part of the head-to-toe health care that people need. Regardless of where they live across Canada, everybody should be able to access it.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I want to say that I may be standing on the floor of the House of Commons, but my heart is back home with my fellow Nova Scotians.

As we all know in this House, today marks the third anniversary of a brutal tragedy, where a gunman took 22 beautiful lives. They will never be forgotten.

It is no secret that the past few years have brought unprecedented challenges, from a global pandemic to Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine and global inflation. As a government and a country, we have tackled these challenges head-on together. We have delivered sensible and compassionate policies to ensure that Canada would not just weather these storms but also find its way through and grow stronger than before, with a stronger economy, a stronger social safety net and a stronger climate plan.

Over the last year, economically, Canada has come out on top, delivering the strongest economic growth in the G7. There are nearly one million more Canadians working today than there were at

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the start of COVID. That means that 126% of the jobs that were lost have been recovered. Wages are outpacing inflation. Unemployment remains incredibly historically low, at 5%.

There is one great challenge that I have to mention and that continues to test every single country around the world: climate change. Yes, climate change is an existential challenge, but it is also the one greatest opportunity of our generation. Despite the significant challenges that countries around the world are facing, there is now an unprecedented race to retool economies and rapidly build the net-zero industries of tomorrow.

Madam Speaker, I have just been reminded that I will be sharing my time with the member for Toronto—Danforth.

Businesses in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour already get the economic value that the clean technology industry provides, and they are providing good jobs for people right here at home. Such companies include CarbonCure, which has brilliant technology that captures carbon and recycles it, permanently trapping it in fresh, resilient concrete. There is also Rayleigh Solar Technologies, which develops lightweight, thin and flexible perovskite solar cells that can be installed on just about anything. We can install this thin material to harness the energy from the sun on whatever we build, whatever shape, straight or curved. As we can imagine, the sun is the limit.

There are also companies like Graphite Innovation and Technologies, which attracts brilliant minds from around the world to beautiful Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. It has developed an incredible marine coating that reduces the drag on ships, significantly boosting their fuel efficiency. These are just a few examples of the many companies in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, which is an incredible clean-tech hub.

Now that we have tabled budget 2023, we have launched our “Made-in-Canada Plan” to support affordable energy, create good jobs and grow our clean economy.

I think we can all agree that Canada has an abundance of the critical minerals needed for clean technology, such as batteries for electric vehicles and microchips for digital technology. As a government, we have built the strong environmental foundation needed to make sure we are ready for these projects. Since we have strengthened federal legislation for impact assessments and environmental regulations, we are ready and showing that we can sustainably lead the way to handle the full life cycle of this new technology.

Another great example in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour is a brilliant company called Novonix, which is developing cutting-edge technology for electric vehicle batteries. We can develop the technology, provide the critical minerals required, manufacture the batteries and recycle them all here in Canada. This is just one example of many.

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Through budget 2023, we are making the sound investments needed to ensure that a clean Canadian economy will deliver prosperity, middle-class jobs and more vibrant communities all across our country. With smart measures like expanded clean technology tax credits, we are making sure that Canada is perfectly positioned to attract and grow businesses and jobs here at home.

● (1155)

Back in 2021, we knew that we had a lot of educated and skilled workers who could not afford to go back out to work because day care costs in most parts of the country were just too expensive. These workers were disproportionately women. That is why we have inked deals with every province and territory across Canada through our Canada-wide early learning and child care plan. Of course, this plan is an absolute game changer for Canadian families. Day care fees have already been reduced by at least 50% across the country. This means that families are already saving thousands of dollars per year, and soon, fees at day cares across the country will be just \$10 a day on average.

Like I said, this is an amazing plan for families. However, it is also important for our economy. Just about every industry across the country has been facing a labour shortage. I am so proud of the new stats saying that 85.7% of women aged 25 to 54 are working. This means that since we launched our plan, almost 20% more women are working in Canada. I know that when the Nova Scotia government meets its commitment to increase the child care spaces, we will see even more women back to work in my home province.

What I have shared today is exciting and positive news, but we know that global inflation has deeply impacted the most vulnerable people in our communities. It is why we launched our affordability plan, which is a suite of carefully targeted measures to help make life more affordable for millions of Canadians. From enhancements to the Canada workers' benefit to a 10% increase in old age security, as well as rent support, dental care and extra support through the GST credit, we have supports to help people make ends meet.

Budget 2023 builds on these measures by introducing a new grocery rebate for those who need it most. Carefully targeted to provide inflation relief for 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians, the rebate will provide eligible couples with two kids with up to an extra \$467 and single Canadians without kids with up to an extra \$234. We are also introducing automatic tax filing for low-income Canadians to ensure that they get proper access to the benefits they are entitled to. We are also cracking down on hidden junk fees and predatory lending.

I think we can all agree that the pandemic exacerbated the struggles facing our publicly funded health care system. Our system and our incredible health care workers are under enormous strain. Too many Nova Scotians are struggling to find a family doctor; wait times in emergency rooms are way too long, and folks spend too much time waiting for important surgeries and procedures. Yes, health care delivery is in the jurisdiction of each province, but it is up to all of us to uphold the Canada Health Act and make sure that every Canadian can access health care when they need it.

Budget 2023 delivers an extra \$195.8 billion to the provinces and territories for health care. This additional funding is incredible news. However, I firmly believe that more funding alone is not

enough. That is why our government is requiring the provincial and territorial governments to provide proper data to measure and report progress in provincial health care systems. We will uphold the Canada Health Act and use new federal spending to strengthen Canada's public health care system because every Canadian deserves to get health care as and when they need it.

More than 250,000 children under 12 years old across Canada have received the dental care that they need in the Canada dental benefit. However, we know that too many Canadians, especially seniors, are struggling to access dental care. I have heard from some seniors that they must choose between either paying their rent and bills or paying for their needed dental care. By the end of this year, we aim to improve access to dental care for Canada's seniors, people with disabilities and children under 18. Budget 2023 will launch the Canadian dental care plan; by the end of 2025, this plan will deliver dental care to uninsured Canadians with a family income of under \$90,000.

Budget 2023 helps deliver a healthy Canada, which is where the clean-technology industry thrives and smart businesses are figuring out ways to protect our environment while growing our economy. A healthy Canada will leave no one behind.

● (1200)

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I work together at the defence committee. It is a good committee, and I think we work together well. He has a role as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors. I thank him for his speech, which mainly focused on supports for seniors.

Of course, the seniors in my riding have been talking about dental care and the incredible benefits that the NDP has pushed for, in terms of getting them the dental care that they so greatly need. However, one of the other things that they greatly need is pharmacare. The government has not moved on that yet.

Seniors are splitting pills between themselves or skipping their much-needed prescriptions because they cannot afford them. When will the government actually fulfill promises that it has made to Canadians in the past during election campaigns on the provision of a nationally delivered pharmacare strategy.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, as the member said, we work together at the national defence committee. This is a member whom I work very well with.

A lot has been said by Conservatives talking about this “coalition”. When I talk to Canadians, people in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, and ask them what they think about cooperating with an opposition party, they say they sent us to Ottawa to work with all the parties to do the important things that Canadians need. The budget shows that parties can work together.

The member is speaking to the choir. We will get to the places that we need to get to. We are seeing generational change in the last seven and a half years with some of the things that we have done with the Canada child benefit and the day care system. The things that we are doing are changing Canada for the good, and we will continue to work with any party in the House that is willing to work with us to get to where we need to get on behalf of Canadians.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, health care deficits have been growing for more than 30 years.

These deficits arise from the fact that the health transfers should cover about 50% of the provinces' costs but currently cover only 18% to 22%. We should not be surprised if provinces make cuts. Federal cuts impact budgets, especially in times of crisis.

I find it appalling that the provinces have to be accountable to the federal government, which will provide the money only if it is satisfied. The source of the problem is that the amount of the health transfers is not what it should be.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on that.

[English]

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, I do not think there has ever been a government that has invested more into health care in Canada while understanding that health care contributions to the provinces should be held with some strings attached to work as a partner. Yes, the delivery of health care has always been provincial, but we see the importance of being an equal partner and working with provinces and territories to ensure we receive the proper data. It is not just about throwing money at a problem. If one does not know that problem is being fixed by that money, one does not have the proper data.

We need to continue to work on that and have partnerships with provinces and territories, working with them to do the better things that we can for Canadians.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour got my attention when he talked about the clean technology businesses in his riding. As he knows, we have a lot of clean technology happening in Guelph. The Nova Scotia Innovation Hub, according to its website, is one place that is capitalizing on opportunities created by growing global demand for low-carbon products and processes.

Could the hon. member comment on the great opportunity we have that is being supported by this budget?

• (1205)

Mr. Darren Fisher: Madam Speaker, as a 57-year-old Nova Scotian, I can say that 20 or 30 years ago, if one wanted to do incredible things in the science or clean-technology world, one had to

leave Atlantic Canada. One had to go to the big spots like Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, or to other countries. We are doing incredible things in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour right now in clean energy. We are doing things in technology with Meta Materials, Novonix, Suncel and MetOcean. I listed a few in my speech as well.

It is an absolutely incredible hub. Not a day goes by where I could not visit some amazing company out there doing things that we could never do in Atlantic Canada 20 or 30 years ago.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am really happy to be able to stand today and talk about how this new budget we tabled is a building block on everything that we have been doing since 2015. It is in response to so many of the issues that I have been hearing about from people in my community.

I would particularly like to focus on the work that we have been doing to support young families and people with low incomes, and our work on fighting climate change and building a strong, clean economy with jobs for the future.

We have been doing all of this work, I should add, in a time of tremendous disruption since 2015. When we think about it, we had to renegotiate CUSMA. That was something so strong and important for our economy as a whole.

After that, on another very important issue for an MP from Ontario to highlight, we made sure those automobiles and the parts here in our country were included as part of the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States.

We can talk about other issues that have been in the background as we are working through these building blocks to support Canadians. There has been a pandemic. We do not like to talk about it that much because that was a very tough period of time for our country.

Through it, our government was there to support Canadians and small businesses, and that was a lot of work that happened as we were trying to build and move these big building blocks forward. To say one nice piece after all of that, it is really nice to highlight the economy. The growth in our economy has been one of the highest in the G7 since the pandemic.

We have record-high labour involvement of women in our economy. That is partly due to the child care agreements we struck and I am going to be talking a bit more about that.

There is a final piece to highlight to show that we are doing hard work sometimes in a place where it is not always easy. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia has been disruptive to global supply chains and it has been a big change for our country as a whole and the world economy. Through all of those disruptions, we have been there to support Canadians.

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Let me focus first on young families. I have to say one of the biggest disappointments for me when Stephen Harper's government formed was that the first thing he did was to scrap child care agreements right across our country. We were there.

I had young children at that time. It would have been so helpful to have had affordable child care, and yet that was scrapped. In its place was a system that sent the same payment to everyone regardless of what their income was. There were no new child care spots; there was no affordable child care and no quality child care being provided.

That is why, for me, one of the proudest pieces of this budget, and all the budgets before working as building blocks in supporting young families, is that we put in place the child care agreement.

In Ontario, in my home community of Toronto, people already have seen a 50% drop in child care fees. That is thousands of dollars kept in people's pockets. We are not only doing that, but we are going to \$10-a-day day care. That is already available in some of the provinces and territories. That will make such a change on affordability for young families.

Let us also talk about what some of the first things were that we did back in 2015 when we formed government. On the Canada child benefit, I mentioned the \$100 cheques; the same amount was sent to everyone regardless of what one's income was. We changed that.

Not only did we put in place child care agreements with \$10-a-day child care across the country, but we also helped to create essentially guaranteed income for children by making sure that instead of sending the same amount to everyone, we provided support for children who had the greatest needs. It is a means-tested system.

According to Statistics Canada, the child poverty rates are now less than half the levels they were in 2015. That is an amazing change. That is supporting our future generation, supporting children and I think it is something that really needs to be highlighted.

• (1210)

The next step was dental benefits and supporting children under the age of 12 by giving them access to dental benefits. That was put in place last year. This budget goes one step further. We are making sure that dental benefits would extend to all Canadians. It would be in stages, but we would be at a point where we would have that.

When we think about where a young family was before we formed government in 2015 and where we are now, with child care agreements, with the Canada child benefit and with the dental benefits, those are a lot of important changes, and that is something I see and hear about when I talk with people in our communities.

I talk about young families a lot, but it was not just about young families; it has also been a priority of mine to make sure we are supporting people who have lower incomes and are in greater need right across the community. The dental benefit, as I mentioned, would expand to cover not just children, but the entire community, with eligibility rules on income and whether people have insurance, but that would be a big piece. We doubled the GST support during the pandemic, we did it again to address inflation, and now we have

a grocery rebate. Once again, that would help people with affordability issues. We are there to continue to provide these supports.

Let us talk about housing. Just last week in my community I was at a WoodGreen location at Bowden. We are creating, through the rapid housing initiative, 50 units to support seniors who are at risk of experiencing homelessness or who are experiencing homelessness right now. This is in addition to, right nearby in my community at Cedarvale, another 60 units with the same profile, all with supportive services to help these seniors age in place in their new homes. In fact, rapid housing has created over 1,000 new homes for people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness in Toronto.

[Translation]

The rapid housing initiative is bringing big changes to our communities. The objective is to create new units of permanent affordable housing for vulnerable people. We can create this housing and include wraparound services with the help of our partners from the non-profit sector. That is very important for our communities.

[English]

That was about the rapid housing piece, but with a co-investment in my own community, we also saw affordable housing being built for seniors down at Gerrard and Leslie, and that created lower-rent affordable accommodations for people. I hear from people that they want to see these positive changes, and they are happening. I am actually seeing them being built in our community.

Those are a few of the pieces on affordability. I know I only have a couple more minutes, but I do not want to leave without talking about environment and climate change, because that is such a central piece of what is raised by people in my community.

This is also about creating jobs and a strong economy, and one thing I am very excited about is that just last week, the GHG inventory was submitted for the UN. We had that and it was made public. The numbers for 2021 for our GHGs show that we actually stayed below prepandemic levels in 2021. It is an amazing movement to be able to see, that we are actually showing a drop in our GHG emissions. The largest driver of that was moving off coal-fired electricity, so that is a really strong thing. Someone from Ontario would remember that we used to have 55 smog days a year. Now, there are no smog days, and that is because we moved off coal-fired electricity to clean electricity.

We have one of the cleanest electrical grids in the world. What the budget would do through important clean electricity investment tax credits is help support the development a strong, clean electricity grid from coast to coast to coast in our country. That would help to attract investment from industry that is looking for places to build their businesses and their manufacturing where there is clean electricity. It would also mean cleaner air for Canadians, and it would mean we would be well supported as we make that transition.

To the tax credit I mentioned, added in were investments on research, development, demonstration and deployment of new technologies. Like I said, we are talking about clean air, fighting and reducing our GHG emissions, and creating clean jobs for the future while attracting investment.

It is a very exciting time for our economy. It is a very exciting time for Canada as we move forward.

• (1215)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, listening to the hon. member's speech, one would think Canadians, and particularly Torontonians, have never had it so good. In fact, prior to the pandemic, of the 128 food bank networks across the greater Toronto area, 65,000 people were using the food bank. This March, 275,000 people used the food bank. Across Canada, 1.5 million people are using food banks.

Does the hon. member not take any responsibility for government policy creating this mess in terms of the debt, the deficits and the increased inflation, all the things that have contributed to this food bank usage?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, what I am saying, and what I would be very strong in saying, is that I know there have been difficult times for many people in my community and my home city. I would experience that much more than someone who is from outside the community, as far as having those conversations with people and seeing it.

What I do think is most important is to be providing income supports like the Canada child benefit, like increasing the GIS and making sure we have the wraparound services for Canadians. That is what we are doing.

What the member opposite is pointing to are many global issues, and I addressed that right at the beginning when I spoke about it. We have been in a time of many disruptions and many challenges, but through that and continuing, we will always have the backs of Canadians. I am always there to listen to my community members about how we can do better to support them.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned affordable housing, specifically for seniors.

Knowing that a \$2,250 unit is considered affordable because it includes a 10% discount on the actual cost of rent, but that the pension for seniors aged 65 to 74 is less than \$700 per month, can my colleague explain how these units are affordable? I also wonder how she can justify the government's refusal to increase the pension for seniors aged 65 to 74, as it did for seniors aged 75 and over.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, I mentioned seniors because I am very happy to see affordable housing being built in my community in Toronto. It is more than just affordable housing. It is housing for the most vulnerable seniors and for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. It is housing to help seniors who need it most.

However, that is not all. I also talked about dental care and support through the guaranteed income supplement. There are many

ways to help seniors. Seniors are so important, and we must always support them.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I wanted to acknowledge the member talked about people who are struggling right now. There are many communities here in our region, particularly indigenous communities, for which the cost of living crisis has become even worse.

One of the biggest challenges indigenous communities in our region face is the housing crisis. The Liberals, unfortunately, in this budget, while they heard our advocacy on the importance of investments in indigenous housing, pushed the bulk of the funding committed past the possible next election. This is a very cynical move that delays the urgent funding indigenous communities need when it comes to housing.

Does this member acknowledge the housing crisis on first nations and indigenous communities and does she agree it needs to be dealt with urgently with significant federal funds?

• (1220)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Madam Speaker, I agree not only that it is urgent and important, but also that it must be addressed. I will point out I talked about rapid housing and the rapid housing initiative in my own community because it can be different with people who are indigenous who are living in urban areas and what the needs may be. I am glad to see some of the rapid housing funding has gone to build housing specifically for indigenous people who are experiencing homelessness or who may be at risk of experiencing homelessness, but I 100% agree it would be one of my priorities to continue working for more to support indigenous housing.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today and add the voices of the people of Barrie-Springwater-Oro-Medonte to today's debate.

Residents in my riding, in places such as Midhurst, Elmvale, Minesing, Shanty Bay, and Moonstone, all beautiful little communities, know very well that Canadians are getting less and paying more. They are struggling to pay rent, feed their families and heat their homes.

Before I discuss my concerns with the specifics of this budget and the concerns I am hearing from residents in my community, I want to take a moment to reflect on how we got into this cost of living crisis and how it is affecting Canadians today.

The Budget

During the pandemic, the Liberals used historically low interest rates to justify record spending and record deficits. The Prime Minister then stated he was not worried about the cost to service Canada's increasing debt, because rates were very low. The Governor of the Bank of Canada stated that borrowing rates "are very low and they're going to be there for a long time." He went on to assure Canadians, "If you've got a mortgage or if you're considering to make a major purchase, or you're a business and you're considering making an investment, you can be confident rates will be low for a long time."

Thousands of Canadians locked in their mortgages at a variable rate, believing that when the government and the Bank of Canada said rates would be low for a long time, they meant it. Fast-forward to today, and we have seen the Bank of Canada raise its policy interest rate eight times to 4.5% in less than a year. Families that bought typical homes five years ago, with typical mortgages that are now up for renewal, will pay an additional \$7,000 per year. This is thanks to the Liberal government's inflationary spending.

How has this government responded to the crisis it has created? In this year's budget presentation, it responded by recklessly adding \$4,300 in new spending and debt for every household in Canada. It is driving up inflation, raising taxes and harming Canadians.

Last year, the finance minister stood up in the House and stated that the debt-to-GDP ratio was her government's "fiscal anchor". She promised that our debt-to-GDP ratio would decline and that our deficits would be reduced. We see plainly now that promise to Canadians has not been kept. In fact, our debt-to-GDP ratio will increase from 42.4% this fiscal year to 43.5% in 2023-24.

Furthermore, the cost to service Canada's debt is up. This year, the government will spend almost \$44 billion to service our debt, which is double the cost from the last fiscal year at \$24.5 billion. The more this government spends to service our debt, the less money it can spend on programs that help Canadians. To put this number in perspective, the defence department's budget is currently \$27 billion, and this year's budget includes just over \$30 million of new defence spending over the next five years, at a time when our country is under pressure from our allies to increase spending.

Leading up to the tabling of this year's budget, Conservatives had three clear demands in order to lend our support to the government's fiscal plan: lower taxes for workers, an end to the inflationary deficits that are driving up the cost of goods, and the removal of red tape that prevents homes from being built for Canadians.

We were hopeful the government would listen to Canadians and move into an era of fiscal prudence. However, the Liberals have presented us with yet another irresponsible deficit and they plan to keep us there until at least 2028. The assertion from this government that it is showing any fiscal restraint is demonstrably false.

I would like to take some time to point out what is missing from this document, namely that the budget fails to deliver any measures that would meaningfully address the rising costs of housing, groceries, and home heating. It fails Canadians who desperately need a break.

First, one of the top concerns for residents in my community is housing affordability. Make no mistake; we are in a housing crisis. Since this government came into power, rents have skyrocketed. In 2015, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment was \$973 a month. As of last month, in my riding, a one-bedroom apartment costs almost \$2,000 a month to rent, on average.

Under this government, Canada has the fewest homes per capita in the G7. A recent report by RBC found that we need over 300,000 new rental units in the next three years to restore normal vacancy rates. Canadians need bold leadership in this sector. Amid sky-high housing prices and increased immigration numbers, we need to do everything we can to increase housing supply.

Home ownership is completely out of reach for most Canadians. A recent survey found that nine out of 10 young Canadians who do not own a home think they never will. On average, those who do have a mortgage are spending 62% of their income on monthly payments on the average house.

● (1225)

While the government's previously announced first home savings account offers Canadians the opportunity to save \$40,000 for their first home, the Liberals have failed to acknowledge that most Canadians will be unable to put money into the account. Thanks to the government's inflationary spending and taxes, young and new Canadians are spending most of their hard-earned paycheques on rent and groceries, with nothing left over to save.

The housing crisis is policy and leadership failure from the federal government. It has had eight years to address this issue. Unfortunately, this budget offers no new support for Canadians who feel that their dream of home ownership is farther and farther out of reach.

I will go on to an issue that is directly affecting families in my community, which is the rising cost of groceries. The high cost of groceries is exacerbating food insecurity, and many Canadians are turning to food banks to make ends meet. It is heartbreaking to see how many families are using food banks in my riding and across Canada. In March 2022, there were nearly 1.5 million visits to food banks in Canada. That is a 35% increase from 2020 and a 15% increase from 2021. One-third of those food bank clients are children.

Locally, the Barrie Food Bank is supporting close to 4,000 individuals every month, including 1,300 children. It has seen the number of families with children accessing the food bank rise by 56%. Sharon Palmer, the executive director of the Barrie Food Bank, which serves residents in my riding, told a local newspaper that she is seeing residents who have historically donated to the food bank now using it to feed their own families.

Despite the government's inaction, Canadians are finding innovative ways to attempt to tackle this issue and help their neighbours who are struggling during this cost of living crisis. For example, Leah Dyck, a resident in my riding, launched a community initiative called Fresh Food Weekly to tackle rising food insecurity in our community. Fresh Food Weekly partners with local farmers and businesses to deliver fresh meal boxes to community members in need.

Canadians simply cannot afford 10% yearly food inflation. To address this issue, the government has touted an increased GST credit as a grocery rebate. The grocery rebate will give a one-time \$467 payment to a family of four. To put that number in perspective, it amounts to roughly \$39 a month. Canada's Food Price Report 2023 predicts a family of four will spend up to \$16,000 on food this year, or over \$1,300 a month, which is \$1,261 more than the rebate they will receive. We know that this top-up does not actually address the food insecurity Canadians are facing.

The fact that this year's budget has no financial commitments to food security initiatives is unacceptable at a time when six million Canadians, including 1.4 million children, are food-insecure. I urge the government to act swiftly to address this issue.

Finally, I have received countless calls, emails and letters from residents in my riding who are concerned about the inflationary pressures they are facing.

One area in which families and businesses are feeling the pinch the most is the government's costly carbon tax. On April 1, the Liberal carbon tax increased to \$65 a tonne, increasing the price of gasoline, home heating and other fuels. This tax disproportionately affects our agricultural sector. Canada's Food Price Report 2023 found that, by 2030, a typical 5,000-acre farm could see taxes of over \$150,000 a year, which will definitely hinder an owner's ability to make a profit. The report also notes that these added costs will trickle all the way down the supply chain to consumers as producers struggle to make a profit. I am proud to represent a riding that includes a strong and vibrant agricultural sector. This year's increase and the government's plan to eventually triple the carbon tax by 2030 are simply too high a price for farmers in my riding and across Canada to pay.

Conservatives have proposed a real plan to remove the carbon tax from natural gas and propane used on farms, through Bill C-234. This legislation would save farmers tens of millions of dollars on upfront costs when it comes to the use of natural gas and propane for necessary practices. Unfortunately, when presented with a proposal to make life more affordable for our hard-working Canadian farmers, the Liberal caucus voted against it.

Despite the Liberal government's claims that Canadians will be better off with a carbon tax, the Parliamentary Budget Officer has

found that most households will see a net loss when the broader economic impacts of the carbon tax are considered. The Parliamentary Budget Officer found that the carbon tax will cost the average family between \$402 and \$847 in 2023, even after rebates.

Let me be very clear: The carbon tax is not a climate plan. It is a tax plan that places an undue burden on families, small businesses and farmers. Meanwhile, the Liberal government has failed to meet a single, solitary emissions target after eight years in power.

Canadians deserve better. They deserve a government that can bring home powerful paycheques, lower their taxes, and build more homes. Only a Conservative government can provide the relief that Canadians so desperately need.

• (1230)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member mentioned the interest rates being applied by the federal government. Interest rates are applied by the Bank of Canada, and the federal government responds through policies and programs like those we have in budget 2023, which are targeting the vulnerable people affected by interest rates. In fact, this morning, we had great news that our inflation rate is down to 4.3%, which is down from 8.1% last June. Even more impressive was that gasoline prices have actually fallen, year over year, for the second consecutive month.

Could the member tell the House how targeting programs working with the Bank of Canada to get inflation under control is precisely what this budget is doing?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, the biggest concern is, quite frankly, that people listened to and believed the Prime Minister when he stood in front of the country and said that inflation rates would remain low for a very long time. He should be someone Canadians can look up to, believe and respect. Obviously, in this case it did not happen and rates have gone up drastically.

People are now struggling. In my community, they have locked in on those rates. I personally spoke with a bank manager who said there are many families right now on the verge of losing their homes because they did not think rates would go up that much. People were told by the Prime Minister to hang in and lock in, and that rates would remain low. They did not, and Canadians are struggling.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I think we can agree that the budget is not all bad. There are some good intentions in there.

The Budget

That said, as my colleague mentioned, there are also things missing. I would like his opinion on one thing that I noted was missing, and that is respect for the jurisdictions of Quebec and the Canadian provinces, as defined by the Constitution.

I would like my colleague to tell us more about this lack of respect for the Constitution in current budgets.

[English]

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I do not know how much of that is in the budget, but I think there should definitely always be respect among the federal government, the provincial governments and all municipal governments. Sometimes, what is lacking in politics these days is respect among all politicians. I agree with the member opposite that we should all be respecting each other and our boundaries and should be working together to get things done for Canadians.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I most definitely agree with the member's comments about us working together to get things done for people.

The member mentioned in his speech the many Canadians who desperately need a break, and I would ask if he could speak to the implementation of a windfall tax on those who are earning excess profits at a time when many are struggling the most.

I heard about those struggling to purchase groceries in the grocery store. Does the member feel there are benefits to our taxing those who are earning profits off the backs of those who are struggling in the grocery stores? We could then use that money toward, as just one example, those living with disabilities, who are struggling now more than ever.

Could I get the member's thoughts on this issue?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I do not think we have a tax problem in this country. I think we have a spending issue. Taxing more really does not solve a lot of issues. It could perhaps drive people out of the country, and we need good people to create good jobs, good businesses and a good economic situation. I really do think raising taxes is never a good idea, unless it is absolutely necessary. What we need to do is rein in some spending, not increase taxes.

• (1235)

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Madam Speaker, as someone currently in the role of shadow minister for the Treasury Board, I am always very interested in the public accounts and how we can show more transparency to Canadians. With his experience as a municipal councillor, can the member please express to the House what he would like to see in the budget and how he would like to see more transparency for Canadians in the budget?

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, as we have seen many times over, the Liberal government ran in 2015 on being open and transparent, and on sunny ways. I have heard many times from many of my residents that it is anything but that. They are having trouble getting access to many documents, many institutions and many facts along the way. Hopefully, we can correct that as we go forward.

Some day soon, Conservatives will be on that side, and we will be open and fair and let people know what is going on.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Madam Speaker, a budget is supposed to tell people where their money is going to go, not have them wondering where it went. However, after eight years of the Liberal government, Canadians are not only wondering where it went but how much more it is going to take to get results.

Canadians see grocery bills going up and a carbon tax that is adding to the price for groceries, to heat their home, to drive to work and the trucks that deliver their food. They see a health care crisis that has many people waiting for a family doctor, let a lone waiting months and months for appointments with doctors they already have. They see a mental health and addictions crisis. Military and NATO are underfunded in Canada. The cost of government has doubled to more than \$39 billion just for wages alone, and consultants are \$17.7 billion and counting. Farmers are seeing as much as \$150,000 per farm for carbon tax, with only \$862 back. A lot of farmers are wondering whether they should keep their farms or sell them. There is a housing crisis that has never been seen before in Canada.

It is the housing crisis that I want to focus on today as it, bar none, is the biggest legacy the Liberal government is going to leave for my generation and it is, bar none, the biggest issue that Bay of Quinte residents are seeing in our riding. We focused on it last week alone at two summits: one, a homelessness summit in the city of Belleville put on by the municipality of Belleville; and another housing summit by the Quinte and District Association of Realtors.

People in our generation are having to live with their parents because they cannot afford a home of their own. Homelessness, addictions and mental health are at record highs. Builders and developers are mired in red tape on every level of government. We have, this week, renovations with respect to 120 residents in Trenton, Ontario, who are being evicted from their homes so a new owner can renovate their homes. Of course, it is a free market, but there is nowhere for them to go.

When so many Canadians are feeling down about the housing market, we need to pull them up. There is only one answer to the housing crisis, and it is three words, "build, baby, build". We need more supply in Canada, which means we build for everyone. We build with more trades. We build affordable housing that is innovative. We build housing for our military and for our indigenous communities. We build faster and targeted, and we build to own. We need to build, baby, build.

When we build for everyone, I think we all can agree that it should be a fundamental human right that every Canadian should have a roof over his or her head. When we look in this nation right now, we see the amount of homelessness. In my region, and we count it, it has doubled in the last four years alone. It should be fundamental that we provide a shelter for residents. It is one step only to become homeless, but there are three steps to come out of it.

When we talk about homelessness, a lot of people lose their homes for a lot of reasons. The myth is that it is because of mental health and addictions. People do not lose their homes because of that. A lot of times it is because of a domestic dispute, a missed paycheque, many missed paycheques, the fact that it costs more to live, a family matter or just lack of supply. When people lose homes, it is devastating to hear their stories about what happens on the street.

I and others here have one thing that many people do not. We have a home. We are able to lock our stuff away and we have a secure place to call home, which means to have security. If people are on the street, they do not have the luxury of security, which means oftentimes they have to turn to drugs. Why drugs and why is that important? If people are up all night trying to protect their stuff and look after, God forbid, a child or a pet, a lot of times they turn to drugs because it numbs the pain and it keeps them alert because they do not have that luxury of locking their door.

There are three steps to get out of homelessness and one step to become homeless. Of the three steps to get out of homelessness, the first is to have a shelter. Step two is to have transitional housing, which is the most important because that moves people from a shelter into programs where they get mental health and addiction counselling. They also get supports for keeping a job, learning life skills and they get a place to lock up their stuff. The third step, which is really most important, is affordable rental housing. If people are on the street and the cheapest apartment they can find is \$1,800, they are probably going to end up back on the street. Affordable market rent is about \$700 to \$900, and that is really important. However, we build for everyone.

We have heard members today talk about building for indigenous, absolutely, and building for our military, but building for every kind of person who lives in our country should be an absolute human right. The government has three programs for that. Something I am going to get into is the fact that we are not targeting on that.

• (1240)

There is the \$40 billion national housing strategy. There is the \$1 billion rapid housing initiative. There is the \$1.5 billion for homelessness. All of that combined over 10 years with other programs, of the 1.8 million homes that were needed last year, only 300,000 homes were built. The government talks about \$89 billion, but only 300,000 homes were built.

We are a great nation and we need a lot of immigration, especially skilled workers. We brought 955,000 immigrants in last year. Again, that raises the number of homes needed to 2.8 million. When the government touts that it spent \$89 billion, that was for 300,000 homes of the 2.8 million needed. It is a dismal number.

The Budget

When we talk about homes, we need 300,000 affordable rental units. When we think about what our most vulnerable in society need, it is a place they can rent and call home. We are building 70,000 a year. We needed 300,000 units by 2026 as noted in a report by the Royal Bank of Canada. We are way behind.

One of the biggest parts of immigration that we need to focus on is bringing more trades into Canada. We have a lot of new immigrants, but we also need to focus on the trades. We need home builders, drywallers, framers and well drillers. It is not only the workers, we need those people to start their own businesses. I know many who are, but we need to really focus on that.

A normal builder in my region is capped at 50 homes a year. When builders look at how many homes they can build as a whole and the limits that they have hit in the last four or five years, they can only 50 units. We are seeing that across the country. A report this week talked about how Canada had the lowest supply of real estate in 20 years, yet prices are still going up.

A report last week, when we were supposed to have initiatives that lowered prices for Canadians, including a cap on foreign homebuyers, prices went up a whole lot. I think they are up 3% or 4% in March alone.

I want to mention a great program in our region. It is for people who have been on Ontario Works, people who sometimes have not had a job for a while. It is called elevate plus. It is put on by Quinte Economic Development Commission. It trains people for six weeks in programs that teach them about construction and how to get into home building. It is pretty amazing going to these graduations.

It is powerful for people to get trained for a job that will give them a paycheque. From being at those graduations, I can say how emotional it is for those individuals and their parents. Elevate plus is a new program, but it is something we can replicate across Canada. It is training people for jobs in the trades where we desperately need them.

The Budget

As a hotelier, I have built hotels. When we talk about building hotels, we talk about building hotels by key, the price per door. The average house price for affordable housing in Canada is \$465,000 a unit. It is quite unaffordable. It is ironic to me that affordable housing is actually unaffordable to build. We need to get these units down to about \$200,000 to \$250,000 to make them affordable.

If developers are building a house and then trying to rent that house out, to try to even make back the interest alone on running that house, how can they afford to rent that for less than \$1,500 or \$1,600 given interest rates today? Housing needs to be affordable.

When we talk about building, we need to build for our military. I have talked about this a lot of times. We need 4,000 military houses. It is the only housing the government actually builds. We need 4,000 units in Canada, 50 in CFB Trenton alone where we have 360 families on a waiting list. We have not done it. Money was announced in budget 2022, but it still has not been started. We have heard from other members today about indigenous communities desperately needing housing. It still is not happening. We really need to get focused on how we can make that happen. We need to build faster.

Our leaders talked about withholding federal infrastructure funding from those who do not comply with ensuring we get things built a little faster. Being a former municipal councillor, I know it is not easy but we really need to work with those municipalities on how to get that done. Part of it is looking at nimbyism. Nimbyism kills us all. It is inherent to a lot of Canadians. Nimbyism is just part of our brains. Perhaps it goes back to when we used to have caves and had to protect our stuff. We really have to work with municipalities.

I will go back to this. When it comes to the budget, housing was not even mentioned once. The Liberal government does not see housing as a priority, yet it is the biggest crisis we face. A Conservative government would build housing and ensure we build it up by build baby build. We need to build for everyone. We need more trades, affordable housing for our military and indigenous communities. We need to build faster, and we need build to own.

• (1245)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I share this passion. I am deeply concerned about housing in my own riding, and there has been significant federal investment in the Fredericton region. I think of the Oak Centre. We have supportive housing on multiple levels. We have 12 Neighbours, which is about tiny home investments, a really creative model. I work to support the shelter network in my community. It is always about building that collaboration with municipalities and the provincial government. I agree that housing is absolutely a human right, and we need to decommodify the housing system.

My question for the hon. member is simply: How many houses did the Conservative government build when it was in power?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, it is an easy answer. We had house prices that were half of what they are now. However, I want to focus the answer to the member's question specifically on how we have more collaboration.

In our region, we have an amazing group. Hastings County has put together a "7 in 7" plan where it is going to build 7,000 homes in seven years. It is going to do it by working with the municipalities, the province and innovative groups like Phil Spry and Bob Cottrell who have discovered how to put developers together with not-for-profits. The developer takes the risk and the not-for-profit runs the programs using the government. They have actually been able to build homes faster.

Seven thousand homes in seven years, which I know the member for Kingston and the Islands will benefit from, is an innovative program that is going to benefit eastern Ontario. That is the kind of innovation we look at in the future—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: I was there at the opening; you weren't.

Mr. Ryan Williams: We will work together.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please. There is some cross debate. I would remind members that if they have questions or comments to wait until I call on them. I know that some of them are senior officials here and should know better.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Drummond.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to mention that I was surprised to hear that there is a connection between the glaring problem of drug abuse and the fact that people do not have a door to lock so they need to stay awake and watch over their children. That does not add up to me. I would probably put more blame on mental health issues in general, but I have a different question for my colleague.

I am going to touch on something other than housing, because I thought that part of his speech was pretty interesting. I would like to know what he thinks about the fact that, even though the situation is critical, the government is not proposing EI reform in the 2023 budget.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, yes, we need reforms in EI for sure, but let us get back to the subject at hand: We need homes for people. As I said in my speech, shelter, transitional homes and affordable market rent are the three answers to housing.

When we talk about mental health and addictions, what is nice about a transitional home is that it actually provides those supports to residents to overcome addictions and to deal with mental health. We talk about everyday residents who have to wait sometimes six months just for one appointment with one counsellor for mental health.

The Budget

I agree that there is a mental health crisis in our country, but let us talk about it as it comes back to the street where all of that is compounded, especially because people do not have a place of their own. We need more supports and to focus on the three answers.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member said “build baby build” many times, which has a good ring to it, but I am concerned it is another Conservative slogan that is not actually based on fact.

I wonder if the member could share his thoughts around the fact that we are seeing developers building all around us. We are seeing new units popping up, but the problem is that we are seeing more unaffordable homes, more unaffordable units, popping up around us, which is not going to resolve the issue that we are currently experiencing with the ongoing commodification of housing that has happened over the last 30 years by consecutive Conservative and Liberal governments.

Would the member agree that in order to ensure that those he was referencing, including military, veterans and seniors, have access to the affordable housing they need, we need to see more social housing put into place, more affordable housing put into place, so everybody can have a place to call home?

• (1250)

Mr. Ryan Williams: Madam Speaker, I did answer that in my speech. Build baby build means for everyone.

We need affordable housing. We need market rent. We need transitional housing. We need to ensure we are building housing for our military and indigenous. We need housing of every stripe, which means we need more. We need 2.8 million units today, and that only happens if we build them, not by wishing they came in but actually making that happen. It is going to take a lot of work, and a Conservative government would ensure it happens at the end of the day.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, Canada has made a remarkable recovery from the COVID recession. Canada’s economic growth is the best among the G7 countries. About 830,000 more Canadians are employed today than before the pandemic. Inflation has been falling for the last eight months. Our unemployment is at a record low, and in February, we had labour force participation for women aged 25 to 54 at a record high of 85.7%.

However, we also face many challenges. As we know, globalization is winding down. We see a sort of Cold War-style era returning to the world now. The unipolar world is no more. It is bifurcating into a bipolar or even a tripolar world. Multilateral agreements that were the basis for global trade are also taking a back seat, with the WTO Appellate Body almost unable to function because of vacancies that are not filled because of issues related to some major countries. What we are seeing now, more than bilateral trade agreements, are free trade agreements among blocs of countries; we are also seeing more friendshoring. In fact, this concept of friendshoring is just starting up.

While it is a challenge, this is also an opportunity for us. Protectionism is growing. This is not just from the traditional countries that were practising protectionism, such as developing countries;

rather, protectionism is also growing in developed countries, especially countries like the United States.

A few years back, in this chamber, I talked about the importance of artificial intelligence and how that technology will not only affect the corporate sector and the economy but also the entire society. We are already seeing the impact of artificial intelligence and technologies like robotics and automation on this society.

I will be sharing my time with the member for Richmond Hill.

The budget talks about transforming challenges into opportunities. It mentions a need for investment to manage the structural changes, which will not be limited to one sector or one aspect of the economy. Broad-based investment will be required to grow our economy and create good middle-class jobs in the years to come. The scale of required investment is massive, and the private sector alone is unlikely to mobilize the level of capital required in Canada at sufficient speed. However, although we say the private sector alone cannot mobilize, it is expected to invest about \$100 trillion in the global clean economy between now and 2050.

Many of the investments that need to be made will stretch over decades and involve high upfront costs, and that is where governments come in. Moreover, key sectors and technologies will have significant spillover effects by driving development of related industries. For example, fundamental inputs to clean production and the production of clean technologies, such as electricity; critical minerals; and carbon capture, utilization and storage, will provide foundations for an expanding clean economy. For related sectors, such as hydrogen and clean manufacturing, this will boost their productivity, support their resilience and help generate new middle-class jobs. Private investment decisions may not take full account of these spillovers, and this increases the risk of underinvestment.

Without the right policy framework, as stated in the budget 2023 document, Canada could see underinvestment in critical areas and a slow pace of innovation in new clean technology. Together, these factors would result in Canada falling behind the United States and other countries that are moving forward aggressively to build their clean economies, create middle-class jobs and ensure more prosperous futures for their people.

The Budget

• (1255)

Canada must act decisively to ensure that it remains the location of choice for new investment in these sectors, particularly in the face of the U.S.'s recent passage of the Inflation Reduction Act. In addition to this act, we have to take notice of the U.S.'s CHIPS and Science Act, a \$280-billion act. It will not only focus \$80 billion on the manufacturing of semiconductors in the United States but also invest in around 20 technology centres focusing on advanced technologies, from transition energy and biotechnology to others.

This combination of the IRA and the CHIPS and Science Act is called a once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-a-generation policy of the United States. It has fundamentally rewritten the entire industrial policy of the United States.

We also have to consider the friendshoring that the U.S. is emphasizing now. That is a challenge for many countries in the world, but it creates opportunities for Canada that we are already seeing in the critical mineral sector. I will talk about this in a minute.

Budget 2023 proposes substantial measures as the next steps in the government's plan to "crowd in" new private investment by leveraging public investment and government policy. The goal of this approach is neither to substitute government for the private sector nor to supplement market-based decision-making. Rather, it is to leverage the tools of government to mobilize the private sector.

This approach is not about the government picking individual corporate winners in an effort to engineer a preferred vision for the economy in 2050. That approach did not work in the past, and it is even less likely to work in today's environment of rapid technological change. The tax incentives and investment supports proposed in budget 2023 are designed to set a framework for boosting overall investment while leaving the private sector to determine how best to invest based on market signals.

Canada has been rich and prosperous because of the natural resources we have and the hard work of several generations of Canadians, including present-day seniors. However, the future is changing with the digital economy and the new technologies that are coming up. We have an opportunity, in these challenging times, to invest and grow. One growth aspect is the critical minerals, which are very important for the clean economy that is being envisaged all around the world.

Before touching on that, I just want to mention two fundamental challenges. The first is that many of the investments that will be critical for the realignment of global supply chains and a net-zero future are large-scale, long-term investments. The second challenge, as I have already mentioned, is the U.S.'s IRA, with the related CHIPS and Science Act.

In budget 2022, last year, we committed \$3.8 billion to Canada's critical mineral strategy. In March of this year, last month, the government launched the critical minerals infrastructure fund, announcing that this new fund will allocate \$1.5 billion towards energy and transportation projects needed to unlock priority mineral deposits.

In addition to this funding, the federal government is entering into bilateral agreements with various provinces. Recently, we signed

an agreement with Ontario, what we call the "Ontario table," where the federal government and the province committed to work together to align resources and timelines and to have a common regulatory approach to promoting the critical minerals required for a clean economy.

I also have to mention that although we have critical minerals and announced investments, and although we have already attracted investments in battery manufacturing and electrical vehicles manufacturing, we still have the stumbling block of the long regulatory processes that are required to see a critical mineral mine start and become operational.

• (1300)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, one thing that I am concerned about is the \$43-billion deficit that is projected by the budget this year. Back in 2015, when the Liberals took power, they promised they would run four consecutive deficits of only \$10 billion, and after that, they would return to a balanced budget.

Why does the member continue to support deficit spending? Does he think this has an impact on inflation?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, let us take the way I personally look at the deficit of \$43 billion. For me, as a working Canadian, I do not like credit card loans. However, I do like having a mortgage because it helps me to invest in my long-term future and long-term assets.

The deficit we have is basically going towards long-term investments required for Canada so that we can continue to be competitive in this world, improve our long-term transportation network and invest in long-term things required for clean energy growth. Those are the kinds of long-term infrastructure-related investments that are required, and these things are primarily contributing to the deficit we have today.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned the U.S.'s Inflation Reduction Act more than once in his speech.

On page 56 of the "Statement and Impacts Report on Gender, Diversity, and Quality of Life", the companion paper to the budget, there is a measure entitled "Future Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Development".

Does Canada want to embark on that adventure, which is both unacceptable and inconceivable when we think of the environment and the future, because it wants to follow the lead of the U.S. President, who has announced drilling in Alaska?

The Budget

[English]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, when we were discussing the Inflation Reduction Act at the international trade committee, one union leader put it very neatly and simply. He said we cannot match the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act dollar for dollar, but we can provide a smart response. We do not have to pick and choose everything in the Inflation Reduction Act and do as they are doing, whether drilling in the Arctic or not. However, as Canadians, we can respond in a smart way.

We have taken care of some of the measures that are in the Inflation Reduction Act in our budget. We took care of some measures even before the Inflation Reduction Act came into being by lobbying very heavily with the U.S. administration. Because of the lobbying effort and our team Canada approach, we were able to secure the subsidies and incentives that the U.S. government announced in the IRA. They are applicable to all North American manufactured vehicles.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, there are many people in our society who are struggling with the increased cost of living. The cost of groceries and rent continues to rise, and people are struggling to survive and make ends meet.

Meanwhile, the ultra-rich are lining their pockets. I am talking mainly about the CEOs of the large grocery chains who are earning \$5 million, \$12 million and \$13 million a year.

Does my colleague not find it indecent that these people are getting richer by creating hardship for others? Does he not think it would be a good idea to have a wealth tax so that these large multi-millionaire families finally have to pay their fair share and so that we have a more just society?

• (1305)

[English]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, fundamentally everybody has to pay their fair share of taxes. To help vulnerable Canadians, who are deeply affected by the rising cost of living, we took several measures before the budget, as well as in the budget.

To be very clear, we cannot tax anybody to death. Therefore, we are collecting taxes from the rich with the existing tax structure; in my view, this structure is quite adequate. At the same time, we are investing in providing support to vulnerable Canadians.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to highlight some of the important measures in budget 2023 here today and the impact it will have on my community of Richmond Hill. With strong economic fundamentals, as so many of my colleagues before me have talked about, this budget comes at a very important moment not only for our country, but I will dare to say for the world.

Allow me to start by highlighting that this budget is a made-in-Canada plan with three distinct pillars at its core.

First, budget 2023 aims to make life more affordable by introducing new targeted inflation relief support for Canadians, an important component of which is the new grocery rebate through

which budget 2023 will support about 11 million low- and medium-income Canadians and families.

Second, with a historic investment of \$198 billion to strengthen our public health, and the introduction of a dental health care plan, budget 2023 will help reduce backlogs, expand access to family health services, and ensure the high quality and timely health care Canadians deserve. This includes a \$46-billion investment in new funding to provinces and territories through new Health Canada transfer measures that will support seniors, people with disabilities and minority groups.

Finally, budget 2023 ambitiously invests in growing a clean and green economy while creating hundreds of thousands of middle-class jobs, providing the energy that will power our daily lives and entire Canadian economy, and providing more affordable energy to millions of Canadian homes.

All three of these pillars are of great importance to Canadians. They are of great importance to the passionate and dedicated constituents of Richmond Hill as well.

Just two weeks ago, over 50 community representative organizations and leaders from across our five community councils, which focus on affordability, health, environment, seniors and small businesses, gathered at our affordability round table at the Richmond Hill Public Library to hear about budget consultations and recommendations from budget 2023, in a discussion with the Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario.

We heard from key Richmond Hill community leaders about the ongoing collaboration between the federal government and the provinces as it relates to health care.

We heard about strategic economic development and promoting learning and business opportunities for our indigenous populations and members of minority groups.

We talked about supporting affordable housing for our seniors and youth.

We also heard from Ted Pickles on budget 2023, who said that the message he was hearing was about leadership, calling out where there were gaps and taking responsibility and doing something about it. Ted's message resonates with many constituents and Canadians.

With affordability, health care and greening the economy its core priorities, budget 2023 is more than just government financing; it is a smart and strong investment in our country's future. Having said that, I would like to shift the focus of the remainder of my speech to the third pillar of budget 2023, which is growing a green economy.

The Budget

We know that climate change is real and the path forward is clear. Budget 2023 builds on the foundation the government has been laying since 2015 by delivering a series of major investments to ensure Canada's clean economy can deliver prosperity across Canada. With new investments in clean electricity, the driving force of a clean economy, we will build a national electric grid that connects Canadians and delivers cleaner, more affordable electricity to Canadians and Canadian businesses. We will deliver investments to put Canadian workers and Canadian businesses at the heart of an essential global supply chain, and we will become a reliable supplier of the goods and resources the net-zero world will need.

● (1310)

Our made-in-Canada plan is centred on three tiers of federal financial incentives that will attract new investments, create new middle-class jobs and build Canada's clean economy. Those include an anchor regime of clear and predictable investment tax credits, low-cost strategic financing and targeted investments and programming to respond to the unique needs of sectors or projects of national economic significance. Together, they will incentivize businesses to reduce their emissions, become leaders in the global clean economy and create new middle-class jobs for Canadians.

The accelerating transition to net zero has started a global race to attract investment as our friends and allies build their clean economies. Canada has so much potential and a strong competitive edge and Richmond Hill's brightest minds are contributing to it. They are paving the path forward for a greener and cleaner transition in our country.

Over the past two weeks in my own riding of Richmond Hill, I was delighted to have the opportunity to see first-hand the knowledge, the passion, dedication and innovation that Richmond Hill entrepreneurs offer their community and our nation in parallel with budget 2023's goals and to see how this budget will further support their innovation.

In my visit to Mitrex with the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, I learned that Danial Hadizadeh, the CEO of Mitrex and his executive team are revolutionizing the solar panel industry by offering building-integrated photovoltaic systems, with the vision of generating solar energy from all surfaces. With their hard work and ambition, not only have they transformed into one of the largest facilities in Canada that carries out innovative cladding and panelling systems, but they have also created more jobs toward a vision of a cleaner Canadian economy and a day that every building in Canada becomes green. In Danial's words, making every building its own power plant is his vision.

Budget 2023 introduces a 30% refundable tax credit on investments into clean-tech manufacturing and adoption alongside clean energy technologies, including solar, wind and storage. This is in addition to the expansion of the strategic innovation fund through \$500 million in funding aimed to support the development and manufacturing of clean equipment and technologies. This not only supports but incentivizes the work done by organizations like Mitrex.

Moreover, I along with the Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario visited Edgcom Energy Inc. and Circuit

Energy Inc. in Richmond Hill, a group of talented individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including entrepreneurs from the Iranian, Asian, indigenous, African Canadian diaspora led by Behdad Bahrami and Sean Mirrahimi, who, with their fascinating expertise provided energy solutions through their innovative technology for various national energy consumers and large-scale businesses.

MIS Electronics, led by Saeid Mohmedi, is another leading clean-tech company at the heart of Richmond Hill, whose expertise lies in developing solutions that reduce operating costs for businesses while maintaining the highest standards of manufacturing, backed by multi-stage quality control and exceptional customer care. Here too the investment tax credits into zero-emission technologies and carbon capture encourage the use of clean energy, growing energy sources and reducing pollution.

Canada is the future of clean energy and a green economy, and Richmond Hill offers the facilities it needs in hitting these important targets. In general, budget 2023 has several important components to invest in our shared future. It will be investing in clean electricity and a growing clean economy both here in Canada and around the world, which will depend almost entirely on it. It will follow the federal tiered structure to incent the development of Canada's clean economy and provide additional support for projects that need it.

By extending support to a broad base of clean electricity technologies and proponents, it will accelerate the investments needed to expand the capacity of our clean electricity grid and ensure more sustainable, more secure and more affordable electricity across Canada. It will position Canada's Infrastructure Bank to play a leading role in electrifying Canada's economy, supporting lower energy bills for Canadians and businesses and, finally, it will continue to invest in other targeted federal programs that advance individual projects to build a stronger Canadian electricity industry.

● (1315)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to note that the member never talked at all about the 40-year highs in inflation nor about the \$43-billion deficit that is projected by this particular budget.

I am just wondering if the hon. member has any concerns about the inflation that is happening in Canada and whether deficit spending is what this country needs right at this moment.

The Budget

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, we are all concerned about inflation. We are all concerned about affordability. That is why the measures not only in budget 2022 but also in budget 2023 have clearly focused on the most vulnerable who are impacted by the rising costs of food as well as issues with affordability.

As it relates to the so-called deficit, as my colleague from Nepean indicated before, this is an investment that we are making. This is very similar to the decision that any parents make when they make an investment in their home, when they make an investment in children's education, when they make an investment for a better future, not only for themselves but their families. This is indeed exactly what our government has done.

It has made a conscious decision to make an investment in Canadians and that is what we are doing.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague for Repentigny has been up and down so often to talk about carbon capture technology she must be getting dizzy. Maybe my Liberal colleagues should have a word with their speech writers, because everything they say is something they have said before. Here we are, still talking about this technology, when better-informed countries across the world are moving away from it, now that it is known to be ineffective.

The United States is dropping its incentives to use carbon capture technology, while we are adding more. I would like to understand the logic of it all. The government says it wants to fight climate change, yet it encourages the oil companies with measures like this one.

[English]

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, what I would like to remind my colleague is the fact that our approach is a comprehensive multipronged approach. Yes, we are talking about investing and providing tax incentives for organizations that need to focus on carbon capture, but we are also focusing on incentivizing companies that are focusing on solar, wind and renewable energy, as well as others, such as nuclear energy.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, Joe Biden has just announced a dramatic shift in EV investment, that they will have 67% of American cars running electrical within nine years. That is extraordinary, but what that is also going to mean is that if Canada does not keep up, we will be left behind.

However, this government continues to put massive investments into the Trans Mountain pipeline, over \$30 billion. If we are looking at 67% of vehicles in the United States going to electric within nine years, we are going to have a lot of stranded assets.

I want to ask my colleague why the government continues to subsidize Trans Mountain when it has been proven to be a money loser. This is taxpayers' money that we are not going to get back and we are now \$30 billion-plus and rising on Trans Mountain.

• (1320)

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Madam Speaker, well, yes, there is an investment made in the Trans Mountain pipeline.

However, let us talk about the investment that has been made in hydrogen. Let us talk about the investment that we are making in critical minerals. Let us talk about the investment that we are making in ensuring that there are electrical batteries being developed close to the facilities where these critical minerals are being extracted.

The most important thing: let us talk about other countries and other organizations from across the world that are making the conscious decision to come to Canada and set up their leading clean tech and EV battery plants here, such as Volkswagen.

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak to budget 2023 on behalf of the great people of Simcoe—Grey. I was hoping to have the opportunity today to congratulate the budget for balancing itself, but alas it appears we all must still wait for that miracle.

Not a day goes by when I am not contacted by a constituent who is at wit's end. Mortgages have gone up by thousands of dollars a year, and groceries, especially the healthiest of foods, cost hundreds more each week. Gas, which most people outside the major cities rely on to get to work, costs hundreds of dollars more per month. Home heating fuel, again, is hundreds more per month this winter.

When one adds it all up, it can cost the average family a thousand or more dollars a month just to live in this country. Many cannot afford that, as they were just getting by before the government took office. For those who can get by still, it means having to spend all of their paycheques just to survive.

RESPs are not being topped up. Retirement savings accounts are left to languish, and family emergency funds are being used to pay for the carbon tax and inflationary spending of the Liberal government. Very few are enjoying life like they used to prior to 2016. Sunny ways have turned to dark days for many in our middle class. We have seen record spending, record deficits and now record debt.

However, the pain sure is not being felt by all the Liberals and their friends. There are \$6,000-a-night hotels and governor generals trying to outdo one another with extravagance. While regular Canadians are digging deep in their pockets for an extra buck, Liberal ministers are handing out millions of dollars in contracts to friends and family, just like Santa Claus on Christmas morning. Liberals really have no idea how much pain there is in the country right now, and they think shuffling a few hundred bucks here and there is going to make it all better. Liberals would have us believe we have never had it so good. Their arrogance knows no bounds.

The Budget

Constituents who contact me with concerns about making ends meet run the gamut of Canada's demographics. These are younger people trying to make it through school; middle-class families struggling with rapidly rising house prices, transportation costs and trying to put a meal on the table; and new immigrants trying to find a rental in my area while working in a service industry job. I hear from them all and listen to the challenges they face, which are directly due to the government's economic mismanagement.

The group I hear the most from is seniors. Seniors feel ignored by the government, and they are hurting. Seniors on fixed incomes are especially feeling the pinch. OAS increases are laughable, as they are just a couple of bucks. That does not help to pay for the increase in home heating or groceries, thanks to the carbon tax. Cancelling the carbon tax and cutting their income tax would be a great way to move forward.

Instead, the Liberals will spend \$2.5 billion more to create a gimmicky grocery rebate that does not need to be spent on groceries. It does not matter, because one does not need to show a receipt. It sounds like a good idea, but is it? Not really.

The grocery rebate means \$225 in a one-time payment for eligible seniors. If one thinks this cures the affordability crisis facing Canadians, one may also think the budget can balance itself. That is 62¢ a day.

I know the Prime Minister does not do his own grocery shopping, so he may not be aware of how much groceries went up because of the carbon tax, but 62¢ is less than the increase in a loaf of bread. Thanks to the government, an eligible senior who gets groceries once a week will have an extra \$4.34 in their pocket to cover the increased cost. That does not come close to helping the seniors who reach out to me and my office.

Members need not take my word for it. Here is what some seniors in my riding have told me.

Mary Glencross says, "Instead of the government giving people \$250 to cover groceries, perhaps they could lower all the taxes we pay on natural gas."

Giovanni Scianni says, "Please support Canadians' call for a halt of tax increases. It's becoming more and more difficult to afford basic necessities to sustain a modest standard of living."

Eva Johnson says, "Please try to stop all these unnecessary taxes. I am a senior. We don't seem to get a tax break ever."

Ken Grubbe says, "As a senior citizen living on a fixed income, I find these increases to be both appalling and unconscionable."

Marie Romanelli says, "I know it's a choice for many whether to go into the grocery store or to heat their house. I am strongly opposed to all these extra taxes that hurt the average Canadian, including myself."

● (1325)

Bruce Murray says, "Being on a fixed income makes it very difficult when budgeting your finances every month. The Federal Carbon Tax has increased 57% compared to my November 2021 bill and this is utterly ridiculous and must be eliminated, once and for all!"

Brian Rosenkrands says, "The Liberal government keeps insisting they are helping Canadians, but for some seniors the many years of waiting for a decent rise in their OAS payment, and the government's insistence to go ahead with all the increased taxes at this period in time, is putting some in jeopardy."

Finally, Mark Holmes says, "When is this government going to raise our CPP and OAS payments so we're ALL not living below the poverty line?"

The audacity of anyone on that side talking about making life more affordable is absolutely laughable. In essence, the government is proud that it has created a food stamp program that would not actually help people afford food, but it sure indicates the damage its policies have brought on all Canadians.

When the government was elected, it talked about modest, short-term deficits. We in the opposition were skeptical, and we said so. The deficits continued, with no plan in sight to balance the budget at all.

Then the pandemic hit and people panicked. The government took some action. It was not always successful, and it was deaf to concerns from the opposition about the poor design of many programs. We all remember the rental assistance program, in which the landlord for a business needed to approve their tenant's application so that he or she could get no money. That program lasted for months without being corrected, but overall, most Canadians were prepared to let the government spend some money to help Canadians get by.

Small deficits turned into record deficits pretty quickly with this government in charge. The pandemic is over, and it has been for a while, yet the government keeps spending. In fact, most costs of all new spending in this budget work out to \$4,300 for every single Canadian family. This is 10 times what an eligible family of four would get via the new grocery rebate. Put another way, the Liberals are spending 10 times more on their own priorities than what they are putting back in the pockets of working families, and 20 times what they are providing to seniors.

Often when I say that the government needs to eliminate the deficit and start paying down the debt, people will ask me, "What about health care?" The cost of servicing Canada's enormous debt continues to grow and will continue to do so as long as we the Liberal government is in power.

The Budget

In fact, the Prime Minister has added more debt than the previous 22 prime ministers combined. Canada's federal debt is now expected to be \$1.22 trillion this year. That is \$81,000 per household here in Canada, and the debt needs to be paid. Debt-servicing costs after seven years of Liberal fiscal management are predicted to be \$43.9 billion this year. That is a lot of money going to service a debt that could have been spent on much-needed services, such as health care.

The Liberals recently concluded a health care funding agreement with provinces, which was substantially less than what the provinces needed and what they were asking for. However, listening to the Liberals toot their own horn, one would think the provinces never had it so good, either. In Ontario, Canada's most populous province, additional federal investments in health care will equal \$8.4 billion over 10 years.

The Liberal debt-servicing payments are \$43.9 billion per year, so the Liberals will be spending five times more per year servicing the debt than they will be providing in new support to Ontarians for health care. That is a lot of hospital beds or nurses that will not be going to Collingwood General and Marine Hospital. That is, perhaps, a brand new wing that will not be built for Stevenson Memorial Hospital in Alliston.

Reckless spending has consequences. Running endless deficits has consequences. Record debt has consequences. The government has its priorities wrong. It keeps spending money to keep various interest groups satisfied, to help maintain its tenuous grip on power and to keep the leader of the fourth party in its pocket. It may work for a little while longer, but the average Canadian is tired of paying the price for the government's reckless spending and inability to get its fiscal house in order.

There are 40 billion reasons to vote against this budget, but I have only one vote. That vote will be against this inflationary budget.

• (1330)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, there is so much to unpack there, but let us just talk about a couple of issues.

First of all, at the beginning of his speech the member talked about the grocery rebate being a gimmicky thing the government has come up with. Let us not lose sight of the fact that it is a top-up to the existing GST rebates that are given to Canadians. We know what the Conservatives did last time we introduced that. First they said they would not vote for it. Then maybe there was some pressure, but they backpedalled a bit and said that they would vote for it.

If the member wants to call it a gimmick, that is fine. If Conservatives want to say that we are just trying to package up the GST rebate as a gimmick, that is fine. However, let us not forget, that at the end of the day, what they would be voting against would be giving more of that GST rebate to Canadians.

Could the member explain to the House why he was in favour of it recently, when the Conservatives did their flip-flop, but now, he

suddenly does not want to see it? How is the GST rebate this time not as beneficial to Canadians as it was the last time?

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Madam Speaker, I will reiterate that it is a gimmicky rebate for the simple reason that we should not need to do that for Canadians.

We now have 1.5 million people visiting food banks because of the policies of the Liberal government. We have people who need assistance. There is no doubt about it. However, all these increases have been created by Liberal policies. In my riding, whenever I am going out to see people, and I think maybe the member opposite should spend a lot of time doing that, I hear that that kind of money is not going to make a big difference when there is a carbon tax. On top of that, the government could lower the taxes for seniors.

Those are the things I am hearing in my office. I would not be too proud of the fact that the government is giving a grocery rebate.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his passionate speech.

He mentioned the government's deficit. What I have noticed is that the government announces spending, but does not manage to spend what it announces. In 2021-22, they failed to spend the \$38 billion they announced. In 2022-23, they failed to spend the nearly \$40 billion that was announced and we can expect the same amounts in the current budget.

In short, the federal government announces deficits when in reality it is squirrelling away significant sums of money in its coffers. In the meantime, it refuses to increase seniors' pensions, to modernize the Employment Insurance Act and to meet the demands of Quebec and the Canadian provinces on health transfers.

What does my colleague think of the federal government perpetuating the fiscal imbalance to the detriment of Quebec, the Canadian provinces and their populations?

[English]

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Madam Speaker, first of all, when we talk about announcements, I have never seen a government with more announcements and no delivery. It happens all the time. My office gets bombarded whenever the government makes an announcement, and then my staff is busy because there is no meat to what it is saying.

I agree with the member that a lot of money is not spent. We could look at different departments each and every year. I am on the veterans affairs committee, and a lot of that money that has been earmarked for programs is not spent.

The Budget

I also think we need to respect provinces. We could do a lot better if we worked together, and we would be able to accomplish a lot more and solve a lot of the problems that we have here in Canada, from housing to health care. We need to work together and have open discussions, respecting one another. However, once again, we have a Prime Minister who likes to create division in all things, including with the provinces.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Before I go to the next question, I want to remind all members to make sure their phones are on silent mode. A phone dinged a while ago, and it was problematic for the interpreters. We want to make sure that we prevent any hardships for them.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

• (1335)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is always quite entertaining to listen to the Conservatives tell us how much they care about seniors, veterans, single moms and working people. It is like being invited down to the riverbank to have a picnic with a crocodile. Maybe they have changed the way they do business, but if we look at historic records, we know it is not a good idea.

Let us talk about the member's love for seniors. Let us remember Stephen Harper, who announced this big transformation in Canada. He was going to go after the public funding of seniors' pensions, and he was going to raise the seniors' pension age. Where did he do that? He did not talk to seniors. He went to Davos. Stephen Harper went to the World Economic Forum to announce that he was going after Canadian seniors.

Would the hon. member explain why Stephen Harper thought it was better to tell Davos that he was targeting seniors than to have the guts to talk to senior citizens, face to face?

Mr. Terry Dowdall: Madam Speaker, I do not know if the member still watches a black and white TV, but there are colour TVs now and we have moved forward as a country. I believe that seniors are extremely important.

As I said, during the Harper days either, we never saw 1.5 million people at food banks. Quite frankly, I am not sure why we are talking about the past. Let us solve the problems today for all Canadians.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that if they want to have discussions or cross-talks, they should take them out to the lobby to allow respect for the person who has the floor.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Thornhill.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, today, I would like to add a voice that has been missing from this debate.

We talk a lot about what is happening right now, what is going on in our modern political world, what the Prime Minister said yesterday or what was in the headlines this morning, but there is another perspective that we need to consider that is equally important. More than just thinking about the present, we need to think about the future once in a while.

The choices we make here directly impact the country that we pass on to the next generation, the nation that it will grow up in, live in and inherit. In many ways, the biggest job is not the making the decisions that will impact us in the next 10 days, but rather the ones that are going to affect our country in the next 10 years. Our most sacred obligation is to build a country that is stronger than the one we have today, to build a future that is bright and that is prosperous and to leave the next generation unencumbered by bad decisions. To that end, the budget is one of the most important documents that we consider in Parliament because it sets out the long-term trajectory, or at least it is supposed to do that.

However, it is clear that this is no plan for the future. It is clear that the Liberals are not even thinking about it. What do we see under the Prime Minister? We see record-high projected debt. We see record lows in projected growth, the lowest in the G7, the lowest in decades. We see record inaction in protecting our environment through some bizarre obsession of punishing the consumer; inaction on building new housing or preserving the most basic of freedoms, the freedom to work hard and get ahead.

The finance minister had a brief epiphany months before presenting what was seemingly the opposite of what she presented weeks ago. Last year she said this, "Our economy will slow. There will be people whose mortgage rates will rise. Businesses will no longer be booming. Our unemployment rate will no longer be at its record low. That's going to be the case in Canada." We agree.

Then the budget happened. A reasonable prescription for slowing growth would of course be smaller deficits, lower taxes, more competition, less regulation, without massive subsidies. What we got, however, were bigger deficits, higher taxes, more regulation and more subsidies than this budget has pages.

Less than half a year ago, the fall economic statement projected a deficit of \$36-billion for this year, falling steadily over the next five years. There was even supposed to be a small surplus.

Fast forward, the deficits are exceeding \$40 billion over the next two years. There is no return to balance in sight. I get it. The Liberals do not think balance is their responsibility. They say instead that a declining debt-to-GDP ratio is the measure of success, but we did not get that either. That is going up.

The Budget

One in five Canadians are skipping meals because food price inflation is in the double digits. The average down payment needed for a home has doubled. It is the same for the average cost of rent and the average cost of a mortgage, which have all doubled. The cost of heating a home went up by 100% in some parts of our country. One in three Canadians say that they are struggling financially, 67% say they are cutting back and making sacrifices. Nine out of 10 young people do not ever believe they will own a home.

People are out of money and they are out of hope. That is after eight years of the government.

The government is putting its hands even deeper into the pockets of Canadians. That is what budget 2023 is: more taxes on pensions and EI; more taxes on beer, wine, and spirits; more taxes on gas, groceries and home heating.

It is painfully clear that the government does not understand the struggles of the middle class or even the simple principles that govern the country's economy, because its response is more of the same. It is more of the reckless, misguided, ineffective ideas that got us into this mess in the first place. Therefore, forgive me if I do not think the Liberals can fix this.

We have the most unaffordable homes in the OECD. We have the second-biggest real estate bubble in the world.

The theme of this budget is "Made in Canada". It is right on the front page. What have the Liberals made in Canada? They have a made-in-Canada cost of living crisis, a made-in-Canada housing crisis, a made-in-Canada opioid and addiction crisis and a made-in-Canada violent crime crisis. That is their record over the last years. We cannot afford to spend billions of dollars with no plan to pay it back.

• (1340)

Never in the history of our country has there been a prime minister, who has been in that chair for eight years, who has spent so much so much money to achieve so little. We cannot afford to pay the interest that the Liberals are racking up on the taxpayer credit card.

This year, our debt will cost nearly \$44 billion. In five years, it will be \$50 billion. We cannot afford the cost of spending on consumption instead of spending on investments. We cannot stop. We cannot afford to not build new homes. We cannot afford to have an environment plan that is a tax plan that does not even lower emissions.

What happens in 10 or 20 years when the bill comes due for a decade and a half of Liberal debt and deficit? What is going to happen when we have had 20 or 30 years of building four homes for every 10 new people in our country? What is going to happen when we have had 10 years of a carbon tax that keeps going up and emissions that have, so far, followed suit? More important, who is going to pay?

I do not have the answer to that question, because I honestly do not know. However, what I do know is that it is not going to be the Prime Minister. However, it will be a problem for the next generation, the young people who will want to buy a home, who will want to get a job, who will want to build a family; the people who are

already struggling today; the people whom we are supposed to be leaving a bright, optimistic future, the ones we are supposed to be setting up for success. We have had eight years of the Prime Minister and the Liberals are leaving them with no hope, no money and no opportunity.

We will be voting against budget 2023. We know that better is possible in our country. The Prime Minister said it himself, but that is not what he has delivered. We know that we can aim our sights higher than 0.3% real GDP growth. We know that we need to stand up for the common sense of the common people. We know that we need to be here to bring home a better, brighter future for Canadians.

We are going to do that by creating powerful paycheques with lower taxes that make hard work pay again. We are going to do that by ending the inflationary debt and deficits once and for all, and to bring home lower prices and lower interest rates so hard-working families, hard-working people can save more of their own money.

We are going to protect the future and the prosperity of the next generation by living within their means, something that the government has no idea how to do.

We are going to bring homes that people can afford by removing those in the way and cutting the red tape to freeing up land so we can actually build housing. This is how we build a strong and prosperous country, with a small government that makes room for bigger people.

We know that we have the best, the brightest and most talented individuals in our country who want to do well, who want to have better lives for their families and who want to work in their professions. We know that we are blessed to live in a country with fields full of wheat, with oceans full of fish, with reserves full of oil and with brains full of knowledge. We are squandering every single opportunity by eight years of the government's record.

We know that we live in the best country on earth and we think it is time for Canadians to have a government that also believes so. It is time for change and it is time for a government that thinks about a budget focused on the future, focused on growth and not just focused on staying in power.

• (1345)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member opposite, but I am confused. The program we have in place to fight climate change, the price on pollution, has shown to be the best market mechanism to actually combat greenhouse gas emissions. This is about the future, as is investing in clean tech. I am wondering why the member opposite believes that we are not focused on the future when this budget is all about the future.

The Budget

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, let me clear it up for the member.

The carbon tax does not work; emissions have gone up. Canadians pay more than they get back. Therefore, the Liberals' claim that it is revenue neutral, both the parliamentary Budget Officer and the member's own Minister of Finance said the same thing. The carbon tax does not work. In fact, this is a government that reveres the President of the United States, who stood here and talked about a climate plan. The Liberals revere his climate plan, which has no consumer carbon tax. They should take a lesson from him.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. She began by saying that we need to think about the future. At the same time, she criticized the government for taking action on the environment.

For the Bloc Québécois, both the future, and even the present, depend on a healthy planet. It means being able to breathe unpolluted air, protect biodiversity and not get sick because what we put in our bodies is polluted. This planet sustains us. There is no option B, that much is clear. The Bloc Québécois, unlike my colleague, feels that the government is not doing enough.

My colleague ended her speech by saying that she wants to have oceans full of fish and reserves full of oil. There are oil spills in Alaska right now because of Imperial Oil. Indigenous communities have no fish to catch, and they are drinking contaminated water. Rising temperatures are destroying the oceans and therefore the fish. I would like a brief comment from my colleague on this.

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, I am not sure there was a question there, but I will certainly speak.

The government does not have an environmental plan. It has a tax plan disguised as an environmental plan, which takes more money out of the pockets of Canadians and actually produces no results. The government has hung its hat on a consumer carbon tax that has increased emissions, that has taken more money out of the pockets of Canadians and that has raised the price of gas, groceries and home heating, and it has nothing to show for it.

Members can forgive me if I do not think it is an environmental plan, because nobody else here does either.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, it should be pretty straightforward to take on the Liberals. Sometimes it is like wrestling with mediocre Teletubbies over there, but the Conservatives have to claim everything is propaganda, because they are offering nothing.

The idea that the Conservatives care about a housing crisis is ridiculous. I was here for all the years of Stephen Harper, who did nothing. The idea that Pierre Elliott Trudeau's son caused the oxy crisis, when Stephen Harper did nothing on it, we know that is false. It is not propaganda; it is false. Then, on a climate plan, it is ridiculous to hear the Conservatives talk about a climate plan, when half their backbench believes the earth is flat.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague why the Conservatives have to come up with the so-called gatekeepers and misinforma-

tion, when the fact is that building housing in Canada requires investments and money, and that is something they refuse, and have always refused, to put in. That is why we have the extent of the crisis we do now.

• (1350)

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Madam Speaker, when I was a young staffer here, I used to watch that member oppose the government before he decided to check his principles at the door, stop representing his constituents and join the government in ensuring that life was unaffordable for Canadians. That member used to be a part of an opposition, before he joined the government.

In terms of environmental plans or housing plans, that member opposite has not brought an idea to the floor on them. In fact, he has decided to support the government in everything it does, including by voting against ensuring that the government is held accountable at committees and in the House of Commons for all the scandals. The member opposite, who has joined that government, can join the scandal ridden government that we have today.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to find a few minutes to join my colleagues. It is always interesting following my colleague from Thornhill, who is my riding's representative. I think we are all here for the same reason, which is that we want to make a difference in the lives of many people. We may come from different sides of the equation on a variety of issues, but other than that, outside the House I think all of us get along quite well and are actually working at trying to get along better, in spite of all the things that get said here in the House.

I am pleased to have a few minutes to comment on the budget and its importance. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Parkdale—High Park.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance introduced budget 2023, called “A Made-in-Canada Plan: Strong Middle Class, Affordable Economy, Healthy Future”, and I think those are the words that talk about all of us Canadians and what we want, where we want to go and the kind of Canada we want to see.

Canadians are clear: They want good jobs. They want clean air. They want a strong economy where everyone has a fair and real chance of success. Our government, I believe, is providing just that.

The Budget

In the months and years to come, we need to seize the remarkable opportunity before us. There are two fundamental shifts in the global economy. The first is the race to build clean economies of the 21st century. Clearly, when we look at climate change, the impact on the environment and what has happened this year in North America when it comes to storms and tornadoes and so on, these are pure examples of the need for investment in fighting climate change. Second, our allies are accelerating efforts to friendshore their economies by building their critical supply chains through democracies like our own. These are two great opportunities to move Canada forward and make the world a better place.

At a challenging time and in a challenging world, budget 2023 will ensure that Canadians can continue to count on their government to be there for them in good times and in bad. Budget 2023 is focused on making life more affordable and making housing more affordable. I think we have heard about housing all day today, which is great, because for years we were not talking about housing. We knew there was a tremendous need. Our national housing strategy and the investment of billions of dollars that our government has made over the years ensure that affordable housing is being built and that seniors and others have access to good-quality housing.

Focusing on making life more affordable, for the middle class as well, includes investing in growing the economy and also strengthening Canada's social safety net. I am very proud to have seen what our government has done, through the difficulty with the pandemic and so on.

Budget 2023 is also delivering new measures for support for the most vulnerable Canadians with respect to the cost of living. Particularly, budget 2023 offers a one-time grocery rebate. It is a bit interesting to call it a grocery rebate, as my colleague pointed out earlier, but that is what it is. It is to help offset a few dollars of the cost of living, which seniors and many people on limited incomes are struggling with.

The budget provided, again, \$2.5 billion. That may sound like a little bit of money when one talks about a grocery rebate, but when one is looking at the overall costs to the tax envelope, \$2.5 billion is a considerable amount of money, and that is targeted inflation assistance for over 11 million low- and middle-income Canadians and families.

Moreover, this year's budget introduces automatic tax filing for low-income Canadians. My office, for the last 15 or 16 years, has provided four Saturdays each year to give income tax support to low-income constituents in Humber River—Black Creek. This coming Saturday will be the fourth one we are doing. My staff come in on those four Saturdays and spend the day, along with registered accountants who come in and volunteer their time as well.

The fact that, in the future, some of these constituents will have their taxes done automatically will be a big help, because there is also a group of people who do not file, for a variety of reasons, and they are missing out on resources and money that they very much could use. I am always encouraging them to make sure that everybody files their income taxes. People say it is too cumbersome and too difficult, so we as a government are going to try to relieve that as well.

• (1355)

Another issue we continue to hear a lot about is education. All of us hear from student associations from the different universities and colleges. For many years, they have come to see us, asking about relief for their loans and about increasing their capacity. Now that students do not have to pay interest on their loans, that makes a huge difference for them. They will not be graduating from college or university with a \$30,000 debt. The debt will be much lower than that and much more easily paid back after they have become employed and not before.

I have to say that I was really pleased to get some of the updated numbers for the year. In my riding itself, over \$23 million was given out through the Canada child benefit. That is an important amount of money. Approximately \$8,000 went to many individual families with children, and that makes a huge difference. When we see these families with backpacks, proper clothes and the like, we can tell that they have been receiving that extra support.

I will talk about the dental plan. Already 4,000 children have benefited from the new Canada dental program. We are talking not only about investing in the large items in the budget, but also about investing in people and making a difference in the lives of so many who are important. We talked about the dental program being expanded. I recall many times when I was knocking on doors talking to seniors who complained about the issue of dental costs. We cannot control what dentists charge. It is expensive, but seniors need dental care and do not have the money for it. With this dental program, they are going to be able to go to the dentist and get the kind of help they need as seniors, without having to put out thousands of dollars. They will get a degree of assistance that will make it more affordable.

Some of these measures are in place.

Now I will talk about the tax-free home savings plan. Most of us have children who want to buy a home. As of April 1, the tax-free first home savings account is now available to my grandchildren to help them purchase their first home, which is critically important for them. We all talk about people getting their foot in the market, and that is what this is intended to do. It will help as they go through the system.

Statements by Members

Now I will get into the health care issue. As many members in the House did, I met with members of the Canadian Cancer Society today and heard first-hand about its challenges. Although we think we are moving ahead so quickly to solve problems, I listened to three women who told me of the difficulties they have had, of having to put out their own money for basic support within the Cancer Society and the health care system. They did not have sufficient income. They had to rely on being able to go to work to keep their health care, because there were no resources for them to access the necessary supports or mental health support. They talked about the length of time they had to wait to get treatment and about the issue of genetic testing, which we know is out there and available today, but was not available to many of these people. It took many years before they had the chance to get that, which was probably very late.

A lot of the stories I heard this morning from these women show us clearly that there are huge gaps in our health care system. More money has to be put into it, and, yes, it will be transferred to the provinces. We have to ensure the provinces are going to provide the services required, so at the federal level we have put in an additional \$198 billion over 10 years, including \$46 billion in new funding for provinces and territories that we want to see get transferred to our hospital system and our health care workers.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

BLUE MOUNTAIN-BIRCH COVE LAKES WILDERNESS AREA

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the heart of Halifax West is a pristine piece of nature that calls to visitors from near and far: the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Area. Long before I became an MP, I would hear about how significant this natural gem is to residents in my community.

In October 2021, a meeting with the Friends of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes was my very first meeting as a member of Parliament. We pored over maps of the area and talked about the exciting opportunity for a national urban park that lay ahead.

Since then, Parks Canada has worked with stakeholder groups, other levels of government and the Mi'kmaq to conserve nature and support reconciliation at Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes. I thank everyone whose advocacy and partnership have helped us get to this point today. I am looking forward to sharing more on our progress soon, as we work toward making Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes the first national urban park in Atlantic Canada.

DAFFODIL MONTH

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, cancer is a life-altering experience, which, unfortunately, too many Canadians have gone through. It remains the leading cause of death in Canada. In April, the Canadian Cancer Society runs the daffodil campaign. Let us not forget to recognize

and support the society's admirable work for patients, survivors and loved ones affected by cancer.

We in this place have joined forces with the Canadian Cancer Society through an all-party parliamentary caucus so that parliamentarians can better address this disease, which affects one out of every four Canadians. Many of my Conservative colleagues are excited to be part of this caucus and will firmly support the society's goal to increase access to palliative care across Canada. This is just one example of how we can take further action.

Last, let us thank the many researchers, patients, survivors, donors and volunteers who assist in the fight against cancer and in preventing the disease. Many are here in Ottawa today and we thank them for their efforts. As Canadians, let us work together and make a difference for everyone.

DAFFODIL MONTH

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this April marks the beginning of the Canadian Cancer Society's daffodil campaign, which raises awareness of and funding for Canadians who have been diagnosed with cancer, and for cancer research. We all know someone who has been affected by cancer: a friend, a parent, a child or a neighbour. Those affected are almost 50% of Canadians, young or old and from all backgrounds. This is why it is so important to make sure we do all that we can to support preventative care, research and treatment in the fight against cancer.

The daffodil campaign's impact can be felt from coast to coast to coast as it supports nationwide support systems and helps to support world-class research right here in Canada. Across Canada, Canadians are stepping up. In my own community of Vancouver this weekend, the Canadian Cancer Society hosted the Daffodil Ball to raise money in support of cancer research in B.C. and across Canada. This year it raised \$3 million.

I urge all my colleagues to support the Canadian Cancer Society's daffodil campaign, wear their daffodil pins and continue to fight against cancer.

[Translation]

CLAUDE THIVIERGE

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to pay tribute to a talented artist from Salaberry—Suroît, Claude Thivierge.

His latest accomplishment speaks for itself. Mr. Thivierge designed a coin that portrays a grey wolf in black and gold, evoking a yin and yang motif. This majestic coin won a Coin of the Year award at an international competition. What an incredible achievement.

As an artist living in Rivière-Beaudette, Mr. Thivierge is inspired by wildlife. The duality of our wild and human nature serves as a muse for this very prolific artist, who is keen to share his talent.

Along with his colleague Madeleine Turgeon, he recently unveiled nine colourful works of art created to adorn the walls of the pediatric unit of the Suroît Hospital, much to the delight of patients, their loved ones and health care staff.

Congratulations to Claude Thivierge. This award is a testament to his talent. Well done, Claude.

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● (1405)

SOPHIE GRENIER

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to stand up today and acknowledge rising star and Orléans ambassador Sophie Grenier.

Sophie just won season nine of the Quebec television program *La Voix*. From the very start, she wowed the show's coaches and fans with her powerful voice and emotional delivery.

She owes her win not only to her own talent, of course, but also to years of vocal training at Orléans' Sing House Studios, where she has studied singing since early childhood under the supervision of owner Chantal Hackett.

Sing House Studios is a small business that provides young Franco-Ontarians with a musical education and is active in the community.

I am proud to pay tribute to Sophie Grenier, and I thank her for representing the Franco-Ontarian community in music and song across Quebec, Canada and the world.

* * *

[English]

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while Canadians from across the country are struggling to make ends meet thanks to inflation and the skyrocketing costs of living, the Prime Minister and his Liberal cronies have never had it so good.

Despite the fact that the Prime Minister has been found guilty of breaking ethics laws twice, and his party has been found guilty of breaking ethics laws six times, violations continue to run rampant. Not only did the trade minister give her best friend a \$23,000 contract, but the housing minister then gave a whopping \$93,000 to his senior staff's PR firm. All this is happening while Canadians have never struggled more.

Across this country, including in Saskatchewan, 20% of people are skipping meals as they simply cannot afford them, more than half the population is paying over \$200 monthly on home heating and the carbon tax is making things even worse.

The corrupt, out-of-touch Liberals are thriving while they sit on Canadians' backs and watch them suffer. It is time to make Canada

Statements by Members

proud, honoured and respected once again. It is time for a new Conservative government.

* * *

EID AL-FITR

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Friday, April 21, or Saturday, April 22, based on the moon sighting, Muslims across the world, including myself, several members of this House and many of my constituents in Brampton Centre, will celebrate Eid al-Fitr.

Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the month of Ramadan where Muslims fast daily from dawn to dusk, participate in communal prayers and give back to their communities. Eid celebrations traditionally last three days, starting with a special prayer on Eid morning. The festivities also include sharing meals, giving gifts and spending time with family, friends and community.

To all of the Muslims who will be celebrating Eid al-Fitr this weekend, from my family to theirs, *Eid Mubarak*.

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CANCER

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every April, the Canadian Cancer Society hosts its daffodil campaign, a symbol of strength, resilience and courage for those living with cancer. Today, cancer survivors have come to Ottawa to share their experiences and advocate for better cancer care.

Cancer is the leading cause of death for Canadians. Nearly half of us can expect to be diagnosed with cancer at some point in our lives, and if not ourselves, then we will be affected by the toll on family and friends in supporting someone we know and love who is going through their fight against cancer, like mothers, fathers, husbands, wives, siblings and friends. We all know someone who is bravely meeting the fight or, in some cases, mourning the loss of a loved one.

We also have hope. We proudly wear daffodil pins in support of those affected by cancer and recognize the incredible research and progress that is under way to accelerate change. Many cancers are no longer the death sentence that they once were. With more research and treatments, more preventative screenings and palliative care, each day we are closer to the goal of saving lives.

Together, we can and will continue to work toward a brighter, cancer-free future for all Canadians.

* * *

● (1410)

2020 SHOOTINGS IN NOVA SCOTIA

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, April 18 and 19, 2020, are the days ingrained in the memories of all Nova Scotians, and indeed all Canadians. Today marks three years since an inexplicable madman inserted himself into the lives of 22 Nova Scotians and an unborn baby.

Statements by Members

The hurt and disbelief continue to be a part of everyday life. Events such as this do not happen in Canada, let alone in a small community such as Portapique, Nova Scotia. Words fail when we attempt to understand the gravity of the situation, when we attempt to grasp the ongoing rawness of emotions or attempt to understand how and why this happened.

Our thoughts, at times, are frozen as we attempt to process, to interpret and to explain the shock, the horror and the sadness experienced by all affected. Those of us left behind need to continue to honour their memory, ensure the terrible events are not forgotten, and hold accountable the systems and institutions that failed these Canadians in their time of greatest need.

I invite everyone in the House to keep all of those left behind, especially the families, in their thoughts and in their prayers.

* * *

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is over 27,000 kilometres, connects us from coast to coast to coast, and travels through urban, rural, wild lands and waterways? It is the Trans Canada Trail. It is a beautiful pathway that connects us all. It is something where we can all go out, no matter what our ability, and explore the world around us.

Last year, we made the largest single investment in the Trans Canada Trail. It goes toward enhancements, maintenance and expansion, and it is something that we can all enjoy together. My favourite part is the ravines around the Don Valley and along the waterways. In all of our backyards, there is a place for us to be able to explore.

I invite everyone to check out the Trans Canada Trail. Let us celebrate this wonderful network that connects us all.

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LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, just this past Christmas, the Prime Minister and his family holidayed at a luxurious estate in Jamaica belonging to a wealthy family that just so happened to have recently made a large donation to the Trudeau Foundation. Who would have thought? While one in five Canadians are skipping meals, the Prime Minister's lavish and luxurious family trip cost taxpayers \$160,000 for security and staff accommodations.

Nine in 10 youth believe they will never afford a home. Our national debt has doubled. This morning, gas prices in the Fraser Valley hit \$1.85. Inflation is at a 40-year high. After eight years of the Prime Minister, Canadians cannot catch a break, let alone pay for a vacation.

When will the Prime Minister show some respect to Canadians, show some respect to our conflict of interest law and stop wasting our taxpayer dollars on trips with wealthy donors?

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “In Vancouver, some residents resort to dumpster diving to combat high food prices”. That is today's headline in The Globe and Mail. Here is another shocking statistic. Food banks and other programs serving vulnerable Canadians are expected to serve 60% more people per month in 2023. It is fair to say we have a cost of living crisis in this country. Where is the Prime Minister during this pain and suffering and increase in financial anxiety? Well, he is taking luxurious and extravagant vacations to Jamaica that cost taxpayers \$162,000, he is staying in a \$6,000-a-night hotel room and he is surfing in Tofino in an \$18.5 million rental property.

The Prime Minister has a permanent pass on “out-of-touch island”. It is gross, it is insulting and it is time for a new leader who respects Canadians and their money.

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BATTLE OF VIMY RIDGE

Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last Sunday marked the 106th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. On April 9, 1917, Canadians from coast to coast joined together on the beaches of Vimy Ridge to fight one of Canada's most decisive military victories.

Thanks to the strong leadership of General Sir Arthur Currie and the use of innovative tactics, such as the creeping barrage and leaping frog, to advance across no man's land, Vimy Ridge was taken in a day, but the battle came at a great cost. Nearly 3,600 Canadians lost their lives and over 7,000 more were wounded.

On the event of Vimy Ridge Day, I encourage all members and all Canadians to reflect on their sacrifices and honour their bravery. Let us never forget their stories, their character and their place in our great history.

* * *

● (1415)

YOM HASHOAH

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Yom HaShoah is a day to remember the six million Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust, including members of my own family. All of my relatives were killed by the Nazis, except for five: my grandparents, father and two uncles. My father, Albert Gazan, was two and a half years old when the Germans invaded Holland. He spent the entire war in hiding, being sheltered by Dutch families. His mother, my grandmother, Gina Gazan, spent time in a concentration camp. Miraculously, they survived, but three-quarters of Dutch Jews did not.

It was over a year before my father was reunited with my grandfather and another several months with my maternal grandmother. He became an advocate for peace, justice and human rights. Their stories must be told and retold. We are seeing a rise of Holocaust denial and revisionism, and I fear this will get even worse after the last survivors pass away.

We must not let their stories die and confront denial with truth. Today and every day, we remember and we must also say never again.

* * *

[Translation]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is more noble than giving freely? What is more noble than a person with means being kind enough to use that strength to lift up their entire community? That is what more than two million Quebecers do every day when they volunteer.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to use this 49th National Volunteer Week to thank them. Since this year's theme is "Let's volunteer in unison", let us all stand up and applaud those who help our seniors and children every day. Let us applaud the volunteers working in our community organizations, our health care centres, our learning centres. These often modest but always generous people use their light to make others shine.

This week, let us flip the script. Let us make our volunteers the stars and shine a spotlight on the essential role they play in Quebec society as a whole.

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[English]

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government has close ties to the Trudeau Foundation, but the Prime Minister does not seem to care about accountability or transparency. First he chose a special rapporteur who was previously a member of the same foundation to be investigated for foreign interference and now he is making a desperate attempt to attack Conservatives. He wants to make it sound like the Trudeau Foundation is similar to an ordinary charity that has been victimized by partisanship from the opposition, but that is quite a stretch.

This is an organization that is listed under a government department's portfolio. The foundation's annual report also states that it reserves spots for the Minister of Innovation to appoint directors and members. Though the Prime Minister has officially divested his interests while holding public office, his name is still listed as a succession member.

Sadly, the NDP has sold out its principles for a coalition with the Liberals and is not supporting our efforts for transparency. Even if the NDP-Liberal coalition votes against it, Conservatives will demand nothing less than a fully independent inquiry.

Oral Questions

SIKH HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in April we celebrate Sikh Heritage Month, which is a time to recognize and appreciate the rich history and culture of Sikhs in Canada and across the globe. We celebrate our heritage as a time of joy to start off a vibrant harvest season and the founding of the Khalsa in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh.

Canada is home to one of the largest Sikh populations globally and there are many organizations working hard to help the community, like Seva Food Bank, Khalsa Aid Canada and many others. In fact, last week I saw a true example of selfless service as Avaal Technology founder Dara Nagra donated \$1 million to the SickKids Foundation. These are true values of Sikhism, and are shared with Canadians as well.

On behalf of the residents in Brampton South, I wish everyone in Brampton and around the world a happy Sikh Heritage Month and a very happy Vaisakhi.

[Member spoke in Punjabi]

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[Translation]

ETHICS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): According to a survey, two-thirds of Canadians have to scale back their summer vacation plans and one-quarter of Canadians will not be taking a vacation at all because of the inflation caused by this Prime Minister. Today, we learned that not only did he force these same taxpayers to pay \$160,000 for his vacation, but that he also spent that vacation in a luxury villa owned by a Trudeau Foundation donor.

Did the Prime Minister pay for his own stay in that villa?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows very well, we have been friends with the family in question for 50 years. We have always worked with the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that all the rules are followed.

If the Leader of the Opposition were really concerned about the cost of living for Canadians, he would be supporting our budget, which is there to give Canadians more money in these difficult times. There is the grocery rebate that we are asking the House to fast-track. There is also direct support for dental care, but the Conservatives voted against that.

We will continue to be there for Canadians.

*Oral Questions**[English]*

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because of the galloping inflation the Prime Minister has caused, two-thirds of Canadians say they are cutting back on summer vacations, and one-quarter say they have cancelled their vacations altogether. However, they will still have to pay for someone else's vacation, \$160,000 of taxpayer expenses for the Prime Minister to go down to a private villa, the luxurious villa of a super-rich Trudeau Foundation donor for which the nightly cost is as much as \$9,000.

How much did the Prime Minister pay for his accommodations at this luxurious villa?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our family has been good friends with this family for about 50 years. As always, we work with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure that all rules are followed.

If the Leader of the Opposition was truly concerned about affordability for Canadians, he would be voting to support our budget, which puts forward concrete measures to help Canadians from coast to coast to coast. He would be fast-tracking the grocery rebate through this House to make sure we could deliver, as quickly as possible, help to 11 million Canadians, and he would not have stood to vote against the dental care supports, which already help 250,000 young people right across this country.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, this is a villa that rents out, commercially, for as much as \$9,000 per night. If any other Canadian had stayed there, that is what they would have had to pay, and they would have had to pay for their own airfare, not having a private jet.

The Prime Minister wants us to believe that these Trudeau Foundation donors offered him a \$9,000-a-night vacation for nothing. We know nothing is free. This is about influence and power for the super-rich.

Why will the Prime Minister not answer? How much did he pay in accommodation per night at this luxurious villa?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I guess the Leader of the Opposition struggles with the concept of friendship.

My father was godfather to one of their kids. Their father was godfather to one of my brothers. This is 50 years of friendship. Of course, we worked with the Ethics Commissioner to make sure all the rules were followed.

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to talk about friendships, let us talk about the fact that he is running to his American billionaire tech giant friends to attack the local news that Canadians are relying on. Shame on him for going after Canadian content, Canadian news and Canadian things that people care about.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the only thing Canadian about the Prime Minister's vacation is the tax dollars forced to pay for it.

The Prime Minister refuses to answer the question. He knows that these powerful interests are buying influence while making the Prime Minister more out of touch with the people on whom he is

imposing his inflationary taxes and deficits. This is consistent with having already been found guilty of taking a quarter-of-a-million-dollar vacation from a billionaire who was seeking a government grant from him.

If the Prime Minister has nothing to hide, will he tell us, did he take these \$9,000-a-night villas for free?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows well, there are certain security protocols that the RCMP needs to follow for all prime ministers, regardless of political parties or partisan stripes.

Again, if the Leader of the Opposition genuinely cared about affordability for Canadians, he would be voting in favour of our dental benefits, which are helping hundreds of thousands of kids right now and would help millions of Canadians into the future, but he voted against it. He voted against tax cuts for the middle class while we raised them on the wealthiest 1%. Now, he is running to his American billionaire buddies to go after local news for Canadians. That is not what Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this is from a guy who took a \$160,000 taxpayer-funded trip to a private villa, for which there is no security reason he could not pay for his own room. He took a \$6,000-a-night vacation in London and two weeks in Costa Rica in the middle of the summer. He went surfing in Tofino on truth and reconciliation day at taxpayers' expense, and he got a guilty verdict for staying at billionaire island.

The Prime Minister is out of touch, and Canadians are out of money. When will he stop with these vacations and start working for the people in this country?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Conservative leader cared as much about Canadians as he does about partisan attacks, he would actually be stepping up to support our delivery of direct benefits to Canadians. He continues to stand against the child care agreements, down to \$10 a day in six provinces and territories across the country, already saving Canadians right across the country hundreds and hundreds of dollars every single month. He would be standing in favour of the dental care supports we are sending to hundreds of thousands of kids, instead of continuing to vote against them. He would be accelerating the delivery of the grocery rebate to help 11 million Canadians—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Beloeil—Chambly.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, friendship really matters. There is an old saying in Quebec that a friend is a friend.

I am not going to ask questions that the Prime Minister is not going to answer. I will assume that he knew that the Green family contributed to the Trudeau Foundation before going on vacation with them. I will move on to the ethical point.

Can he tell the House, Quebecers and Canadians the cost of the accommodation where he stayed, and whether he personally paid, out of his own pocket, for the stay?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our families have been friends for 50 years. However, when it comes to friendships and for other vacations, we always consult the Office of the Ethics Commissioner to ensure that all the rules are followed.

That is what Canadians expect, and that is what we do every time. It is important to follow the rules, and that is exactly what we did.

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner also should have been told that the Trudeau Foundation had just received a donation.

In another example, the Chinese government wanted to donate \$1 million to the University of Montreal—not out of friendship; we are not naive—so it went through Zhang Bin. Rather than protecting Quebec's largest academic institution, the Trudeau Foundation took a \$200,000 cut and asked for a statue of Trudeau senior.

Will the Prime Minister admit that it is completely inappropriate for him to make any decisions on the issue of Chinese interference, and will he defer to the House?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, I have had no direct or indirect involvement with the foundation that bears my father's name for 10 years.

* * *

[English]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadian families and workers have been hard hit by inflation. Do members know who was not hard hit by inflation? It is CEOs. CEOs have made record salaries. In fact, the average CEO in our country makes 241 times more than the average employee. This is outrageous. Canadians are frustrated by it, and they have the right to be.

Will the Prime Minister realize that life is not all sun and beaches and that we need to support our initiative to make sure we can raise the salary of workers and tackle this inequality?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have been, and will continue to remain, committed to making sure everyone pays their fair share of taxes. We know the cost of living continues to be a real concern of Canadians. Even with inflation coming down, with more good news today, we know that the cost of groceries remains too high. That is why we are moving forward with the grocery rebate for 11 million Canadians in a targeted way that will not contribute to inflation, and that is why we are hoping that all members in this House accelerate this grocery

rebate, so we can deliver it to Canadians who need it as quickly as possible.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Liberals are out of touch with the reality of Canadians.

Our idea is simple: If a company like Loblaws can afford to pay its CEO, Galen Weston, 431 times more than its employees, that company can afford to invest more in our society. If that company wants to pay less in taxes, it can always raise workers' wages.

Will the Prime Minister support our initiative to increase workers' wages?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the first things we did was raise taxes on the wealthiest 1% in this country so we could lower them for the middle class. We continue adopting measures that help those who truly need it, ensuring we stopped, for example, sending benefit cheques to millionaire families. We will continue to be there to help people—by providing the grocery rebate, for example—and we are asking everyone in the House to help fast-track the delivery of those benefits. I hope that all parliamentarians will speed up the process to ensure that Canadians who need this help receive it as soon as possible.

* * *

[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians got sky-high heating, grocery, rent and mortgage bills this holiday season while the Prime Minister was sky-high in a private jet to another rich Liberal crony's private estate in the Caribbean on the taxpayer dime, who happens to be a massive Trudeau Foundation donor.

This out-of-touch, trust-fund Prime Minister does not understand or feel the pain that his inflation caused, as 1.5 million Canadians are going to a food bank in a single month. Will the Prime Minister stand up today and apologize for using taxpayers' money to vacation at a Trudeau Foundation donor's estate?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the point of poverty, when that party was in power, there were 2.7 million more people who were in poverty than there are today, and that includes 800,000 children.

If a prime minister is to travel, there has to be security, so I would ask members of the party opposite this: Is their position that there should be no security for a prime minister who travels on vacation with his family, or is their position that a prime minister should never take a vacation with his family?

Oral Questions

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, he could have paid for his own vacation. I guess the Prime Minister went on vacation so Canadians would not have to. As Canadians pay \$2,200 a month for rent, the Prime Minister stays in lavish, \$6,000-a-night hotel rooms. One in five Canadians is skipping meals, while the Prime Minister gets to charge \$55,000 for groceries. Sixty-two per cent of Canadians have to scale back on vacations, while the Prime Minister charges Canadians to vacation on a huge Trudeau Foundation donor's estate.

I just have a simple question: Which high-priced Liberal consultant gave this stupid advice, or was this another one of the Prime Minister's tone-deaf decisions?

The Speaker: I just want to ask members to be judicious in the language being used in the chamber on both sides, whether they are asking the question or answering it.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member across is well aware, this government has taken a series of measures to help those who are dealing with the global impact of inflation, and the party opposite has voted against every single one of those measures and continues to oppose measures like the important grocery rebate that we put forward.

However, I would say this to members of the party opposite. I get that they do not like the Prime Minister. I get that they have personal animosity and partisan attacks that they want to level against him, but I would ask them again: Do they believe that a prime minister should not be able to travel at Christmas with his family, or do they believe that he should not have security when he does so?

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all we are saying is that he should pay for his own vacations and not stick taxpayers with the bill.

While Canadians were experiencing the chaos that his mismanagement of the airport system caused, the Prime Minister got to skip the queues and jet down on yet another Caribbean vacation. The Prime Minister never has to pay for the terrible policies that his decisions make. Other Canadians have to pay for the higher cost of the fuel they put in their cars; he does not. He also does not have to pay for his own home heating fuel, and now we are finding out that he does not even pay for his own vacation.

Treasury Board guidelines say that he should reimburse at least the commercial cost. Did he?

• (1435)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I can absolutely confirm that he did cover that cost. I can confirm that to the member across, yes, absolutely.

I would ask the member to step away from the idea of attacking this Prime Minister, and from his partisanship, and I would ask him about a future prime minister. Would a future prime minister be afforded the opportunity to take a vacation with his family? If he believes that is the case, does he believe that a prime minister should

be afforded security? If he does believe that, which is the vast preponderance of these costs, then certainly he would see that the actions taken were reasonable.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if the government House leader is going to answer specific questions, the Prime Minister dodged this question five times. Now, the government House leader just answered that yes, he does pay, but the specific question is this: Did the Prime Minister reimburse or pay for the commercial value of the accommodations? The accommodations for this luxury villa run as high as \$9,000 per night. The specific question is this: Did the Prime Minister pay for it?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister taking a vacation with his family over Christmas, with his friends, is a preoccupation—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I want to remind hon. members to not call each other names.

The hon. government House leader.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, it is clear in the questions, and in the way those questions are posed, that the interest of the party opposite is a partisan interest. It is an interest to attack to advance its partisan advantage.

I would suggest to those members that, at this moment, when we are dealing with a series of issues on this planet, such as global inflation and the war in Europe, that their particular fixation with the Prime Minister being able to take a vacation with his family and friends at Christmas is very revealing.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spent two weeks on vacation at Peter Green's estate down south. This trip cost taxpayers \$160,000. He confirmed that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner gave him the green light for the trip, but I am not convinced that the commissioner knew that the vacation would take place at the home of a Trudeau Foundation donor.

Can the Prime Minister tell us today whether the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner was aware, yes or no, that the invitation came from a Trudeau Foundation donor?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the question is clear. Can the Prime Minister go on vacation with his family? If the Prime Minister goes on vacation at Christmas with his family, can he have security for his family? If so, obviously, there is a cost for that. That cost is quite reasonable.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the most ironic thing about this saga is that, according to media reports, the Prime Minister's own staff was concerned about the optics of this trip. We know that 62% of Canadians are cancelling or considering cancelling their vacations because they cannot afford them, due to inflation.

Let us come back to the concerns of the Prime Minister's staff. Were they concerned because Canadians were going through tough times or because the Prime Minister was going to the residence of a Trudeau Foundation donor?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the concern of the party opposite is purely partisan.

There are many really serious problems in Canada, such as affordability and the cost of living. These problems are addressed in the budget, which is being studied in Parliament. The Conservative Party could vote for measures to help Canadians, but no, as usual the Conservative Party is only interested in playing politics.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the CBC—the Liberal propaganda arm, according to the Conservative Party—reports that the Prime Minister spent his Christmas holiday with friends who made significant donations to the Trudeau Foundation. These are childhood friends, one of whom is Pierre Elliott Trudeau's godson. These people are major donors to a foundation embroiled in allegations of suspicious donations linked to the Chinese government. Those are the people the Prime Minister chose to vacation with.

On top of his lack of judgment and lack of ethics, how can the Prime Minister continue to claim that he has no ties to the Trudeau Foundation?

• (1440)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister can say that because it is true.

The Prime Minister has not had any ties to the foundation for 10 years.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, that was quick.

There is reality and there is the perception of reality. The Trudeau Foundation received money from Chinese donors, that is reality. The Prime Minister went on vacation to visit one of the Trudeau Foundation's major donors, that is reality. Morris Rosenberg, who was commissioned by the Prime Minister to assess foreign interference in elections, was CEO of the Trudeau Foundation, that is reality. David Johnston, the special rapporteur on Chinese interference appointed by the Prime Minister, is a member of the Trudeau Foundation, that is reality.

We cannot help but think that the Chinese government is using the Trudeau Foundation to influence the Prime Minister, and it is working.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that every member of the House, on this side and certainly in opposition, is loyal to our country, Canada. There is absolutely no question that interference from China or other countries is designed to destroy our democracy. That is a serious concern for us and that is why we are using every avenue we can to protect our country.

Oral Questions

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the problem is that people get lost in all these distractions.

The Trudeau Foundation is problematic. What is even more problematic is foreign interference in our elections.

A foreign power, China, is interfering in our democratic process. This undermines public confidence. That is the crux of the issue. We absolutely need an independent public commission of inquiry to ensure the integrity of our elections and to restore public trust.

What is the Prime Minister waiting for?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely essential, not only for us, the government, but for each and every member of Parliament, that our democratic system ensure we have independent elections.

That is why we made sure to appoint someone who is very reasonable and well known across the country, Mr. Johnston, the former governor general appointed by Mr. Harper, who can ensure that our system is protected.

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[English]

ETHICS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that a prime minister should be able to take a holiday, and everyone agrees that the cost of security was reasonable. Everyone also knows, now that we have heard a direct answer on the cost of the flight, what the Prime Minister did.

What we do not know is if the Prime Minister did the reasonable thing and paid for his own accommodations, which every other Canadian would have had to do. Did the Prime Minister pay the cost of a \$9,000 per night villa when he went on that trip?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one could ask the question, when a party opposite now is deep into question period asking only questions about the Prime Minister's trip over Christmas with his family, to see that their interest is partisan in nature. Their interest is to advance their own interests rather than the interests of the people whom we are all elected to represent.

There is a budget in front of us right now, on which they are asking no questions, which has absolutely critical measures to help those who are in need in the country right now. Therefore, I understand the members' particular fixation. I am glad they agree with me that the Prime Minister should take a vacation. I am glad that they agree that the costs of security were reasonable.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government does not get to pick the questions that get asked, but it would be nice if the members would finally give us an answer.

Oral Questions

Let me do some quick math for the government House leader. The Prime Minister stayed there for nine nights. It would cost \$9,000 per night for any other Canadian. Did the Prime Minister pay the full cost of \$81,000 to stay there, or is this just another example of the Prime Minister being part of this elite class where he passes costs on to Canadians but incurs no costs himself?

• (1445)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has been very clear that this is a family that he has had a close personal relationship with for 50 years. I do not know if the member opposite ever takes time at a friend's house over Christmas with his family, or what he does, but I would say—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: Order.

The hon. government House leader can take it from the top, please.

Hon. Mark Holland: Mr. Speaker, let us start from the top, which is that the Ethics Commissioner was consulted on this trip. The Ethics Commissioner cleared this trip. The Ethics Commissioner made it clear that this trip was appropriate.

The member opposite has agreed that a prime minister should be given the opportunity to have a vacation. The member opposite has also agreed that security costs for the Prime Minister were reasonable. The Prime Minister spent Christmas with his family and close, personal family friends of over 50 years. Yes, that is what happened.

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[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's brother is a member of the Trudeau Foundation, as is the Prime Minister himself.

The Trudeau Foundation received a cheque backed by funds from the Communist regime in Beijing channelled through two billionaires who will be reimbursed by the regime.

Alexandre Trudeau accepted the cheque on behalf of the foundation, but the receipt was issued in the name of another company, which directly violates the Income Tax Regulations.

Is the Prime Minister going to let slide this new evidence of Beijing's influence on his government through the Trudeau Foundation or will he ensure that his brother will testify before a parliamentary committee?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister clearly explained, he has not had any ties to the Trudeau Foundation for almost 10 years.

This issue is not the Prime Minister's responsibility because he does not have any ties to the foundation. Unfortunately, there are many situations where the party opposite has attacked the Trudeau

Foundation, the media, the CBC, pretty much any person and any type of organization.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's name still appears in the Trudeau Foundation's annual report. Alexandre Trudeau wrote a book that talked about his family's fascination with China. It is hard to deny the influence that the regime in Beijing has had and continues to have on the Prime Minister. Not only is the Beijing regime using the foundation to increase its influence over the Prime Minister, but it is doing so illegally, with complete impunity, and without being challenged by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Will the Prime Minister support a motion calling on Alexandre Trudeau to appear before a parliamentary committee, yes or no?

[English]

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, at the foundation of the question being asked is whether this government would ever allow a foreign government to dictate or influence our decision. The answer to that is a categorical no.

Secondly, embedded within that is a question, I would say, of the loyalty of members of Parliament to their country. They can call it sanctimony. I call it my entire life, and I know that other members on the other side do as well. They have fought for our democracy every day of their lives. They fought to get here to be members of Parliament. To have their patriotism questioned is unacceptable.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in this latest episode of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous*, the Prime Minister and his family vacation at the private Caribbean estate of a billionaire family friend and Trudeau foundation donor.

The Prime Minister cannot help himself from helping himself. Whether it is flying to the Aga Khan's island, the \$6,000-a-night hotels in London or his latest family luxury vacation, the Prime Minister keeps showing us just how out of touch he is with everyday Canadians.

When will the Prime Minister stop working for the billionaires and start working for the working-class Canadians of this country?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply proud of the government and the Prime Minister, which have, over the last number of years, fought to make sure that Canada is a leader in the world, both economically and on tackling poverty, by making sure we are there in the budget and through other measures.

Yes, the Prime Minister did take a vacation with his family with family friends over Christmas. Yes, there were security costs that were involved with that. If a prime minister is to take a vacation, those costs are inevitable. They cannot be avoided.

I think that we as a House have to ask if we believe that a prime minister should be able to take a vacation with his family. I believe he should be able to.

• (1450)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the government's joint environmental review process and oil sands monitoring program is a failure. It is causing a public health crisis in indigenous communities. First nations and Métis people are dealing with millions of litres of toxic sludge in their communities. The Alberta Energy Regulator, the UCP, Imperial Oil and the federal government are to blame.

Now the Liberal government is suggesting a working group. It is not good enough. When will the government meaningfully deal with the toxic tailings ponds?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since we have been made aware of the seepage incident at the Kearl oil sand mine, we have been working to get to the bottom of it, support indigenous communities and collaborate on improving the reporting system of these kinds of incidents.

Last week, I sent letters to indigenous leaders about the new notification and monitoring working group which, in collaboration with them, will improve the notification process in cases of future environmental emergencies.

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HEALTH

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, April is Daffodil Month. We recognize that cancer is a health issue that impacts nearly all Canadians, whether through a personal diagnosis or that of a loved one. I wear this pin in remembrance of my late husband, Arnold Chan.

Today, Canadian Cancer Society representatives will meet on the Hill to discuss the importance of working to improve the lives of those affected by cancer through world-class research, transformative advocacy and compassionate support. Could the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions please update the House on the current efforts our government is making to fight cancer?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Scarborough—Agincourt for her heartfelt advocacy.

We support the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, which brings together all jurisdictions, organizations, community partners and patients to achieve a common goal of equitable cancer care prevention, treatment and support for those living with cancer. The government has invested over \$1 billion in cancer research in the last five years.

I want to personally thank all of the advocates doing the important work, today on the Hill and every day in their communities.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the costly coalition is also a cover-up coalition.

Oral Questions

Yesterday at committee, the NDP voted with the Liberals to shut down debate on our motion to investigate the Trudeau Foundation. This family foundation has been bankrolled by taxpayers and the Communist regime in Beijing. It said the money had been returned to the Communist regime. That turned out not to be true. Why is the costly cover-up coalition currently covering up corrupt conduct clearly concocted and conducted contrary to Canada's national interests? When will these hearings take place?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that there are opportunities to talk about any number of issues, and I am happy to talk again about the Trudeau Foundation. As the Prime Minister has made clear, he has not had involvement with the Trudeau Foundation over the last 10 years.

What I find disturbing is this: Whether it is with respect to the CBC, which Conservatives are now attacking as a partisan organization, or a myriad of different organizations, their partisan attacks seem to have no bounds because their interest is in fact partisan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if there is nothing to hide, then why will the cover-up coalition not allow these hearings to take place? The fact is the Prime Minister is a member of the foundation. His name is on its annual report. Why is he still a member of the foundation? We would like to know. We would like to know why, after \$125 million of taxpayers' money was given to this foundation, a foundation defined in statute as a government institution, it said the money was returned when in fact it was not.

Will this cover-up coalition end the cover-up and allow committee hearings into what happened at the Trudeau Foundation?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the definition of a cover-up is me not agreeing to follow every conspiracy theory the member opposite has. I think that, in fact, the House of Commons has an obligation to do the business of the nation. The business of the nation right now is the concern about the global impacts of inflation. I just spent two weeks, as I am sure the member did, talking to constituents. People are looking forward to getting a grocery rebate so they can get help to deal with the global costs of inflation. They are anxious to see that their health care system is protected; we have been negotiating with the provinces to make sure that it is prepared and protected for future generations. I think that is what they want us to be studying.

Oral Questions

● (1455)

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the embarrassing proximity between the Trudeau Foundation and the communist government of Beijing affects all Canadians. That is why we have an obligation, here in Parliament, to get to the bottom of things. Yesterday, in parliamentary committee, the Liberals, with the complicity of the NDP, decided not to hold meetings to hear from the directors of the Trudeau Foundation.

I have a very simple question. Could the non-minister government member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, that proud social-democrat, rise in this House and explain why he is being complicit in this Liberal cover-up?

The Speaker: Before giving the floor to the Leader of the Government, I would like to remind members that they have to direct their questions to the government, not the other opposition parties. I would also like to remind people that it is not nice to make fun of one another.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, more games. This serves the parties across the way. It is partisanship. It is obvious. They keep asking questions on things that have nothing to do with reality.

That is the case for CBC. Attacking the independence of the CBC is totally unacceptable. It is an attack on an independent institution that is very important for our country.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the minister on the quality of his French, but just because he is speaking French does not mean his words make more sense. Here is the situation. There is a foundation, the Trudeau Foundation, which is not just any foundation.

Let us remember that, when the foundation was founded at the turn of the century, the federal government gave it \$125 million in public funds. Morally, this foundation needs to be accountable to all Canadians. The best way to do that is through a parliamentary committee.

Why not allow its directors to testify before committee?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered the question my colleague just asked.

However, I have a question for my colleague opposite. What does he think about the attack on the CBC? What does he think about the position of his party's leader, who is attacking the CBC's independence? What is the position of the member opposite on that issue?

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, members will recall that the World Cup of soccer was held in Qatar this past fall. We debated whether it was acceptable to organize major sports events in countries that violate human rights. The Bloc Québécois had demanded a diplomatic boycott, but the government still sent a minister to Qatar. Believe it or not, The

Globe and Mail revealed that this minister was mandated by the Department of Foreign Affairs to promote the sale of Canadian arms.

Was it acceptable to send the Minister of International Development to sell tanks to Qatar?

[English]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, human rights will always be at the centre of all the work that we do. We will always hold the highest standards. The minister is regularly briefed and given advice by our officials. The talking points provided were not mentioned during this particular meeting. When it comes to contracts, exports or programs of any sort, particularly defence exports, Canada has one of the strictest export control systems, which is based on careful review.

Human rights will always be protected, and that is exactly what we aim to do.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague just reiterated that the government sent people to Qatar to talk about human rights. Come on.

The minister's briefing note proves that the Department of Foreign Affairs tasked him with promoting the sale of armoured vehicles. It was even in the key messages of his briefing note. Armoured vehicles are tanks. I have a news flash for everyone: Qatar is not going to use tanks to promote human rights.

How could this government have asked the Minister of International Development, and I want to repeat that it was the Minister of International Development, to sell tanks to Qatar?

● (1500)

[English]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, those particular talking points were not mentioned during that particular meeting.

What we do know, absolutely, is that the minister, when he was there, on numerous occasions, raised human rights with his counterparts. In fact, he took the opportunity of the visit specifically to raise things like labour rights and other human rights issues, as we always do.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, "Sorry, kids, Disneyland is cancelled" is what too many Canadian parents are having to tell their children. Sixty per cent are scaling back their summer vacations because of inflation.

However, that has not stopped the Prime Minister from jetting off to Jamaica, costing taxpayers \$160,000. It is unbelievable. While our Prime Minister catches some rays with his Trudeau Foundation cronies, Canadians just cannot catch a break.

Instead of cancelling Canadians' vacations, will the Liberals stop the hypocrisy and cancel the carbon tax?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy is coming from the other side. Conservatives say that they care about Canadians and the affordability challenges they are facing, but when they have an opportunity to actually support Canadians, what do they do? They vote against them.

Conservatives have another opportunity coming up to support budget 2023, which is going to support Canadians through health care, access to the dentist and the grocery rebate. Unfortunately, I know that they are already going to be voting against Canadians, because they declared that right from the outset. However, Conservatives still have a chance to make a difference.

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am actually going to answer a question for the Liberals.

Earlier in question period, the Prime Minister asked if we know what friendship is. The answer is yes, but in Saskatchewan, when we have a friend, we share a case of Pilsner, not a private island, with them.

This champagne-and-caviar trip cost the taxpayers \$162,000. It is amazing. This high-flying carbon hypocrite flies all around the world and then comes back home and charges a single mother triple the carbon tax to heat her home and feed her kids.

Will the Prime Minister cancel his out-of-touch carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since the opposition likes to quote the PBO report on the issue of climate change, let me quote the PBO. He said, "I am concerned at times about looking at just one aspect of the report". I continue quoting the PBO, who said, "Doing nothing would also have costs."

In fact, if the Conservatives were interested in climate change, they would look at the PBO report, which shows that it already cost Canadians \$20 billion in 2021 for the impacts of climate change. What is their response? It is that climate change is a hoax.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, maybe the minister should do something because he has never met an emissions target.

Another day and another billionaire island boondoggle. This time, the Prime Minister jets off to Jamaica and costs the Canadian taxpayers over \$160,000. Of course, he stays with a friend who has donated to the Trudeau Foundation because he is so independent from that foundation. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Canadians cannot afford a vacation. They cannot afford to eat and heat.

Will the Prime Minister end this double standard of living and axe the carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to remind the

hon. member that Conservatives never met any target that they had set on climate change.

The national inventory report—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am not even sure if it is heckling anymore or just people talking to each other. Members should try to whisper if they are going to talk to each other.

The hon. Minister of Environment, from the top, please.

• (1505)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I would like to remind my hon. colleague that the Conservatives never met any target that they set.

Last week, Canada published a national inventory report, which shows that between 2019 and 2021, we cut carbon pollution in Canada by 53 million tonnes. That is the equivalent of removing 11 million cars from our roads. Our plan is working, and we are getting the job done.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canada-Chile trade agreement was modernized over five years ago, and the two countries have had diplomatic relations for over 80 years. Canada is the largest investor in Chile, and developing this relationship could prove crucial, particularly in the areas of clean energy and technology.

Can the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development tell us about her recent trip to Chile and its results?

Hon. Mary Ng (Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the environment and the economy go hand in hand. I saw this first-hand during a trade mission with 25 clean technology companies from Chile last week.

Consider, for example, the Quebec company Oneka, which uses ocean waves to create energy and desalinate seawater, or Summit Nanotech, a woman-led company that extracts lithium sustainably. That is why budget 2023 invests in the clean economy of tomorrow.

*Oral Questions***DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

Mr. Richard Martel (Chicoutimi—Le Fjord, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the FBI arrested two suspected Chinese agents yesterday morning for allegedly operating a police station in New York City.

In Quebec, the RCMP recently informed the public that Chinese authorities were running covert police stations in the Montreal area.

While the United States proactively dismantles Beijing-operated police stations, Canada sits idly by doing nothing. What is the government waiting for?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government takes foreign interference very seriously. The RCMP handled the situation by taking concrete action and shutting down the alleged Chinese-run foreign police station.

We will keep investing and allocating resources in the field to respond as needed to protect our institutions, our communities and Canadians.

[English]

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the FBI arrested two individuals connected to the PRC's foreign interference threat activities. The FBI said that one of the individuals was connected to the illegal police stations that the PRC established in Canada.

Why does it take the FBI to take action to protect Canadian sovereignty on Canadian soil?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with great respect, I think my colleague got the initials wrong. It was the RCMP that shut down the so-called police stations in Canada, and it will continue to take decisive, concrete action against those forms and all forms of foreign interference.

I would encourage the colleagues across the way in the Conservative Party to support the budget, which was advanced by the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Prime Minister, which puts more resources into the RCMP to protect our communities and to protect all Canadians from foreign interference.

Hon. Michael Chong (Wellington—Halton Hills, CPC): All that has happened, Mr. Speaker, to this point is that the RCMP has parked police cars at these illegal stations, and that is not good enough.

The government has had years to counter what CSIS has called a serious national threat to the security of Canada, but nothing has happened: no prosecution of anyone involved with these illegal foreign interference activities; no prosecution of anyone for these illegal police stations; no legislation introduced to counter Beijing's agents; no diplomats expelled.

Why does it take the U.S.A. to protect Canadians and Canadian sovereignty on Canadian soil?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague can continue to bury his head in the sand on the concrete actions that the RCMP and all agencies within the national security community are taking to protect our institutions. However, the fact of the matter is that this government has done more than any other in the history of our country when it comes to

putting in place the people, the resources, the authorities and, yes, the transparency to shine a light on the way we will continue to protect all our democratic institutions, and, most important, Canadians.

* * *

● (1510)

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the First Nations Health Authority recently marked its 10-year anniversary as the gold standard for indigenous health transformation based on self-determination. The First Nations Health Authority has worked to improve indigenous health in a way that is respectful of distinct cultural practices and responsive to unique community needs.

Could the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada please tell the House what she is doing to further support and improve first nations-led health care across British Columbia?

Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Indigenous Services and Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Northern Ontario, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his unwavering advocacy. We were so excited last week to sign another 10-year agreement with the First Nations Health Authority. I want to thank the First Nations Health Authority and leadership council for their incredible vision of the next 10 years, providing self-determined health care services to indigenous peoples across B.C. This is transformational.

* * *

HEALTH

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we need real action to tackle the toxic drug crisis. I am glad to see the Minister of Mental Health recently call out the leader of the official opposition for his misleading tweets on substance use and crime, which create more harm.

The minister says that we need to invest in our communities and provide care to those who use substances by providing support and empathy, but where is it? This is a national health crisis.

The Liberals' incremental approach in this budget simply will not cut it. Therefore, when are the Liberals finally going to deliver a full-scale response outlined by their own experts?

Hon. Carolyn Bennett (Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his ongoing advocacy. He is so right. The toxic drug and overdose crisis continues to take a tragic toll on families, loved ones and communities. Our government will continue to use every tool at our disposal to work with our partners to end this national public health crisis.

Since 2017, we have committed more than a billion dollars to address the overdose crisis, and we are taking concrete steps to divert people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system. Approving B.C.'s decriminalization proposal for personal possession was an important first step, and we have supported 31 projects—

The Speaker: The hon. member for London—Fanshawe has the floor.

* * *

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since October, Canadian Armed Forces have been in Poland to train their Ukrainian counterparts to fight against Putin's horrific invasion, but, once again, the federal government has cut corners at their expense. Instead of sending military cooks to Poland, it tried to save a few bucks by telling troops to foot the bill. Military families have been forced to dip into savings to send money for food and some are still waiting to be reimbursed by the government.

Will the Minister of National Defence commit today to stop the cuts and ensure our forces have what they need to eat?

Hon. Anita Anand (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased that the member opposite brought up the very point of Canadians assisting the Ukrainian armed forces in their time of need. Not only have we trained 36,000 members of the Ukrainian armed forces, we are in England, we are in Poland; we are in Latvia continuing to support Ukraine in its time of need. We will always stand up for the Canadian Armed Forces here at home and abroad, ensuring that they have what they need to protect and defend this country.

* * *

● (1515)

2020 SHOOTINGS IN NOVA SCOTIA

The Speaker: I understand that there have been discussions among representatives of all parties in the House and that there is agreement to observe a moment of silence.

I now invite the House to rise and observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the tragic event that happened three years ago in Nova Scotia.

[A moment of silence observed]

The Budget

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was at a trade show in my riding on the weekend, and the Liberal Party actually had a booth there. They had, in big letters, “Enter a draw, win a race car test drive”. Many people were excited. They thought it was a race car, and they realized it was actually a test drive. Unfortunately, this is the approach of the government's programs in many ways. They are promising the moon, and they are not delivering. They are promising giveaways with money that is borrowed, and that we cannot afford, and programs that are not sustainable.

Why is the Liberal Party in my riding, and the Liberal Party here in the House, continuing to over-promise and under-deliver?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I do not think we over-promise; we encourage people. We are encouraging them. We have lots of EV credits coming up. We are encouraging the issue of climate change so that we can get people actually test-driving EV vehicles and seeing how smooth that drive is. Sometimes we encourage people through a mechanism, like a raffle or whatever mechanism possible, to get them to actually try out different things. I think the government is looking for innovative ways to promote all of the great things we have in the 2023 budget.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I apologize to the hon. member, because I know she did not touch on this in her speech, but I have been trying to get an answer to it for some time. If she does not know the answer offhand, perhaps she can help me find the answer.

On page 117 of the budget, there is a reference to “Future Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Development”. I have been pursuing this and trying to find out why there is \$7 million for future Arctic offshore oil and gas development when a moratorium was announced under the Western Arctic - Tarruq (Offshore) Accord. It is supposed to be a moratorium, but that moratorium expired December 2022, and now in the budget we have this so-called “Future Arctic Offshore Oil and Gas Development”.

Privilege

Are we to conclude that the government is ending the moratorium and opening the Arctic to offshore oil and gas development? The budget puts forward a very clear statement on future Arctic offshore oil and gas development, which has not been announced as government policy. Perhaps the hon. member can help me understand this part of the budget.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to see my hon. colleague here with us asking questions about things that always matter immensely to all of us. Future development in the Arctic is critically important. It is an area of our world that needs far more attention and protection. I certainly will see if I can answer. Page 117 is where you quoted the particular issue in the budget, and I will try to find an answer for you.

• (1520)

The Speaker: I just want to remind the hon. members that questions are not for me. Members are to be speaking through the Speaker, not to the Speaker.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member has long been an advocate for seniors, and within this budget we talk about the grocery rebate and we talk about the expansion of the dental plan, both of which would help our seniors. Could she just provide her thoughts? I know, as I said, she has been a long-time advocate for seniors in Canada. I would like her thoughts on senior supports.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, there is a variety of things. In particular, I go back to the issue of the dental benefit. I have knocked on doors and met with the constituents who have asked me for many years for a program that would help offset the extensive dental costs. It is very expensive, and this program, by the end of the year, will be there to help many seniors throughout Canada.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, just to highlight that the grocery rebate is a very important tool that is being used to support Canadians, could the member just provide her thoughts on the importance of the grocery rebate, overall?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, it is very unique to call it a grocery rebate. Let us be honest: It is about helping people with the high expenses with inflation. Calling it a grocery rebate is a cute little nickname to put on it. It gives us another opportunity to be able to promote it. It is a terrific thing.

* * *

PRIVILEGE

ALLEGED DEFAMATION RESULTING IN OBSTRUCTION OF A MEMBER'S
FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to respond to the question of privilege that was raised yesterday by the member for Pickering—Uxbridge.

On Friday, March 31, I rose on a point of order to draw to the Speaker's attention comments made by the member for Pickering—Uxbridge, whom I heard using inappropriate and unparliamentary language. The member had the opportunity to respond and under normal circumstances in matters such as these, the Speaker would check the records of Hansard and come back with a ruling. In the

absence of any recording of the exchange, the matter is usually left as a dispute of the facts. Those are the normal circumstances. In this case, the member responded by calling me a liar. Those comments she rightly apologized for yesterday.

The member then immediately followed her apology with a question of privilege, accusing me of lying. While I was awaiting a ruling from the Speaker on my point of order from Friday, March 31, the member was drafting a question of privilege in an attempt to do indirectly what she could not do directly on Friday.

Mr. Speaker, if you have any doubts as to the member's intentions, I draw to your attention the Debates from Friday, March 31. After the Speaker called out the member for her unparliamentary comments, the member said, "I will withdraw the word but the sentiment remains".

Since Speakers have consistently ruled that it is out of order to attempt to do something indirectly that one cannot do directly, this matter should be dismissed on those grounds alone. Further, at page 88 of Bosc and Gagnon, it states that members should not raise trivial matters as matters of privilege or contempt. Clearly, this matter does not come close to meeting the threshold of privilege.

It is a well-established principle that in order to have a *prima facie* case of privilege in relation to a claim of misleading the House, three elements must be established.

First, it must be proven that the statement was misleading. In this case, the member only has her claim of the facts and I have mine.

Second, it must be established that the member making the statement knew it to be misleading. Simply put, I heard what I heard and the member had the opportunity to address my point of order. While she got off to a shaky start with unparliamentary language, she had the opportunity to express her version of those facts and when we left things on Friday the Speaker was to look into the matter. The member had risen and had stated that she did not say those words. I prepared to follow the standard convention of this House and take the member at her word and let the matter drop.

Third, the misleading statements must have been presented with the intention to mislead the House. Again, I heard an offensive comment and I raised it with no other intention except to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, a breach of the rules of decorum and use of language. The member had the chance to respond and, while I do not want to belabour the point that the member ironically responded to my point of order by breaching the rules with more unparliamentary language, those are the facts.

• (1525)

The Speaker: We will take what has been presented under consideration and make it part of my decision.

Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade.

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THE BUDGET

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed consideration of the motion that this House approve in general the budgetary policy of the government, and of the amendment.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in the debate on the budget of 2023, as presented by our government, and what it means for my constituents and people right across Canada. I propose to canvas five areas: affordability, health care, climate action, housing, and combatting hate and discrimination.

On the first issue of affordability, what I hear at the doors is very similar to what representatives in this chamber from around the country hear at the doors in their own constituencies. The cost of living has gone up, and there is a direct link to inflation.

Inflation is coming down, thankfully. We heard news just this morning of the ninth consecutive month which inflation has been reduced. It now sits at 4.3% for the month of March. However, the reduction in inflation rates has not been occurring as fast as it needs to, hence our government's proposal in the budget, which we will be voting on shortly, for additional relief targeted at persons with low and modest incomes in this country through what is being called the grocery rebate. This would apply to approximately 11 million Canadians of low and modest income who are already eligible to receive the GST credit. It is a sum of \$234 for a single person and as much as \$467 for a couple with two children. This would be significant in assisting people with the affordability squeeze they are experiencing right now.

However, the initiatives outlined in the budget do not stop there. There are also initiatives to address students and their needs in times of rising tuition costs and rising expenses while they are pursuing post-secondary education. This budget allocates a 40% increase in Canada student grants, which means full-time students will be able to receive up to \$4,200 more per year to pay for their studies, as well as an increase in the limit on the interest-free portion of a Canada student loan.

The second point I hear a lot from my constituents is about health care and the pressures of not having a family doctor. There are also the pressures in our communities of wait-lists for surgeries and wait-lists at hospitals. This budget is a concrete response to those particular concerns. There is voluminous funding in this budget for health care, to the tune of \$195 billion over the course of 10 years. That includes \$46 billion of new funding, which would help reduce backlogs, expand access to general practitioners and modernize the health system.

For example, the budget allocates \$2 billion just to address urgent pressures in ERs, and \$1.7 billion is to address personal support workers' wages. By addressing personal support workers, we

The Budget

would help alleviate the stress on hospitals and medical clinics. We are also working hard to ensure, through this budget, that we are helping to empower health professionals to work in more remote areas. There is nearly \$46 million allocated in this budget for loan forgiveness for those medical students or nursing students who would like to practise in rural and remote areas and to incentivize them to do exactly that.

The constituents of mine in Parkdale—High Park speak to me repeatedly not just about health care but specifically about mental health. I have heard those concerns and continually advocate for them in this chamber, in committee and within the government caucus. This budget is a firm response to those particular concerns, with \$7.8 billion of the funding envelope for health care dedicated to home care, mental health and long-term care. There is a 988 suicide prevention line committed to in this budget, which would be operational by November of this year. There are aspects of this budget that also address the opioid crisis, which has had fatal consequences in my riding, much like it has in every other riding of this nation.

Through this budget, we are addressing issues such as addiction. We are increasing funding to the substance use and addictions program, or SUAP. That program, in particular, supports community-led, not-for-profit organizations in responding to drug and substance use issues across Canada. There is \$144 million dedicated to the SUAP, which would result in improved access, harm reduction, treatment services and things such as safer supply.

● (1530)

In my riding of Parkdale—High Park, this would have a specific local impact. The budget allocates \$1.27 million to the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre in my riding for its safer opioids supply program. That is new funding that would allow the Parkdale centre to continue its very successful work in helping people who are experiencing severe opioid use disorder gain access to pharmaceutical grade medications and offering a wide range of fully wraparound services, such as social programming, case management, mental health supports and trauma counselling.

The approach of the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre is focused on harm reduction, and that is an approach we wholeheartedly support as a Liberal government. Stigmatizing and even criminalizing those suffering from addictions does not work. Let me repeat that. There is no point in criminalizing and stigmatizing those who are suffering from mental health or substance use problems and addictions. Addictions are a health problem, not a criminal justice problem. Budget 2023 reflects that direct orientation and commits important funding to mental health care and addictions to help people heal.

The Budget

The envelope of care with respect to health care includes dental benefits. As members know, we launched the Canada dental benefit for children under 12 last year. Up to now, 240,000 young persons under the age of 12 who were previously uninsured are now receiving dental care that they did not previously receive. That is a monumental change in the landscape for low-income families in this country.

We are taking an already successful pilot and expanding it through the Canadian dental care plan, which is entrenched in this budget. That is what we will be voting on when we vote on budget 2023. It is about whether we should be allocating \$13 billion over the coming years to help up to nine million low-income families that are uninsured access dental care as part of their health care. From my perspective, that is something that all of us in the chamber should be supporting.

Third, my constituents speak to me about climate change. They support initiatives we have taken, like the price on pollution and the corresponding climate action rebate, but they ask for more. What this budget does is it responds to the clean economy of the future in a way that keeps pace with what we are seeing with the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States.

Through this budget, we are raising the green economy, green jobs and unionized workers across a number of sectors. One sector I want to highlight is the sector of nuclear energy, which is pivotal to the closure of coal-fired plants in Ontario, the dramatic reduction in pollution in Ontario and the drop in GHG emissions. Today, looking at the lights illuminating this chamber and the lights throughout the province of Ontario, on any given day, up to 60% of the electricity that keeps the lights on in Ontario is based upon energy that is sourced from nuclear energy on Ontario's electrical grid.

The demands on that grid are only growing because of the much-needed electrification of the transport sector in this province and around the country. What this budget would do is it would aggressively support the electrification of that grid by supporting investments in clean electrical generation, through things such as non-emitting sources like wind, solar, hydro and nuclear energy. That is undoubtedly a step in the right direction.

My constituents talk to me about housing. This budget reflects the need of people who are wanting to purchase their first home and giving them access to do so by launching the tax-free first-home savings account as of April 1, earlier this month.

I just want to finish with the fight against discrimination and working to combat hate. In the wake of the Quebec mosque shooting in 2017, I founded the inclusion network in my riding. The inclusion network tries to build dialogue and understanding amongst communities so that we can promote more dialogue, not just tolerance but actually celebration of diversity.

I have conducted many events in my riding over the past several years with respect to the inclusion network. Two weeks ago, we had an interfaith walk, going from a Tibetan temple to an Orthodox church and then ending at the Jami Mosque, the Friday mosque in my riding. That is meant to promote understanding. Sadly, literally 36 hours after my event, in another part of the GTA, there was an

attack on a mosque where someone used a car to try to run down a worshipper. This underscores the work that still needs to be done in this country.

What budget 2023 would do, among many other things, would be to support places of worship and their protection by dedicating \$50 million more to the security infrastructure fund, which helps protect places of worship. That is something that all of us need to get behind in this day and age, when we are fighting such penetrating issues as combatting hate.

• (1535)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's contributions to the debate today. He specifically mentioned the first-time home-buyer tax-free savings account. That was actually promised in the budget before. Therefore, I have two very simple questions.

When will this so-called tax-free savings account be available for people to use? Where will young people, particularly those who are hit hard by inflation and the cost of living, find the \$8,000 they could put into it? I would like the member to explain to his constituents and mine where they are supposed to find that money for a home.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, pursuant to the budget document and the tax-free savings account, Canadian financial institutions, including the five major banks, are empowered to make that available as a product to their customers as of April 1, about 20 days ago.

The second point begs the question of their economic growth. What I would point to is the economic growth under our government. We have recovered about 120% of the jobs that we had prior to the pandemic. That is a pretty incredible record of economic growth. What Canadians are doing is leveraging the benefits of that economic growth, including record low levels of unemployment, to assist with their savings.

Savings will also benefit from some of the affordability measures that I outlined at the start of my speech, including, for low-income families, things such as the grocery rebate.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his speech. Unfortunately, one of the top issues right now is the housing crisis. He used about 22 seconds of his 10-minute speech to talk about it. That is more or less the equivalent of what is in the budget. Some 3.5 million homes need to be built in Canada over the next 10 years. The budget, which is 250 pages long, talks about it for a page and a half. That basically reflects how much of a priority this is for the government.

Here is an interesting statistic. Yesterday, the National Housing Council, the body set up by the government to oversee the great national housing strategy, released a report with some very interesting information. Between 2011 and 2021, Canada lost over 550,000 units of housing that rented for \$750 or less. Not only are we not building housing—according to this same organization, 35,000 units were built and 65,000 renovated, totalling 100,000—but 550,000 affordable units were lost in the last 10 years.

The Budget

How does my colleague explain the budget's near silence on this issue?

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I want to point out that it is completely incorrect to say that nothing is being done about housing and affordable housing. First, we launched a national strategy. We have committed \$80 billion to date. Second, there is also a policy that allocates more than \$4 billion for housing for indigenous peoples in budget 2023. It is important to point that out.

As for the creation of housing, the most popular program in my riding, and probably in Trois-Rivières as well, is the rapid housing initiative.

[English]

With that program, we are creating new housing units in eight to 10 months' time in a given calendar year, which is quite remarkable.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, since 2015, I have become well aware of the importance of social determinants of health, and also how important preventative measures are.

In this country, we have a hunger problem. Across this country, millions of Canadians go to school hungry every day. Canada is one of the few countries in the world that does not have a national nutrition school food program. The Liberals and the NDP campaigned, in 2021, on allocating \$1 billion, in our case over four years and in the Liberals' case over five years, to address school hunger, which is particularly acute right now with the price of food.

Can my hon. colleague explain to the people I represent why the Liberals did not put any money in this budget to fulfill their promise to start developing a national nutrition school food program, such as what the NDP has been pursuing?

• (1540)

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question, as it is an important one. Food security, particularly for low-income children, is incredibly important, as is the school program mentioned. I will highlight, just for people who are watching, that we are supportive of food security, not only in the supply chains, but also in the support of food banks in this country. A national food program at schools is something that is important, and I will prioritize that in my advocacy.

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I stand today in the House to speak about the budget tabled by the government on March 28, 2023. Just because the government is bragging about it does not make it an excellent budget, quite the contrary.

In the political arena, the opposition is expected to find flaws in the budget. That is healthy, and it is part of the game. However, upon closer inspection and careful reading of the budget, it becomes apparent that it has some major shortcomings, indeed.

Unfortunately, whoever looks at the broad lines of the budget tabled by the government can see that it is another unbalanced budget. This is really on trend for the government. How can it be that

we can still not manage to have a balanced budget? We have not had a balanced budget since 2015.

The government clearly stated last November in its economic statement that it intended to have a balanced budget by 2027-28. What they are announcing now is that there will be a \$14-billion deficit in 2027-28. We are therefore nowhere near the forecasted balanced budget that would allow us as a country to compete and have a bit of credibility on this planet.

The budget also includes \$43 billion in new spending. I think that, here as well, in this inflationary environment, we are dealing with a government that has the wind in its sails but not much of a rudder. There is \$43 billion in additional spending. I do not think that that is what Canadians expected. They were expecting a balanced budget. Unfortunately, that is not what we are talking about today.

As a result, we have an enormous debt, and it is growing at a rapid pace. It is approximately \$1.2 trillion. I do not know what everyone else thinks, but I am not even sure how many zeroes that is. The debt is enormous.

What that means for Canadians is that they will have to continue to tighten their belts and pay up. We are right in the middle of income tax season, and I am convinced that there are Canadians out there today who are wondering how they are going to manage.

In my view, and that of my party, this is a downright irresponsible, unfair and visionless budget.

I think we need to consider where this country is today. Need I remind my colleagues that we are going through an inflationary crisis? Inflation is at a 40-year high. I will give members a quick overview, although I could spend a lot of time on the subject. A family of four will spend \$1,065 more on groceries in 2023 than in 2022. That is a lot of money. It is more than what the government is promising to give families to lower the bill.

House prices have gone up 21% in the Quebec City region alone. The average mortgage payment has doubled since 2015. I will point out that 2015 is the year the Liberals came to power. The average mortgage payment is now \$3,000 a month.

Food bank use has reached record highs, with around 1.5 million people seeking help each month. Some parents are now skipping meals so their children can eat. This is Canada. We never would have imagined we would get to this point.

The Budget

Also, nine out of 10 Canadians say they do not even dream of owning a house. Becoming a homeowner gives us freedom. Canadians should be able to hope to one day buy a house. Instead, young people are now sleeping in their parents' basement or, worse yet, moving into shelters because they cannot afford housing.

• (1545)

One in five people are skipping meals and, based on what we unfortunately learned today, some 60% of Canadians are considering not taking a vacation this summer. We also learned in a release today that food inflation was still hurting Canadians in February and that, for a seventh consecutive month, the price of groceries rose by 10% or more over the same period last year. This is where we are today.

Need I also remind my colleagues that we have a government that spends recklessly? This government alone has increased the debt more than all other previous governments combined. That is something. It now costs \$44 billion to service the debt. It is counterintuitive and counterproductive to go on this way. We are spending money on interest rather than on services to the public. We should be outraged about that. However, on the other side of the House, the government keeps spending recklessly and has added \$43 billion in new spending in this year's budget.

Another factor we must consider is the collaboration, or coalition, between the Liberal government and the NDP. To remain in power and ensure its stability until 2025, the Liberal Party has agreed to implement the NDP's agenda with great speed and at great cost. I would like to remind the House that Canadians did not vote for that. Only 17% of Canadians voted for the NDP. That is certainly not enough to justify endorsing and implementing the NDP's agenda.

One key item on the NDP's agenda is dental care. Dental care was announced only a few months ago, but already its cost has more than doubled. I think that Canadians are entitled to ask questions and to feel outraged, especially since even the Parliamentary Budget Officer, a credible and independent man who plays an important role on Parliament Hill, has questions about this program. First, he said that it is incredibly expensive. Then he said that people only have to say they have an appointment with the dentist to receive a reimbursement.

That is a slippery slope. People will want to be reimbursed even before they get to their appointment and before getting the bill, especially since, as we know, many Canadians already have provincial or private dental insurance. This measure is costing almost \$13 billion when it should cost only \$5 billion, and Canadians are footing the bill.

Since my time is almost up, I will wrap up by saying that, on this side of the House, we are hoping for a much more responsible government, a government that, like Canadians and parents, knows how to count. These people know that when they spend five dollars, it is five dollars well spent. If someone earns \$10, they should not spend \$12.

• (1550)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam

Speaker, I listened very carefully to the speech made by my colleague, for whom I have a lot of respect. I appreciate her insistence on a balanced budget. She undoubtedly knows that Canada still has the lowest debt and the lowest deficit among the G7 countries. I wonder if, as a former Radio-Canada journalist, she would like to see budget cuts to both Radio-Canada and the CBC, or just one of them, to achieve the balanced budget she wants. I expect that, as a former journalist, she has tremendous respect and admiration for her colleagues who are still working to provide Canadians with reliable news.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her question. I will answer with another question that she could ask the Minister of Finance, who announced in November's economic statement that we would return to a balanced budget in 2027-28. Now we have learned that that will not be the case. Rather, there will be a \$14-billion deficit, and there is nothing in any of the budget documentation about a return to a balanced budget.

I think that that is the real question today, the only one that matters to Canadians.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the point raised by my colleague from Outremont. I thought her question was very interesting, but we did not get an answer. We are talking about responsible government, yet we have heard the leader of the Conservative Party say that he would cut \$1 billion from CBC/Radio-Canada's \$1.2-billion budget. I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that, since she herself was a journalist.

Is it responsible for a government to cut \$1 billion from a \$1.2-billion budget for an institution like CBC/Radio-Canada, which exists to report the news and has broadcasting stations and newsrooms all over Quebec and the rest of Canada?

I think that it is important that Canadians and Quebecers know exactly what the Conservative Party wants to do with CBC/Radio-Canada's funding, and I would like an answer.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Madam Speaker, I am honoured by my colleagues' interest in my speech today. What I am most interested in today is reminding my colleagues how hard Canadians work every day and how they are facing major costs every day for food, housing and other essentials.

Our commitment is that, when we form the government, we will table a balanced budget.

*The Budget**[English]*

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, two years ago, the Conservatives voted against dental care. Now that we have a proposal in this most recent budget for a national dental care plan, they plan to vote against the budget and indicate their non-support for that policy, and that is fine. That is a difference of opinion when it comes to the oral health of Canadians and whether low- and moderate-income Canadians should have access to the kind of dental care that the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis has access to as a member of Parliament.

My question, though, is as follows: Should we see a Conservative government in the future, would it cancel that program? Would it take away a national dental care program that is established under the budget we have before us?

[Translation]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Madam Speaker, we will have the opportunity to present an election platform in due course. One thing is clear. We will not compromise on that. We will present a balanced budget.

● (1555)

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, during my time in this place, I served as parliamentary secretary to the President of the Treasury Board when I sat on the government side of the House. During my time on this side of the House, I have served in various roles, such as the finance shadow minister. Certainly, I have spent my time on the finance committee and have had the opportunity to grill both former and current Liberal finance ministers.

I mention that because, as we all know, a comment by the former finance minister, before he became known as just another random Liberal, was reported in the media. It was about how budgets are really put together in the current Liberal government, or, I should say, within the Prime Minister's Office. I say the PMO, because it is within the PMO that these things really occur. Bill Morneau stated, "calculations and recommendations from the Ministry of Finance were basically disregarded in favour of winning a popularity contest". Government by polling is, and has always been, what the always-be-spending Liberal government does.

Let us recap the pattern for a moment. It all began with the Liberals, in 2015, promising small deficits of \$9.9 billion in 2016, \$9.5 billion in 2017, \$5.7 billion in 2018, and a return to a \$1-billion surplus in 2019. That Liberal promise to return to a balanced budget in 2019 was cast in stone, as the Prime Minister said at the time. For those in the PMO who may be watching, "cast in stone" means something that cannot be changed, something that is permanent, something that is absolute. Of course, we all know that was a lie, a fabrication.

No doubt some polling was probably done at the time, and focus groups said that some small deficits would be supported, provided there was a firm commitment to return to a balanced budget afterwards, and, voila, there is the Prime Minister avowing a cast-in-stone commitment to return to a balanced budget in 2019. We all

know how the Liberal government did not even try to honour the cast-in-stone promise it made to Canadians.

[Translation]

I know that some of my colleagues will say that this is ancient history. They will ask why we are talking about the past instead of the budget that is before the House today.

This is why. Not so long ago, in November, the Liberal government tabled a fiscal update. That was five months ago. In that economic update, the Liberal government told us that Canada would have a balanced budget by 2027.

Only five months later, another Liberal budget has revealed that this was just another lie, something they made up. Seriously, why does the Liberal government keep trying to mislead Canadians and convince them that it intends to balance the budget? Why does it not simply tell the truth and admit that it will never balance the budget and that it does not really think it is necessary? Budgets balance themselves, do they not?

Consider spending for a moment. In 2015, total federal spending for the last year of the previous government was just over \$248 billion. In 2019-20, the last year of the Liberal majority government, spending was just over \$338 billion. This is a significant increase, with \$80 billion in new spending.

That is not taking into account the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, when total federal expenditures reached a record high of \$608 billion in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

● (1600)

The Liberals said that last year's budget was a fiscal return to reality. In last year's fiscal return to reality budget, the Liberals proposed total spending of \$434.3 billion.

[English]

To recap, in the final year of the Liberal majority, the reality was \$338 billion. Last year, the Liberals' new normal was \$434 billion. That is an increase of \$96 billion. Now, in this year's budget, the Liberals are proposing \$496.9 billion, but wait; there is more. The budget projects that spending will reach \$555.7 billion in 2027-28. This is why I call it the "speNDP-Liberal partnership", because the outcome of this partnership is an out-of-control, always-be-spending Liberal government.

The Budget

I know there are members of the government and the fourth party's side of the House who will say, "Who cares? We can afford it." Here is the thing: This level of spending will soon exceed 16% of Canada's GDP, the highest it has been in three decades. Debt charges rose by 52% in the last five months of the fiscal year, in tandem with interest rate hikes. Last year, the government spent \$24.5 billion servicing the debt. Desjardins forecasts that debt charges of \$49.8 billion are coming. We are getting to the point where we will spend almost as much servicing debt as we spend on the Canada health transfer.

Think long-term about what \$50 billion could do every year if it were not spent servicing debt. That is obviously, and ultimately, the problem with the Liberal government. Much as random Liberal Bill Morneau told us, "calculations and recommendations from the Ministry of Finance were basically disregarded in favour of winning a popularity contest."

Many economists are now warning that the Prime Minister's "plan to add billions of dollars in new annual spending has some economists worried that Canada is at risk of racking up unsustainable debt—especially if economic growth comes in worse than expected". Other economists have warned that this ongoing Liberal spending "works against the Bank of Canada's tightening of monetary policy to combat inflation and risks keeping interest rates higher for longer".

There is another elephant in the room: our lack of productivity and competitiveness. Consider a Canadian lumber company: "West Fraser's U.S. lumber production rose 13 per cent last year, while its Canadian output fell 17 per cent." Other Canadian lumber companies, like Tolko, closed Canadian lumber mills and instead opened up new mills. Where did they do that? They opened them in the United States.

Recently, The Ottawa Citizen reported that "Canadian steel producers are actively trying to reduce climate emissions as well as facing a carbon tax as part of government efforts to fight climate change, but offshore steel producers don't face the same rules and surcharges. As a result, domestic firms are losing market share to high carbon, offshore steel at an unprecedented rate". For those who do not know, there is a name for this. This is called "carbon leakage", which is what happens when industries compete with industries and countries that may have low or no carbon prices. If an industry loses market share to the more polluting competitors, this negatively affects our economy, lowers GDP and does nothing to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions.

This is the path that the Liberal government and the budget put us on. It is a very dangerous path. As a former Liberal finance minister recently stated, "If Liberals don't want to face that kind of calamity, then it's way better to manage the growth of your expenditures and manage your revenue carefully."

Before I close—

• (1605)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the hon. member's time is up.

Questions and comments, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy my colleague's speeches.

Today, he spoke to us about the importance of fiscal responsibility. I agree with him that this is a priority.

However, I would like to understand one thing. I was under the impression that the Conservative leader had confirmed that he supported our \$2-billion investment in the health care system and that the Conservatives would support that investment.

Is that still the case? Could my colleague confirm that in the House?

[English]

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, the member opposite's raising this issue allows me to finish my speech. I was quoting John Manley, who said, "Otherwise, there's a reckoning coming, and someone is going to have to face it."

There is all sorts of spending in this budget. There are things we might agree on and lots of things we will disagree on, but I do not think anyone on that side of the House will say that this is a fiscally responsible budget. At some point, as Mr. Manley says, someone has "to manage the growth of...expenditures and manage...revenue carefully", or, guess what, it is going to be the young people of this country who are going to be saddled with it.

That is the problem we have. We need to start focusing on the priorities of Canadians and only on those things, because we will not have the fiscal room if the economy shifts. We need to remember that this budget actually shows a recession in Q3 and Q4. Let us talk about those issues.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation and his excellent French. It is always a pleasure to hear anglophones speak French in the House. I congratulate him.

My question is twofold. First, according to the budget, investments are still being made in the oil sands and offshore drilling. What does my colleague have to say about that?

Along the same lines, what does he have to say about the two oil sands industrial wastewater spills in Alberta that have caused, and are still causing, an environmental disaster?

*The Budget**[English]*

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, when it comes to Alberta, I would speak to Alberta members, but my understanding is that there is agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of Alberta for a harmonization agreement that allows for an equal program where there is a set of procedures in place so there is an equal level with what the federal government considers acceptable.

I imagine that, as a member from Quebec, the member would say that is probably the best, because the people closest to the problem should have the most input. I am sure he would argue, from a Quebec standpoint, that Quebec can manage its own house better than Ottawa can.

The second thing is that we had, earlier, a parliamentary secretary come and say that the tax-free savings account for first-time homebuyers is available now. I just checked the Desjardins website.

[Translation]

The tax-free first home savings account does not currently exist.

[English]

Perhaps there is at Questrade or whatnot, but I went to RBC and could not see one. It was the same thing with CIBC. The government says it is doing all these things to help people, but it is not doing that. I hope this member can check with Desjardins to confirm, because people are told something is coming, and when it is not there, they lose trust.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I wanted to ask about the budget in terms of adaptation to climate disasters.

Earlier today, the hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon put forward a petition. Of course, petitions are not our own opinions, but the petition talked about the loss in Lytton and how Lytton has not been rebuilt. We know that the regions of central Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola experienced, as did Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, losses due to floods, fires and the heat dome. The budget speaks, in terms of adaptation and funding, under the title “Supporting Natural Disaster Resilience”, only to floods and flood zones. There is nothing about fires. I wonder if he has any comments on that.

• (1610)

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, this is close to my heart. Mayor Mike Goetz originally placed the question to the minister responsible for this particular program, because it does not appear that communities hit hardest will be able to access that. They will be on a level playing field with other communities that will be applying for the adaptation funds, and Mayor Goetz has said that is not appropriate.

Every time I speak to citizens in Merritt or Princeton, I hear they do not feel that either senior-level government, the provincial or federal government, has had their backs. It really takes away from the trust in government, and I have to say that if that is the goal of the government, it is succeeding.

Ms. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam

Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today in support of budget 2023. I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Whitby.

As we all know, the Canadian economy has come a long way. Recovering from the pandemic, we have delivered the strongest economic growth in the G7. Canada has recovered 126% of the jobs that were first lost in the pandemic. Almost one million more Canadians are working now than when the pandemic first began, and chief among them are women, young people and immigrants. Nearly 86% of working-age women are participating in the labour force and contributing to our economy, and as the parliamentary secretary for women, gender equality and youth, that makes me extremely happy.

The numbers I mentioned and this boom in employment did not occur without effort. Our economy is strong because of the successive and persistent investments in our economy, in our industries, in our workers and in Canadians. Federal budgets of years past have paved the way for budget 2023, a made-in-Canada plan to build a stronger, more sustainable and more secure Canadian economy.

Among the many impactful policies budget 2023 proposes, I am particularly excited about the commitment to green technology. Sharing in my excitement are the over 550 companies, which are big and small start-ups and scale-ups, in my riding of Kanata—Carleton that are inventing and innovating the clean technologies of the future. The world is looking for answers to the climate crisis, and Canada is making its pitch to solve this generational challenge. From semiconductors to zero-emissions vehicles and from critical minerals to clean electricity, Canadian industry is retooling to meet the needs of the green economy.

We are undertaking this green transition not just for the future of our environment, but also for the future of our economy. We have learned the hard way, through the pandemic and through the invasion of Ukraine, how vulnerable our energy markets are to supply chain tangles and the whims of autocrats. These vulnerabilities drive up our costs here at home, so instead of doubling down, we are moving away. We are moving away from foreign supply chains and are moving toward building the technologies we need right here at home. We are moving away from autocratic oil and are moving toward clean Canadian energy. These clean, green investments make our supply chains more resilient, our economy more competitive and our country more prosperous.

Already, Canada is a model nation for green energy and green technologies, and there are a number of examples of this in my riding of Kanata—Carleton.

For example, Equispheres has become a leading supplier in aluminum powders and additive manufacturing, producing lightweight high-performance metal powders for the electric vehicles of today, among other industries.

The Budget

The technology workers at Ranovus design the world's most advanced semiconductors in a growing number of phones and interconnected devices, and their cutting-edge intellectual property enables them to do so while cutting electricity usage by 30%.

BluWave-ai is a Kanata clean-tech company that uses AI to help utility companies manage their electricity grid as they integrate renewable energy sources, ensuring renewable energy is utilized first. It also leverages AI to manage EV fleet operations while reducing energy consumption and carbon-emitting vehicles.

Strengthening these industries is central to Canada's competitiveness moving forward.

Budget 2023 proposes a tool kit for the clean economy: three tiers of federal financing initiatives for cutting-edge clean technologies.

• (1615)

First among them is an anchor regime of clear and predictable investment tax credits made available to a broad range of companies. Companies that invest in new machinery and equipment to manufacture clean technologies or process critical minerals can earn a tax credit equal to 30% of the cost of these investments. Companies that embark on new clean electricity or clean hydrogen projects will also receive federal tax credit support.

Through these clean technology investment tax credits, Canadian clean-tech manufacturers will continue to innovate and produce the products needed to power the clean, green economy. To ensure the workers behind these companies see the benefits of our investments, we have made it clear: To take advantage of these tax credits, they must pay their workers prevailing wages.

These efforts are coupled with a second tier of low-cost strategic financing initiatives. I have heard from companies throughout my riding about the hesitation and uncertainty surrounding investing in proprietary clean technologies. These risks will stall innovation, restrict capital and draw talent away from our country. If we want Canadian tech to succeed, we need confident investors.

In response, we have created the Canada growth fund, with an experienced, professional and independent team that stands ready to make important investments in support of our country's climate and economic goals. We will use the Canada growth fund to invest in scale-up projects, project certainty into the market and unlock the capital that Canada needs now.

The final tier includes targeted programming. We will use federal initiatives like the strategic innovation fund to respond to the unique needs of the clean-tech sector and invest in projects of national importance.

The companies in my riding of Kanata—Carleton are no stranger to the strategic innovation fund. The companies I mentioned, like Ranovus, which designs some of the fastest, smallest and greenest semiconductors in the world, have recently had their work supported by federal innovation funding. The Minister of Innovation and I had the honour of visiting Ranovus's lab and meeting the extraordinary talent that makes this company successful.

The strategic innovation fund alone has contributed to over 105,000 good-paying Canadian jobs, including thousands in my riding alone. I have no doubt that countless more jobs will be created when budget 2023 expands the strategic innovation fund to include clean technology and emissions-reducing innovation endeavours throughout the next decade. There is no doubt that budget 2023 looks to support clean, green Canadian innovation.

A few weeks ago, we welcomed President Biden to this House to share his thoughts on the future of the Canada-U.S. relationship. He said, "The United States chooses to link our future with Canada, because we know that we'll find no better partner...no more reliable ally and no more steady friend". The friendly competition between our two nations has led to tremendous growth and tremendous benefit.

As Canadian companies compete in the global marketplace, I am proud to be standing behind them in support. Our government is here with budget 2023 to support our Canadian companies and the incredible talent that makes them what they are. As local technology companies in my riding scale up and grow, I am proud that we are giving them the tools and tax credits needed to reach their full potential.

I fully believe, as I know the Minister of Finance does, that this is a country of big ideas, big opportunities and hard-working people who can do big things. Let us seize the moment, as the Minister of Innovation aptly says, and write the future of clean technology and a clean, green future in this country together.

• (1620)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her speech. We have just returned from a week of work at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, where we looked at the state and situation of human trafficking. I know we are committed to addressing the sexual exploitation of women.

However, I was listening to her speech today and I am going to have to disagree with it, to object to what she said. I heard a lot of greenwashing. She talked at length about green energy but, essentially, the \$21 billion set out in the budget is going to go to oil companies, small nuclear plants, oil extraction, dirty hydrogen and carbon capture. I am not alone in saying this. Environmental experts are saying that carbon capture is greenwashing.

The Budget

I would like to hear my colleague's opinion on this. Frankly, they may have good intentions, but unfortunately, I feel like this government does not walk the talk when it comes to the environment.

[English]

Ms. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, I would like to acknowledge, as was shared, that members work closely together on the status of women committee. We have been doing some great work, most recently on a human trafficking study last week.

I want to acknowledge that budget 2023 includes \$160 million for women's organizations. That will support the important work necessary to ensure women are safe across the country, whether from human trafficking, precarious housing situations or gender-based violence. We are very much committed as a government to continuing in that vein.

Further to—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have to allow for more questions.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, we have 40-year highs in inflation and more people visiting the food bank now than at any other time in Canadian history, yet the member opposite paints a rosy picture of Canada. There is a \$43-billion deficit this year in the budget as well.

Inflation is out of control, yet the government continues to pour more fuel on that fire. Does the hon. member know when, if ever, the budget will be balanced?

Ms. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, I think it is important to recognize where we are in these economic times and recognize that budget 2023 is a responsible fiscal plan for the challenging times we are in. I think we are making smart investments in Canada's future.

As I highlighted in my remarks today, the future is clean. It is clean, green technologies that are powering us into the future. That creates a future for our children and grandchildren. I am proud of the budget that has been put forward, and I hope the member opposite will support it.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will keep it brief. Last week, my colleague from Vancouver East and I hosted a town hall on the environment and heard a lot of very passionate people talk about their concerns for the environment. We just saw recently that the Trans Mountain pipeline is now estimated to cost \$30 billion, and it is going to expand bitumen export in this country. I wonder if my hon. colleague thinks that spending \$30 billion on that pipeline is a wise use of expenditures in today's economic climate.

• (1625)

Ms. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, I think it is important to recognize that when we look at our electricity needs and look at the investments being made in this budget, we are investing in clean, green energy and technologies. If we look to cloud computing, AI and the use and rise of technology and 5G networks as examples, the energy being consumed in the world, not even in this country, is

multiplying. We need to ensure that we make smart, sustainable decisions that do not jeopardize the future of this country for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in support of budget 2023, which is a responsible budget that supports Canadians with the rising cost of living through a grocery rebate, as we have heard about. It also makes important investments in our health care system, including \$198 billion over the next 10 years in total through the Canada health transfer and bilateral agreements, and expands the dental benefit that has already helped approximately 250,000 Canadian children under 12 to ensure that many more Canadians who are uninsured can access dental care. These measures are all worthy of a speech in themselves, and yet will not be the focus of my speech today.

Today I would like to focus on the fact that budget 2023 makes significant investments in securing Canada's fair share of the emerging global green economy, which is essential for our economic success. This is another major step forward in marshalling the resources needed for the massive transformation of our economy to achieve net zero by 2050.

Let us not forget that this is a commitment that our government enshrined in law through the Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act. This emerging global market is estimated by Oxford Economics, through a report that was released in January 2023 called "The Global Green Economy: Capturing the Opportunity", at \$10.3 trillion in value to the global economy by 2050. The largest opportunities identified in this report include electric vehicle manufacturing, renewable power generation, clean energy manufacturing, hydrogen, biofuels and even green finance.

It is interesting, if we look at the government's chapter 3 in budget 2023, the investment tax credits and many of the other programs and strategic investments that are profiled there closely correspond with these major global opportunities in the green economy that have been identified by experts. Budget 2023 has many merits, but I would like to focus on the clean energy and green economy portion of the budget, which I feel will catapult our country forward in leading the world in the fight against climate change while ensuring prosperity for future generations.

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I am very proud to say that I am one of the advocates in the Liberal caucus constantly pushing for more ambition and action on climate change. I wholeheartedly endorse our government's view that the path to net zero comes with massive economic growth opportunities if we can create the enabling conditions. In short, the green economy provides a more prosperous and sustainable future for our country. This means good-paying jobs in many industries, whether in critical mineral exploration or extraction, clean hydrogen production, electricians installing new public transit infrastructure like those that I visited in the electrical workers training facility close to my riding, line workers in EV manufacturing like those at GM Canada, again close to my riding, installers of building retrofits and many more.

We know that the average wage for jobs in clean-tech manufacturing is \$90,000, which is well above Canada's economy-wide average of approximately \$69,000. That is 30% higher wages in clean-tech manufacturing than Canada's economy-wide average, and most of these jobs do not require a university degree.

Based on one of the latest reports from the IPCC, we are rapidly approaching the point of no return in terms of any hope of keeping average global warming to within 1.5°C. In fact, the report says we are on a trajectory as a planet to 3.2°C of warming. The cost of inaction, I would say, is great and, I would argue, dwarfs the cost of making the needed strategic investments now. As one of my colleagues at one time said, we either pay now or pay more later.

Based on the Canadian Climate Institute's report on climate change called "Damage Control", we can see that climate change is already costing Canadians billions, and that is just the tip of the iceberg. The Canadian economy will continue to be saddled with increasing costs as damages brought on by climate change continue to climb to \$25 billion annually by 2025, which is equal to 50% of projected GDP growth.

● (1630)

That number is already extremely concerning in itself, but when we think about how significant those costs are, how quickly they will rise and the massive drag this would create on Canada's economic growth, we must recognize the severe consequences associated with inaction.

The losses in real GDP are projected to rise to over \$100 billion by 2050 within a high-emission scenario, and eight times that amount by the end of the century. That is almost a trillion dollars. This climate change threatens, and I think this is the point, the future growth and stability of our economy. This is just the top-line number, which only tells a part of the story. Authors in the Climate Institute's report say that these annual drops in GDP growth might not seem like a big deal, but they accumulate, reflecting a significant drop in investment, household income, and consumption, trade and employment.

In my view, we cannot afford to lose investment, household income, trade and employment, because that is what Conservatives would have us do, which is not address climate change, not take it seriously, not make the needed investments and move to an austerity model.

Waiting for climate disaster means that Canadians would pay for the repair of destroyed assets rather than seeing capital investments in key industries that increase productive capacity and thereby help realize economic growth and prosperity for all Canadians.

In my view, there is a strong moral imperative to act on climate change, but more forcefully perhaps is the economic imperative to act when taking the opportunity cost into account. Avoiding the future costs of losses and damages to our economy and society means we could invest that capital in our future economy now, and invest in the innovation that would drive future growth.

Let us not forget that the damage caused by climate change hits the household and hits it hard. Climate change makes life more expensive, and the solutions make life more affordable. Climate change can be felt at the household level by lowering income and increasing expenses. If we want to alleviate the cost of living pressures that Canadians are under, we must fight climate change. Our government knows that the economics of climate change necessitate action and strategic investments.

The cost of climate change continues to rise, but every dollar invested in adaptation and mitigation returns a significant amount to the Canadian economy in both direct and indirect impacts. For every dollar invested, the Canadian Climate Institute estimates that \$13 to \$15 of total benefit is accrued. For every dollar invested, \$15 is coming back to the Canadian economy.

We are decreasing the costs that the economy would be saddled with in the future as well. Again, when we consider the costs and project them out into the future, we realize how important it is to act and make those investments now.

Budget 2023 really builds on a really strong foundation of significant investments. I could name a few, the net-zero accelerator fund, the low-carbon economy fund, Canada's critical minerals strategy, the zero-emission vehicle purchase incentives and charging infrastructure, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and the list goes on and on. There is over \$112.2 billion, by my calculation, of climate-related investments that would help us get to net zero. That is only part of the picture. In fact, the Climate Institute estimates Canada would need to make between \$125 billion and \$140 billion investment per year in order to get to net zero. Obviously, the government cannot make all of those investments itself, but will need to leverage the power of the market.

I will quote the Oxford Economics report that I mentioned earlier. They look at what is called the net-zero transformation scenario and say:

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In addition to innovation, this Net Zero Transformation scenario assumes that governments introduce policies that encourage private sector investment. Measures such as R&D tax credits, co-financing, and risk guarantees all have the potential to spur faster private sector investment and generate R&D spillovers. These can be thought of as “carrots” to incentivise private investment, in addition to the “stick” of carbon pricing.

This highlights why this budget is so important. It is because the significant investment, tax credits and the strategic financing that is outlined in the key priorities are really going to drive private investment into the key areas of our economy to fight climate change.

• (1635)

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would just note that we are living in times of 40-year-high inflation with more Canadians visiting food banks than at any time in Canadian history, and yet the Government of Canada continues to tout that life has never been better in Canada. There is a \$43-billion deficit in this budget and yet back in 2015 the Liberals said they would balance the budget in 2019. I just wonder if the hon. member has any comments about the \$43-billion deficit and how this is contributing to inflation.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, as we know, inflation is a global issue that everyone can acknowledge is a product of supply-chain disruptions left over from COVID-19 and the war that Russia has waged on Ukraine. There are many factors associated with global inflation, but what we have to acknowledge is that fighting climate change is a part of the solution to combatting inflationary pressures in our economy. That is exactly why our government is saying that we cannot really fight inflation without fighting climate change.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague is pleased to be pleased, as they say. He talked a lot about climate change, saying that Canada is good, that it is strong and that everything is fine. I just want to point out to my colleague that our net emissions went up again this year. We are still one of the worst countries in the world in that respect.

There are many measures in the budget. Oil companies are getting tax credits to green their record, for greenwashing, as my colleague mentioned earlier. Last year, in 2022, Exxon Mobil made \$56 billion in profits; Shell made \$40 billion; Total made \$36 billion; Chevron made \$36 billion; and BP made \$27 billion.

How can my colleague justify giving those companies even one cent?

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, obviously we disagree. I am very proud of the action that our government is taking on climate change, including the massive investments that we have made and commitments that we have enshrined into law. It is clear to me that emissions reductions are already being had in Canadian society across many industries and are only going to deepen as we implement the many different measures that are in budget 2023. I do not see anything other than a legitimate, authentic commitment to reduce emissions and adapt to the changing climate and to get to the root causes of climate change.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Whitby for his focus on climate change, which is an issue I would hope that all of us take very seriously.

Bill C-12 set an emissions objective for 2026 and that objective is 20% below 2005 levels. The recent emissions inventory that just came out for 2021 had Canada's emissions at 8.4% below 2005 levels, so we have another 11.6% to go in only five years and yet what we saw in 2021 was that emissions were higher by 1.8% over 2020 levels. Therefore, if emissions are going up and we are trying to hit a target that needs them to go down, how do Liberals make that work?

• (1640)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, the question is a good one. Obviously, the intentions are to reduce emissions across our entire economy. Budget 2023 builds on many other measures that are bearing or starting to bear their fruits. What we are talking about is a massive transformation of the economy and that is going to take time. To realize the emission reductions it takes time.

Obviously, the adoption of electric vehicles is going up. We are seeing major deals with the manufacturing of clean technology in Canada. There are many aspects of this transition; it is going to take time to realize those benefits, but I am sure that they are coming. I am sure the things that we are doing are grounded in principles that will bring about the outcomes that we are all looking for.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Public Services and Procurement; the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, Taxation; the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to speak to the reckless budget brought down by the Liberals and supported unreservedly and unsurprisingly by the NDP.

In fact, the budget is truly a product of the office of the Leader of the NDP. I think it is fair to say that people underestimate him. Canadians now know that he is the one truly responsible for the government's budgetary decisions. We might even call him the right hon. member for Burnaby South.

It has to be a bit embarrassing for the Liberal members to sit in the House day after day and see their party being completely controlled by the NDP leader. They should not be surprised because since 2015, the Prime Minister and his ministers have demonstrated through their behaviour that their level of incompetence should have served as a warning.

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For example, in 2013, the Prime Minister told anyone who would listen that he was not worried about budgets because, as he explained, budgets balance themselves. We know how that turned out.

After such a comment, we might have expected that many Liberal candidates would be reluctant to run under his leadership. No, on the contrary, they all took the same stance and eagerly repeated whatever he said.

That was certainly not the first time that the Prime Minister made odd and dangerous comments, but, for Canadians, that was certainly the most memorable one.

Some believed that although the Prime Minister was incompetent and did not have the experience required to steer the ship, at least he was surrounded by ministers and wise advisers who could tell him how to be sensible and would control his impulses. This hope quickly evaporated when his Minister of Finance increased our country's national debt to unprecedented levels. Yes, the Minister of Finance defended the federal government's record deficit of more than \$381 billion arguing it was affordable, given the low interest rates.

I would like to say more about that, but I want to speak about what would be important to address in a budget, and that is my Bill C-325, which I recently introduced.

Bill C-325 would strengthen the conditional release system by creating a new offence for the breach of conditions, requiring parole officers to report breaches of conditions and restoring the former version of section 742.1 of the Criminal Code, which was repealed in 2022 by the Prime Minister's Bill C-5.

The government's Bill C-5, which has passed, allows criminals convicted of aggravated sexual assault, for example, to serve their sentences in the community. I hope that this monumental error will be corrected, and that the Bloc Québécois and NDP members will support my bill.

These violent criminals should not be serving their sentences at home watching Netflix. They should be behind bars. The Bloc Québécois did support Bill C-5. They voted in favour of it, but after seeing what happened next, they realized that there were problems. Consider the case of Jonathan Gravel, a 42-year-old man who managed to avoid prison after committing a violent sexual assault. The Bloc Québécois now realizes that this needs to be reversed, because it just does not work.

Even a Crown prosecutor in Quebec, Alexis Dinelle, slammed the government for reopening the door to sentences served in the community for this type of crime. He said, and I quote, "Right now, [the Prime Minister] and [the Minister of Justice] probably have some explaining to do to victims of sexual assault. I cannot stay silent in the face of this regressive situation".

What this federal law does is give men who have been convicted of aggravated sexual assault the possibility of serving their sentences at home. For example, according to *La Presse*, Sobhi Akra wants to be able to serve his sentence from home after pleading guilty to sexually assaulting eight women. That is outrageous.

My bill also proposes to create an offence for breach of conditions of conditional release by criminals who have been convicted

of crimes such as sexual assault, murder or assaulting children, for example, and who fail to meet their parole conditions when they are on parole. Right now, it is not an offence for such criminals to violate the conditions of their parole.

For example, I am sure everyone remembers Eustachio Gallese, who murdered Marylène Levesque three years ago. One of his parole conditions involved being treated by a psychologist. However, he was not reincarcerated when the Parole Board learned that he was seeing prostitutes and violating the conditions of his parole. His release was not revoked and nowhere in his record does it indicate that he was failing to meet his parole conditions.

With my bill, people like Eustachio Gallese, who are out on parole, will no longer be able to make a mockery of our justice system and will have to take the conditions of their parole seriously. It will help save the lives of people like Marylène Levesque.

• (1645)

As we know, the main role of parliamentarians is to ensure the highest level of public safety for Canadians. We must correct the monumental error in the law stemming from Bill C-5 and strengthen management of the parole system.

Let us get back to the budget.

Canada's finances and public funds are not toys for the Prime Minister and his rich friends to play with. Canadians have worked too hard and sacrificed too much to allow these people to destroy the quality of life of our future generations.

We know that the Minister of Finance studied at Harvard. We also know that this university does not teach these kinds of financial strategies to its students. Like the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance clearly missed a lot of classes at university.

When the budget was tabled by the government, we heard different reactions. One came from Mario Dumont, a well-known commentator and former Quebec politician who hosts several shows in Quebec, on TVA. This was his initial reaction upon seeing the budget:

What is most shocking is that, during those months when the Canadian public service was growing by leaps and bounds, service delivery was the least efficient it had ever been. Need I remind anyone of the passport crisis? ...When you read the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report and compare it to what is happening on the ground, one conclusion is obvious. Canada is bloody badly managed. A private company that is so poorly managed would be sent to the slaughterhouse.

From what we can see, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance have no idea what sound financial practices are, and, with the support of the NDP leader, they are dragging this country into financial chaos. While the Prime Minister is destroying the country's finances, Liberal members on the other side of the House are sitting back and watching our children's future slip away. That is the Liberal legacy under this Prime Minister: a total failure to manage our country's finances that puts Canada's future in a very precarious position.

Our legacy will be to clean up this mess and restore sound fiscal policies for the good of our citizens, because when we talk about the future, we are talking about our children and grandchildren. We may tell ourselves that everything is fine right now, but when we look at the interest on the current debt, when we do the projections and calculations, we can see that we are talking about \$21 billion in additional interest payments. It is not hard to see that this will become unsustainable over the next few years and the funds available for government operations will be subject to that interest. That means there will be less money and we cannot just keep borrowing, which will only make things worse.

That is why we on this side of the House will always seek to work in a reasonable way in order to maximize the public purse and strike a balance to ensure we do not end up in a situation where our grandchildren will pay the price later on.

• (1650)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague talked about a lot of things, including the importance of addressing the violence playing out on our streets, and yet the Conservatives continue to oppose all the gun control measures we are proposing.

However, let us talk about our budget. My colleague spent a lot of time talking down the Canadian economy, when we know that it is much more resilient than that of our peers. We brought Rio Tinto to Sorel and Moderna to Laval. We also brought 5,000 new jobs to Bécancourt, and this is just in Quebec.

When my colleague talks about the importance of reducing government spending, is he talking about the \$2 billion that is being invested in health care for Canadians? Since the Conservative leader has confirmed—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I must give the member an opportunity to respond and leave time for other members who would like to ask questions.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, do I have the same amount of time to answer my colleague's question as she took to ask it?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): You have one minute to respond.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, a government has to make choices. It must create a list of priorities and decide what to do. Since 2015, the Liberal government has chosen to constantly increase spending without having any controls. That is the problem.

Is everything a priority? Of course. If my children want ice cream every day, do I give it to them every day? No. Everyone has to learn about control sometime. The \$21 billion handed over to consulting firms is one example of something that needs to be controlled. This is an example of potential savings, because the public service has grown by 30% at the same time. How can we have 30% more public servants, whom we obviously pay, while at the same time paying \$21 billion to contractors? That does not work.

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Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, we know the Conservatives' position in terms of the budget, the cuts they would make if they were in power, major budgetary restrictions and balancing the budget. This evening, 150,000 federal public servants will quite likely go on strike.

I would like to ask my colleague from Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles the following. If he were the minister in such a situation, would he accept the federal public servants' salary conditions to avoid a strike?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, it is the government's responsibility to manage its public service properly. There is a strike mandate right now because this government did not do its job of managing the public service properly. It hired 30% more public servants, it awards external contracts, and in the meantime, working conditions are being mismanaged.

I cannot necessarily respond directly to my colleague's question because I do not have all the information on the demands. The fact remains that good public management means knowing how to work with the resources on hand, hiring the necessary number of people to complete tasks on budget, and ensuring that employees are paid properly.

However, if the government hires people, spends money elsewhere and cannot afford to pay them more, then there is a problem.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just want to ask my hon. colleague what his thoughts are on the fact that the Liberal government is continuing to deficit-spend, even though it promised, way back in 2015, that it would run only four modest deficits of \$10 billion, which it has never even come close to. Budget 2023 is \$43 billion.

I am wondering what my colleague has to say about that.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question. We remember very clearly that the Prime Minister did some marketing during the 2015 election campaign. He said that the Liberals would generate small \$10-billion deficits in order to heavily invest in Canadian infrastructure.

However, during that government's first four years, it ran \$100 billion in additional deficits. A few billion dollars were invested in infrastructure, because nothing was forthcoming. It was all smoke and mirrors. They said there would be small deficits to allow investments in infrastructure. No one can object to that. However, ultimately, \$100 billion went up in smoke. That was the result after the first four years. Now, we are way past that point.

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● (1655)

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am sure that all of my colleagues will be delighted with the words I have chosen for my speech. I am sure they all want to hear it, as do the majority of Canadians. It is important to be able to repeat things that have been said here and to be able to listen to them carefully, because sometimes they come back to haunt us.

I am going to start with a quote from someone who said, “let me be very clear. We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline and our deficits must continue to be reduced. The pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe and solvent must [and will] be paid down. This is our fiscal anchor. This is a line we will not cross. It will ensure that our finances remain sustainable.”

That sounds good. That is great. It seems serious. Who said that? It was not an analyst on television or an economist. It was the Minister of Finance. She did not say that a long, long time ago; she said it when presenting the 2022-23 budget just a year ago. Let us look at this quote and analyze it a little to see what it means.

The first statement is, “let me be very clear. We are absolutely determined that our debt-to-GDP ratio must continue to decline”.

She was talking about the 2023 budget. One year later, has the minister demonstrated resolve? It seems not. According to the 2023-24 budget, the debt-to-GDP ratio will increase from 42.4% to 43.5% in 2023-24. It will also be greater than 42.4% in 2024-25. In the two years since this statement was made, the Minister of Finance was unable to maintain her resolve not once, but twice, with regard to her fiscal anchor, which was to ensure that the debt-to-GDP ratio would continue to decline.

The facts presented in the budget are simple. Canada's federal debt for 2023-24 is expected to reach \$1.22 trillion. These are not numbers we are used to saying. One trillion is a thousand billion. When we talk about \$1.22 trillion, that means 1,022 billion dollars. That is nearly \$81,000 per Canadian household.

Canada's budgetary projections show no path to balance. The deficit for 2022-23 is \$43 billion. In 2023-24, the deficit will reach \$40.1 billion. The fall economic statement projected a surplus of \$4.5 billion in 2027-28. The 2023 budget projects nothing but deficits. The current projection is a \$14-billion deficit in 2027-28. That was the year we were supposed to have a balanced budget, according to the Minister of Finance. As I was saying, she lacked resolve.

Let us continue with another sentence from this statement by the Minister of Finance. She said that the pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe and solvent must and will be paid down.

That is firm, clear and precise. I may have a quick lesson for the Minister of Finance. To pay down a debt, people have to start by paying it down. To pay it down, they have to stop borrowing money. To stop borrowing money, they have to stop adding new spending.

The reality of budget 2023-24 is that public spending has again increased by more than \$120 billion over pre-pandemic spending.

In 2019, federal program spending was \$323 billion. In 2023-24, expenditures will reach \$447 billion. That is a far cry from paying back pandemic debt. We are spending even more money than we spent before the pandemic.

The budget makes no mention of paying down the pandemic debt. Things have certainly changed after just a year. The words “pay down” seem to have disappeared from the Minister of Finance's vocabulary, even though he had given us a bit of hope last year. Unfortunately, it seems that nature has resumed its course. It probably came galloping back following a meeting between the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister, the biggest spender in the history of Canada. Indeed, it is good to remember that the Prime Minister has accumulated more debt than all the other previous prime ministers of this country combined.

● (1700)

He has no plan for balancing the budget and bringing his inflationary deficits under control. Inflationary deficits are the reason behind the rising day-to-day costs of the goods we buy and the interest rates we pay.

I am going to read out another statement related to what I was talking about earlier, and this one really important. In the 2022 budget, when speaking about the debt-to-GDP ratio that I mentioned earlier, the Minister of Finance said that this was the fiscal anchor, the line that should not be crossed in order to ensure that our finances remain sustainable. We are in trouble.

As I said earlier, the Minister of Finance herself has crossed this uncrossable line twice, for both the coming year and the next year. She made it clear that exceeding the current debt-to-GDP ratio would make Canada's finances unsustainable. According to our own finance minister, the Prime Minister's debt and inflationary deficits keep rising.

In 2021-22, debt servicing costs were \$24.5 billion. The Prime Minister's inflationary spending caused interest rates to climb, which increased the cost of debt servicing in Canada. Who is going to pay for all that? Not I, but rather our children and our children's children, in short, everyone will to some extent. Even today, the cost of repaying the debt is so high that we will no longer be able to pay for all the promises and all the spending that the government keeps adding.

In my opinion, the finance minister has lost all credibility because she probably abdicated her responsibility to ensure Canada's finances were viable, healthy and above all realistic for future generations. This is evident and has been demonstrated.

It is not too surprising because the Minister of Finance was probably following her Prime Minister's example. We have had the chance to talk about this several times since the beginning of the budget debate. In 2015, the Prime Minister was elected after making his grand promise to run small deficits, very small deficits. He promised to run a deficit of \$10 billion the first year, \$10 billion the second year, \$6 billion or \$7 billion the following year and then go back to a balanced budget. The Prime Minister made that promise in order to get elected, obviously. He said it because interest rates were low. He said that interest rates would never go up, that we were in a good period, that everything was going well and that we could afford to borrow money. That is not what happened in the least.

Let us not forget that the Prime Minister said that budgets balance themselves. The Minister of Finance probably thought that a return to a balanced budget would happen on its own. Unfortunately, the reality of the economic situation we are experiencing around the world caught up with her.

Here is the Prime Minister's latest and probably worst statement. In front of a group of young people, the Prime Minister tried to justify his propensity for borrowing by urging young people to use their credit cards at 19% interest to pay their rent and invest in their education. That was the Prime Minister's wise counsel to a group of young people who came to hear him speak. It is not surprising today that the finance minister has put us in a situation where our federal finances are no longer viable. The only way to fix the situation is to elect a responsible Conservative government in the next election.

• (1705)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will try for the fourth time to get an answer to my question. We see the Conservatives pivoting. All the Conservatives agree not to touch the \$2 billion we will invest in health care. We also put very clear and specific measures in the budget to cut government spending by \$15 billion. This includes vendor contracts. It includes cuts to the public service.

Since those are the facts, here is my question for my colleague. What would the Conservatives cut? What cuts would they make to achieve their austerity goals?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, it is rather ironic to hear such a question.

The member just told us that the budget contains \$15 billion in cuts. However, there is no indication anywhere of where these \$15 billion in cuts will be made. At this time, the Minister of Finance is leading the country.

Now I am being asked to do her job. I would be only too happy to do her job. Our Conservative team will be only too happy to do a good job by managing this country's finances in a fiscally responsible manner when we are elected and have the opportunity to be on that side of the House.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really enjoyed my hon. colleague's speech. What is inter-

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esting is that the Conservatives are saying that they will be a responsible government and that they will form the next government.

Now, my colleague did not specify exactly what the Conservatives would do to balance the budget. I heard one proposal from the Conservative leader. Earlier, my colleague quoted the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, but I am going to quote his leader. During the Conservative Party leadership campaign, he said that he would cut \$1 billion from CBC/Radio-Canada's budget, which is currently \$1.2 billion. Not one Conservative member from Quebec has wanted to answer the question we have been asking for two days now. I would really like someone to answer me.

Does my hon. colleague agree with his leader's proposal? If the Conservative Party takes office here in Ottawa, will the member support his leader's proposal to cut CBC/Radio-Canada's \$1.2-billion budget by \$1 billion?

Mr. Luc Berthold: The answer is yes, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech. I would like to hear him speak about the Liberal-NDP coalition given that the NDP got 17% of the vote in the last election and that the Liberals are implementing the NDP platform.

Mr. Luc Berthold: Madam Speaker, that is a very good question.

I think that if I were a Liberal right now, I would be asking myself some serious questions about who is really leading the Minister of Finance when the time comes to write a budget. What we see in the budget is \$67 billion in new spending on new programs.

I am not the only one saying this. People have seen the budget and read it. The Parliamentary Budget Officer said it. It contains \$67 billion in spending. That means even more borrowing, even more problems, even more inflationary spending that will ultimately increase costs for all Canadians, workers, mothers, everyone. That is the current reality.

That is what happens when a Liberal government forms a coalition with the NDP. In the end, everyone pays the price. Unfortunately, we do not trust anyone to deliver these programs, because we know that when it comes to program delivery, the current government's performance over the past few years has been feeble. Take passports, for example, or employment insurance. I could keep listing examples until I sit down.

• (1710)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what I will try to do in a very short period of time is amplify the contrast between the Conservative opposition and what we have been doing here in government.

The Budget

When we think of the budget, we need to recognize that the budget in its entirety is a reflection, based on what I mentioned the other day, of a great deal of consultation and a great deal of effort that has been put together in order to ensure that this is a budget that serves every Canadian from coast to coast to coast. It is very clear in terms of the manner in which it does that.

No matter how many times the Conservatives will say that there is no plan, there is a detailed plan. It is there in front of all of us. All one has to do is be prepared to do a bit of reading. There are many aspects of this budget that will continue to support Canadians, build our economy and build our society in a direction that I believe a vast majority of Canadians would approve of.

The Conservatives seem to be of the opinion that when the government spends money, it is not a good idea. I wanted to amplify the issue of child care. People will recall in the last election the Conservative Party said it did not support the national child care program the Liberals were talking about. We now have all provinces and territories onside. We are investing in child care and the Conservatives opposed that.

When we think of child care, it does mean that the government is spending money. A February report that came out said the participation rate for women between 25 and 54 is at an all-time high of 85.7%. I suggest that is the highest in North America. At the end of the day, a child care program that provides \$10-a-day child care, what the Conservative Party opposes, will ultimately provide more opportunities and enhance the lifestyles of all Canadians as a direct result. That is investing in Canadians.

We can talk about the \$198 billion over the next 10 years, which is a genuine commitment to financing our health care system, not only for today, but for future generations. It shows the federal government does have a role to play in long-term care, mental health and other issues that Canadians are concerned about. They are reflected in this budget. People understand and appreciate that health care is at the core of what our Canadian identity is all about. The budget reflects that desire.

We can talk about the inflation rate. The Conservative Party always seems to want to forget that this is a worldwide inflation situation. In Canada, we are doing so much better than virtually all of our peer countries, including the United States. We know we can do more. That is why we have the grocery rebate. It is a one-time grocery rebate because we understand the difficulty that Canadians are going through.

I see my time has already expired. I would suggest to members opposite that all they need to do is understand the budget, and then I am sure they will rethink their position and vote in favour of it.

• (1715)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know the hon. member was looking forward to his full 20 minutes.

[*Translation*]

However, it being 5:15 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the amendment now before the House.

[*English*]

The question is on the amendment.

Shall I dispense?

Some hon. members: No.

[*Chair read text of amendment to House*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the amendment be carried or carried on division, or wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

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

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

• (1800)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

(*Division No. 295*)

YEAS

Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Chambers	Chong
Cooper	Dalton
Dancho	Davidson
Deltell	d'Entremont
Doherty	Dowdall
Dreeshen	Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)	Falk (Provencher)
Fast	Ferreri
Findlay	Gallant
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmiec
Kram	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	Martel
Mazier	McCauley (Edmonton West)
McLean	Moore
Morantz	Motz
Muys	Nater
O'Toole	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Redekopp
Reid	Rempel Garner
Richards	Roberts
Rood	Ruff
Scheer	Seeback
Shields	Shipley
Small	Soroka

Steinley
Strahl
Thomas
Tolmie
Vecchio
Vien
Vis
Warkentin
Webber
Williamson

Stewart
Stubbs
Tochor
Van Popta
Vidal
Viersen
Wagantall
Waugh
Williams
Zimmer— 106

NAYS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron
Beech
Bennett
Bérubé
Bittle
Blair
Blanchette-Joncas
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Cannings
Chabot
Chahal
Champoux
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Desbiens
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
El-Khoury
Fergus
Fisher
Fortier
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Garrison
Gazan
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lattanzio
LeBlanc

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Beaulieu
Bendayan
Bergeron
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blanchet
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Brunelle-Duceppe
Casey
Chagger
Champagne
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
DeBellefeuille
Desilets
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Ehsassi
Erskine-Smith
Fillmore
Fonseca
Fortin
Fraser
Fry
Garon
Gaudreau
Gerretsen
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jaczek
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Larouche
Lauzon
Lebouthillier

The Budget

Lemire
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
Maloney
Mathysen
May (Saamich—Gulf Islands)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Michaud
Morrice
Murray
Ng
Normandin
Oliphant
Perron
Plamondon
Qualtrough
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Scarpaleggia
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh
Sousa
St-Onge
Tassi
Thériault
Thompson
Trudel
Valdez
van Koeverden
Vignola
Virani
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Connell
Pauzé
Petitpas Taylor
Powlowski
Rayes
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Savard-Tremblay
Schiefke
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Simard
Sorbara
Ste-Marie
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Therrien
Trudeau
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandenbeld
Villemure
Vuong
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 204

PAIRED

Members

Barsalou-Duval
Dzerowicz
Gill
Kramp-Neuman
Melillo
O'Regan
Serré

Battiste
Epp
Joly
Martinez Ferrada
Morrison
Schmale
Vandal— 14

The Speaker: I declare the amendment defeated.

*Private Members' Business***PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS***[English]***FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS ACT**

The House resumed from February 1 consideration of the motion that Bill C-239, An Act to amend An Act to authorize the making of certain fiscal payments to provinces, and to authorize the entry into tax collection agreements with provinces, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise and speak on a very important issue. The Canada Revenue Agency has demonstrated, particularly over the last few years, just how valuable it is to all Canadians from coast to coast to coast. I can understand why the Bloc would move this piece of legislation, but it is legislation I personally cannot support. This is primarily because the Bloc has underestimated what the CRA actually does for all of us, no matter where we live in the nation.

All one really needs to do is look at their annual tax forms and other things that I will get into shortly. However, I would like to emphasize the pandemic. When the worldwide pandemic came upon us, the CRA and professional civil servants stepped up to the plate in a significant way. Through the CRA, we were able to support Canadians when they needed to be supported. During a pandemic, something that was virtually unheard of for generations, people needed to get the funds that were necessary in order to pay for the food on their tables, utility bills, mortgage bills and so forth. I would suggest that the role the CRA played in providing direct support to the people of Canada was second to no other, whether a non-profit or government agency. Even today, we are looking to the CRA to wind up what has taken place through the many different programs that it was ultimately responsible for.

If it were up to members of the Bloc party, and unfortunately even some Conservative members whom I have heard debate this issue, the CRA would not be necessary. They would rather have a system where if a province wants to be independent with its own revenue collection, it would be allowed to do so. I do not think that Canada needs that.

I think of the people in Shawinigan and the surrounding area, with the thousands of good, middle-class jobs in that region. I wonder to what degree members of the Bloc have even considered those individuals and the impact this legislation would have on them, from an individual point of view. From a national perspective, we know that the Bloc does not really care about the whole idea of Canada as one nation when looking at the CRA, even today after the pandemic.

In debating legislation, I talked a great deal about budget 2023. One of the initiatives in that budget is the grocery rebate, which is actually being administered by the CRA. When we put it in perspective, we are coming out of a pandemic, during which we were very dependent on the CRA. We are virtually out of the pandemic now but dealing with inflation. Once again, we are turning to the CRA in order to provide direct support for Canadians in every re-

gion of the country. It is enabling us to alleviate some of the concerns that people have with respect to inflation.

That is not to mention the Canada child benefit. Somewhere between \$9 million and possibly \$10 million is going to Winnipeg North every month from the Canada child benefit. That is an incredible amount of money that is going to support children, and the CRA plays an important role in that.

• (1805)

However, surely for only political reasons, the Bloc wants to get rid of the CRA footprint in the province of Quebec. Those jobs in the Chicoutimi and Shawinigan area do not matter to the Bloc. The programs and services at the CRA that have been there during, after and even prior to the pandemic do not concern members of the Bloc.

At the end of the day, whether their votes are related to international tax evasion, providing services to Canadians or providing good-quality jobs, I would encourage all members to vote against this piece of legislation.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to the merits of Bill C-239, an act to amend the Act to enable certain tax payments to be made to the provinces and to authorize agreements with the provinces for the collection of taxes. I am going focus on the second half of the title.

The truth is that the Conservative Party of Canada is the only party that truly respects provincial and territorial jurisdictions. In fact, in early 2019, during question period in the House, I asked why the Prime Minister was stubbornly saying no to a single tax return in Quebec. One of my colleagues had tabled a motion in the interest of Canadians, and Quebecers in particular. That motion read as follows:

That, given:

- (a) the House has great respect for provincial jurisdiction and trust in provincial institutions;
- (b) the people of Quebec are burdened with completing and submitting two tax returns, one federal and one provincial;

I should add that this is the only province in Canada that is required to file two tax returns.

- (c) the House believes in cutting red tape and reducing unnecessary paperwork to improve the everyday lives of families; therefore,

the House call on the government to work with the Government of Quebec to implement a single tax return in Quebec, as adopted unanimously in the motion of the National Assembly of Quebec on May 15, 2018.

We Conservatives work together in the interest of all Canadians. The arguments presented in this motion are still just as valid. It is about respecting the provinces and also the intention to improve the quality of life of Quebecers and the Canadian people.

Our leader, at the time, said that “no public service jobs will be eliminated” and that “we need public servants to ensure that our federal laws are upheld” and enforced. He said that “we can also make more effective use of the people who work for the federal government.”

Again in 2021, the Conservative Party of Canada supported the single tax return and also campaigned on it. The sponsor of Bill C-239, the member for La Prairie, was inspired by our commitment, which goes back a few years, and the clear desire expressed by the National Assembly of Quebec. We listen to the intentions and will of the National Assembly of Quebec.

CRA workers, among others, have expressed concerns about their jobs. I heard the Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons say that public servants did a good job during the pandemic. That is true, but all public servants in every department did a good job, not just CRA employees working in Quebec.

Out of respect for public servants, we must protect their jobs. That can be done when there is good will. That is a concern for us, the members of the Conservative Party of Canada. I would remind the House that the federal public service has been negotiating with the Liberal government for more than a year, and that there will be a public service strike this evening at one minute past midnight if an agreement is not reached. When people say that public servants should be treated well and that we should find jobs for them, we should come to an agreement with them because they did a good job during the pandemic. They are right. There were shortcomings and problems, but I believe that we must respect our federal public servants.

We still have a labour shortage. We are in the midst of an economic crisis and, on top of that, a labour crisis. Instead of handing out outrageous contracts, this government could show some faith in its own employees.

• (1810)

I recognize that there are certainly situations where expertise is needed to perform certain tasks, and that contracting out may be required. However, in many cases, Canadian public servants have filed complaints because, among other things, the contractors were doing the same work as the public servants, so the excuse of the need for expertise to justify these contracts does not hold water.

Earlier this year, federal public sector unions expressed concern about this issue. The president of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada said, “[This] results in higher costs and lower quality services for Canadians, less transparency, less accountability and the loss of institutional knowledge and skills”.

As the sponsor of the bill said, on the one hand, there is a shortage of workers and, on the other hand, we are paying two people to do the same job. I agree with him. It is a bit ridiculous.

It is ridiculous and outrageous that the Liberal government spent \$11.8 billion on subcontracts in 2021. It is now 2023, and I am sure the situation has not gotten any better. All I have to say is “McKinsey.” I will leave it at that. I think people who are listening still understand that while the abuse and waste continue, so does the preferential treatment for Liberal friends.

The Conservative Party is the only party that can implement this, because history has shown that the current Liberal government does not necessarily respect the majority of the House. Many private members' bills that were supported by a majority of the House have

still not been implemented by this government. That is a lack of respect for democracy. That is the Liberal government. Meanwhile, Canadians would have benefited from all of those bills that parliamentarians had a chance to introduce because of the lottery system for private members' bills. I will come back to that another time.

The Conservatives support a united Canada and are in favour of a fairer and simpler tax system for all Canadians. We want to simplify the lives of Quebecers, who are the only ones who have to file two tax returns. Today is April 18, my daughter Anne-Frédérique's birthday. I want to take this opportunity to wish her a happy birthday, but I also want to say that, on April 18, Quebecers and Canadians across the country have to complete their tax returns. In Quebec, they have to file two returns. Does the Liberal government not trust Quebecers? I am not sure. Why, in 2023, are Quebecers still required to file two income tax returns?

In closing, I simply want to say that in this chamber only the Conservative Party of Canada can establish a single tax return to improve Quebecers' quality of life.

I would have liked to take questions. Unfortunately, in accordance with procedure, there are none.

• (1815)

[English]

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, I was attempting to vote earlier today and my phone malfunctioned, and so did Zoom and my iPad. I am requesting unanimous consent that my vote be counted in the affirmative.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member's request will please say nay.

Hearing none, it is agreed.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really appreciated the speech our Conservative colleague just gave. I respect the fact that he supports the bill despite being a federalist, and I thank him for it.

As my colleagues know, we are a separatist party. Consequently, taxation power is a crucial issue for us, because it is central to and inherent in the very principle of political sovereignty. It will come as no surprise to anyone when I say that, in our opinion, it is high time we broke the shackles that bind us to Ottawa, this foreign entity that drains our financial resources and imposes its centralizing vision on us. As members know, in Canada, we are condemned to paying considerable sums of money to a state where our political weight is constantly declining. It is time to take control of our own destiny.

Private Members' Business

Bill C-239, introduced by my Bloc Québécois colleague from La Prairie, does not free us from the obligation to pay our share to the foreign state that is Ottawa or from the obligation to remit billions of dollars for priorities that we do not share. However, it would make it possible for Quebec to manage its own taxes with a single income tax return adapted to our realities and our needs. Ottawa, however, is digging in its heels and putting forward spurious arguments to continue controlling our finances.

The purported fear of job losses that we hear from the Liberals and the NDP is just a hollow excuse to justify their desire to control our revenues. The fact is, there are many other challenges facing the public service, including the Phoenix payroll fiasco, which has caused so much confusion in the management of public servants' salaries. Delays in processing applications and calls were commonplace long before the pandemic. This highlights the shortcomings of an outdated system. There have been many long and very frustrating delays.

It is time for Quebec to take back control of its taxation system to ensure that our distinct choices and unique characteristics are respected. The provincial income tax, created in 1954 by Maurice Duplessis, made history. In the year 2023, we must once again make our own history by demanding our own single tax return. Quebec deserves a tax system adapted to its reality and managed by its own democratic institutions. It is time we charted our own course towards a better future for our nation. It is time we implemented a single income tax return in Quebec, because it would bring us numerous indisputable benefits.

For nearly three decades now, Revenu Québec has successfully collected the Quebec sales tax as well as the federal goods and services tax. Why should it be denied the responsibility of also collecting federal income tax on behalf of Quebecers? There is no reason why it should not be entrusted with this responsibility.

It is unfortunate that Ottawa has repeatedly rejected this proposal, meaning that Quebecers are the only taxpayers in Canada who have to file two separate tax returns. It is now tax season. I would like to remind those who are watching that the deadline for filing a tax return is April 30. This situation creates considerable costs for citizens and businesses, not to mention the complications that arise from having to communicate with two separate organizations. We must abolish this administrative inconsistency and adopt a single income tax return in Quebec. It would make life much easier for taxpayers, but there are also other benefits to a single tax return.

According to the Research Institute on Self-Determination of Peoples and National Independence, or the IRAI for short, this measure would save us a whopping \$425 million. What is more, it would give Quebec direct access to foreign tax information, which means it could crack down on tax havens in a proactive, professional and concerted way, rather than having to simply copy the federal laws in that regard, which are a prime example of hollow, flawed legislation.

It is important to note that there is a consensus on this bill in Quebec. The Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution in favour of this measure on May 15, 2018. It was proposed by the MNA for La Prairie at the time, who is now the member for La Prairie in another Parliament here with me.

• (1820)

The Legault government formally made this request during a meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada on January 17, 2019. It is time for Ottawa to acknowledge the will of Quebecers that has been so clearly expressed. There is a clear desire to transfer the amounts saved through this measure so that Quebec, through Revenu Québec, can assume full responsibility for the single tax return.

We must put an end to this absurd situation where Quebecers are the only ones who have to file two tax returns, with all the costs and complications that this entails. A single tax return in Quebec is a logical measure that will benefit taxpayers, the economy and the province's fiscal autonomy.

Let us act wisely. We must pass this for the benefit of all. I mentioned consensus, but it is not just the consensus of elected officials. The idea is backed by Quebec's business community, including chambers of commerce, independent businesses, the Quebec Employers Council and the Quebec CPA Order.

Look at what workers say, too. In 2016, the Syndicat de la fonction publique et parapublique du Québec, the union that represents workers in Quebec's public and parapublic sectors, launched a campaign in favour of a single tax return administered by Revenu Québec. The campaign has the support of the Bloc Québécois, of course, but also the Coalition Avenir Québec, the Parti Québécois and Québec Solidaire. Revenu Québec has the necessary expertise to implement a single tax return.

Quebec currently already collects more information from income tax returns than Ottawa does. Quebec already collects most of the critical information for managing its social programs, which is data that Ottawa does not have. I want to clarify that when we talk about a single tax return, it would of course be based in Quebec City. To hear the members across the way talk, they seem to be picturing a single tax return based in Ottawa. That is not what we mean.

I would like to add a quick word about the fact that concerns about job losses are unfounded, because expertise is transferable and so are jobs. We have always said that we want to transfer all the powers and responsibilities to Quebec. We want all of it to be transferred. It is the Liberal government that should stop using the threat of job losses at the tax centres.

In closing, a single tax return, received and collected by our only legitimate national capital, would be the best solution for everyone, including taxpayers, businesses and workers. It is time to rethink the way resources are allocated and to promote a decentralized approach to ensure greater efficiency and fairness in the tax system.

• (1825)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Madam Speaker, I had some technical problems earlier during the vote on the motion we moved regarding the budget. I am sure the vote record of the House of Commons will be able to confirm that. I therefore seek the unanimous consent of the House to allow me to vote, and for that vote to be affirmative.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member's request will please say nay.

There being no dissenting voice, it is agreed.

[*English*]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, we have seen a couple of requests from Conservative MPs who, I would have to assume, were not in the chamber for the vote, despite saying that virtual Parliament is the end of democracy and that it is going to shut down debate and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That is getting into debate and that is not a point of order. The point of order was to register a vote that could not be done electronically.

[*Translation*]

Resuming debate. The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak on this issue.

I would like to begin by congratulating the sponsor of this bill, the hon. member for La Prairie, who led the fight for the single tax return in the Quebec National Assembly a few years ago and is now leading it here. It is an important fight.

It is a bit surreal to think that we are at this point today, wondering whether people should file one tax return or two. This is not rocket science; it makes absolutely no sense. Besides, as the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot mentioned, people in Quebec are the only ones who file two tax returns. It is too much paperwork, just a lot of paperwork. It is a problem.

People across Canada have no idea what this is like. They do not know what it is like to have to file two tax returns and fill out lines 287 and 544 two or three times when the issues and restrictions are not the same. It is complicated, and not everyone can afford accountants.

We saw what happened with a very important issue recently. Under Bill C-31, those who earn less than \$20,000 a year and pay more than 30% of their income for housing are supposed to get \$500, but many people could not find the form and did not know they were entitled to this \$500. It is odd that we are talking about this, but there are plenty of people in Quebec who have run into these problems.

There is a problem here. There is already too much red tape, too much paperwork. We cannot understand why our Liberal friends and their NDP lackeys insist on saying no to such a measure. Perhaps it is because it comes from Quebec, because it would give Quebec more power and because it might make Quebecers realize that, basically, they no longer need Ottawa. We already know that. We can say so, because that is why we are here. We are here because we believe that we no longer need Ottawa on many fronts.

Private Members' Business

Ottawa always enjoys attacking Quebec. Yes, there are fine words, always lots of fine words.

Let us talk about language, for example. I always want to talk about it because what we hear from the other side is always somewhat hypocritical. I have listened to the Liberals talk ever since I became an MP. They keep saying that they will pass legislation on the issue of language, that French is in decline and that they will address this by introducing a bill with teeth that will halt the decline of French. It is fascinating to hear.

Today, I am going to make a solemn declaration: The only way to halt the decline of French in Quebec is for Quebec to become independent. There is no other way to do it. We could quibble about Bill C-13. Even Quebec's Bill 96, which is a good law and will result in some progress, will not resolve the problem in a tangible way. That is what I want to talk about. The Liberals are hypocrites when they say that they want to work on this issue. Behind the scenes, in committee, the government directs its members, its West Island bullies, to sabotage its own amendments and its own bill because the Liberals are allergic to anything that comes from Quebec and to anything that could give more power to Quebec. That is what is at stake, and that is what we are talking about. It is fascinating.

I saw them, the West Island ministers, when they went to Montreal to protest against Bill 96. It is not enough for them to play the hypocrites in the House and not introduce the measures we need. Now they are working to sabotage legislation that might offer a slight improvement in the decline of French. It is fascinating. We keep seeing this double standard where things that are allowed across Canada and not allowed in Quebec.

We also see what is happening in immigration, where there is another problem. Quebec needs more control over our immigration levels in order to ensure that we can integrate newcomers. What are we seeing instead? The government dreams of a Canada with a population of 100 million, where 500,000 people are welcomed every year. Quebec is letting in 50,000 people right now, and we cannot integrate them. For whatever reason, good or bad, we cannot integrate the people arriving in Quebec. It is a major problem. In fact, it is the major problem, and we cannot cope.

• (1830)

We need to create an ecosystem in Quebec to ensure that we are able to integrate the people who are arriving from all over. We want to welcome these people. We need them to help us out with the labour shortage, for example. We need people who come from all over and bring their amazing knowledge and culture with them. They will make a positive contribution to our Quebec, the nation we love. We said that we needed more power. Mr. Legault got elected by saying that he would get that power from Ottawa. What was the answer he was given?

Private Members' Business

The answer was no. It seems that any request that comes from Quebec is seen as dangerous. The federal government decides that there must be something behind it and that Quebecers are bound to take advantage to do bad things. The federal government is scared of us.

We are talking about a savings of \$425 million. How can the federal government say no to that? How can it say no to \$425 million when needs are growing? According to the study my colleague mentioned earlier, we are missing out on \$425 million in savings.

There is a housing crisis. We talked about it earlier, but it is worth mentioning time and again. In the 250-page budget, how many pages are dedicated to housing? One and a half pages. Canada needs 3.5 million housing units over the next 10 years. The housing crisis is the greatest challenge of our time, alongside the language crisis and the climate crisis. The budget contains 250 pages of numbers, statistics and measures, but only one and a half pages on the housing crisis. Unbelievable.

This budget is basically a slap in the face to every person who does not have adequate housing in Canada. It is basically a slap in the face to the 250,000 people in Quebec alone who are in dire need of housing.

Then there is climate change. The government is sending billions of dollars to billionaires. It is appalling. It is utterly outrageous. That is what these geniuses came up with when they sat down to talk about taxes and dream up measures.

I am currently touring Quebec to talk about the housing crisis. In Trois-Rivières, a woman who has been the victim of domestic violence is sleeping in a car with her two children. The budget does nothing for her. There is no mention of her in the budget. In Longueuil, 17 people are living in a three-bedroom apartment. There is no mention of those 17 people in the budget. The government is not addressing this problem.

Here is what we are talking about. This measure would not only eliminate paperwork and red tape, but it would also save money. It would help the less fortunate.

Health is another file with urgent needs. Quebec asked for \$6 billion. How much did it get? I am tired of talking about health transfers, but I do not know how else to communicate. Maybe we could sing about it. My colleague from Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix could sing about it. I could get up on the desk and do a little dance to convey how inadequate the health transfers are. People are dying in Quebec's emergency rooms.

Quebec asked for \$6 billion. How much did it get? Did it get \$4.5 billion, \$3.2 billion or \$2.8 billion? No. It did not even get \$1 billion. The government is not doing anything to help fix the problem. There is no support.

There are all kinds of good reasons to tackle this problem. Things are dire. It is a surreal issue. We must fix this. This is an issue that is unique to Quebec. I will state right away that it is true that Quebec wants more powers. We do not want just a single tax return, we want all the powers. We want Quebec's independence.

• (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for La Prairie for his right of reply.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Madam Speaker, today, the Bloc Québécois is defending a bill that all Quebecers have been waiting for. I think I am right in saying that. We have examples. Some say that the single tax return is a separatist thing, that separatists are secretly gathering power, little by little, and that they need to be stopped. Unfortunately for the people saying these things, such is not the case.

On May 15, 2018, I moved a motion in the Quebec National Assembly that was unanimously adopted. Sitting opposite me was Philippe Couillard, who supported my motion. I think we can all agree that he is about as much of a separatist as I am a Cirque du Soleil contortionist, yet even he voted in favour of the motion.

He did it because it makes sense. It is the right thing to do. It is the smart thing to do. It is efficient and will save us money. For all of these reasons, 75% of Quebecers are saying that they want a single tax return because they are tired of filing two. Quebecers also only want one tax collector, and they want it to be Quebec because we trust the Government of Quebec. All of the Quebec statistics show that the Government of Quebec is the best representative of Quebecers. I am not the one saying that. It is Quebecers. The question is simple. What do we do with that information? Will the government listen to Quebecers, yes or no?

The time and money savings are obvious. The Research Institute on Self-Determination of Peoples and National Independence has done scientific research on this. Research exists. Research has been done on this specific issue, not on something that may be close to the issue. We are talking about \$425 million in ongoing savings. That is nothing to sneeze at, at a time when governments keep running deficits.

We do not have any money to waste, and now we have an opportunity to save \$425 million. Why pass it up? That is the question.

Some will say they are afraid to put these good people out of a job. That would be too bad, because they are skilled and we would hate to see them lose their jobs. We like them. They are our public servants. Of course they are skilled. They are so skilled that we can find a use for them elsewhere in the federal public service.

We are talking about 3,000 people who do the same task that someone else is already doing. The NDP says that we must not put people out of work. After the orange tax comes the orange calculator, but maybe it is too hard to press the buttons. These are 3,000 jobs we are paying for anyway, for work that others are already doing. Ever heard of efficiency? There must not be very many business leaders in the NDP.

I think everyone can understand something so basic. We know the Liberals are against it, because anything that gives Quebec more power makes them nervous. They get antsy. It no longer makes any sense. They do not like it. I do not know why, but they do not like giving powers to Quebec. They are saying that we are already paying for 3,000 jobs, so is there enough room in the public service?

Passport offices are understaffed. People have to line up to get their passports like we used to line up for concert tickets. Do passport offices not need staff? Do immigration offices not need staff?

The immigration department is so understaffed that files are being assigned to people who have not worked there in 15 years. At the Canada Revenue Agency, files are on hold. Does it not need staff? Employment insurance must not need people either, nor the rest of the public service, because the government is giving more than \$1 billion to McKinsey and its ilk for subcontracting. Are the Liberals going to tell me that no one can use 3,000 highly competent and skilled workers? Do I look that gullible?

That is the reality. Quebeckers, and consequently Canadians, have an opportunity to make their public service more efficient. The bill's opponents are engaging in idle partisanship but cannot produce a single argument against the incontrovertible logic of the single tax return. I have never heard anything in the House to make anyone have doubts about passing a bill that would be good for the economy and the intelligent management of the public service.

• (1840)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The question is on the motion.

[English]

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

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Madam Speaker, I request a recorded division on this bill.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 19, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (1845)

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, members will be familiar with the over \$100 million in contracts the government gave to its friends at McKinsey. The government said, though, not to worry, as all the rules were followed. It just so happened, it said, that as it followed all the rules, those contracts ended up getting awarded to McKinsey.

We see massive increases in spending on the public service, as well as massive increases in spending on contracting out of public services. In other words, we have more public servants and we are contracting more work out of the public service at the same time.

Adjournment Proceedings

When Dominic Barton, a friend of the Prime Minister, was leading McKinsey, we started to see this increase, and the increase has continued. It is a significant increase in contracting out, specifically contracting out to McKinsey.

What was the government's response? It said those were independent decisions, the rules were followed and Dominic Barton is not really the Prime Minister's friend anyway. Actually, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister have spoken previously about the significant close access they had to Dominic Barton and about that being a key factor in their decision to appoint him as ambassador to China. In their dealings with this shady company, they said all the rules were followed, until they said the rules were not followed. This is new.

Members might not have heard that, because they quietly released a press release on the day President Biden was here. Everyone was talking about President Biden's visit and they thought it was a great opportunity to release a press release quietly on a Friday in the middle of Biden's visit. They said they were actually misleading the public the whole time and that, actually, the Treasury Board rules were not followed. I will quote the press release. It says, "However, there are indications that certain administrative requirements and procedures were not consistently followed."

In other words, in response to my question and various other questions, the government House leader had been saying that the rules were followed in the awarding of these contracts and that we can rest assured that more than \$100 million was given in contracts to McKinsey in accordance with Treasury Board rules. Now the government has revealed that the rules were not followed.

We are left with this question: Why is it that the government gave over \$100 million in contracts to its friends at McKinsey, a company that has been implicated in causing the opioid crisis and had to pay over half a billion dollars in compensation for causing the opioid crisis in the United States, a company that did a report for the Saudi government, which enabled it to identify and target dissidents who were active on social media, and a company that has been involved with corrupt officials all over the world and has worked closely with sanctioned entities in Russia and with state-owned and affiliated entities in China?

Why did the government give over \$100 million in contracts, and why did it break the rules in the awarding of these contracts in the process? Why were its clear administrative requirements and procedures not consistently followed?

Will the government apologize? Will it apologize for having misled the House for weeks about whether the Treasury Board rules were followed, and will it come clean about why it broke the rules in awarding these contracts to this company with a terrible global reputation?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is interesting listening to my friend across the way. Whenever he has the opportunity to amp up the whole concept of something wrong, or corruption or whatever it might be, he never passes on that opportunity.

Adjournment Proceedings

Today is a good example if we take a look at question period. Here we are in the debates of the budget and the Conservatives are looking at ways in which they can turn it into personal attacks. Why is that relevant? The member himself makes reference to Dominic Barton and tries to give the impression the Prime Minister is buddy-buddy with Dominic. We have heard that consistently. Members opposite would say that even in the heat of the debate. They try to play up the fact there is this huge friendship between the Prime Minister and Dominic, and it is not true. When Dominic went to the standing committee to address a number of different issues, he made it very clear they were not friends, from what I understand.

At the end of the day, there is a process. At times, there is a need for government to look at contracting out. Putting things in proper perspective can be a very significant challenge for the Conservative Party because it goes against what its members want to focus on. If there were some deviations from the actual policy or protocols put into place, the member has standing committees in which he can raise the issue in expectation of getting some sort of response.

What I am expecting to hear when the members stand up is an exaggeration from a bias that always brings it back to looking for some form of scandal, even if there is no scandal to be found. That is 99.9% of the time.

I do not want to discourage the member, but I suspect if one takes a look at the history of McKinsey one will likely find there are Conservative administrations that also used that particular firm. Whether it is at the federal or provincial level, I would like to think the member would acknowledge there are times in which governments at different levels and in different regions of the world turn to professionals to look at how they might be able to facilitate the government in doing something it is hoping to accomplish, and that is done through a tendering process.

Canada is looked upon around the world as a nation that has a very good process. It does not mean we cannot improve upon it. We are constantly looking at ways in which we can improve procurement processes, because we understand and appreciate the importance of the integrity of the system. That is something I will always be advocating for.

• (1850)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, here are the facts. The government broke the rules in the awarding of contracts to McKinsey. It admitted it broke the rules. It put it in a Treasury Board press release that it put out on the Friday of President Biden's visit. It admitted it broke the rules, albeit in a way that was specifically designed to avoid public notice. That is why we need to have the ministers back to committee to question them about exactly why the rules were not followed.

We hear bluster from the member across the way, saying, "These opposition politicians, they're always criticizing us. They're always engaging in personal attacks. Why are those members of the opposition criticizing the government?" This is a case where his own government admitted it flagrantly disregarded the rules that were in place, so of course it is the job of the opposition to criticize the government in cases where it especially has admitted breaking the rules. Why—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member started off his four-minute question by talking about how the government was trying to hide things and was being secretive. A press release went out. When the government issues a press release, it is far from being secretive.

I asked the member a question in a heckle. I know we are not supposed to heckle, but I posed a question across the way. I asked him to tell me what rule was broken and the member had no idea. I do not think he has any idea whatsoever what rule was actually broken. If I am wrong, he can please stand up and let me know I am wrong, but I suspect I am not wrong.

He does not know what rule was broken, but it is good for amping this up and trying to make it look as if it is something that it likely is not. That is something the member across the way is fairly good at.

• (1855)

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today to talk about the issues affecting Canadians. I have heard regularly from folks in my community and from folks right across Canada about the struggles they are having with the made-in-Canada cost of living crisis.

On April 1, the government made a choice to make things harder for people who are struggling to put food on the table for their families. It made a choice to make it harder for people who are putting gas in the tanks of their cars so they can get to work, get to extracurricular activities for their children like hockey, dance and soccer, and just get around. In communities like mine, folks do not have the option to change or modify their behaviour in the way that the government is looking for them to do. There is no subway, Sky-Train or rapid transit system to get people across rural southern Ontario or eastern Ontario, which is also true in many parts of this country.

The reality of rising fuel prices at the pumps, the reality of rising prices at the grocery store and the reality of folks facing soaring costs to heat their homes is that people are making really tough choices. It is not like the tough choice the Deputy Prime Minister talked about to scale back on Disney+. People are skipping meals, working Canadians.

Here is the best example I can give. The food bank in Brockville had to change its hours and modify its service delivery so it could accommodate folks who needed to get to the food bank after they finished work. People are working their jobs, taking home a paycheque and still do not have enough money to afford food at the grocery store or enough food to sustain their families, so they are going to the food bank.

Adjournment Proceedings

This is a devastating situation, and as we saw from the Parliamentary Budget Officer, the average Canadian household is going to pay \$710 more this year than they would have if there were no carbon tax in place. Therefore, after people get that rebate, they are still left over \$700 more in the hole than they would be if they were not paying for this carbon tax.

The carbon is not going to change the weather. The carbon tax is not going to change the changing climate. If the government was serious about climate policy, it would have a climate plan, not a tax plan that hurts Canadians and disproportionately hurts Canadians living in rural and remote communities.

When is the government going to axe its carbon tax and put in place a plan that exports clean Canadian energy, displaces the high-carbon economies around the world that burn resources that are less clean than clean Canadian natural gas, displaces high emitters in favour of good, clean Canadian jobs and helps Canadians afford to put food on the table and heat their homes?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am sure the member's memory is at least as good as mine, and we were in a federal election not that long ago. He will recall that there were 338 Conservative candidates all over Canada saying to Canadians that they supported a price on pollution. That is the carbon tax. That is what the member was just talking about. Therefore, in the last federal election, 338 members of the Conservative Party of Canada went all over the country saying they supported a carbon tax. Then they got a nice, shiny, brand new leader, and now they say they want to be able to oppose the carbon tax, the price on pollution.

That was the most recent flip. They have been all over the place. They are like fish out of water. Has anyone seen a fish flip and flop all over a deck? That is kind of like how the Conservative Party has been on this issue. To top it off, its most recent position is to get rid of the price on pollution, or the "carbon tax", as the Conservatives like to call it. They say it is such a burden. Do members know that 80%-plus of the constituents I represent will actually get more money than they are paying into it? A vast majority of my constituents are going to realize a larger net gain because of the price on pollution. That comes out of the office of the independent budget officer, when we look dollar for dollar.

As such, when the Conservatives say they are going to get rid of the carbon tax, they would be taking money out of the pockets of almost 80% of Canadians. That is what they would be doing, but they do not talk about that. When they talk about how we are going to increase the price on pollution, or the "carbon tax", as they like to refer to it, they do not talk about the increase for the environmental tax rebate that is going to Canadians.

These are the types of questionable comments we get from the Conservative Party of Canada. They are flip-flopping on all sorts of different issues, including the price on pollution, or the carbon tax. They are then trying to mislead Canadians by giving people in Winnipeg North the impression that, if the Conservative Party killed the price on pollution, they would benefit. In fact, it is the absolute opposite. A vast majority of my constituents would lose on the Conservative promise to get rid of the carbon tax. That is the reality.

When a Conservative member stands up and says it is about the cost of living, we should deal with the cost of living. What is the Conservative Party doing? There is the dental plan expansion. Members can imagine the tens of thousands of seniors whom the dental plan would benefit, helping them with the cost of living. The Conservatives have voted against that. They are going to be voting against the budget; they told us that. That is where we would be getting the grocery rebate. Members can imagine the 11 million Canadians who would be getting a rebate for groceries, under this budget, to deal with the cost of living crisis. That very member has constituents who would benefit from it, yet the Conservatives ignore it and vote against the things that are going to benefit Canadians.

● (1900)

Mr. Michael Barrett: Madam Speaker, if the government were serious about addressing greenhouse gas emissions, it would build pipelines, export LNG and displace the emissions created by countries that are burning coal. However, it is not going to.

That would have a substantive impact on global greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, however, the Liberals punish Canadians for living their lives. It costs them more. It costs the average Canadian household more than \$700 more than it is going to get back after the rebate in the carbon tax pyramid scheme the government has cooked up. Canadians see it for what it is.

It is not a climate plan; it is a tax plan. Canadians deserve better. When are the Liberals going to get out of the way so we can give it to them?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member said that we are not exporting natural gas, but what is LNG? The federal government worked with the NDP provincial government in B.C. on the biggest-ever government and private investment in the exportation of natural gas. That is one hit against what the member just finished saying.

Then the member said that we do not build pipelines. What does he call Trans Mountain? Stephen Harper, in 10 years, could not build an inch of pipeline to coastal waters, yet we have Trans Mountain. However, we still understand and appreciate the important issues of indigenous consultation and the environment. That is why we passed legislation for net zero by 2050. We have set targets and brought in government tax benefits and programs of all sorts to ensure that we get to that net zero.

Adjournment Proceedings

● (1905)

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Madam Speaker, I take it this evening my question will be addressed by the parliamentary secretary for all departments.

On the final sitting day prior to the Easter break, I rose in this place to ask the immigration minister the following question:

...the immigration minister's program to admit the families of language and cultural advisers who assisted our troops in Afghanistan has such rigid criteria that it will freeze out almost everybody it should be helping.

For example, only those who were still in Afghanistan after July 22, 2021 are eligible, so this rules out the Afghans who were in the most dangerous parts of the country and who therefore had to flee...before the Taliban overran their regions. These family members are now trapped in third countries and are in danger of being transported back to Afghanistan, where they will be killed.

Will the minister change these restrictive criteria to fix the mess he has created?

The response I received from the government benches left me puzzled. The hon. member for Orléans, who responded on behalf of the government, said the following:

If it were a matter of will, there would be 40,000 Afghan refugees here already, but we know that in reality, with everything that has been happening, there have been challenges and obstacles. We are working very hard in addressing those, for instance through Bill C-41. There are a number of factors that we do not fully control, including safe passage.

Now, the most obvious problem with this answer is that the particular impediment which I was addressing, the government's choice to refuse to admit any person who left Afghanistan prior to July 22, 2021, is absolutely a factor that the government does control. They could change that date.

Therefore, I will just repeat my question in slightly different words. Will the government change this particular criteria and extend Canada's protection to Afghans who meet all of the eligibility criteria but who left the country prior to July 22, 2021?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the things I have learned, especially in comparing the current minister to the previous Conservative administration, is that there is a great deal of good will. Our minister took into consideration a wide spectrum of factors in coming up with a policy that has ultimately led to thousands of refugees, and I believe it is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 35,000, coming from Afghanistan.

It is an incredible number, and we are still hoping to do more. I can appreciate that the member has some specific ideas and that he wants to share them with the House. I am sure that the minister will do what is in the best interest of all the parties sitting around the table and the people who are making these types of decisions.

I say that because I am thinking of the Daoud family. The Daoud family are residents in Winnipeg North and Mr. Daoud is a translator from Afghanistan. I have had a meal in his home with his lovely wife and family, and I can tell members that it really warms my heart when I see people, such as those in the Daoud family, come to Canada. The service they provided to our Canadian forces personnel and others had a significant footprint in Afghanistan.

In fact, it is interesting that we would be talking about this tonight. The first time I raised this was before Daoud had even come to Canada. I was the immigration critic for the Liberal Party then, when we were the third party, and the government Conservative minister was not open at all to translators. The record will show that I was, on behalf of the Liberal Party, advocating for recognizing our translators in Afghanistan, who were in predicaments that, ultimately, Canada should have been opening our doors for.

That is why I am very proud that we have, in a relatively short period of time, increased the overall numbers and the manners in which people could come to Canada. When it comes to Afghanistan and Ukraine, they are virtually customized programs, so we can facilitate people coming from both Ukraine and Afghanistan.

The safe passage issue is a very serious issue because it is not like we can just bring a plane into Afghanistan and have people exit from Afghanistan. When the member responded to the original question, it was legitimate to talk about safe passage since the incident we are all familiar with had taken place during the summer just prior to the last federal election.

We are all very much aware of it. The difference is that we have a government that is a whole lot more sympathetic in taking actions, tangible actions, than the previous administration was. That was when I was the critic for immigration, asking for the same sorts of considerations for the Afghani translators who were supporting our Canadian troops and others.

● (1910)

Mr. Scott Reid: Madam Speaker, of course it warms my heart to hear how deeply the current government cares, and how much more it cares than the people in my party care, so I will just repeat my question.

Will this caring government change this particular criteria, which is 100% under the control of the caring government, and extend Canada's protection to Afghans who meet all other eligibility criteria but who left the country prior to July 22, 2021?

I will add this final note: There is no need to send a plane to Afghanistan. These are people who are outside of Afghanistan, in Pakistan, for example, who could easily go from there to here, but who are in danger of being deported back to their homeland, where they will be killed.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, the member, in a sarcastic manner, tries to say that it is nice that we are a caring government. I think that there is absolutely nothing wrong with being able to express compassion on such an important issue, because there are members of the Afghani community and others who might be following this debate.

To try to give a false impression that the government is not sensitive to the issues that are being raised, including this one, would be wrong. We understand, very much, a wide spectrum of issues that are there, and we, whether it is within the ministry or with others, are taking those into consideration. I suspect, wherever we can and when we are provided the opportunity, we will act.

Adjournment Proceedings

If the member has some specific files, as I have one specific file, I would think the member would be using that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):
The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been

adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:14 p.m.)

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