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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, April 21, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1000)
[English]

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

The Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that a message has been received from the Senate informing the House that the Senate has passed the following bill, to which the concurrence of the House is desired: Bill S-242, an act to amend the Radiocommunication Act.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (for the Minister of Finance) moved that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for me to split my time with the member for Nepean.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to talk about the budget implementation act. Last month, our government released budget 2023, our made-in-Canada plan for a strong middle class, an affordable economy and a healthy future.

It comes at an important moment for our country. Canada's economy has made a remarkable recovery from the COVID recession. Last year, Canada delivered the strongest economic growth in the G7. This is thanks to the hard work, resilience and ingenuity of Canadians. In fact, there are 865,000 more Canadian workers today than at the start of the pandemic. This shows that our strategy of keeping Canadians healthy and focusing on a jobs-based recovery is working. In fact, we have recovered over 128% of jobs lost during the pandemic, while the United States has recovered only 115%.

In the short term, however, Canada and the world face several headwinds. We face a slowing global economy, high interest rates and inflation. While the inflation rate in Canada has been consistently lower than for our economic peers, that is cold comfort to Canadians who feel the impact on their pocketbook every single day. It is important that we address these challenges. Fortunately, our budget provides a direct response.

It delivers billions of dollars to the public health care system, a prudent investment after coming through the most significant health care crisis we have faced in over 100 years. We go even further by investing in dental care for millions of Canadians, a measure that has already benefited over 250,000 children under the age of 12.

The budget provides important investments to build Canada's clean economy, creating even more good jobs for the middle class while ushering in a new era of economic prosperity for Canadians. In the future, when nations around the world look for new technology to help combat climate change, they will be able to turn to Canada.

The budget offers a responsible fiscal plan that will allow Canada to preserve the lowest deficit and net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. This means that our country enjoys not only the strongest economic growth, but the strongest balance sheet in the G7, which is why we have retained our AAA credit rating. This allows us to provide new, targeted relief from inflation for those Canadians who need it the most.

I would like to pause here and share my thanks to all members of this House, who unanimously supported the Canada grocery benefit and the immediate \$2-billion health transfer, which will help provinces and territories deliver the health services that Canadians deserve. Despite partisan differences, which too often make the highlight reel on the Internet or in the media, I am still encouraged and heartened by the fact that we can find ways to come together in this place and support Canadians when they need it the most.

Having said that, I would like to highlight measures in the budget implementation act that would make life more affordable for Canadians.

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In Canada, inflation is coming down. It has actually declined for nine months in a row. It is currently at 4.3%, and the Bank of Canada predicts it will drop to 2.5% by the end of the year. While it is lower than inflation seen in the United States, Europe and other parts of the world, we all know that it is still too high, and it is still making it difficult for many Canadians to make ends meet and put food on the table. That is why budget 2023 announced new, targeted inflation relief for the most vulnerable Canadians, to help support them with the cost of living.

The grocery rebate will help and provide support to 11 million Canadians and families, and it will also provide hundreds of dollars to over 50% of Canadian seniors.

In addition, we are helping the nearly 500,000 students who withdraw funds from their RESP by increasing withdrawal limits from \$5,000 to \$8,000 for full-time students.

We are helping workers by ensuring that tradespeople get the equipment they need, by doubling the allowable employment deduction for tools. These individuals are critical for building Canada's clean economy and supporting our plan to double the number of new homes built in Canada by 2032.

We are cracking down on predatory lending by proposing to lower the criminal interest rate from 47% to 35%, and we are imposing a cap on charges for payday loans.

Workers will also benefit from automatic advance payments of the Canada workers benefit. This will provide up to an additional \$2,461 for a family to help cope with the rising cost of living.

In addition, we are increasing the amount Canadians can earn before paying a penny of federal income taxes to \$15,000. Since we have formed government, that is \$3,673 more that people can earn tax-free.

Combined with our previous programs, such as child care, the Canada child benefit, student grants and increased investments in retirement security, we are making sure Canadians have the resources they need to cope with global inflation.

• (1005)

We are also committed to helping the provinces and territories achieve better health outcomes for Canadians. The \$2-billion Canada health transfer, which was delivered this week, will help deliver the high-quality, timely health care services that Canadians deserve. This funding will reduce backlogs and wait times for surgeries and will improve service levels in emergency rooms and pediatric hospitals. This funding builds on the \$6.5-billion one-time Canada health transfer top-ups that the Government of Canada has provided throughout the pandemic, as well as the \$196 billion we have committed over the next 10 years. This includes a guaranteed increase to the Canada health transfer of at least 5% for the next five years. With improved data and transparency and more financial resources, we are confident that premiers will have the tools they need to deliver the health care services that Canadians expect.

The other major investment that Canadians expect is in Canada's plan to grow our clean economy while creating high-paying and sustainable jobs. Budget 2023 builds on over \$100 billion of investments in the environment and fighting climate change to position

Canada as a global leader. We are well positioned to meet our emissions targets while creating the net-zero technologies the world will demand. We are doing this through the Canada growth fund, through the Canada innovation corporation, and by incentivizing investment in Canada's net-zero economy. These investments will create thousands of high-paying, sustainable jobs from coast to coast to coast while protecting our environment and fighting climate change at the same time.

We also need to fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorist activities. We are proposing to expand the mandate of the Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions to include oversight of federally regulated financial institutions to determine if adequate policies and procedures are in place to protect them from threats to their integrity and security, including from foreign interference. This will include new compliance and intervention tools available to the superintendent and to the Minister of Finance, underpinned by strong safeguards. The bill would also improve the sharing of compliance information between FINTRAC, OSFI and the Minister of Finance. Collectively, these measures will provide oversight to the financial sector and support a healthy and stable Canadian economy.

Speaking of stability, this is probably an appropriate time to outline how budget 2023 would also continue to support the people of Ukraine as they fight for their sovereignty, their democracy and democracy right around the world. This includes a \$2.4-billion loan to the Government of Ukraine to support essential services, which brings Canada's commitment to over \$8 billion to date.

The BIA would amend the customs tariff to extend the withdrawal of the most favoured nation preferential tariff from Russia and Belarus indefinitely. This means that the 35% general tariff will apply, placing them in the same category as North Korea. In addition, the budget implementation act would strengthen Canada's ability to pursue the assets of those who have enabled Russia's illegal war, and help to finance Ukrainian reconstruction.

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Budget 2023 is our government's plan to build a stronger, more sustainable and more secure Canadian economy that works for everyone. The budget implementation act is a foundational piece of this plan, from delivering new, targeted inflation relief for Canadians to helping with higher prices at the checkout counter, building our clean economy and creating good jobs. At a challenging time, in a challenging world, these are important investments to secure a bright future for Canadians and ensure that there remains no better place to be in the world than in Canada.

I implore all hon. members and all Canadians watching this at home to support the speedy passage of this bill so that we can get it working for Canadians as soon as possible.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. parliamentary secretary, with whom I have the pleasure and privilege of working on the Standing Committee on Finance.

The Bloc Québécois was very concerned about one aspect of the most recent budget, and that is the employment insurance fund. We saw that the government was choosing to make contributors, workers and unemployed workers pay off the pandemic-related deficits. We are talking about \$15 billion, in addition to \$2 billion from last year.

We can see from the budget implementation bill introduced yesterday that the government is electing not to do anything about that and to make workers and unemployed workers pay by taking a total of \$17 billion out of their pockets for an insurance plan that does not work.

How does my hon. colleague justify that decision?

[*English*]

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question, and I also appreciate my colleague opposite. I would like to tell his constituents that we had a very elongated technical briefing on the BIA and he was the most active member in making sure he understood the over 400 pages that are involved in the act.

When it comes to employment insurance, I think it is really important that all of us support this institution, which was so helpful over the course of the pandemic and continues to be helpful. We have taken care to make sure we are addressing some of the concerns with respect to EI in the BIA, in this document, but I would note that we have also extended employment insurance and some of the benefits that we had during the course of the pandemic through to 2024. At the same time, we are providing better services at a lower rate than when the Leader of the Opposition was in charge of the file.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague knows, as a former municipal councillor himself, just as I am a former municipal councillor for Tofino, that municipalities shoulder a large majority of services and costs. However, they only collect 8% of the overall tax revenue.

The government just made a retroactive agreement with the RCMP to ensure that they get paid more. We know that our front-

line law enforcement deserves to be paid more, and they deserve better training, especially de-escalation training. We also need to ensure they get supports when they are injured, especially with PTSD.

However, the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities just met in the member's former hometown of Nanaimo. They were unanimous that the federal government needs to support local governments after the downloading of this retroactive funding. Unlike federal and provincial governments, which can run deficits, municipal governments have to run a balanced budget.

Will the federal government get back to the table with FCM and local governments to make sure they are not eating the costs of a deal they negotiated without consulting local governments?

Mr. Terry Beech: Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, I have been to his riding, and I am originally from Vancouver Island. When I was elected to city council, it was on Vancouver Island.

I have had a couple of opportunities to interact with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. I was recently at a housing summit, just a number of weeks ago. In fact, this week, on Monday, I was at an announcement with the president of the UBCM, which announced \$103 million of new federal infrastructure money, which is going to over 45 different communities throughout the province.

The message is that the federal government is here to support municipal governments. In fact, looking at our investments since 2015, we have made historic and unprecedented investments that have directly benefited our municipalities.

Obviously the policing arrangements that the member opposite is referring to are negotiated by the federal government, and the cost is burdened by municipalities. I have had an opportunity to meet with police officers, both in my riding of Burnaby, as well as the District of North Vancouver. We always take their concerns very seriously.

• (1015)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the budget implementation act. This is a challenging time in a challenging world. With every challenge comes an opportunity. It is in this context that I speak to this budget implementation act.

There are two main things in this budget for me. The first is that we would ensure that Canadians can continue to count on us to be there with our continued support to all vulnerable Canadians. The second is that we would also meet the challenges of today and tomorrow while building a Canada that is more secure and more sustainable, and ensuring that the prosperity we enjoy today will be available to future generations too.

Government Orders

Let us start with the challenging times. We all know that the pandemic hit not only Canada but also all the countries across the world. With the co-operation of Canadians, we managed to contain the pandemic to the best extent possible. We are one of the best countries in the world to have managed the pandemic this well.

The economy got hit, and 8.9 million working Canadians lost their jobs. We came out in support of them. We also supported more than half a million small businesses through the wage subsidy scheme and the small business account. As well, we managed through the pandemic with relatively fewer deaths compared to many other countries in the world.

Then came the war, the illegal invasion of Russia on Ukraine. This created a problem in the energy crisis across the world. It also gave rise to the rising crisis of food grains. We also had the problem of the supply chain issue due to the pandemic. There are a lot of shortages because the supply chains were disrupted across the world. We also realized the importance of self-reliance in that time, when critical goods were not being produced and were not available at the right time to all those who needed them.

Due to all of this, we faced inflation, which peaked to 8.1% in September 2022. However, during the last nine months, we have seen the inflation rate going down. Currently, it stands at around 4.3%. With all of this, we can still say that Canada has done relatively well. In fact, among G7 countries, we have the best economic growth. We have recovered 865,000 jobs more than there were before the pandemic.

These challenging times are also in globalization. Globalization, as we knew it for several decades, is on the way down. The multi-lateral agencies, such as WTO, on which international order-based trade depends, are also facing their own problems. With all the vacancies at the appellate body at WTO, it cannot even operate today due to non-cooperation by some key member states.

We are seeing that, the more bilateral free trade agreements taking place, free trade agreements among certain blocks taking place and the concept of friendshoring is coming in. While these are challenges, they also provide opportunities for Canada. I will come to that a bit later.

We also had the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States, our biggest trading partner, which was a game-changer. This Inflation Reduction Act, combined with the U.S. CHIPS and Science Act, is close to one trillion dollars in legislation. They have rewritten the rules of industrial policy and industrial development in the United States.

The Inflation Reduction Act did affect many of the trading partners of the United States, but Canada was able to manage the bulk of it through effort brought by different levels of the government and the industrial bodies. Before the IRA became legislation, we were able to ensure that all North American manufactured vehicles are included in the incentives and subsidies proposed in that IRA.

• (1020)

At the international trade committee, when we were discussing the effects of the IRA on Canada, one trade union leader very aptly said that we cannot respond with every dollar to dollar to IRA, but

we can respond smartly. That is what Canada has done, and that is what Canada would also be doing with this budget.

Canada is prosperous, and has been prosperous for a long time, due to our natural resources, such as oil, gas, minerals, metals and forestry products, and due to the hard work of several generations of Canadians, but the world is changing. The world is moving more toward a knowledge-based economy.

This knowledge-based economy makes a flat world out there. Canadians, especially the younger generation of Canadians, today face competition from all across the world, whether from Sydney, Australia; Tokyo, Japan; Shanghai, China; Mumbai, India; Frankfurt, Germany; or any other place. We all are facing the same competition in this digital world.

Even in this digital economy, we have invested. In last year's budget we came out with an investment of over \$1.2 billion in artificial intelligence, quantum computing and other advanced technologies. In this budget, we have committed \$1.2 billion for space technology. If possible, I will touch on that a little later.

The other key thing is that the world is moving toward a clean economy. Between now and 2050, it is projected that about \$100 trillion of private capital will be invested across the world in building the global clean economy, and that is where the opportunity lies for Canada. We have the opportunity to be a supplier of critical minerals and the entire supply chain. In the transition toward electrical vehicle industries, Canada can play a major role.

We are already seeing investments announced by major auto manufacturers in Canada. I believe even today there is going to be a very major announcement on battery manufacturing in Canada. We have seen the battery recycling plants coming up in Canada, and already Canada is projected to be one of the leaders for the supply of critical minerals required for this entire ecosystem. We need to see the processing of critical minerals also take place in Canada today.

We have a lot of opportunities on that front. However, we have a small issue with the new mines coming up to mine the critical minerals. There is a long regulatory process that is involved in that. For that, the federal government has come out with agreements with various provinces. For example, we have signed an agreement with the Province of Ontario where we can work together to align ourselves on the timelines, on the resources and on the regulatory approval process so we can deliver quicker, faster approvals, which are required to get the minerals from the ground for battery manufacturing.

As I mentioned, we would invest \$1.9 billion in Canada's space agencies. This funding would support the development of new technologies and capabilities, including space robotics and exploration missions, as well as support for Canadian companies involved in the space industry.

Government Orders

• (1025)

Mr. Dan Muys (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what does the hon. member have to say to his constituents who, like mine, are struggling with high interest rates and mortgage rates?

Those who are renewing their five-year mortgages, or those who are on variable mortgages, are very much feeling the gut punch of the interest rate increases, which are the result of inflationary spending and the deficits of his government. These would not be abated in any way by the budget. This is ravaging household budgets, and when the mortgage costs and rents have doubled, that is having a huge impact on household budgets.

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, inflation is the result of many things that are outside the control of government and indeed Canada. The pandemic, the illegal Russian war on Ukraine, the supply shortages, the pent-up demand, and the governments across the world investing, including Canada investing in Canadians, all resulted in inflation. It was quite high. It affected my constituents, and indeed all Canadians.

Inflation rose to 8.1% in September 2022, but during the last nine months, it has trended downwards. It is now at 4.3%. The interest rates introduced by the Bank of Canada to combat inflation have already started taking effect, and the Bank of Canada expects the inflation rate to go down to 3% soon. Hopefully, this will happen in the next 12 to 24 months; this would provide relief to all Canadians, including the hon. member's constituents and my own.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are discussing the budget implementation bill. The fiscal measures announced in the budget are implemented in part in this massive bill, Bill C-47.

Towards the end of this budget bill, they go completely off topic and decide to refer to Charles III as the King of Canada. Division 31 states the following:

The Parliament of Canada assents to the issue by His Majesty of His Royal Proclamation under the Great Seal of Canada establishing for Canada the following Royal Style and Titles: Charles the Third, by the Grace of God King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth.

Does my colleague think it makes sense to include this in a budget implementation bill? Should we not vote on it separately instead?

For that matter, do we even need this kind of thing in 2023?

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Speaker, a budget implementation act covers many things that are required immediately. Some of the things that the hon. member mentioned need to be considered and voted upon in the current budget implementation act.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I just came from Kinngait, a small community of about 1,000 people. That community just suffered a rash of four suicides in a very short amount of time. At the same time, the budget proposes almost \$1 billion to persuade indigenous peoples to engage in environmental assessment processes, which the member spoke briefly about.

Indigenous peoples are not getting the benefits they deserve for the resources from their lands that are being exploited. Is the Liberal government saying that it will continue to suppress and oppress indigenous peoples and continue to profit from their lands off indigenous peoples' backs?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry to hear about the number of suicides in this small community.

The track record of our government during the last seven and a half years shows how closely we work with the indigenous community. We have involved, consulted and worked with them for the benefit of the entire indigenous community. We have worked to provide them with all the assistance that is required to not only improve their health but also tackle the economic development that is very badly needed.

• (1030)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with the unanimous consent of the House, I will be splitting my time with the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing the intervention of the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

My comments today lead off the comments of His Majesty's loyal opposition on Bill C-47. That is the Liberals' budget implementation bill. The question before us is whether anything in this budget bill will actually be true when we look at the promises of the Liberals compared with the results.

I want to put the record spending in this budget plan into some historical context. I know the Liberals are a little challenged on math sometimes, so please bear with me. I hope they can follow it.

In the federal election of 1968, Pierre Trudeau reassured Canadians that a Liberal government would not raise taxes or increase spending. During the election, he said that the government was not Santa Claus. How did that work out? When Pierre Trudeau became prime minister, real government spending increased from 17% of the GDP to 24.3%. In other words, the federal government's share of the economy rose 42% under Pierre Trudeau. Every single area of federal government spending increased, except defence spending, where Pierre Trudeau cut spending in half as a percentage of the budget. When Pierre Trudeau took office, we spent more on national defence than we did on servicing the country's debt. When he left office in 1984, for every dollar the government spent on defence, we spent \$3 on paying the interest on his national debt.

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Let us look at this another way. The deficit Pierre Trudeau ran in his last year of office was 8.3% of the GDP. Based on Canada's GDP in 2022, Pierre Trudeau's 8.3% of GDP deficit would be like an annual deficit of \$157 billion today. His record was to drive Canada's debt from \$262 billion when he became prime minister to \$700 billion when he left office. Pierre Trudeau added \$438 billion to Canada's debt, almost tripling it. This was from a Liberal leader who said he would not run deficits when he was first elected in 1968 and that the government was no Santa Claus.

I raise this because, as the adage goes, like father like son. By the time Pierre Trudeau left office in 1984, 38¢ of every dollar that the federal government spent was to pay interest on the debt that he had built up. His policies of massive spending led to a rapid rise in interest rates to try to reduce inflation. All that government spending simply made it worse. Interest rates rose to 21%.

Like his father, the current Liberal leader promised Canadians in his first election in 2015 that, even though Canada was running a robust growing economy and had a balanced budget left by the Harper government, he would run modest stimulus deficits. However, in 2019, it would be balanced. The platform that the Liberals all stood on in 2015 said: "We will run modest deficits for three years so that we can invest in growth for the middle class and credibly offer a plan to balance the budget in 2019" and "we will...reduce the federal debt-to-GDP ratio to 27 percent".

Did he have a balanced budget in 2019, as he promised and as his father also promised in his first term? No, he did not: like father like son. The Liberals produced a \$20-billion deficit in 2019. Promises were made, and promises were broken.

Did the Liberals reduce their first fiscal anchor of 27% of the GDP? No, they did not. It was 31% in 2019, so another promise was made and broken.

In the new Liberal budget after 2019, there was no longer talk of a balanced budget. The debt-to-GDP ratio was the new fiscal anchor. It would remain the same during the four years of that fiscal plan, even though that meant they would be spending more. We know that at least the promise to spend more and not to balance the budget was true.

● (1035)

We then had an early and unnecessary election in 2021. What did the Liberal platform say then about promises for the country's finances? There was no talk of balanced budgets until perhaps 2050, but the Liberals did promise to drop the debt-to-GDP ratio from 48.5% in 2021-22. We should remember that in 2019, their campaign promise said that, in 2022, the debt-to-GDP ratio would be 31%, not 48%.

What does the bill project for this year? The budget set the cumulative spending for the next five years at a record \$3.1 trillion. We should remember that, in the fall, they promised that the budget would be balanced. However, if these numbers are to be believed, and if they did not add more spending in the rest of their term, they would add another \$130 billion to the national debt. The national debt would rise to a record \$1.3 trillion. The Liberals project that interest on the national debt would rise from \$44 billion a year to \$50 billion a year in five years. This is if we can believe the in-

terest rate projections in this budget. That \$50 billion in interest is \$10 billion more than we spend on national defence.

The budget includes \$84 billion in new tax credits for businesses over the next five years. The Liberals project that inflation will be 3.5% in 2023 and roughly 2.1% thereafter. For this to happen, inflation would need to drop from 5.5% now to 2% in July and stay there for the next five years. This is not likely. The \$3.1 trillion in spending, with massive deficits, would pour gasoline on the inflation fire. Therefore, these projected inflation rates are ridiculous.

In the last year of the Conservative government, federal government spending was \$280 billion, with a \$1.9-billion surplus. This year, the budget projects \$456 billion in spending. That is up \$176 billion, or 63%, since the Liberals took office. The fiscal framework projects the government spending to be \$543 billion. This is if there is no further spending in the rest of their term. That is \$263 billion more than in 2015, representing a 94% increase in spending. The increase alone is almost as much as the entire 2015 budget. Taxes have risen by \$282 billion since 2015. We know it is not a revenue problem, because revenue has gone up by 92%.

At the end of the bill's plan, Pierre Trudeau and the son, the current Liberal leader, will have contributed \$1.1 trillion to Canada's national debt. Pierre Trudeau always spent more than he promised. After eight years of the Liberals, the son has done the same. Promises were made, and promises were broken. Canadians simply cannot afford any more Trudeaus.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, history is an interesting teacher for us.

I want to point out to the hon. member that when Brian Mulroney took over as prime minister, the national debt was \$200 billion. By the time he left, it was \$514 billion, and that was without a pandemic. That was without an invasion of Ukraine. It seems that the Conservatives are following the same pattern of loving money more than people, looking at the price of everything but the value of nothing.

Where is the factoring in of the pandemic? Our inflation rate is coming down to pretty low levels compared with the rest of the world. However, where is the factoring in of the difficulties with supply chains and the external influences on our inflation rate?

Government Orders

• (1040)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, the Mulroney government produced an operating surplus by the second year of its mandate and an operating surplus every year after that. Every prime minister since Pierre Trudeau ran an operating surplus, except for the current Prime Minister.

In terms of pandemics, the Parliamentary Budget Officer said that over half the spending done in the pandemic had absolutely nothing to do with the pandemic itself. That is the fiscal irresponsibility of Liberals.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is a mammoth bill. It is over 400 pages long, amends 59 statutes, in addition to amending the Income Tax Regulations, and contains 39 divisions. When he was elected in 2015, the Prime Minister pledged that he would not allow this kind of thing to happen. Almost eight years later, he is doing it again for the umpteenth time. What does my hon. colleague think of this?

[*English*]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, it is another promise made and broken. The Liberals were never going to do omnibus bills, but every single budget bill they have had has amended acts of Parliament that had nothing to do with the budget. They have done it yet again. Canadians have come to expect they cannot trust anything the Liberal government says, whether it is on the finances or how it is going to operate Parliament.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that I appreciate working alongside the member on the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans. I thank him for speaking about campaign promises. I was reflecting, as a fellow member on the fisheries committee, about the campaign promises of the Conservatives, and I am wondering if the member could clarify something.

The Conservatives campaigned on getting open-net fish farms out of the water, yet I am hearing very different discussions happening today. I am wondering if the member can clarify what the Conservative stance is currently on the importance of getting open-net fish farms out of the water. Furthermore, what are his thoughts on the fact that the current budget does not have a commitment to support all those impacted through this very necessary transition?

Mr. Rick Perkins: Mr. Speaker, I enjoy sitting on the fisheries committee with the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith, as well as her thoughtful interventions during the fisheries committee work we do together.

From our perspective, what we do is respect provincial responsibility first of all. Open net-pen farms or aquaculture in Atlantic Canada is a provincial responsibility in licensing. In British Columbia, it is a federal responsibility. The government has lost several cases in the B.C. courts over its handling of it. It committed to consulting with the industry, which it did not do. The fisheries minister previous to this one, whom I happen to have defeated, also promised, when she made the decision to remove the Discovery Islands fisheries, that there would be transition programs for the industry and the employees, and now the current government, of course, is silent on those promises.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell you a secret that I am sure you will keep to yourself. I went into politics because I care about keeping the public finances in respectable shape. I am a member of the opposition and, to put it mildly, I have had my work cut out for me when it comes to opposing the government's management of public funds, which has been anything but sound.

I will give a few examples. The debt-to-GDP ratio was already very high at 42.4%. Because of this government's inflationary measures, which are costing all Canadians dearly, the debt-to-GDP ratio, which was 42.4% last year, has now reached 43.5%. The Liberals will surely say that that is not a lot and that it is normal, but we need to be careful. Let us remember what the Minister of Finance herself said in her budget statement in the House in November, just six short months ago. I would remind members that the debt-to-GDP ratio increased from 42.4% to 43.5% this year.

Nevertheless, just six months ago, the finance minister said, and I quote, “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.” I will talk about that shortly.

She also said, “The pandemic debt we incurred to keep Canadians safe 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.”

Her words are almost lyrical. They are words that I, for one, would have spoken with honour and dignity. However, the Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, who is second in command in this government and a contender for the top job, as everyone knows, said one thing and did exactly the opposite when the budget was tabled two weeks ago. That is what we are seeing with every number and every word in this omnibus bill that we are debating today.

The promise on the debt-to-GDP ratio has not been kept, and the debt-to-GDP ratio has gone up. The finance minister was so proud about a balanced budget at the economic update. She boasted that the budget would be balanced in five years and that there would even be a \$4.5-billion surplus. That is hogwash, because exactly the opposite is happening. This year, the deficit is more than \$40 billion, which is completely unacceptable.

I would remind the House that those folks over there got elected in 2015, eight years ago, on what was admittedly a bold promise. They promised a shift to the left, and they have definitely delivered on that. They promised that if a Liberal government was elected, it would run small, strategic deficits for three years and return to a balanced budget in the fourth year. What happened was the exact opposite. The Liberals have run huge deficits over and over again, and the budget is far from balanced.

Government Orders

Balanced budgets are important. We cannot spend our lives, as individuals and families, perpetually living on credit. Sooner or later, we have to pay off our debts. If we do not pay now, we will have to pay eventually, or our children will be left to pay the price. A deficit leads to a debt, which leads to a bill that we pass on to our children and grandchildren, who will have to pay the price because we are living beyond our means today. Canada's debt is now \$1,220,000,000,000. That is a lot of zeros. That is fitting, since there are a lot of zeros on that side of the House. Seriously though, Canada's debt is \$1.220 trillion, which works out to \$81,000 per family.

Every family now has \$80,000 in debt that will be passed on to our grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who have not even been born yet but who will have to pay it off. Today, we are spending \$43.9 billion to service the debt compared to last year, when it was half that, \$24.5 billion. That is a huge amount. It is double the budget of the Department of National Defence. I will repeat, this is money being sent to banking institutions to pay for past spending, not for any direct services to Canadians.

It is irresponsible to live beyond our means. Is it any surprise that this is happening, when we know that the leader of this government once said that deficits balance themselves? As far as I can tell, he is the only person on the planet in a position of authority who has made such a silly comment. Deficits do not in fact balance themselves.

• (1045)

The government's money does not grow on trees. The government has no money. The government gets its money from Canadian workers. That is something we must never forget.

Now, about taxes, we know that the carbon tax is going up. As the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed, this directly affects all families. It costs them more than they get back from the government. The PBO says it could cost the average family between \$402 and \$847 more.

The Prime Minister and the minister boasted that they had listened to the Liberal caucus, that they had listened to members speaking out on behalf of their constituents. Guess why? They wanted to make sure that the tax hike on alcohol would not be too high. I am not going to judge them for not wanting to raise taxes on alcohol too much. They are within their rights. I just wish these members would show the same concern over the debt, the deficits and the bills we are leaving to our children and great-grandchildren.

We also see this government announcing income tax hikes. The increase amounts to \$305 for workers earning an average of \$66,000. The Canada pension plan will cost them an additional \$255. Employment insurance will cost them another \$50.

When we look at the key elements affecting all Canadian families, be it taxes, the deficits or the debt, and we look at the overall numbers, such as the debt-to-GDP ratio, we see that this government has failed to do its duty to ensure responsible government. These people have never had a balanced budget. They have never paid attention to public spending. On the contrary, they continued to spend recklessly.

I want to share an anecdote. There is a section on Facebook called "Memories". We can open it to see our memories. Facebook then shows us what we did last week or in previous years. This is the time of the year we debate the budget, so, every day, Facebook reminds me of the speeches I made or the questions I asked. The hallmark of this government is that it has no control over spending, it has no idea when it will return to a balanced budget and it always spends without restraint. However, when the Liberals were elected in 2015, they said that they would balance the budget by 2019. They did not do that. Six months ago, the minister projected a return to a balanced budget in five years. That is not happening.

Earlier, my colleague gave a history lesson about the 15th Prime Minister of Canada, Pierre Trudeau, father of the current Prime Minister. I want to talk about what happened next. In 1972, the Liberals won a minority government under Pierre Trudeau. The Liberals struck a deal with the NDP to keep them afloat for a while. This arrangement lasted until 1974. All of a sudden, a measure was rejected, leading to an election. When the election was triggered, the Liberals said they would not introduce price and wage controls to bring down inflation. After being elected on July 8, 1974, however, they did just that a year later. As my colleague said earlier, like father, like son. They say one thing and do another.

In closing, I move the following amendment:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following: "the House decline to give second reading to Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, since the bill fails to end inflationary deficits, high taxes, and the war on work, measures that would allow Canadians to bring home powerful pay-cheques, lower prices, and affordable homes."

• (1050)

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism.

• (1055)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague knows, I have a great deal of respect for him.

Last month, here in the House, he said, "Our party's objective is not to take money away from the CBC". However, his leader was quite clear about his contempt for our public broadcaster, even going so far as to beg Elon Musk to ridicule CBC/Radio-Canada.

Will the member opposite from Quebec, who was a Radio-Canada journalist himself, continue to support his leader, who wants to cut funding to CBC/Radio-Canada?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we have heard many contradictory statements that are not true. Let us remember that our plan calls for budget cuts to CBC but not to Radio-Canada.

Statements by Members

The member's intervention gives me the opportunity to clarify the misinformation floating around in the last few days. The Conservative Party's goal is not to cut funding to Radio-Canada, which provides French programming across the country, but rather to take a completely different approach with CBC, which has a 4% audience share, whereas Radio-Canada has 25%.

That is not new. Need I remind members that the father of the Prime Minister wanted to literally shut down both CBC and Radio-Canada? Let us remember that, 20 years ago, Liberal prime minister Jean Chrétien orchestrated the biggest budget cuts in the history of Radio-Canada, to the tune of \$600 million. That is the Liberal Party's signature.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my regards to my hon. colleague for Louis-Saint-Laurent. I thank him for his speech. We might not always share the same values, but he always has something interesting to say during our debates in the House.

I want to ask him about something that is unclear to me, to see if he feels the same way. In her budget, the Minister of Finance announced funding of \$80 billion for the economic transition, as it is called. A lot of upcoming tax credits are absent from the bill. No money for investments, subsidies or support is directly announced, but the infrastructure development is there. From the way things are presented, it appears as though the money earmarked for this will not be part of the budget framework and will be managed separately, outside government accounts. That means there will no longer be accountability to the House.

What does my hon. colleague think of that?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, to echo my colleague's remarks about me, I could say exactly the same thing about him and all of his hard work in the House of Commons.

On the substance of the issue, specifically, the Liberal approach and the fact that the \$80-billion investment in tax credits for new measures will be without any parliamentary oversight, that is unacceptable.

I would remind members that our leader has always said that to have a green economy, we need to give the green light to green projects and encourage them by focusing on positive tax measures rather than making Canada a place where, unfortunately, when people invest, they face a lot of cuts. This is especially true when it comes to setting wages. Canadians pay too much in taxes, and this discourages investment.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the great concerns my constituents have right now is the growing concern of what is happening in our climate. They are seeing changes in their region that they have never seen before. They have been very clear that, when we step forward to address climate change, they want local responses, and they want to make sure good jobs are attached to that.

Of course, the NDP forced the government to make sure that, in its clean energy economy tax credits, there would actually be a tie to companies that pay better wages and have better working conditions. I am just wondering if the member is against this, as well as the other things that are in the budget.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, yes, responding to environmental challenges is important to us. Climate change is a reality. That is why we are committed to giving the green light to green projects, precisely to accelerate access to green energy for Canadians and to cut red tape when it comes to developing lithium mines, for example. Lithium is needed for the electrification of transportation.

We know that there is lithium in Quebec and in several regions of Canada, but unfortunately, it takes a long time to make these investments. We want to give the green light to green projects to ensure that more Canadians have access to green energy.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1100)

[English]

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciated your S. O. 31 on Monday, opening up National Volunteer Week, and today I am tremendously honoured to be closing up National Volunteer Week. I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who donate their time and labour to make Sault Ste. Marie and the broader Algoma district a better place to live, work and play.

Last week, I had the opportunity to meet the folks from Sault Search and Rescue, whose members log over 4,000 hours each year responding to urgent situations and training, at no cost to the community. They provide such an important service. Whether it is in a field like firefighting, conservation, hospitals or local child and sporting activities, volunteers make our communities run. Board leaders, fundraisers and those who work on the ground, these people are absolute jewels to our community.

I urge all Canadians to take some time and find ways to give back to their communities, because with each individual act of volunteerism, we collectively make our communities better. We also make our country an even better place to live.

* * *

REGINA PATS PLAYER

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say, "Thanks for the memories" to Connor Bedard.

Over the last three hockey seasons, Connor Bedard has been the starting centre for the Regina Pats of the Western Hockey League. During this time, he has accumulated a long list of records and achievements, including the WHL's Rookie of the Year and youngest player ever to score 50 goals in a season. This season he led the league in goals, assists and points.

Statements by Members

Connor Bedard's play for Team Canada at the World Juniors has been just as exciting, including a memorable goal in the quarter-finals in overtime against Slovakia, a goal that also saw him break the record for most World Junior points by a Canadian, a record previously held by Eric Lindros.

Now that the WHL season is over, Connor is off to bigger and better things, as he will be the first overall draft pick in the NHL entry draft this June. I hope Connor enjoyed his time in Regina. I hope he will not be a stranger, and I wish him all the best.

* * *

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND CLIMATE INITIATIVES

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have IKEA Ottawa in my riding.

Our government announced \$300,000 of Canada's zero-emission vehicle infrastructure program to install electric chargers at IKEAs across Ontario and Quebec. IKEA has partnered with Ottawa-based GoBOLT for a fleet of zero-emission delivery trucks. This means that, when people order from IKEA, their products will be delivered in a sustainable way, which is a big step toward a net-zero future.

I also toured IKEA to learn about how it is reducing waste through its AI waste disposal in the kitchen and through recycling and reusing items. These are just some of the ways IKEA is contributing to our community. I would like to thank IKEA employees, who, during the recent ice storm, volunteered on their day off to cook 400 meals for people who had lost electricity in the storm.

It is through partnerships like this that we will achieve our climate goals and position Canada for the economy of the future.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqittiji*, the budget allocated almost a billion dollars to persuade indigenous peoples to exploit their lands.

There are too few of the 338 MPs who will work to protect indigenous peoples' rights. That is why I say now, directly to Inuit, first nations and Métis, that their inherent rights are being violated, infringed upon and exploited. I say to the families of the MMIWG, the survivors and families of residential schools, families who were forced off the lands and into settlements and to indigenous peoples and their lands that were, and continue to be, stolen, that they must protect and defend indigenous peoples' lands. To indigenous peoples who are homeless, living in overcrowded or dilapidated housing conditions, and to all Inuit, first nations and Métis, I say that too few of MPs will stand up for their rights and I plead with them to protect their rights, speak up and demand justice from their MPs.

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● (1105)

[*Translation*]

GATINEAU OLYMPIQUES

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Gatineau Olympiques

in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League for reaching the semi-finals in the Gilles Courteau Trophy playoffs. That is bad news for MPs from the Quebec City area, as the Remparts de Québec are bound to lose.

I want to highlight the passion and commitment of the players, coaches, host families, sponsors and supporters who backed the team throughout the season at the new Slush Puppie Centre in Gatineau.

All members and everyone in the Outaouais are pulling for them.

Go, Olympiques, Go!

* * *

[*English*]

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, elver licence-holders wrote DFO in January, stating, "Over the last 4 years we have heard every excuse in the book why C&P can't enforce, including Covid-19, staff shortages, safety concerns, and the ever popular 'we're working behind the scenes'. We see zero change in the enforcement strategy."

These Liberals ignored the pleas of legal licence-holders for years about poaching. Now, of the few DFO arrests of the thousands of poachers on the rivers this year, all have been released by DFO without processing because DFO enforcement staff are on strike, leaving no enforcement of any fishery in Canada.

Hardware stores and Canadian Tire stores in my riding are telling me that the last few days they have sold out of nets, buckets and bubblers, which are all needed to poach elvers.

The Liberals bragged about increasing patrols. Observing is not arresting. Now DFO is not even observing. I know the Liberals failed math, so let me help. Zero multiplied by any number is still zero. Lawlessness is on our rivers. Legal harvesters are paying the price. The Liberals are as effective as washed-out bait.

MILTON

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Milton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week our community in Milton came together to support Bradi McCoy after she was the victim of an unspeakable act of horrible violence. The Rad Brothers Sports Bar in Milton was overflowing with support last Friday night, and it would not have been possible without a really incredible volunteer effort, so I thank Mary, Dave, Marg, David, Heather, Veronica, Jo Anne, Jan, Greg, Annalisa, Francesco, Carie-Mae, Amir, Erin, Liz, Roger, Janet and all the Rad staff for doing what Milton does best.

Bradi is a 23-year-old Miltonian. She is an educational assistant with the Halton District School Board. She loves working with kids who have special needs and dreams of becoming a teacher. She spent weeks on life support in the hospital after her face and body were burned in that horrible attack, but to everyone's delight last week she got out of the hospital early and was able to join the celebration in her honour.

A GoFundMe page has raised over \$125,000. As my friend Heather put it, it is just a group of perfectly good strangers pitching in for a neighbour who needs a bit of support.

To Bradi I want to say that our community stands with her, Milton loves her, and we are going to be supporting her every single step of the way.

* * *

KIMZ ANGELS

Mr. John Aldag (Cloverdale—Langley City, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday mornings in Langley City a line forms in front of the Langley Vineyard church. This line includes people struggling with hunger, homelessness and sometimes mental health issues.

Waiting inside to welcome those in need are Kimz Angels. With over 70 volunteers, Kimz Angels cares for our community's homeless and hungry populations. These angels provide food, clothing, housing and essentials to those who need it, no questions asked. They champion the importance of making positive impacts on the lives of others.

The giving of furniture, non-perishable food, baby necessities, kids' toys, school supplies or shelter changes life stories. All it takes is a community coming together to help give a hand up. This is what Kimz Angels do, rain or shine, in our community.

I have had the privilege of volunteering with Kimz Angels many times over the years. I have seen the tireless efforts that Kimz Angels make in Langley City. I thank Kim Snow and all her angels for the work they do.

* * *

● (1110)

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Swan River used to be a town where you could raise a family, enjoy retirement and operate a business, but today Swan River is unrecognizable. It is unrecognizable because, after eight years of the government's catch-and-release policies, crime is out of control. The crime severity index in this rural town of 4,000 is six

Statements by Members

times the national average and over 50% higher than just five years ago.

When I was in Swan River, I met with Linda, who owns a small clothing store. After 26 years in business, Linda never thought she would experience an armed robbery, but she did. A surge of robberies by repeat offenders has nearly put her out of business. Now nearly every business in Swan River has bars on their windows and buzzers on their doors.

Canadians deserve to feel safe. If the Liberals will not cancel their failed soft-on-crime policies Conservatives will.

* * *

EID AL-FITR

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Scarborough—Rouge Park, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to wish my Muslim friends and neighbours Eid al-Fitr. During Eid, Muslims are encouraged to forgive and seek forgiveness, as well as generously sharing their blessings with those less fortunate. Eid al-Fitr symbolizes the virtues of patience, piety, godliness and fortitude. It is a time to reflect, spend time with loved ones, show grace for the blessings in their lives and celebrate fresh beginnings.

Ultimately, it is a celebration of and reward for the spiritual discipline exercised by worshippers during the holy month of Ramadan. During this month, I want to thank the Islamic Institute of Toronto, Masjid Al-Jannah and Spiritual Society Canada for their warm welcome to prayers. I also want to acknowledge the enormous contributions of the Muslim Welfare Centre of Toronto for its ongoing fight to ensure food security in our community and beyond.

To all those who will be celebrating today in Scarborough—Rouge Park and across Canada, *Eid Mubarak*.

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OPIOIDS

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the record-setting rate of addiction deaths is bringing to the forefront the horrifying effects of addiction from Vancouver to St. John's, Newfoundland and everywhere in between.

The B.C. coroner reported that almost 600 people died from overdose in the first three months of 2023 in B.C. alone. Every life lost to addiction is one too many. This data further proves what Canadians are experiencing within our communities and often within our own circle of friends and loved ones. More and more people are falling through the cracks and losing their lives to the disease of addiction.

Statements by Members

Every Canadian living with addiction deserves the opportunity to pursue recovery, yet the Liberal-NDP coalition believe the answer is to flood the streets with opioids under the guise of so-called “safe supply”. Conservatives know that recovery is possible for those with addiction, and it should be the goal.

We invite the government to join Conservatives and commit to a recovery-focused approach that will improve the lives of Canadians with addictions, their families and their communities, because recovery is possible.

* * *

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government will shamelessly announce anything, but it always fails to implement anything other than, say, higher taxes, deficits, inflation and now higher emissions.

Yesterday, we learned that this Liberal government has broken another one of its election promises. The environment commissioner’s audit revealed that the Liberals’ promise to plant two billion trees within 10 years is failing so badly that they are on track to plant only 3.8% of what they promised.

Seedlings are not in production. Partnership agreements are not signed. The Liberals are so far behind that there is no chance they are going to achieve the carbon sink that they have been counting on by 2030 through tree planting. Another A for announcement and F for follow-through.

This government could not manage a two-car funeral. There is absolutely no reason to believe any announcement about anything that these Liberals promise.

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[Translation]

MISSION INCLUSION

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, quite often in the House we spend our time talking about the problems in our society and how to fix them. During this volunteer week, we should also take the time to recognize all those who work on the ground to improve people’s lives.

That is precisely the mandate of Mission inclusion, an exceptional organization in my riding of Outremont that is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Mission inclusion has made its mark in the world for 75 years. It has helped nearly 30 million vulnerable people through support programs in Outremont, throughout Quebec and around the world.

To the entire team led by Richard Veenstra and Isabelle Morin I say in the House of Commons, here in Ottawa, congratulations, Mission inclusion, here is to many more years.

* * *

• (1115)

EARTH DAY

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is Earth Day, a day for people

to come together and take action for the future of our planet and our future generations.

It is an opportunity to individually commit and recommit to joining forces in the fight against climate change. More importantly, it is an opportunity to put pressure on governments, starting with Ottawa. Although the federal government is saying that we need to accelerate the transition of our economy by supporting workers, it is continuing to fund oil activities in its budget this spring. At a time when we urgently need to fast-track the fight against climate change, this government is investing in future oil exploration in the Arctic.

On Earth Day, let us make Ottawa understand that climate change is not a business opportunity. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I encourage everyone to join the protests that are being held in Montreal, Quebec City, Joliette, Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Chicoutimi, Rouyn, Rimouski and Baie-Comeau.

Ensuring our future means investing our energy in climate action, not investing in the energy stakeholders of the past.

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[English]

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF GAPYEONG

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 72nd anniversary of the Battle of Gapyeong. This battle is regarded as the most famous and significant action fought by the Canadian armies in the Korean war, and the most famous battle fought by the Canadian Armed Forces since World War II. In this battle, Canadian, Australian and New Zealand troops blocked the Chinese advancements towards South Korea’s capital, Seoul.

Today, I will join members of the Korean Canadian community to commemorate the battle at the Gapyeong Stone Korean War Memorial in Langley, B.C. The stone came from Gapyeong, South Korea and will serve as a reminder of the bravery of those who served in the Gapyeong battle and their commitment to upholding freedom and democracy. The efforts of those who created this monument, to keep the memory of this battle alive and to educate the next generation on the sacrifices made during the Korean War, are an inspiration to all of us.

There is an eternal friendship between Canada and South Korea that must be celebrated. I thank all the veterans of the Korean War and commemorate the more than 26,000 Canadians who served.

LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the Liberal government, it is clear it is running out of steam. As Canadians struggle with the cost of living crisis, the Prime Minister is struggling to explain his latest \$81,000 free stay at a Liberal insider's villa in Jamaica and struggling to justify why he needed a \$6000-a-night room in London with a butler.

On this side of the House, though, Conservatives are focused on helping Canadians with the real solutions to fix what the Liberals and the NDP have broken: capping government spending to get inflation under control; addressing the crime wave with jail, not bail, for repeat violent criminals; forcing gatekeepers to get out of the way; and, finally, building new housing and establishing a blue seal national testing standard to fix the doctor and nurse shortage. Of course, we will scrap the terrible carbon tax to lower the price on everything.

Canadians are simply tired of how out of touch the Liberals are and they are getting on board with our Conservative plans to address the issues in the country.

Better is always possible. Conservatives are delivering real ideas.

* * *

JOHN O'CONNOR

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with sadness and deep appreciation that I rise to honour and remember my dear friend Dr. John O'Connor, better known in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour as Dr. Jake.

A former high school quarterback, paddler, skier and runner, one would be hard-pressed to find a sport that Jake did not enjoy. In fact, late in his life, we would still see him jogging by our house each day.

Jake began his medical career as a physician with the Royal Canadian Navy and then served our community as a beloved and distinguished family physician for over four decades. He was instrumental in establishing the Dartmouth General Hospital, where he then served as chief of staff and head of the emergency department.

Jake was a true steward of the Shubenacadie Canal. He fundraised for the Shubenacadie Canal Commission and gave so much of his time ensuring its protection and its enhancement. In turn, the beautiful parks and waterway gave him the sanctuary that he deserved.

My thoughts and gratitude are with his family, especially with his wife Barbara, who kindly shared Dr. Jake with us for all these years.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1120)

[English]

LABOUR

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is spending \$21 billion more on the public service than when he took office. It takes a special kind of incompetence to spend 50% more on the bureaucracy but to give Canadians worse service, with 150,000 workers out on strike, the largest public sector strike in 40 years.

How will the Prime Minister fix the government and the public service that he has broken?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our public servants and the Public Service Alliance of Canada provide valuable services that are important to Canadians. The government certainly values their work. We are committed to reaching an agreement with the Public Service Alliance of Canada that is fair to government employees and also reasonable for Canadians. There is a competitive deal on the table, and I am really proud to say that both parties are continuing to negotiate in good faith. Canadians expect both parties to reach an agreement.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, why does the Prime Minister not stand up and answer? I will tell the House why. It is because the Prime Minister will not stand up for Canadians. He will not stand up for Canadians who are stuck in passport—

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to make sure that we cannot say whether someone is in the chamber or not in the chamber.

The member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, why does the Prime Minister not stand up to answer the question? He will not stand up because he will not stand up for Canadians. He will not stand up for Canadians who are stuck in passport lines. He will not stand up for Canadians who are stuck in airports. He will not stand up for the 700 men and women in uniform who are without heat and hot water as a result of his failures.

When will the Prime Minister finally stand up for Canadians and fix what he has broken?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in spite of your admonition and trying to encourage the member not to do indirectly what he cannot do directly, it is almost symbolic of how the Conservatives treated the public service when they were in government. Public servants remember very well how the Conservatives had abrogated their rights and provided terrible working conditions, and they got no value for it.

Oral Questions

The Liberal government believes in public servants. We believe in good-faith negotiations. We are there. We are providing important services to Canadians, as Canadians saw through the pandemic and as they saw through many things, and providing things that would help us deal with the current inflation. This is good news for Canada.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, only the Liberal government would call the largest public service strike in 40 years “good news” for Canadians: long lines at our passport offices, good news for Canadians; record delays at our airports, good news for Canadians; having hundreds of men and women in uniform at CFB Petawawa without heat and hot water because of Liberal incompetence, good news for Canadians.

The Liberals are not in it for Canadians, and that is exactly why this morning, when we tried to call Alexandre Trudeau from the Trudeau Foundation to committee to talk about how he signed for a \$200,000 cheque from Beijing as part of an influence operation to get access to the Prime Minister, which they did in fact get, they sent their Liberals in to block it.

When will the Liberals stand up for Canadians?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to the question of what happened at the committee today, committees, as members know, are masters of their own destiny. The committee chose not to go forward and support what the Conservatives had brought forward. It was unanimous, with the exception of the Conservatives, to not go forward with that, because we have important things to discuss, not to engage in these drive-by smears that the Conservatives like to engage in.

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[Translation]

LABOUR

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister wrote a long letter to public service employees in 2015, promising to bargain with them in good faith, yet he is the only prime minister in 40 years who has failed at the task.

Worse still, he is the only prime minister to have managed to hike the cost of the public service by 50% in the span of eight years, to \$21 billion, while still failing to prevent 150,000 employees from going on strike. That takes a special level of incompetence.

How does he plan to explain this monumental failure to everyone affected by this incompetence?

• (1125)

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we believe that public servants do important work for Canadians, and we agree that they have the right to strike if they are in a legal position to do so.

What is important is to have the opportunity to negotiate in good faith. That is what we have been doing. In contrast, when the Conservatives were in power, they denied public servants the right to strike and forced them to go back to work.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is time for the Prime Minister to stand up before Canadians and answer for his incompetence. We know he does not like to show up for work. He has never had to work. He has never had to stand in line to get a passport nor worry about whether or not he could go on vacation in Jamaica. He has never had to wait in airports because he travels by private jet. He has never had to worry about paying bills at the end of the month because he has never had to balance a budget.

When will the Prime Minister finally work on fixing all the problems he has created in the past eight years?

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where public servants are in a legal strike position. That is important, but even more important is that the two parties, the employer and labour, are at the bargaining table and they are negotiating in good faith. The negotiations are going well. Unlike the Conservatives, we will allow the negotiations to continue at the table.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Air Canada is abandoning Quebec's regions and it is high time the federal government got involved. Even the Alouette aluminum smelter back home, the largest in America, has written to Air Canada because its lax attitude is threatening the company's operations. Air Canada is currently cancelling one out of five flights to Sept-Îles and not a single flight leaves Baie-Comeau anymore.

Air Canada abandoned the regions long ago, and the federal government has been condoning it for too long. What will Ottawa do to ensure that the regions have reliable and accessible air service?

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to maintaining a fair level of competition in the airline industry. This industry supports Canada's economy, trade and tourism. It is essential to connecting Canadians and communities in a country as large as ours.

Our government will always do everything in its power to ensure that carriers provide flights to Canadians across the country, especially to remote or northern communities that often rely exclusively on the airline industry for travel and to receive essential goods and services.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, commitments also require action. For competition to exist, there must be more than one player. The federal government needs to guarantee accessible and reliable air transportation in the regions, but it is doing exactly the opposite with this budget. It is raising airport taxes to cover security. In other words, not only is it doing absolutely nothing to ensure the reliability of Air Canada flights, it is putting upward pressure on the price of regional flights. Ottawa is going to charge us more for increasingly unreliable flights.

Rather than laughing from their seats, will the Liberals back down, stop making matters worse and start coming up with solutions for air travel in the regions?

Ms. Annie Koutrakis (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her important question.

We will continue to ensure that airports across the country have the resources they need and that Canadians have access to an efficient air sector. We remain committed to continuing our conversations with all airlines to come up with better solutions for all Canadians.

* * *

[English]

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today the government announced \$13 billion for a new Volkswagen electric vehicle battery plant. It has \$13 billion for a private company, but it is dragging its heels for a fair contract for government workers. This deal is about accountability, and it is imperative that we put workers at the heart of any agreement. The government needs to ensure good-paying union jobs, or at least a commitment from Volkswagen that it will be allowed to be a union shop, in writing.

What will the government do to make sure that it is Canadian workers, not Volkswagen CEOs and shareholders, who will benefit from this deal?

• (1130)

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government has been very successful in bringing investments to Canada that are creating jobs and growing economic activity across the country.

That Volkswagen has chosen Canada for its very first battery factory in North America is proof of that success, and we are very proud of it. Volkswagen's historic investment of \$7 billion is a major vote of confidence in our workers and in our growing battery ecosystem, and it shows that Canada's work to become the world's green supplier of choice is working.

I welcome the member to get on board.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are fed up. The Liberals keep saying one thing about protecting our planet, but then they do the opposite. Yesterday, we learned that the

minister has dropped the ball on the Liberals' own promise for two billion trees, is not protecting vital species and is not on track to meet Canada's emissions targets. Canada cannot wait any longer for the environment minister to actually do his job, instead of cozying up to oil and gas executives.

When is the environment minister going to stop working to protect the profits of Canada's biggest polluters and start protecting our planet?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am really happy that the member opposite has asked me a question about the work we are doing on the environment, because it allows me the opportunity to share some good news, which is that our national inventory report on emissions, which we put out last week to the UN, shows that we are bending the curve on emissions. In fact, our emissions are below prepandemic levels. They are below 2005 levels.

We are doing the hard work, and we are getting it done.

* * *

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the cost of government is driving up the cost of living. After years of inflationary spending by the government, Canadians cannot afford to put food on the table or to heat their homes, yet the Prime Minister was off jet-setting to Jamaica on yet another luxury vacation. This is just another example of a prime minister who cannot or will not try to understand the realities of hard-working Canadians.

When Canadians are choosing between heating and eating, the Prime Minister is choosing between Jamaica and the Bahamas. When will the out-of-touch Prime Minister realize that money does not grow on trees, not that his government is competent enough to plant any?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to affordability, no Canadian should be forced to make the decision between buying groceries and going to the dentist, but budget 2023 actually takes care of both. We are delivering a grocery benefit, which the member supported, and I thank him for it. It is going to help 11 million Canadians, and over 50% of our seniors are going to benefit. There is also a dental benefit, which has already benefited over 250,000 children. As we expand it through this budget process, millions of Canadians will benefit. That is something that even the Conservatives can smile about.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling with the rising cost of living, particularly with the impact of the carbon tax, which is making it more expensive for Canadians to heat their homes or simply go to work. Canadian families and businesses cannot afford the tripling of the carbon tax, and now the environment minister is musing about \$265 a tonne. Canadians already cannot afford \$65 a tonne. It is not an environment plan; it is a tax plan. Enough is enough.

When will the government stop punishing hard-working Canadians and axe its cruel carbon tax?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to highlight that pricing carbon pollution works. I mentioned earlier that we are seeing our emissions go down. At the very same time as we are bringing down emissions, which is a market mechanism, by the way, which is something I would think the Conservatives would support, but beyond that matter, I would also point out that individual Canadians in the federal backstop provinces are receiving a climate action incentive. In fact, they would have received one just last week. That helps to offset the cost of carbon pricing.

Mr. Fraser Tolmie (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre—Lanigan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadian problems require Canadian solutions. The cost of living crisis is hurting Canadians. The price of gas in Moose Jaw has risen to over \$1.60 after the government tripled its inflationary carbon tax. Let us be honest: This is not an environmental plan; it is a tax plan. The Prime Minister has said that he has put a price on pollution. The fact is that he has put a price on people.

Here is a Canadian problem: the Prime Minister. Here is a Canadian solution: When will the government get out of the way so Canadians can elect a strong Conservative government?

• (1135)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, beyond the fact that carbon pricing absolutely works to reduce emissions, which I mentioned earlier, let us talk about why that is important. If we do not take action against climate change, every single Canadian will pay the cost of the natural disasters that come as part of it, including in provinces like the member opposite's province.

We are making sure that we support Canadians. In fact, there is the grocery rebate, dental benefits, child care agreements. All of those are ways we are supporting Canadians, and at the same time we are fighting climate change.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): TGIF, Mr. Speaker. Thank goodness it is Friday. Canadians have survived another week of unrelenting stress due to the Prime Minister's attack on their livelihoods, while he is living it up himself. Most Canadians could not dream of nine days at a luxury Jamaican estate with wealthy friends. One in four says there is no way they can even afford a vacation of any kind this summer.

The Liberal carbon tax will cost them up to \$850 more after the rebate this year. Record numbers have turned to food banks and, for the first time, there are people diving into dumpsters who have never done that before.

The Prime Minister's curtain is about to fall when he gets the hook. Will he regret not listening to Canadians then, when they cancel his tax and him?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there are Canadians across this country who have been having a hard time with the cost of living, but we should put this into perspective. Over the course of the economic recovery from COVID-19, we have now seen more than 850,000 people with a job today who did not have one before the pandemic. However, to help those people who are still struggling, we are making investments to offset the cost of groceries with a new grocery rebate. We are making investments on the issues Canadians raised with us as being important, to make sure they have access to a family doctor. We are making investments so that they can continue to have access to good jobs.

When it comes to putting a price on pollution, we have found a way to put more money in the pockets of households. The Conservatives want to take it from them so that they can make it free to pollute.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there has been plenty of debate in this House on what the impact of the carbon tax is on Canadians. However, I want to put that debate to rest once and for all. I am going to read right from the Prime Minister's own parliamentary watchdog: "Most households in provinces under the backstop will see a net loss resulting from...carbon pricing." If members do not believe me, it continues: "household carbon costs will exceed the [rebate]". The Liberals have hit zero targets. It is clear that not only does the carbon tax fail to fight emissions, but it is also costing Canadians \$1,500 on average.

Oral Questions

When will the government finally just axe the tax?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the exact same report from the PBO confirms that eight out of 10 Canadian households will receive more from the climate action dividend than they pay out in any fuel charge. What is fascinating is that if the hon. member actually considers the analysis behind the report, the only expenditure he is referring to assumes that the alternative is taking no further action on climate change.

This is par for the course for the Conservatives. We have been defending this policy for three election cycles. If they want to triple down on a losing strategy, I invite them to remain in opposition as long as they would like.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if we want to talk about a losing strategy, they have hit zero emissions targets. That is a victory rate of 0%. That is just how out of touch they are. However, that is not surprising given that we have an out-of-touch government with an out-of-touch Prime Minister. He gets on a plane, goes to Jamaica and takes an \$81,000 free vacation from a donor to the Trudeau Foundation. Moreover, we know that he will not pay that back because we know who he is. Maybe he will pay the carbon tax on the jet fuel. The jet fuel alone would add a carbon tax of \$13,750.

Will the government finally admit it is a carbon scam and axe the tax?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, talking about targets, when it comes to our emissions, I would remind the hon. member that the target we have set is for the year 2030. I would remind all members of this House that 2030 is seven years from now. We are going to continue to work to hit that target, as we have projected we would. However, it is telling that when the Conservatives are confronted with an analysis that they do not want to accept, they turn their guns onto the Prime Minister as a person.

The reality is that the more they are going to focus on him as an individual, the more we are going to focus on the Canadians who live in our communities. We will make sure they have access to good jobs, income support for families that need it and health care for those who deserve it. We are also going to continue to advance environmental policies to protect pocketbooks and reduce emissions.

* * *

• (1140)

[*Translation*]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the interim Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has stepped down following the controversy regarding her family ties to the Liberal minister.

I would like to reiterate that we never questioned the integrity and competence of Ms. Richard, who is doing the right thing. The Liberal ministers should never have put her in this untenable position. Now, these same ministers have to appoint someone else.

They have demonstrated several times that they do not have a good grasp of ethics, so this disqualifies them from moving forward on their own. Unfortunately, I am not available.

Will they finally propose a candidate that all parties can agree on?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the government recognizes the importance of the office and has very clearly indicated that we are actively seeking a replacement. The member can rest assured that it will be done in a proper form.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the vacant Ethics Commissioner position is problematic. No investigations can be conducted until the position is filled.

However, the House is currently looking into the Chinese interference scandal, which could require clarifications about the role played by Liberal actors. The Prime Minister himself is embroiled in a scandal concerning his Christmas vacation with friends who make donations to the Trudeau Foundation. If the Liberals were to leave the interim Ethics Commissioner position empty much longer, questions would be raised.

Will the Liberals provide the opposition with a list of candidates on Monday?

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conflict of Interest office does critical, important work to ensure transparency and accountability at the federal level. As I have indicated to the member, we are actively looking for a replacement. It will be done in due course and through a proper process.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, I received an email from Kim in my riding about the budget. Kim writes, “I’m stretched so thin I either pay bills or buy food because I can’t afford both. Food costs are ridiculous. Gas and heating are going up. Is life better under this government? Not by a long shot”.

The carbon tax is crushing the affordability of everything that Kim buys and uses. The cost of everything is driven up by the carbon tax, making life unaffordable. Will the government finally do something to help Kim and the millions of Kims across Canada by cutting the carbon tax?

Oral Questions

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that just this week, not only our government but also every member of this House stood up and did something for Kim and people in that situation by delivering the grocery benefit to the more than 11 million Canadians who need it the most.

Every day, I stand up in this place waiting for the Conservatives to come up with a plan to fight climate change. I wish that would happen. They deny the fact that eight out of 10 Canadians are actually better off with the climate incentive. They spend all their opposition days and their questions trying to make pollution great again.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is astounding how the Liberals gaslight Canadians. Kim knows about the grocery rebate because Kim looked into the budget. Kim says, “Despite the grocery rebate, I have to choose between heating my home or buying food”.

The answer from the member and the arrogant, out-of-touch government suggests that Kim does not have a problem and that we should not be asking the question. It is audacious and despicable of people to gaslight and diminish Canadians who are struggling to make ends meet. Will they finally show they actually give a damn about Canadians and cut the carbon tax?

The Deputy Speaker: We should be judicious in our words.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, only the Conservatives would consider facts to be gaslighting. The facts are that youth unemployment is down 22%, that 2.7 million Canadians have been lifted out of poverty under this government and that we have the lowest deficit and the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

That strong balance sheet allows us to invest in making life more affordable and creating clean jobs that create a better economy for the future. While the Conservatives continue to come forward with ideas in the House that involve raiding the pensions of seniors and not fighting climate change, we are going to come up with real solutions to benefit Canadians.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax has driven the price of food so high that even military families have to visit food banks. Now, 700 soldiers are without heat or water because the Prime Minister could not reach a fair deal with public servants. The Prime Minister has friends who cover a \$160,000 vacation at a luxury resort for a week, and yet he leaves our military out in the cold. Will he cancel his plans to triple the carbon tax?

• (1145)

Mr. Bryan May (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are of course at the bargaining table and working hard to reach a fair deal. As a result of the ongoing labour action, CFB Petawawa has experienced a disruption in service from its central heating plant. Heating-plant shut-downs may affect those working or living on the base in quarters typically used during training or on a temporary basis. Alternative

facilities are being made available for those affected by this disruption.

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ETHICS

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are out of money, and the Prime Minister is out of touch. Currently, food bank usage is at an all-time high, mortgage and rent costs have doubled and many cannot afford to heat their homes. While 24% of Canadians say they cannot afford a vacation this summer, the Prime Minister decided to jet off to Jamaica on a luxury vacation at a private villa, courtesy of a big-time Trudeau Foundation donor. Will the Prime Minister finally tell us how much he personally paid for this luxury vacation in Jamaica?

Mr. Terry Beech (Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, while the opposition members continue to focus on the Prime Minister, we are focused on Canadians and making sure that life is more affordable. How are we doing that? We are doing that through programs like child care and dental care. We are investing in health care to make sure that premiers in the provinces and territories have the resources they need to deliver the health outcomes that Canadians expect. We are doing all that while having the strongest fiscal framework in the G7. That is what responsible government does and what good ideas look like.

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HEALTH

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, unpaid caregivers in this country take care of children, aging parents and loved ones. They do an incredible amount of unpaid labour. In the finance minister's mandate letter, the government has promised to provide a refundable Canada caregiver credit, but the Liberals failed to deliver it in the last budget.

Families rely on caregivers, who receive so little compensation. Why are the Liberals so quick to move mountains for their rich buddies but not to support caregivers who care for their loved ones?

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, health care is essential, and this could not be more true for those who are most vulnerable, particularly seniors. A couple of weeks ago, before the budget, I was able to sit down with the SEIU, which is a union that supports and represents personal support care workers right across this country. Budget 2023 invests in the wages of those workers.

Oral Questions

Some of the most vulnerable people are also taken care of by immigrants and temporary foreign workers. We need to make sure those people are taken care of too, and this government is on the right side of that equation.

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FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Swiss multinational resource company Glencore is trying to take over Teck Resources, one of Canada's biggest mining companies. The British Columbia premier is urging the federal government to stop this. If this hostile takeover moves forward, thousands of Canadians could lose their jobs. Moreover, our sources of critical minerals would be at risk. Worse, Glencore has been accused of human rights abuses; the company even pleaded guilty to bribery and market manipulation.

Will the Liberals do the right thing for Canadians and block this hostile takeover?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, the Investment Canada Act provides for the review of the most significant investments by non-Canadians to ensure the net benefit to the Canadian economy. All investments, no matter their value, are subject to a national security review under the ICA. Therefore, the acquisition of a Canadian company by a foreign company would be subject to review. As the member knows, due to the confidentiality provisions under the act, we cannot comment further.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, across Canada, people are increasingly feeling the effects of climate change. My home province of British Columbia is experiencing severe floods, droughts and fires, all of which have taken a toll on the health of our iconic forests.

In this context, planting two billion trees in the next decade will support the expansion of Canada's forests and the restoration of important habitats.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources please update the House on how the government is supporting these efforts in British Columbia—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I did not hear half that question. I am going to let the hon. member back up to the question part of his question so he can actually ask it to the minister.

The hon. member for Steveston—Richmond East has the floor.

Mr. Parm Bains: Mr. Speaker, in this context, planting two billion trees in the next decade will support the expansion of Canada's forests and the restoration of important habitats.

Can the Minister of Natural Resources please update the House on how the government is supporting these efforts in British Columbia this planting season?

• (1150)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, we kicked off the planting season by announcing an agreement with British Columbia to plant over 37 million trees. The effect is like taking almost 470,000 cars off the road. It is going to turn burnt areas into healthy forests and restore wildlife habitat and ecosystems.

I would like to wish everyone who is working in the planting fields, such as the scientists, planners, nursery workers and recipients the best throughout this year's planting season.

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AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last year, Volkswagen had the same revenue as the Government of Canada, at \$413 billion. Now the Liberals are providing a \$14-billion subsidy from taxpayers.

My question is simple. How many jobs in the plant does \$14 billion buy for this auto company, which was convicted of environmental law crimes in Canada?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my friend may not have heard that the world is facing a new future built on the green economy. President Biden reminded us in this chamber that the countries able to develop green economies within their borders will be the countries that will win. This is a historic investment for all Canadians.

I will point out to the member that our investment is not a subsidy. In fact, this investment is equal to the economic impact of just five years of operations at this new plant. The scale of the site will create thousands of direct and indirect jobs. Our government is bringing the auto sector back to St. Thomas after a plant closed under the Conservatives' watch in 2011. The area MPs and the Conservative premier are behind this; why is this not the case for the member and his party?

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member should listen to his Minister of Finance who, on Wednesday, said that competing with the subsidies of the Biden inflation act is a "race to the bottom". Liberals surely would not give away \$14 billion in taxpayer money without a contract on the exact commitments of jobs in the plant.

Oral Questions

I will ask again: How many jobs in the plant will this \$14-billion subsidy buy?

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every day in the chamber, the government members come to work to make life more affordable for Canadians, grow the economy and take action against climate change.

This investment by Volkswagen and the federal government is a game-changer for the positioning of Canada as the world's green supplier of choice. It means that we are well on our way. There will be thousands of jobs created in the St. Thomas area. There will be thousands of knock-on jobs created in adjacent industries.

This is a win for Canada, and it is a win for the world.

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HOUSING

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, “we see the interest rate increases over the course of 2022 leading to lower housing starts this year.”

Those are the words of a market analyst at the CMHC. Excessive Liberal borrowing and spending caused a spike in interest rates and will stall new housing construction. CMHC has also said that we need to build 5.8 million homes by 2030 if we have any hope of restoring affordability.

Why, then, is this costly coalition so determined to block the construction of the homes Canadians so desperately need?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. Indeed, too many Canadians are struggling with the cost of housing, and that is unacceptable. That is why we have good news: The federal government is showing bold leadership by quickly increasing housing supply, helping Canadians who are struggling with the cost of housing and protecting the dream of home ownership.

We launched a \$4-billion housing accelerator fund and introduced a federal top-up of \$500 to the Canada housing benefit that will help 1.8 million renters. We also created a tax-free savings account of \$40,000 for first time homebuyers. I could go on.

[*English*]

Mr. Scott Aitchison (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, well, it is pretty clear it is not working. The average rent in Toronto for a one-bedroom apartment is now over \$2,500 per month. Canadians who are going to renew their mortgages this year are faced with record increases in interest costs, and now the CMHC has increased fees by up to 200% on the programs builders use to finance multi-unit residential construction.

If the government really wants to build more homes, why does it continually make it so much more expensive?

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, we believe that every Canadian has the right to live in a safe and affordable place. That is why we brought in the first national housing strategy.

It is an ambitious plan of over \$82 billion that has already helped hundreds of thousands of Canadian families get the housing they need. We have also introduced new measures in budget 2023—measures that the Conservatives voted against—to double construction, directly support Canadians and help them save for their first home.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the UN issued a warning to the entire planet this morning reporting that glaciers are melting at a record rate because of greenhouse gases. It warns that it will take several decades to stop this negative trend. When it comes to melting glaciers and rising sea levels, we have already lost the fight.

At the same time, the federal government's climate change plan has been slammed in no less than five reports by the commissioner of the environment and sustainable development.

When will the federal government finally take action instead of watching our chances to stop climate change melt away before their eyes?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that question. She is giving me the opportunity to say, first, that we thank the commissioner for his reports and all his recommendations, which we are taking seriously.

This is also an opportunity for me to say that the results of our national inventory report of greenhouse gas emissions show progress in our fight against climate change. In 2021, there were 53 million fewer tonnes of pollution in our cities. That is the equivalent of taking 11 million cars off Canada's roads.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the commissioner of the environment is very critical of the federal plan to combat climate change, and the government is not out of the woods yet.

Speaking of wood, he specifically mentions the Prime Minister's much-touted plan to plant two billion trees.

How is the government doing on that front? It has met 2.3% of its target. Two per cent is not terribly impressive, and that is assuming all the trees that were planted managed to survive. The commissioner warned us that Ottawa is not doing any tracking.

It is time to get serious. Instead of pretending to plant trees, when will the Prime Minister take real action by cutting off funding to oil companies?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will begin by thanking the commissioner again for his reports.

Many of the recommendations in his report about the two billion trees have been implemented or are currently being implemented. In fact, he said himself that he has seen progress, and he sees the work that has been done as a result of those recommendations.

Thanks to this program, we have signed or are in the process of negotiating multi-year agreements to plant 260 million trees over 10 years.

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[English]

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the last eight years, Liberals have repeatedly broken ethics laws, more often than any government in Canadian history. Liberals have been found guilty of breaking the law six times, with the Prime Minister alone being found guilty twice.

They decided to appoint the sister-in-law of a current cabinet minister, who has also been found guilty of breaking an ethics law. However, now that it has been caught, she has resigned, leaving the position to be filled yet again.

What Liberals do not seem to get is that the appearance of a conflict is in fact a conflict. Will the Prime Minister commit to appoint someone who is not a friend, a family member or a member of the Trudeau foundation?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have already answered this question. I talked about making sure that there will be a replacement, and that will happen in due time with proper process.

As the Conservatives like to focus their attention on the Prime Minister, I would like to bring their attention to today, when we debated the budget implementation bill, which is an important bill for all Canadians. It is a bill that delivers on things such as the grocery rebate, which would be a benefit to 11 million Canadians.

There are all sorts of opportunities for the opposition. They can continue to repeat the same question, but my preference is to highlight some of the things that are happening in Canada.

Oral Questions

• (1200)

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now that the acting ethics commissioner has stepped down, we hope to see a return to an acceptable ethical standard.

Appointing the sister-in-law of an influential government minister to fill the position of Conflict of Interest Commissioner showed unbelievably bad judgment and clear favouritism.

This time, would it be asking too much to find a candidate to fill the Conflict of Interest Commissioner position who is not related to friends of the Trudeau Foundation?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have always supported the work of the conflict of interest office. We are actively looking at a replacement for that particular position, and it will take place.

If I may, I will focus on what is happening in Canada today through budgetary measures, which include things such as the grocery rebate, as I mentioned, and the dental expansion program, which would help people during the difficult time of inflation. We can talk about the health care issue and how it is that the federal government is investing in future generations for health care services, which we all expect of the government.

[Translation]

Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are more than 38 million Canadians, yet only members of the Prime Minister's inner circle were eligible for the Ethics Commissioner position. What is wrong with this picture?

Could the government finally consider candidates other than close friends and donors from the extended Trudeau Foundation family?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, we are actively looking for a replacement for that particular position. It will come in due course and follow a proper process. This is a government that has consistently respected the independence of our offices.

I would encourage members to change gears, get off the personal assassinations of character and start focusing on the issues that are important to Canadians, such as the economy.

* * *

[Translation]

SPORT

Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this week, we learned that the 2027 Canada Games will take place in Quebec City. That is excellent news for our beautiful province and the sports community.

Oral Questions

This not-to-be-missed sporting event provides many athletes with their first opportunity to participate in a high-level competition in a very friendly environment.

Can the Minister of Sport tell us more about the government's efforts to make events like this one possible?

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pontiac for her question.

I want to join her in congratulating Quebec City for being chosen to host the next Canada Winter Games in 2027, 60 years after hosting the inaugural event.

It is a wonderful tribute to Quebec City for the Canada Games to return to its birthplace. The event will also generate major economic spinoffs for the region.

We will continue to work with our partners to give our young athletes unique opportunities to excel and reach their full potential in a safe, healthy and inclusive sports environment.

* * *

ETHICS

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at a time when inflation is eating away at more and more taxpayers' paycheques, families are being forced to pay \$1,000 more each year to put food on the table, and mortgage payments are doubling, causing untold stress for Canadians, the Prime Minister sees nothing wrong with taking a luxury vacation to Jamaica.

Can he at least tell us how much he paid out of his own pocket for his luxury hotel?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for nine consecutive months, inflation has been going down in Canada. On Monday, we saw inflation drop significantly.

The priority of our Liberal government has been and continues to be the economy and the cost of living. The priority of the Conservatives, especially the leader of the Conservative Party, is to attack the Prime Minister or to join forces with Elon Musk on Twitter to denigrate our Canadian institutions, such as the CBC.

This morning, we saw that all those efforts were for naught, because Elon Musk himself backed down.

● (1205)

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 24% of Canadians say that they cannot take a vacation this summer because of inflation.

They are definitely not impressed when they see their Prime Minister vacationing in a Jamaican paradise at taxpayers' expense. The average Canadian dares not even dream of such luxury.

This Prime Minister is so used to living on another planet that he does not even realize how this is perceived by Canadians and the entire world.

I will repeat my question: Will he pay for his luxury hotel out of his own pocket?

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the government House leader said yesterday, it is somewhat hypocritical, some might suggest, for the Leader of the Opposition, who lives in a government-supplied home, who drives in a government-supplied vehicle and who receives many different government paid expenses, to be critical of other members.

At times, the Conservative Party needs to look in the mirror and realize that sometimes it is not good to throw stones at a glass house.

* * *

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the mass shooting in Nova Scotia three years ago was a tragedy that must never be repeated.

Strangely, the Mass Casualty Commission report identified the physical location of the RCMP Depot in Regina as a problem and recommended that it be shut down. The RCMP Depot in Regina is a world-class police training facility, fully capable of implementing any training requirements that need to be made.

Will the government commit today to keeping the RCMP training depot in Regina open?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we thank the commission for its report and the important recommendations that it has made.

We are reviewing the commission's recommendations, and will be working closely with provinces, territories, counterparts and civil society to respond in due course. We hope that the opposition parties are also reviewing all of the recommendations, not just the one on the RCMP, that dealt with gender-based violence and assault weapons, and that we could work together to implement the recommendations to save lives.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada has a proud tradition of welcoming some of the world's most vulnerable people. With the challenges businesses face and the changing demographic of our rural towns, we know skilled refugees can be part of the solution too.

Could the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship tell us how we are providing refugees with a new lease on life and the opportunity to help businesses in need?

*Routine Proceedings***PETITIONS**

HAZARAS

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his advocacy over the years. I have known him to support some of the world's most vulnerable.

We know that when refugees or displaced people come to Canada they arrive with a heck of a lot more than what they are carrying in their bags. These are people who have skills to contribute. They will grow our economy and give back to the communities that have given them that second lease on life. That is why we recently announced an expanded program, the EMPP, or economic mobility pathways pilot, which taps into the skills that refugees bring to Canada and is going to allow thousands to come and live in our communities and give back.

I met these people. They are working in health care and high tech. We are going to continue to welcome them. It is the right thing to do and it serves our interests at the same time.

* * *

SPORT

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, ahead of the FIFA World Cup 2026 in Canada, we are calling on the Liberals to invest in soccer for kids in indigenous and northern communities. Now we found out that the City of Toronto cooked up a sweetheart deal that will divert public funds to Maple Leaf sports and entertainment. I know the Maple Leafs are not used to making profits come round two of the playoffs, so they want to max it out, but let us be real. This is a misuse of public funds.

The Liberals must be clear. In the lead-up to the world cup, will they ensure that any public funds go to the public good, like investing in soccer for our communities so that all kids can play the sport they love?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pascale St-Onge (Minister of Sport and Minister responsible for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a priority for our government to ensure that sport is accessible for as many people as possible. That is why we created the community sport for all initiative, which has made it possible for children and youth from all communities to access organized sports. Our government will continue to help Canadians access quality infrastructure to participate in organized sports.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

• (1210)

[*English*]**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS**

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

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling a petition on behalf of my constituents who are members of the Hazara minority ethnic community of Afghanistan. They are again reminding the Government of Canada of the ongoing genocide of the Hazaras in Afghanistan who continue to be persecuted by the terrorist Taliban regime in this ongoing genocide, especially going back from 1998 to 2001.

The massacres, arrests, forced displacement and confiscation of Hazaras' lands are of ongoing concern for my constituents. They remind the Government of Canada, as part of the international community, of its obligation to promote justice for the Hazara ethnic community in Afghanistan. They are calling on it to recognize the ongoing genocide and persecution by the Taliban of the Hazara ethnic minority, and asking it to prioritize Hazara refugees as part of the 40,000 Afghan target by the end of this year.

FARMERS' MARKETS

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, given the price of inflation and food, it is timely that I am bringing this petition on behalf of constituents from Cumberland, Courtenay and Royston in my riding. They cite the importance of farmers' markets as a key tool for COVID-19 recovery, as small business incubators, as domestic system and food security builders, and local economy community builders.

Farmers' market coupon programs are a key support for new market development, and for existing markets and their provincial associations. The petitioners are calling for a national coupon-matching program that would assist in meeting the demands of people who are lacking healthy food and food security, encourage provinces without a provincial program to create one, and support those provinces that have a provincial program to expand and meet that demand.

They are calling on the House of Commons and the Government of Canada to support my motion, Motion No. 78, and initiate a national coupon-matching program for all provincial farmers' market and nutrition coupon programs across Canada that would match provinces that are already contributing to their farmers' market nutrition coupon programs and encourage provinces that do not have a program to implement one.

Routine Proceedings

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of 274 signatories from the Turkish Canadian community in my riding of York Centre. Many of my constituents and their families have been deeply affected by the recent earthquake. This petition is calling on the government to take action to help them by easing the temporary resident visa application requirements that are currently in place.

OPIOIDS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I table a petition from so many Canadians and recognizing the heartfelt words of so many of my constituents about addressing drug toxicity and the impact it is having on the many precious lives that are being lost.

We know Canada's current drug policies have proven to be ineffective in the prevention of substance use and exacerbate substance use, harms and risks.

We also know, from much research, that the decriminalization of personal possessions is associated with significantly reducing drug toxicity deaths in the countries that have adopted progressive drug policy reforms.

So many precious souls have died. Once they are gone, they never have that opportunity, so the petitioners are asking the government to implement a health-based national strategy to provide access to a regular safe supply of drugs, and expand trauma-informed treatment, recovery and harm-reduction services and public education and awareness campaigns throughout Canada.

• (1215)

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am once again pleased to present a just transition petition on behalf of 216 Yukon constituents.

The petitioners call upon the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada to enact just transition legislation that reduces emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels and makes significant contributions to emissions reductions in countries in the global south; winds down the fossil fuel industry and related infrastructure; ends fossil fuel subsidies; transitions to a decarbonized economy; creates new public economic institutions and expands public ownership of services and utilities across the economy to implement the transition; creates good, green jobs and drives inclusive workforce development, led by and including affected workers in communities and ensures decent low-carbon work for all workers; protects and strengthens human rights and worker rights, respects indigenous rights, sovereignty and knowledge by including them in creating and implementing this legislation; ensures migrant justice and emphasizes support for historically marginalized communities; expands the social safety net through new income supports, decarbonized public housing and operational funding for affordable and accessible public transit countrywide; and pays for the transition by increasing taxes on the wealthiest corporations and financing through a public national bank.

OPIOIDS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am pleased to submit this petition, signed by Canadians who state that over 29,000 Canadians have died due to apparent opioid toxicity between January 2016 and December 2021.

This petition states that Canada's current drug policies have proven to be ineffective in the prevention of substance use and exacerbates substance use, harms and risks. The war on drugs has resulted in widespread stigma toward those who use controlled substances. It further states that decriminalization of personal possession is associated with significantly reducing drug toxicity deaths in the countries that have adopted progressive drug policy reforms.

The signatories to the petition call for three items: first, that there be reform to the drug policy to decriminalize the simple possession of drugs listed in the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act; second, provide a path for expungement of conviction records for those convicted of simple possession; and, three, with urgency, implement a health-based national strategy for providing access to a regulated safer supply of drugs and expand trauma-informed treatment, recovery and harm-reduction services, and public education and awareness campaigns throughout Canada.

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QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the following questions will be answered today: Questions Nos. 1290 to 1292 and 1294.

[Text]

Question No. 1290—**Mr. Rob Moore:**

With regard to consultations by the Minister of Justice related to the future of the sex offender registry: what are the details of all consultations on the future of the registry which have occurred since October 28, 2022, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) type of consultation, (iii) names of individuals and organizations consulted?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on October 28, 2022, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down two elements of the Criminal Code relating to the obligation to comply with Canada's sex offender registry. At that time, the Minister of Justice indicated that he would look at the options responsibly and was clear that victims and the safety of Canadians would always be priorities in this matter.

Routine Proceedings

Officials from Justice Canada and Public Safety Canada have engaged with provincial and territorial officials and law enforcement through existing fora to discuss the implications of the judgment and possible avenues for a potential legislative response. Specifically, the issue was discussed on October 31 and November 14, 2022, by the Coordinating Committee of Senior Officials, CCSO, High-Risk Offenders Working Group, membership in which is open to all jurisdictions.

The minister's office has consulted the following organizations: Action Canada for Sexual Health & Rights; Association Québécoise Plaidoyer-Victimes; Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic; Benjamin Roebuck, Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime; Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police; Canadian Association of Crown Counsel; Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies; Canadian Centre for Child Protection; Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity; Canadian Federation of University Women Circles of Support and Accountability; Ottawa Criminal Trial Lawyers' Association; DisAbled Women's Network Canada; Egale Canada; Ending Violence Association of Canada; Fédération des femmes du Québec; Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes; National Council of Women of Canada; Native Women's Association of Canada; Newfoundland Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre; Nova Scotia Public Prosecution Service; Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (National Alliance for Racialized, Refugee, and Immigrant Women); South Asian Women's Community Centre; The Criminal Lawyers' Association; The National Association of Women And The Law; West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund; and Women's Legal Education and Action Fund.

Question No. 1291—Mr. Dave Epp:

With regard to the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Regulations, Section 3(1): is Pelee Island considered to be an area that is not within either a census agglomeration or a census metropolitan area and, if so, are residential properties on Pelee Island therefore excluded from this prohibition?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC, cannot provide interpretive guidance on the Prohibition on the Purchase of Residential Property by Non-Canadians Regulations, or responses to fact-specific questions.

Statistics Canada provides definitions of Census Metropolitan Area, CMA, and Census Agglomeration, CA, in their Standard Geographical Classification (SGC) reference maps. Please note that Statistics Canada will not be providing verification of specific residential addresses or interpretative guidance on fact specific questions relating to the applicability of the act.

CMHC has published new information on its website that supports the act and the regulations, including updated frequently asked questions and answers for individuals and industry professionals. Additionally, the government announced amendments to the regulations that expand exceptions allowing non-Canadians to purchase a residential property in certain circumstances.

Question No. 1292—Mr. Damien C. Kurek:

With regard to individuals subject to a removal order under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA): (a) how many such individuals were incarcerated in a provincial correctional facility as of March 6, 2023; (b) of the individuals in (a), what is the breakdown by type of crime and by specific criminal code offence

which resulted in the incarceration; and (c) of the individuals in (a), how many were deemed inadmissible pursuant to sections 34 to 37 of the IRPA, broken down by relevant subsections?

Ms. Pam Damoff (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with regard to part (a), as of March 6, 2023, there were 140 individuals under immigration hold and subject to a removal order who were being housed in a provincial correctional facility.

With regard to part (b), CBSA does not hold the requested information as it falls outside of the agency's mandate. The CBSA's mandate includes enforcement of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, IRPA, which provides for the arrest and detention of foreign nationals and permanent residents who are inadmissible to Canada and who are either unlikely to appear for an immigration proceeding or constitute a danger to the public. Individuals detained under the IRPA are entitled to a review of their detention by the Immigration and Refugee Board, IRB, an independent quasi-judicial tribunal. Individuals are entitled to have the reasons for their detention reviewed by the IRB within the first 48 hours of being detained. At a detention review, the IRB may order their release on conditions or determine that detention should continue. If the IRB determines that detention should be continued, a subsequent detention review is to be held in the next seven days and every 30 days thereafter. The immigration division of the IRB will provide reasons for its decisions, and the decisions are subject to judicial review.

With regard to part (c), of the 140 individuals in part (a), 81 were inadmissible pursuant to sections 34 to 37 of the IRPA. Seventy-one individuals were found inadmissible pursuant to 36(1)(a), which pertains to cases where the permanent resident or foreign national has been convicted in Canada of an offence under an act of Parliament punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least 10 years, or of an offence under an act of Parliament for which a term of imprisonment of more than six months has been imposed. Three individuals were found inadmissible pursuant to 36(1)(b), which pertains to cases where the permanent resident or foreign national is inadmissible on grounds of serious criminality for having been convicted of an offence outside Canada that, if committed in Canada, would constitute an offence under an act of Parliament punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of at least 10 years. Six individuals were found inadmissible pursuant to 36(2)(a), which pertains to cases where the foreign national is inadmissible on grounds of criminality for having been convicted in Canada of an offence under an act of Parliament punishable by way of indictment, or of two offences under any act of Parliament not arising out of a single occurrence. One individual was found inadmissible pursuant to 36(2)(b), which pertains to cases where the foreign national is inadmissible on grounds of criminality for having been convicted outside Canada of an offence that, if committed in Canada, would constitute an indictable offence under an act of Parliament, or of two offences not arising out of a single occurrence that, if committed in Canada, would constitute offences under an act of Parliament.

*Routine Proceedings***Question No. 1294—Mr. Glen Motz:**

With regard to Via Rail trains on the route between Winnipeg and Vancouver, broken down by each stop: what was the total number of passengers who (i) embarked, (ii) disembarked, at each train station, including those in rural areas, broken down by year, for each of the last five years, and by month, for each of the last 12 months?

Hon. Omar Alghabra (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the requested information is confidential due to its commercial nature.

* * *

[English]

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, if the government's response to Questions Nos. 1289, 1293 and 1295 to 1301 could be made orders for returns, these returns would be tabled immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

[Text]

Question No. 1289—Mrs. Laila Goodridge:

With regard to Health Canada's approval of licenses to organizations to possess, produce, sell or distribute substances, as per British Columbia's subsection 56(1) exemption under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act or any other similar type of government granted exemptions: (a) how many organizations are currently being reviewed for a Controlled Drug and Substances Dealer's License ("Dealer's License"), broken down by (i) cocaine, (ii) hydromorphone, (iii) diacetylmorphine, (iv) fentanyl, (v) methamphetamine, (vi) psilocybin, (vii) psilocin, (viii) 3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine, (ix) amphetamine, (x) oxycodone, (xi) MDMA, (xii) morphine, (xiii) opium, (xiv) other substances, broken down by substance; (b) how many organizations have been approved for a Controlled Drug and Substances Dealer's License ("Dealer's License"), broken down by (i) cocaine, (ii) hydromorphone, (iii) diacetylmorphine, (iv) fentanyl, (v) methamphetamine, (vi) psilocybin, (vii) psilocin, (viii) 3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine, (ix) amphetamine, (x) oxycodone, (xi) MDMA, (xii) morphine, (xiii) opium, (xiv) other substances, broken down by substance; (c) how many inspections of license holders have been conducted by Health Canada since British Columbia's exemption was granted; (d) what number of enforcement actions have been taken by Health Canada against license holders found to be in non-compliance, including the number of licenses refused, suspended or revoked and the number of administrative monetary penalties issued; (e) what criteria were used to approve Adastralabs for (i) their Controlled Drug and Substances Dealer's License, (ii) the amendment to include cocaine, on February 17, 2023; (f) is the claim in the February 22, 2023, press release from Adastralabs that the company "received approval from Health Canada on February 17, 2023, for its amendment to include cocaine as a substance that the Company can legally possess, produce, sell and distribute" accurate and, if not, what is inaccurate about the claim; and (g) what are the details of all such licenses approved by Health Canada since January 1, 2022, including, for each, the (i) vendor, (ii) date of the approval, (iii) specific substances approved, (iv) type of activities permitted with the license (possession, production, distribution, sale)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1293—Mr. Bob Zimmer:

With regard to the items listed in the Supplementary Estimates (B) 2022-23 under Department of Fisheries and Oceans: (a) what is the detailed breakdown of the \$1,653,000 listed under Reinvestment of royalties from intellectual property, including (i) how much money was received from royalties, broken down by type of intellectual property, (ii) how the money was reinvested; and (b) what is the detailed breakdown of the \$280,000 listed under Funding for the proceeds of sale from disposition of real property, including how the funding was used and the details of all property sold related to the amount, including, for each, the (i) item description, (ii) price, (iii) location?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1295—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to expenditures made under object code 3252 (Interest, administration or service charges, and other penalty charges), broken down by department, agency, or other government entity for each of the last five years: (a) how many expenditures were made; (b) what was the total value of the expenditures; and (c) what are the details of each such expenditure over \$500, including, for each, the (i) date, (ii) amount, (iii) vendor, (iv) reason for the fee (late payment, incorrect payment, etc.)?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1296—Mr. Dan Albas:

With regard to expenditures on alcohol and alcoholic beverages by the government, since 2016, broken down by year and by department, agency, or other government entity: what was the total amount spent?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1297—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to expenditures related to conferences, since 2016, broken down by year and by department, agency, or other government entity: (a) what was the total amount spent on conference fees (object code 0823 or similar); and (b) what was the total amount spent on travel expenses for public servants attending conferences?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1298—Mr. Gerald Soroka:

With regard to government measures to mark the one-year anniversary of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine: (a) has the Privy Council Office (PCO) provided any guidance or direction with respect to displaying Ukrainian flags on Government of Canada buildings and properties to mark the one-year anniversary of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and, if so, what is that guidance or direction and on what date was it provided; (b) does the PCO support Government of Canada departments and agencies displaying Ukraine's flag on Government of Canada buildings and properties; (c) has Global Affairs Canada (GAC) provided any guidance or direction with respect to displaying Ukrainian flags on Government of Canada buildings to mark the one-year anniversary of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and, if so, what is that guidance or direction, and on what date was it provided; (d) does GAC support Government of Canada departments and agencies displaying Ukraine's flag on Government of Canada buildings and properties; and (e) what is the rationale for not displaying Ukraine's flag on Government of Canada buildings to mark the one-year anniversary of the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1299—Mr. Randy Hoback:

With regard to applications received by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, since January 1, 2016, and broken down by type of application: (a) how many applicants were deemed inadmissible pursuant to (i) paragraph 34(1)(b), (ii) paragraph 34(1)(c), (iii) paragraph 34(1)(f), of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (S.C. 2001, c. 27); and (b) broken down by each paragraph of the act in (a), how many of the applicants who were deemed inadmissible were members of the (i) Kurdistan Democratic Party, (ii) Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, (iii) Movement for Change or Gorran, (iv) Kurdistan Islamic Union, (v) Kurdistan Justice Group or Komala, (vi) New Generation Movement?

(Return tabled)

Question No. 1300—Mr. Brad Vis:

With regard to Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and the Canada Small Business Financing Program (CSBFP), broken down by fiscal years 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and by province or territory: (a) how many businesses applied to the CSBFP; (b) how many loans were awarded; (c) what was the average loan amount; (d) of the loans awarded, how many were defaulted and what was the average claim amount; (e) how many loans have been granted, broken down by industry sector; and (f) how does the government track the success rate of the CSBFP?

(Return tabled)

*Government Orders***Question No. 1301—Ms. Jenny Kwan:**

With regard to the processing of permanent residence applications of overseas dependents of protected persons in Canada and DR2s: (a) are processing resources within Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada allocated in accordance with the immigration levels set by cabinet; (b) if the number of applications for overseas dependents in a year exceeds the high range of the level, what happens to the additional applications, i.e. those beyond the level; (c) what are officers instructed to do with applications after the high end range of applications is reached; (d) how is the number of permanent residence applications processed in any year distributed among the various overseas offices, and on what basis; (e) what is the size of the inventory for permanent residence applications for protected persons in Canada and DR2s; (f) are there two separate levels for DR2s and protected persons in Canada; and (g) what are the written policies, guidance, and instructions that govern the processing of overseas dependents of in-Canada protected persons and DR2s?

(Return tabled)

[English]

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

The Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of the motion that Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, be read the second time and referred to a committee, and of the amendment.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, today we are debating Bill C-47, the 2023 budget implementation bill.

This Wednesday, the House unanimously passed Bill C-46, which does two things. It doubles the amount of the July GST cheque, called the grocery rebate, even if there is no GST on groceries, and it unconditionally transfers \$2 billion to the provinces for health.

When the government introduced Bill C-46, my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I wondered why the government was doing that. The GST credit is issued in July. Introducing the bill on Wednesday and quickly passing it will not speed anything up. The same is true for the health transfers. We know that Ottawa is not providing sufficient funding for health care. The bill included \$2 billion, and it was fast-tracked. That is fine, but we did not understand why the government did that. We figured that it was probably trying to set a trap for the Conservative Party.

However, on seeing Bill C-47, I was thrilled. We were thrilled. We understood why the government presented Bill C-46 on Wednesday, with its \$2 billion for health and \$2 billion for the special GST credit payment. Essentially, Bill C-47 duplicated this. The government tabled Bill C-46 and we passed it, thinking that the government would delete the corresponding amounts from Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, but it did not.

This approach is unprecedented and historic. When it tabled the bill, the government announced it had good news. It told us it wanted to do a little extra for health. It announced \$2 billion on Wednes-

day, and then \$2 billion in Bill C-47, given that it did not remove the clause that had been passed in Bill C-46. The same thing goes for the GST credit, a payment totalling \$2.5 billion. Bill C-47 contains another payment totalling \$2.5 billion.

I was therefore extremely surprised and pleased to see that those measures are back in Bill C-47, which is before us today. The government did not remove them from the omnibus bill, despite the fact that Bill C-46 was passed earlier this week. With Bill C-47, the provinces will therefore receive \$4 billion rather than the announced \$2 billion and the less fortunate will receive a second cheque, ostensibly for groceries.

We are taking this on good faith. We are assuming that the government did not make a mistake here, that it is really saying that the less fortunate should receive a second cheque to help them deal with inflation and that the \$2 billion for health care is to be doubled because so little funding has been provided for that. I commend the government's approach on that. I cannot presume that this is a mistake, even if it is completely unprecedented. There was no press release or communication from the government to announce this good news. It was really after we had passed Bill C-46 that we saw the text of Bill C-47 and realized that the government had doubled these two support measures. We are really delighted about that.

Of course, given the needs in health care, the government is not doing enough. The \$2 billion is not enough. The agreements reached with the provinces do not meet the needs. In early 2015, the federal government was funding 24% of health care spending even though it should have been funding 50%. We have learned that the government will still be funding 24% of health care spending 10 years from now. That is not enough.

This speaks to the question of the fiscal imbalance. While the federal government continues failing to carry out its role, despite the additional \$2 billion, it is buying up jurisdictions. I would remind members that dental care is a health care issue, which is a provincial jurisdiction. As I was saying, this speaks to the fiscal imbalance. Why is the government not adequately funding provincial health care systems and buying up areas of jurisdiction by creating a new health care program?

That is unacceptable, and we will continue to demand that the government carry out its role in health care and that it respect jurisdictions.

Government Orders

● (1220)

As everyone here knows, the political system that was adopted in 1867 was a federation. Although Sir John A. McDonald wanted a legislative union with an all-powerful Ottawa, the compromise was a federation where each level of government would be equally sovereign, with its own areas of jurisdiction. With this government, which is underfunding health care and always trying to buy jurisdictions, we are left with a legislative union. This is not the spirit of the federation. Instead, it is predatory federalism, as a former Liberal health minister in the Quebec government once said.

Let us talk about the dental care program. We expected to see the new dental care program that had been announced in the budget in Bill C-47. Instead, the program that was announced last fall is being retained, but union members are being told that they will not have access to it. Bill C-47, which is before us today, issues directives concerning dental care. People who have group insurance are being told that, because they are unionized, they will never have access to this coverage, that they are not eligible for the program. This sends a clear message to unions and union members. That is what is new about dental insurance in Bill C-47.

This is a mammoth bill of over 400 pages, and it amends 59 statutes in addition to the Income Tax Regulations. It is huge and affects so many different sectors. I will come back to that shortly.

Normally, a budget implementation bill is supposed to implement the budget so as to put in place measures that were announced. However, something quite surprising was hidden near the end of the bill, and it is not a budgetary measure. I am referring to division 31, on royal titles. I will read an excerpt. Here is what it is written in the budget implementation bill:

The Parliament of Canada assents to the issue by His Majesty of His Royal Proclamation under the Great Seal of Canada establishing for Canada the following Royal Styles and Titles:

Charles the Third, by the Grace of God King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth.

What does that have to do with the budget? This is not the right place to do that. What does that kind of language have to do with democracy in 2023? I wonder. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois does not share that approach. Why hide it at the end of a budget implementation bill?

The Speaker often reminds us never to disrespect His Royal Majesty, by the grace of God. Is slipping this clause in at the end of the budget implementation bill not tantamount to disrespecting His Royal Majesty, Charles III? I am just wondering. Obviously, in light of past decisions and the procedures of the House, I understand that I cannot ask the Speaker to remove this clause. The request would have to come from the government, and obviously, I implore the government to make it.

I have more to say about the monarchy. Right now, as soon as the government makes an appointment by order in council, which it certainly seems to be doing here, parliamentarians can call the appointee to appear before a parliamentary committee in order to examine that person's qualifications. Given that Bill C-47 proclaims "Charles the Third, by the Grace of God King of Canada and His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth", what

could be more appropriate than to call him to appear so we can examine his qualifications before finalizing his appointment?

● (1225)

That is a question that needs to be asked, and I am asking it here. In my opinion, division 31 on the monarchy does not belong in this budget implementation bill.

In the budget, there is an important division on the allocation of \$80 billion in funding over 10 years for the green economy. We expected to see details on how the tax credits, the refundable credits, would work, but there is nothing in there about that. It is our understanding that this should involve negotiations with the interested parties. However, Bill C-47 gives us an idea of how the government intends to manage those amounts, and it is very worrisome. Through a legislative amendment, the government is creating two institutions that will be responsible for administering the amounts it plans to invest. This money will be removed from parliamentary oversight. Unelected officials will be responsible for selecting the projects that receive support but will not be accountable to anyone. There are no clear criteria.

Is that a good approach? Is it a good idea to give billions of dollars in taxpayers' money to people who are not accountable to anyone? Does that not just open the door to the arbitrary granting of subsidies based on ties with these anonymous decision-makers and the political stripes of the proponent?

Those are questions that I have.

Parliament wants accountability. Members are here to represent the people. When the government decides to use the resources it collects from the people, even if it is to invest in the transition, there needs to be accountability. That accountability is owed to the House and to the committees that report to the House. The approach set out in Bill C-47 will not provide for that accountability. There will be no accountability, and we find that very concerning.

For years, we have been asking that the government stop subsidizing oil companies. Will this money make that happen? That worries us. Think of all the subsidies that go to the nuclear industry. Is Canada's nuclear industry an example of green energy? I think not. Is that what the small modular nuclear reactors are going to do? There is also carbon capture, and so on. These are the questions we have, and we have not gotten any answers. In committee, I questioned the Department of Finance and they said they would tell us how the money would be spent. After two or three reminders, we are still waiting for answers. It is very worrisome.

Today is Earth Day. Bill C-47 contains very little on environmental protection. It includes an amendment to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act that will encourage oil companies to take their time tackling climate change. At present, the carbon tax paid by major emitters is available to fund green projects in the province where it was collected. If oil companies do not propose any green projects, they lose this money at the end of the year. This approach encourages them to move quickly.

However, Bill C-47 encourages them to take their time. If the bill passes, the money will be set aside for future use. The government is ensuring that oil companies will not lose any money if they do nothing to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. We know that municipalities lose their infrastructure funds if they do not complete their projects by the end of the year. However, oil companies lose nothing if they do nothing. Is this double standard acceptable? I obviously believe it is not. The answer here is clear.

Still on the subject of transition funding, today we learned that Volkswagen is going to get \$13 billion to build a plant in Ontario. The Conservatives were right to ask how much each job created would cost. We know that a transition is needed, but we are wondering why the green economy and batteries are going to Ontario. We thought Quebec was at the forefront given the subsidies and the entire ecosystem we have in place. Why did this project not go to Quebec? Why is Quebec not getting its share? We have questions for this government.

• (1230)

The infrastructure put in place does not allow for accountability, and that is unacceptable. Another unacceptable aspect has to do with EI. As we know, the Employment Insurance Act requires that the EI fund not run a surplus or deficit on average over seven years. Since it ran a huge deficit during the pandemic, it must run a huge surplus every year in the years to come.

Last year, the government grabbed nearly \$2 billion that belonged to employers and workers. We are talking about unionized workers. The same thing happened again this year, and the budget calls for another \$13 billion to be taken away by 2030. Barring an amendment to the Employment Insurance Act to shift the pandemic deficit to the consolidated fund, we are talking about \$17 billion that the government intends to take from the pockets of EI fund contributors. This means that it will be impossible to reform the system to make it more accessible. There is nothing in Bill C-47 to prevent this tragedy. It is unacceptable.

The government has been announcing employment insurance reform since 2015. The announcement is understandable. Six out of 10 workers who lose their job do not have access to EI. The system is broken. Bill Morneau told us, at the beginning of the pandemic, that EI would not help people to keep buying groceries, that the system was no longer working and that it needed to be replaced. They brought in CERB, which was flawed and more expensive. They are still trying to recover some the money owed to them and so on. This story is not over. We need a new system and fast. The government has been talking about this since 2015, but there is still nothing. There is nothing for eliminating the pandemic deficit, either. Increases are going to keep climbing and the system will continue to work poorly.

Let us talk about other aspects of employment insurance. EI should be able to rely on a real appeal mechanism. What we understand from Bill C-47 is that the appeal board is the same as the one in Bill C-37. We will look at the details, but we want to reiterate that we need a real appeal mechanism. This extends by one year the measures for the targeted areas during the spring gap, but 60% of people who lose their job still do not have access to it.

Government Orders

We are talking about a 400-page document that amends 59 statutes and the Income Tax Regulations. It has 39 divisions. The Prime Minister promised not to do that anymore. When we get this, we are given a tight deadline in which we have to go through it all, try to understand the legislative language, which is really difficult, consult with all of the stakeholders in Quebec who might be affected to see what they think, and analyze it all. That is a lot. It is very difficult. The government promised in 2015 not to do this anymore. Once again, it is going back to its old ways. We are going to continue looking into this further to see what else might be hidden in there.

Let us look at some examples. The bill enables the Superintendent of Financial Institutions to increase the deposit insurance coverage limit by \$100,000, an amount decreed by regulation by this government, but only for one year. In April 2024, he will no longer have that power. Why? Do the Liberals want to introduce another bill? What is this about? We need to look into it. Is the paper version that was given to us as parliamentarians the right version?

Last year, I worked with the paper version only to realize in the end that several dozen pages were missing. I asked the Speaker about it and he told me that the digital version takes precedence over any other. Why bother printing it then, if it is not the right version? That is worrisome.

We are obviously concerned about regional flights, which are very expensive. The increase in fuel prices has pushed the price of flights even higher in the past few years. Instead of proposing measures to make regional flights more affordable, Bill C-47 would considerably increase the airport security tax. The cost of both international and regional flights will increase. We think this is wrong.

Despite all the pages, measures and laws, there is nothing for seniors or for housing even though the current situation requires that we provide support for seniors and housing. There are many things missing in this bill.

• (1235)

[*English*]

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard my hon. colleague cover a wide range of issues in his speech. I did hear him ask why the Volkswagen plant that was announced today is not in Quebec and why it is in Ontario. As a member of Parliament from the province of Ontario, I am quite happy that the plant is located in Ontario, but as a Canadian, I would equally support it if the plant were located in Quebec or Alberta or any other province. Is the member not aware that the decision as to where the plant will be located is made by the company in question after consultations and discussions with the relevant province?

Government Orders

• (1240)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, the Bloc Québécois wants to make sure that Quebec gets its fair share. When Ottawa decided to save the auto industry with \$10 billion in 2008, we noted that Quebec did not receive the equivalent. When Ottawa decided to save Muskrat Falls with \$10 billion, we noted that Quebec did not get the equivalent. When the Liberals chose to buy the pipeline in western Canada for tens of billions of dollars, we noted that Quebec did not get its share. We want to make sure that Quebec gets its share.

Quebec specializes in green energy and the green economy, that is, the economy of the future. Quebec had all the expertise it needed to have a successful battery plant, but that was not how it played out. To add insult to injury, it was the minister from Shawinigan who made this announcement with great fanfare in Montreal to say that the plant would not be in Montreal or the surrounding region, but in St. Thomas, Ontario. Good for them.

Could Quebec get some of these structural investments to develop its economy? The proof remains to be seen, unfortunately.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the budget is full of failures; however, the most important issue for my riding is affordable housing. There are \$5.5 billion in the budget, but there is only a plan to build fewer than 200,000 homes.

What does the member think of these government measures?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, we spent one day in camera studying the budget. We wondered whether there really was an inflationary crisis, a housing crisis and a seniors' purchasing power crisis. It seemed to be a budget created in a vacuum, without any context. One could almost believe that it was generated by ChatGPT based on the last 30 or 40 years. This budget came out of nowhere.

We see that in Bill C-47, too. What is there for social housing or housing? There are 430 pages, and 59 statutes are affected, but there is nothing at all for housing. That is unacceptable.

[*English*]

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank my colleague from Joliette, with whom I have worked for many years now on tax fairness, trying to make sure that those who are not paying their fair share do pay their fair share.

I want to talk about mental health fairness, especially for first responders and military veterans in our country.

I got a message from Blair Meadows, who is a veteran and a strong volunteer and committed citizen at the Qualicum Beach Legion, in my riding. He talked about the important costs associated with PTSD service dogs for military police and first responders and that they need to be fully covered by the federal government, including training, maintenance and aftercare. As Mr. Meadows has pointed out, "These dogs are part of our medical care and well-being. Personally, my service dog saved my life and you can't put a price on that." Others have said similar things. These dogs save lives. When it comes to the people who put their lives on the line for our freedom and democracy, who put the sacrifice on, the gov-

ernment has a duty to ensure that the costs associated with these dogs are covered. It actually saves our health care system money.

I know this is an issue for my good colleague from North Island—Powell River, which hopefully should be North Island—whether if she gets her way with the electoral boundary commission, which she should, in the future. I would like to say to my colleague that this was not in the budget.

We saw the Conservatives cut a third of Veterans Affairs when it was under their watch.

The government has failed to deliver the critical services that Blair Meadows and many other veterans and first responders need. Does my colleague agree that this should be covered and that it actually saves money when it comes to the mental health care system in our country?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his moving speech on what are certainly very important topics.

Obviously, the issue in question is not covered in Bill C-47 and I am not really familiar with it, even though I think it is of the utmost importance.

The Bloc Québécois wants Ottawa to ensure that health care services, including mental health services, will be fully funded. Ottawa's plan for supporting the health care plans of the provinces is inadequate and unacceptable, despite the extra \$2 billion provided through Bill C-46, which was passed on Wednesday. We are far from a done deal.

Ottawa offers direct services, including in health, for veterans and certain sectors. What is being done seems plainly insufficient. Of course, anything Ottawa does costs two and a half times more than the same service provided by Quebec.

If the federal government were responsible for delivering health care services, a public health care system would be completely out of reach.

• (1245)

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. He is always smart and sensible.

I would like to come back to the issue of employment insurance. The government is extending a pilot project that is not working at all and does not cover everyone.

Government Orders

How much does my colleague think it would cost the government to provide this help to people working in the seasonal industry so that there is no longer a spring gap? I am having a hard time understanding this lack of political will.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and friend from Manicouagan, and I commend her for all the work she does for the people she represents, including on the issue of employment insurance. Many people throughout Quebec and Canada, including her region, have seasonal jobs. The workers are not seasonal, the jobs are.

Do we collectively want to make use of the land? Do we want people to be able to live and work in their region and flourish there? If so, then we have an EI system that is truly dysfunctional right now. It has not been reformed, and the government has been pushing back the reform every year since 2015.

On top of all the problems, there is the issue of the spring gap. There are not enough weeks of benefits for a person living off seasonal employment to have income all year round. A pilot project was rolled out, but once again there is insecurity. This is being put off for another year.

Will it be enough? Will it be as usual? This is the government's way of doing things. We are a little relieved that this initiative has been extended for a year, because the alternative would have been terrible for our regions, even though the problem is far from being resolved. How much would it cost to reform an insurance system that is broken? It will be a major investment for everyone, especially with a possible recession looming.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier, when answering a question, my colleague stated that he was there, in Montreal, when the Liberal federal government announced the investment in a Volkswagen plant in Ontario. The announcement was made in Montreal. I was there.

I can tell my colleagues that many people looked confused. They wondered if St. Thomas was in Quebec, but in fact, it is in Ontario. It took several very long weeks to get the details, but the story finally appeared on the front page of the National Post this morning. I will come back to that.

My colleague and I were both elected in 2015, when this government came to power by promising small deficits for three years and a balanced budget in 2019. It obviously ignored that promise.

My question for my colleague is the following. Does he believe that \$1.220 trillion in debt is a good thing? That works out to \$81,000 per family. Does he believe that a constant increase in taxes is a good thing? What does he think of the deficit, which continues to increase and is being ignored by the government, which said that it would balance the budget in five years? What does he think of this government's management of public funds?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, it is deeply concerning. Is the government doing a good job of managing public finances? The answer is no. The government is not paying attention to the cost of the services that it is providing.

I will give some examples. Issuing a passport costs four times more than issuing a driver's licence when Quebec does it. Process-

ing an EI claim costs two and a half times more than processing an application for social assistance in Quebec City. Resources are badly managed. Nonetheless, the Parliamentary Budget Officer identified what is indirectly a fiscal imbalance by pointing out that the flexibility is here in Ottawa. Instead of funding, say, health care in the provinces, the government is increasing the number of programs and interfering in jurisdictions. That is unacceptable.

• (1250)

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about what the NDP can add to the budget. As we know, the Liberals have been in power for years. They are doing the same thing that the former Conservative government did. They refuse to take action to help people.

This time, the NDP leader, the member for Burnaby South, and the entire NDP caucus, including the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, were able to work to ensure that we do not have to settle for the same budgets we have seen in the past, budgets that do nothing for ordinary Canadians, but instead give a big boost to the banks and big corporations, just as the Conservatives did. We can see in this budget and in Bill C-47, which the NDP supports, that dental care has finally been added to the health care system for people across the country. We are talking about \$13 billion over five years.

The reality is that, in every riding, no matter where it is located in the country, there are some 30,000 people without access to dental care. Thanks to pressure from the NDP, in a minority Parliament, we were able to ensure that in every riding, those 30,000 people—families, seniors, people with disabilities and young people—can have access to dental care. This is extremely important, and we are quite pleased. Canadians who understand the changes the NDP has made to the budget are also quite pleased because they will finally have the opportunity to have dental care.

That is not all. We exerted pressure on the government to double the GST credit. That is extremely important. Like the member for Burnaby South, I know that people are struggling right now and that they need help. The fact that 11 million families across the country will be able to receive double the GST credit to pay for groceries is going to help a lot because people are having a really hard time.

The NDP is also calling on the government to change our economy and to work harder to have a clean economy, particularly in light of all the challenges posed by climate change. Things clearly need to change. The NDP once again exerted pressure in a minority Parliament to invest in clean energy and for those investments to go toward unionized jobs that come with a pension plan and social benefits. That way, the government will help the whole community by investing in clean energy. The NDP believes that, when it comes time to invest, the investments must help the community. Unfortunately, that is not what we are seeing with the Liberal approach or what we saw with the approach of the former Harper government, as I mentioned earlier.

Government Orders

We also need, and this is important, to change the situation that exists in first nations communities across the country. The member for Nunavut has spoken about this at length. It is important to make investments there immediately. Last year, we were able to force the government to make these investments, but now we need to build this housing as soon as possible. The government tends to announce programs and then do nothing afterward. This is urgent. The member for Nunavut has told us this several times. We need to take action to bring in these investments and build housing as soon as possible.

There is another thing that I find disappointing, despite the fact that the government is finally closing a tax loophole that cost \$600 million a year.

• (1255)

This is something the NDP has been calling for from day one. We obliged the government, forced them to do it. Nonetheless, as I said earlier, most of the loopholes remain in place for the ultra-rich, the wealthy, but also the corporations that benefit from these loopholes. I will come back to that.

[*English*]

The NDP has made a difference in this budget, there is no doubt. I have to speak of somebody I will call Joanne. After I was elected as a member of Parliament, she came to me. She works in the service industry for minimum wage. Her teeth were literally rotting out of her mouth. She was in tremendous pain.

There were no programs I could point to to help her, as is the case with so many Canadians, millions of Canadians across the country, who do not have access to basic dental care. When we look at the average, there are about 30,000 Canadians in each and every riding right across the country.

This constituent, one of my bosses, Joanne, simply had nowhere to turn. She was in great pain. As we know, so many Canadians have to go to emergency wards across the country. The estimated cost in Ontario alone is \$1 billion for Canadians going to emergency wards for dental emergencies that they cannot receive treatment for.

The reality of having a dental care program in place, which children and their families, youth, people with disabilities and seniors could all access, in a few months' time would be an extraordinary improvement to our health care system. Tommy Douglas always said that the health care system needs to cover people from the top of their heads to the soles of their feet. The member for Burnaby South, the national leader of the NDP, also believes this. That is why he has been pushing so hard for the dental care program to be put into place.

How could any member of Parliament vote against a dental care program that would help 30,000 of their constituents? I cannot understand where they are coming from, that they would choose partisanship and ideology over the important primary role we have as members of Parliament, in the House, to work to help the people we represent.

That is just one of a number of things that the NDP forced the Liberal government, in a minority Parliament, to deliver to Canadi-

ans. We have also forced a doubling of the GST rebate, the grocery rebate, to help Canadians who are struggling to put food on the table at this difficult time.

We pushed the government to invest in a clean energy economy that would create good, well-paying union jobs. The ability to organize makes a big difference, as we know. Whether we are talking about the private sector or the public sector, workers who are organized generally have a higher return, better benefits and normally, as well, access to pensions. That makes a difference not only in their lives, but also in their communities, as unions make a difference in communities across the country.

When members of Parliament stand in the House to say that they do not believe in unionized, organized labour, they are saying to their communities that they do not believe in money staying within the community. Unionized workers have better pay and benefits, and a right to a pension, which means more benefits circulating in the local economy. There are some members of Parliament who would say that they want money to instead go to wealthy corporations offshore, and that they want that money to go to high-priced consultants who would take that money offshore.

New Democrats understand that a local economy is built from the ground up. It starts with good wages. It starts with jobs that actually make a difference in the community. Those people who live in the community shop in the community and spend in the community. That benefits everybody in the community. That is a fundamental difference between us and some of the other parties in the House.

The final point I want to make before I start to talk about the elephant in the room is the issue of housing, particularly in indigenous communities. The member for Nunavut has been a strong and powerful voice in this regard, as have the member for Winnipeg Centre and the member for Edmonton Griesbach. The first nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada have been deprived of the right to housing, the right to have that roof over their head.

• (1300)

The government is moving far too slowly to provide the affordable housing that is fundamentally important for the future of our country. We push, and we add our voices to the voices of the members of Parliament for Nunavut, Winnipeg Centre and Edmonton Griesbach to say that we need to build that housing now.

The money that was pledged last year has not rolled out, and it needs to roll out now. The money that the government is promising in a couple of years needs to be moved up, and it needs to be treated with the sense of emergency that is certainly felt in indigenous communities right across this country.

I am now going to come to the elephant in the room, which is the similarity between Liberals and Conservatives. They have a brand coalition of wanting to conserve a privilege that deprives so many Canadians of the investments that are critical for their future. The Parliamentary Budget Officer told us, just before the COVID pandemic hit, that over \$30 billion a year goes to overseas tax havens from profitable corporations and the ultrarich. Members will recall that the Harper regime put that secret network in place to really ensure that as much money as possible could be taken offshore, and it is \$30 billion a year, which the PBO said was a conservative estimate.

Now, at \$30 billion, it means that over the last decade, \$300 billion of tax money was taken offshore. This was put in place by the Harper regime and has been maintained by the current government. This is a coalition of the financially irresponsible, who are depriving Canadians of so many things.

That elephant in the room is something that needs to be dealt with. We have a Liberal government, and a Conservative government before it, refusing to ensure that every Canadian pay their fair share, including Canada's wealthiest corporations and Canada's richest citizens. They should pay their fair share of income tax. It is as simple as that.

A fair share of taxes should go throughout the spectrum and ensure that every Canadian pays their fair share. This would allow us the wherewithal to fund a whole range of things that are not funded now, whether we talk about the dental care plan, which the NDP has brought forward, or pharmacare, which we know would save \$4 billion a year for Canadians generally.

The reality is that pharmacare, like our universal health care system and like dental care, makes a difference not only for the individuals and the families involved, their quality of life and their bottom line, but also for Canadian businesses. Our universal health care system has a competitive advantage of about \$3,000 per employee for a Canadian business compared to an American business hiring that same employee, because in the United States, if they want to keep that employee, they are going to have to invest in a health care plan. In Canada, those businesses do not have to pay for health care, which is so important for their employees. Dental care makes a difference of hundreds of dollars. Pharmacare would be a difference of about \$600 per person. Making that investment in pharmacare is not just smart for the families involved.

We hear the horrific stories from across the country, and the Canadian Nurses Association is telling us that hundreds of Canadians die every year because they do not have the wherewithal to pay for the medication that will keep them alive. I have a constituent family who is paying \$1,000 a month in heart medication. We cannot tell them that universal pharmacare would not make a big difference in their lives. They are having that tough choice every month of whether they are going to keep a roof over their heads or pay for their medication, and that is the case for hundreds of thousands of Canadians across the country. Universal pharmacare would make a difference.

How do we ensure that the federal government can do that? Well, we have to start ensuring that we close the massive loopholes that lead to \$30 billion every—

Government Orders

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We clearly do not have quorum.

• (1305)

The Deputy Speaker: Let us do a count.

And the count having been taken:

The Deputy Speaker: We have quorum.

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge for getting government members to hear this. They need to hear from Canadians that they cannot keep sending \$30 billion to overseas tax havens every year. Instead, they need to invest that money in health care and education, ensure that we have universal pharmacare, ensure that there is access to public education and ensure that every Canadian has a roof over their head at night and can put food on the table. They also need to transition to a clean energy economy. Liberals can do that if they close the loopholes, 30 billion dollars' worth a year. I thank my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge for telling the Liberals to come into the House.

I want to talk a bit about the dismal record of the Harper regime, because the member for Carleton, who is the new leader of the Conservative Party, basically seems to have a motto of "Elect me and I'll do even worse than Harper did." I looked at what the Harper regime did over the course of that dismal decade. The overseas tax havens I talked about are largely the creation of the Harper regime. It put them into place, 30 billion dollars' worth, and now the Conservatives are saying they do not take responsibility for that.

What else did the Conservatives do? They forced people, manual labourers, to work longer. They basically deprived them of their pension. They ripped apart the environmental framework of this country; there is no doubt. They also ripped local offices away for veterans.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, it is not a laughing matter when a veteran who is disabled has to travel hundreds of miles to get to a veterans office because the local offices have been closed. That is not something Conservatives should be laughing about at all.

That is what the record of the Harper government was: dismal and appalling. It put in place many of the cuts that we have seen, devastating the health care sector.

We reproach, of course, the Liberals for not closing all the loopholes so that we have the money to reinvest in health care. They are starting to do that slowly and grudgingly, but far short of what is actually required.

When we look at the Harper regime and the member for Carleton's pretension that he will do even worse than Stephen Harper, I think Canadians have reason to be worried by his attacks on Radio Canada.

Government Orders

[Translation]

I have no idea why no Conservative member from Quebec has condemned these attacks on Radio-Canada.

CBC and Radio-Canada share sites and facilities across the country. It is absurd to say that they will dismantle the CBC but Radio-Canada will be protected. It is ridiculous, because these two organizations share their resources. If the CBC is abolished or dismantled, Radio-Canada will be dismantled.

Not one member of the Quebec Conservative caucus rose to say that they were against it. Why be elected as a francophone MP and serve in the Conservative caucus if they are not even capable of telling their leader that he is wrong, that he must stop this foolishness with CBC/Radio-Canada and he must stop threatening to crush CBC/Radio-Canada?

I hope that others will speak out, as did the member for Richmond—Arthabaska, who clearly understood how the extremism of the member for Carleton had to be called out. I certainly hope that at least one member of the Quebec Conservative caucus will rise.

[English]

That is what the member for Carleton is promising. He would do worse than Harper. He would cut more than Harper did. He would keep in place the privileges that billionaires get in this country and the massive transfer of wealth and tax dollars, more than \$30 billion a year sent overseas, rather than investing in Canadians.

Of course, colleagues know what an NDP government would do. They have seen some signs of that with 25 members of Parliament under the leadership of the member for Burnaby South. What it would mean is investments in health care, investments in housing, investments in education and investments in our economy, as well as transitioning to a clean energy economy and cutting the privileges that, for far too long, the wealthy and Canada's most profitable corporations have enjoyed.

• (1310)

We would end those massive tax loopholes. We would end the gouging that Canadians are seeing in the telecom sector and the banking sector. We would make sure investments happen at the local level, and we would build a local green economy. Right across the country, we would build a Canada where everybody matters and where nobody is left behind.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if the member could provide further thoughts in regard to the issue of health care and how important it was that we achieved the agreement to ensure we can provide ongoing support over the next decade to provincial and territorial jurisdictions. When I think of health care, I think of the core identity that Canadians hold very dear to their hearts. The expansion to include seniors, people with disabilities and now children up to the age of 18 is one of the ways we can deal with the issue of inflation, along with the grocery rebate that is being proposed.

Can he provide his thoughts, as he has to a certain degree already, on those two issues and the NDP's contribution to them?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, first, it is not an NDP “contribution”; we forced the government to do it. The government would not have done dental care without the member for Burnaby South and the NDP caucus pushing, in a minority Parliament, to make sure it happened. It would not have happened, and we know this.

I want to address the issue of dental care making a difference for people. The member for Winnipeg North is absolutely right, but what would make an even greater difference for people is pharmacare. The government has pledged, as a result of the NDP forcing it to, to put in place the infrastructure for universal public pharmacare. This is vitally important, but the government has to also come up with the resources to make that a reality.

The difference for Canadians from coast to coast to coast would be absolutely enormous, and what it would do, as members well know, is take pressure off the health care system. We have universal health care, where we are sending people who cannot afford to pay for their medication back to universal health care because their medication is not being covered. What is it about that picture that the Liberals do not understand?

Yes, we forced the Liberals to do dental care, but we are going to be pressing equally hard on pharmacare, not only because it is equally essential to ensuring the quality of life for Canadians and a better competitive situation for our businesses, but also because it is just a basic question of the fundamental human right to health care in this country. It is about time Liberals listened and put that into place.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the NDP is on the public record having said that, if he did not receive a firm commitment from the Liberal government on pharmacare by December, he would end the supply arrangement they have. Clearly, there is not a single word about pharmacare in the budget, and in addition to that, on the second thing the NDP wanted, dental care, there are vague promises with no plan from a government that has shown over and over again it is incompetent to execute anything.

Will the member and his party quit supporting the government in raising the cost of gas, groceries and home heating, or will he end the supply agreement, because the government has not kept up its end?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I like the member and I enjoy working with her on Canadian heritage, but this is the complete emptiness of the Conservative dialogue. The Conservatives have offered one single idea in the past year, to buy Bitcoin, and we saw Bitcoin tank. If any Canadians had followed their advice, they would be ruined financially. That is the only idea Conservatives have brought forward, so I want to correct the record.

Government Orders

First, in terms of dental care, yes, there is a plan, and it is thanks to the member for Vancouver Kingsway, the NDP health critic, that there is a plan for rollout to ensure that people with disabilities, seniors and youth in that member's riding, about 30,000 strong, would have access to dental care by the end of the year. On pharmacare, the government has to deliver the legislation that both Liberals and Conservatives voted against two years ago, including the hon. member. Shame on all of them who voted against the Canada pharmacare act that I presented in the House.

That legislation would be only a first step, and that is why our warning is to say to Liberals that, if they really want to heed the quality of life for Canadians, the right to basic health care and the competitiveness of our businesses, it is time to start ensuring that the next steps after the adoption of the universal pharmacare bill would be done to put in place the financing criteria so that we can roll that out in the coming years.

• (1315)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for New Westminster—Burnaby for his interesting speech and for all the work he does in the House.

On Wednesday, the House unanimously passed Bill C-46, which does two things. First, it doubles the GST credit cheque next July and, second, it transfers \$2 billion to the provinces for health care with no strings attached.

I was extremely surprised and pleased to see that these two measures also appear in Bill C-47, which is before the House today. The government did not take them out of the omnibus bill, despite the passage of Bill C-46 earlier this week. This means \$4 billion instead of \$2 billion to the provinces for health care, and a second grocery rebate cheque for people with low incomes.

Can the leader of the NDP assure the House that if the government ever realized its mistake and sought to remove that from Bill C-47, the NDP would oppose that amendment, so the government could not make cuts to health care funding and the grocery rebate cheques?

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from my colleague, whom I was pleased to work with on the Standing Committee on Finance. I also appreciated his speech earlier.

I will start off by mentioning that I am not the NDP leader. I am the NDP House leader. I just had to make a slight correction there.

The NDP always makes sure that the benefits that Canadians count on continue to be there. That is why the member for Burnaby South worked to ensure that the GST credit was doubled a few months ago and has done so again with respect to this bill.

Certainly we will continue to keep watch, because we want Canadians across Canada, including in Joliette, to have the ability to pay for groceries.

Dental care is also very important in a riding like Joliette and across the country. We will continue to exert pressure for that to be implemented.

In my speech, I mentioned my constituent Joanne, who was experiencing a lot of tooth pain. By the end of the year, she will have access to dental care for the first time in her life as a senior. That is what we are bringing to the House when it comes to accountability.

The NDP continues to exert pressure for people like Joanne and millions of others who have been abandoned by the old parties.

[English]

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, for his real championing of so many things that give Canadians a better life. One of the things he has been championing is the green new deal, the idea that we have to have a transition to a cleaner future and leave no workers behind. Because of the NDP pressure on the government, we have significant funding for clean tech in this budget that is tied to good union wages so people can have a respectable life in this new future.

I wonder if my colleague could provide further comments on that and on whether this should be standard operating procedure for future government infrastructure funding.

• (1320)

Mr. Peter Julian: Mr. Speaker, the member for South Okanagan—West Kootenay has had a very strong voice in the House of Commons, speaking up for good jobs in the community. Whether he is talking about the South Okanagan, the West Kootenay or anywhere in Canada, he has been one of the foremost advocates of actually ensuring that government investments are put to work to ensure that people have good jobs. The member is right to point out that we have learned the lesson from other jurisdictions where subsidies to green energy had tended to be soaked up by CEOs. We certainly continue to see this with the oil and gas sector, where billions of dollars go and are largely taken by CEOs and do not go to actually providing benefits to workers.

This is the same principle we have brought in when it comes to the issue of the just transition to ensure we can put in place all the elements for clean energy to make sure that Canada is keeping up with the developments in the rest of the world. Those investments have to go to people who have good union jobs. That makes a difference in the community. It means more money stays in the community and it helps to create indirect jobs as well.

Government Orders

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to address the Bloc member's concern regarding the issue of Bill C-47 versus Bill C-46. The member is quite right. We need to recognize that it has been a priority of this government to provide inflation relief in the form of a grocery rebate. That is why it was incorporated into Bill C-46. It is also the government's priority to try to get hundreds of millions of dollars to the provinces with respect to health care. That was also incorporated into Bill C-46.

As the member pointed out, it is also in the budget implementation bill. This is because we could not get agreement for the quick passage of Bill C-46 through the House. We only recently got the agreement to pass it. Following this logic, the member will recall how long it can take to get a budget implementation bill through the House from the last time we had one.

As a good example of that, today, there has already been an amendment to the budget implementation bill moved by the Conservative Party. The Conservative Party is going to hold up the budget implementation bill. Recognizing the importance of getting that grocery rebate to Canadians and getting the transfers of hundreds of millions of dollars to the provinces for our health care system, the government had to come up with Bill C-46 after we got agreement that we could get it passed in the House. That is the reason for this.

I know the member appreciates the explanation. I would even encourage the member to move the amendment so we can rectify the situation once we get to the committee stage. If I could, I would be the seconder.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Joliette on a point of order.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind you and the members of the House that Bill C-46 passed all stages on Wednesday and that Bill C-47 was introduced in the House on Thursday. Therefore, there is no need to introduce amendments.

The Deputy Speaker: I think that intervention is more of an interesting point of debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary has six minutes left.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, one would like to think that things could happen relatively quickly. One would be surprised, in terms of the degree to which we finally got the consensus to get it through the House, in order to be able to support Canadians.

I would point out something that is really obvious. This emphasizes the contrast between the government and the Prime Minister versus the Conservative Party and the leader of the Conservative Party. Today, we had a good-news announcement. The federal government is investing in the future, through Volkswagen, by bringing in a megafactory. This will likely be the largest factory in the country. It is estimated that we are talking about literally the size of not dozens but hundreds of football fields. It is a gigantic factory.

I can say that not only is the federal government at the table with this, but so is Doug Ford. He is investing both cash and future infrastructure to support it. There is a reason for that. It is the idea that this is an investment in workers, as well as an investment in the future.

I would like to quote something that the leader of the Conservative Party quoted in a tweet. This is his mindset on the issue: "there are no lithium mines, no lithium processing facilities and no lithium ion battery makers in Canada." We are in essence, the quote says, "a minnow compared to the United States, Australia and especially China."

Well, that is the mentality of the Conservative Party. It does not understand that this does not have to be the destination. Canada can be a world leader, and that is what this investment is going to do.

It is so short-sighted. Again, it is not that all members of the Conservative Party would think the same way as the leader of the party. Progressive Conservatives may not think the same way, and as I said, we have Doug Ford 100% onside and investing in it.

This is an opportunity for Canada to enter into that green world in a very real and tangible way. We can look at seeing future lithium mines. We can look into a future with many more areas of development. It is estimated that, within a decade, the federal and provincial investments will be returned more than tenfold.

The Conservatives have a tough time thinking of the future or realizing the benefits of an investment of this nature. We can think in terms of the direct, positive impact that this is going to have on the automobile industry in the province of Ontario or in Canada as a whole.

Yesterday, in the chamber, we were talking about the aerospace industry. Members from the Bloc, myself and others were talking about how the provinces of Quebec and Manitoba have benefited. We talked about how important it was and is today that we support our aerospace industry, as we continue to do.

It is also important to support our automobile industry. We can think in terms of the future and the positive impact that this is going to have. I would hope that sometime between now and the next federal election, the Conservatives will have a flip-flop on their position on this issue. The net gains far outweigh the costs of what is being proposed by the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario today.

● (1325)

We need to start thinking about the bigger picture. We need to think of the quality middle-class jobs that will be there as we expand in an industry that is healthy for our province and create opportunities from coast to coast to coast. These opportunities may be in mining or parts distribution. All sorts of opportunities will be there going forward because of this investment. We will be working with the private sector, particularly Volkswagen, in building a state-of-the-art factory, potentially the single largest factory in Canada. We need to look at the tens of thousands of direct jobs, let alone the multiplying factor of indirect jobs.

I will continue the next time the bill comes up for debate.

The Deputy Speaker: I believe the hon. member for North Island—Powell River has a point of order.

* * *

• (1330)

OFFICIAL REPORT

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie inadvertently voted on Tuesday, March 21, and Wednesday, March 22, and should not have done so under paragraph (i) of section (o) of the motion adopted by the House on June 23, 2022.

I therefore ask that his votes from those dates be withdrawn.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for that clarification, and we will make the proper adjustments.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CANADA NATIONAL PARKS ACT

The House resumed from February 8 consideration of the motion that Bill C-248, An Act to amend the Canada National Parks Act (Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada), be read the third time and passed.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by recognizing my colleague, the MP for Windsor West, for being a passionate champion of Ojibway all these years. I was glad to have the opportunity this past Monday to acknowledge the MP's 20 years of public service and his work to advance an Ojibway national urban park.

Our community gathered at Ojibway Nature Centre to celebrate four key milestones our federal government delivered through the work of the amazing Parks Canada. First, we announced the completion of the transfer of Ojibway Shores to Parks Canada. It is to be included in an Ojibway national urban park to be protected forever. Second, we announced that the first phase of the Parks Canada process in the creation of an Ojibway national urban park has been completed, and the process has graduated into the second phase. Third, we announced the acquisition and transfer of additional property on Titcombe Road to the City of Windsor for inclusion in an Ojibway national urban park. Finally, our community announced that the Province of Ontario has seen the value of an Ojibway national urban park and committed to transferring 60-plus hectares of provincial lands to Ojibway.

The credit for the protection of Ojibway Shores and the advancement of Ojibway national urban park rightfully rests with our community. Countless people have carried us to this tremendous day and time.

There are families, such as Derek and Ric Coronado, who have led efforts to protect Ojibway for decades. Karen Cedar, Paul Pratt and Tom Preney have poured their hearts and souls into looking after Ojibway for years.

Private Members' Business

From when I was a city councillor, I remember the number of times Jonathan Choquette came to fight for ecopassages and traffic calming to protect migrating wildlife. I have recently gotten to know professors Catherine Febria and Clint Jacobs, who opened the door to a deeper understanding of indigenous peoples' connections to Ojibway.

There are folks like Tom Henderson, Mike Fisher, Phil Roberts and Bill Roesel, who volunteer their time with the Friends of Ojibway Prairie and Essex County Field Naturalists' Club. There are people like Anna Lynn Meloche and Nancy Pancheshan, who rolled up their sleeves and took on developers and big box stores to elevate the urgency of conservation of Ojibway.

We can see so much courage, vision and togetherness, and there are hundreds of stories like this in Windsor Essex. They are as diverse and resilient as the plants and wildlife that call Ojibway home.

In addition to the people and groups I mentioned, there is the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup, Little Reg, URCA and the Unifor Local 444 environment committee.

These are the folks who will create an Ojibway national urban park. These are the drivers and the leaders, and this is the community. That is what gives me confidence and conviction that we will have an Ojibway national urban park: We are united, we are together and this is what we all want.

Mr. Chris Lewis (Essex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly an honour to participate virtually in the House this afternoon.

The first thing I would like to do, with your indulgence, is to wish my lovely wife Allison happy birthday. She is incredibly sweet and young. I love her dearly and I want to celebrate that.

Second, I want to congratulate the member for Windsor West for getting the bill this far. The member and I have worked tirelessly on this together. It is a fantastic example of collaboration and how working across the aisles we can certainly get things done for our regions. I know how influential he was with respect to my private member's bill, Bill C-241, and it has been an honour to work with him on his private member's bill, Bill C-248, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, the Ojibway National Urban Park of Canada specifically.

This has been a fantastic example of collaboration from all levels of government, which is enormous. I know our constituents continually ask us to not always fight in the House and to try to get along and find common ground. It puts a big smile on my face on a Friday to know that really good, unique things can get done when we work together.

As an example, our provincial government has come to the table. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change has been amazing in making sure that this comes to fruition, along with MPP Andrew Dowie, from Windsor—Tecumseh, who has also been very influential in the conversation and bringing those folks together. I really want to celebrate and thank them.

Private Members' Business

I have had many conversations with Mayor Dilkens, the mayor of Windsor, who is very much in support of this private member's bill, along with the mayor and councillors of LaSalle. It is a win-win for our community, so I thank them.

I want to thank our first nations: Chief Duckworth of the Caldwell First Nation, in collaboration with the Walpole Island First Nation.

Then of course there were amazing community consultations and a ton of outreach. People have literally been so vital in this conversation and I just want to thank them so much for that.

I will be very prudent and say that I am happy the Liberals changed their mind, because twice they voted against this. I am not sure what changed, but I am certainly happy they recognize that this is going to lead to huge opportunities for tourism, our economy and the health and mental health of people in our regions of Essex, Windsor—Tecumseh, Windsor West and Chatham-Kent—Leamington.

I have done my due diligence. I have spent countless hours in discussions with mayors, in community consultations, and with stakeholders. There were two things that were always top of mind. One is to make darn sure that our corridors and arteries, Matchette Road and Malden Road, remain open so that the folks who need to get back and forth to Windsor to work in our automotive sector and our new battery plant that is coming up do not encounter a big blockade that does not allow them to get back and forth to work early. They are putting in countless hours at these businesses and we should not have the major arteries, which are the major roads, blocked so they cannot get back and forth from their place of residence.

Equally, I have spoken many times on the importance of getting Canadians active. We have been basically stuck in our home for three and a half years due to COVID. It is time to get active, to get out on the trails, either a biking or hiking trail, or spend time with family and mother nature. This park has white-tailed deer, raccoons and the endangered eastern fox snake, which I really hope does not cross the path in front of me when I go out to this new park. We have the Gordie Howe International Bridge set to open up in 2025, which perhaps can connect with this urban national park. There is going to be a walking path on the bridge.

● (1335)

The tourism opportunities here for our region are absolutely vital. It is huge for the area, let alone the economy and what it is going to bring to our small businesses, hotels and restaurants, all those who are offering their services.

This is a really good, very well-thought-out private member's bill. Again, I am very happy to be supporting this.

Let me also say that this does not affect private lands. It will have zero effect on those lands that are surrounding it today. This bill uses existing federal-provincial lands that already exist. All it is doing is taking the existing green space and bringing it all together, which is enormous. It is protecting the environment.

Essex, Windsor West and Windsor—Tecumseh is a very small area. We are surrounded by three bodies of water, Lake Erie, the

Detroit River and Lake St. Clair. Property is at a premium, to say the least. When we can give opportunities for folks to get outdoors, to get active, to spend time with their families away from our televisions, then I think we need to enhance that. We need to celebrate it. We have to do everything possible to ensure that we are doing our due diligence on that.

Tomorrow is Earth Day. What a fitting day to be talking about a private member's bill that is actually protecting some 800 acres in Essex that would go a long way to ensuring that our feathered and furry friends are protected.

I understand this bill is to be voted on next Wednesday, and I really hope that it gets passed. Equally, I am hoping that we can somehow, in some way get it to the Senate as quickly as possible, to get their support. Would it not be remarkable if we could get it through the Senate and allow these folks to start taking advantage, again, of this urban national park?

The greedy side of me says, along with Bill C-248, I also hope the Senate talks about Bill C-241, which is my private member's bill. Maybe they could push that through at the same time.

Conservatives will be voting in favour of Bill C-248. Again, I want to celebrate and congratulate the member for Windsor West. It has been an honour to work alongside him. This is only positive for our region, specifically for Essex, Windsor West, Windsor—Tecumseh and Chatham-Kent—Leamington. It would enhance the lives and mental health of people going forward.

● (1340)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I would like to remind all members, specifically the members for Windsor—Tecumseh and Essex, not to use words like “our indigenous peoples” or “our first nations”. This is just to remind MPs that we do not belong to other people. We are not owned, so I ask members to please stop using those words together.

I am very pleased to represent Nunavut in supporting Bill C-248, as tabled by my colleague, the member for Windsor West. This bill would establish the Ojibway national urban park, which is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of first nations, which includes the Ojibway, the Odawa and the Potawatomi.

Before I speak to my support of this bill, I send my congratulations to the amazing, courageous Nunavummiut who have just completed the Nunavut Quest in Arctic Bay in my riding. The Nunavut Quest is a great test of strength, perseverance and determination. It is a race of dog teams between communities.

Owning a dog team takes a lot of commitment and helps to protect Inuit culture. Dog teams were integral to the survival of Inuit in the harshest of conditions. Despite the governments efforts to eradicate Inuit culture and language, including the slaughter of dogs from the 1950s to the 1970s, Inuit remain steadfast in keeping Inuit culture alive.

This year, the competition was a journey that took nine dog team mushers and their support teams from Igloolik to Arctic Bay. I congratulate the organizers and the racers. The racers were: David Oyukuluk, Jovan Simic, Terry Uyarak, Donovan Qaunaq, Jonah Qaunaq, Joshua Haulli, Lee Inuarak, Michael Inuarak, Jeremy Koonoo, Apak Taqtu, Owen Willie and Christopher Piugattuk. *Upigivatsi*. I honour them.

To get back to this private member's bill from the member from Windsor West, I understand that it has taken several years and a lot of hard work to ensure that this region, which has a unique ecosystem, gains its status as a national urban park. This is a particularly important issue because this region is home to hundreds of endangered species that migrate there for their survival. Establishing the Ojibway national urban park will also protect the last remaining undeveloped natural shoreline in Windsor and Detroit.

I thank Chief Mary Duckworth of Caldwell first nation, who said, "Establishing Ojibway National Urban Park, not only preserves the last remaining shoreline and protects remnants of a rare ecosystem but underscores also how important it is to have a natural presence that has been unchanged by humans within a city. This is what makes it even more unique".

A great aspect of this bill is the fact that it garnered support by so many, including Caldwell first nation, the City of Windsor, Friends of Ojibway Prairie, Friends of the Rouge, Wildlands League, the National Audubon society, Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and Unifor.

In his remarks introducing the bill, the member for Windsor West quoted Michelle Prior, president of the National Parks Association of Queensland, Australia, and it is worth repeating an excerpt. She said:

National parks are a national achievement and a cornerstone of a modern, enlightened society. Not only are Australia's parks famous worldwide and form part of our national identity, they provide an abundance of benefits. Reclaimed from the past as a legacy for the future, they are a fundamental aspect of life today.

● (1345)

A final bit of background on the importance of passing Bill C-248 is from a publication. In 2017, the Essex County Field Naturalists' Club and the Essex Region Conservation Authority published the Ojibway Shores Natural Heritage Inventory/Evaluation. I encourage everyone to read this comprehensive report. I learned so much and can absolutely imagine the beauty that exists in that region.

The report states that volunteers collected the data and experts verified it. I highlight this because it highlights the grassroots approach this initiative has taken and how important it is that Canada listens to the voices of the people. My colleague has done his part and we must take their leadership and ensure that the Ojibway national urban park becomes a reality. Not only has this been a grassroots initiative, but I am proud to highlight that my colleague, the

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member for Windsor West, has taken a non-partisan approach. He has worked with all parties, even the Liberals who have needed to be pushed to appreciate the great value that Bill C-248 has for all of Canada.

Why is this so important? I looked up the National Parks Act to see what would happen. Adding the Ojibway national urban park to the National Parks Act would provide two main outcomes: number one, that Canadians will have education, benefit and enjoyment of the park and, number two, that the park shall be maintained and made use of so as to leave it unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

My colleague, the member for Windsor West, has undertaken a major task, which normally could have been completed by the federal government. He has basically handed it a gift. When national parks are to be added, there must be a lot of work that is completed. What was the work required, before tabling an amendment? One was to provide a report on a proposed park, check; two was that the report include information on consultations, check; and three was agreements reached with respect to establishment, check. Finally, Bill C-248 at this stage now has been reviewed at committee, namely, the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development.

I do hope the Liberal government joins in this collective call for the establishment of the Ojibway national urban park. The park needs the federal government to ensure the ecological integrity by its mandate established under the Canada National Parks Act. The Ojibway national urban park needs the government, according to the act, to help in its "Maintenance or restoration of ecological integrity, through the protection of natural resources and natural processes".

Finally, I personally thank the member for Windsor West for asking me to speak on this important bill, Bill C-248. I thank the Three Fires Confederacy of first nations, which includes the Ojibway, the Odawa and the Potawatomi for sharing in their traditional territory and working toward the protection of this important area of Canada. I hope one day to visit the Ojibway national urban park.

● (1350)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely delighted to speak today in support of Bill C-248, an act to amend the Canada National Parks Act, Ojibway national urban park of Canada. I would like to thank the member for Windsor West for his hard work in bringing us here. I also want to acknowledge the work of the member for Windsor—Tecumseh for his advocacy.

I was able to visit this park when I was in Windsor about two months ago, and I was quite impressed with the enormous efforts that have been undertaken by the community, including the Friends of Ojibway Prairie.

Private Members' Business

I suspect that most of what I will say will be more of a reflection on the Rouge National Urban Park, which I am very proud to represent. This is how I want to frame it. On any given week, we have opposition day motions, and we have question period for around five hours. There is an enormous amount of back-and-forth among all the parties, and sometimes it is questionable as to what we are doing here and what this place really means.

After the seven and a half years I have been here, if I were to leave this place tomorrow or if I were to leave this place five years from now, the single most important thing that I would take away with me is the creation of Rouge National Urban Park.

I suspect the member for Windsor West is probably on a very similar journey to the one I am on. The reason is that this was a monumental achievement for us locally, for those of us who represented the Rouge park or, in this case, the Ojibway national park. It is monumental because, when we look back 30, 40 or 50 years from now, we will see that we were creating an enormous gem protecting our wildlife, protecting our natural habitat and ensuring there is ecological integrity in the hearts of some of the most densely populated places in all of Canada and North America.

As I look at the Rouge National Urban Park taking shape today, I often think of how we got there. I want to pay respect to a number of people who have been instrumental. I want to start off with Lois James, who, as members may know, was known as the mother of the Rouge. She unfortunately passed away several years ago.

We have tried to mark her success in so many ways, but the absolute legacy that she left is the park itself. Starting with her, and continuing with generations of activists who were inspired by her, we have managed to bring something very special to the greater Toronto area. We now have 79.1 square kilometres of protected space, with some of the most incredible wildlife protected, including the Carolinian forest. We have hundreds of endangered species, ecological areas and farms, which really do speak to the vibrancy of the park.

We had to do a balancing act to ensure that an established urban area could support a national park. Starting with Lois James, we went through the seventies and eighties, as the city of Toronto was sprawling. Scarborough was at that time a city of its own. It was sprawling, and there were enormous pressures for development because of shortages in housing.

We had activists. We had common citizens, including people who were principals, gardeners, students and people such as my friends Glenda Bearmaker, Jim Robb, Kevin O'Connor and others, who basically said that enough was enough. They saw that we had the historical Rouge River going through one of the most beautiful parts of the city, and if we were going to put development right in the centre of it, we would lose it and the ecological benefits that stemmed from it. People stood in front of bulldozers. There are stories of citizens who stood in front of bulldozers and said that enough was enough. They did not want to have development at the cost of the environment and the land.

• (1355)

I think the enormous sacrifices of the individuals there led us to the park today. I always say, with the member for Scarborough—

Guildwood, that in many ways we are here as the last leg of this long marathon, but what we did was inconsequential compared to the work of the community itself, the fights the member for Nunavut was talking about and the enormous strides our community made.

Then, I look at all the people since then, the kids, the schools and the community. There will not be a week that goes by from now until the fall when we are not doing a tree planting. I, for example, am doing a “walk in the park”, as I call it, in the Rouge National Urban Park next Sunday, and there will be tree planting and a community cleanup tomorrow for Earth Day. There are tree-planting opportunities across the Rouge park that are done by organizations such as the Friends of the Rouge Watershed and Forests Ontario to ensure that the park is vibrant.

The unique nature of the Rouge park also means that we have active working farms with people who are recognized as heritage farmers. Farmers have farmed the area for a couple of hundred years. They have a form of tenure that allows them to continue until their demise, and we have new vibrant businesses that are taking shape, including what I am told is a microbrewery that is coming to the park.

Of course, this is all situated on the traditional lands of many indigenous nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit. There are also the Huron-Wendat, who have a long history, including areas of the park where their history dates back over 10,000 years. The park itself is managed with enormous guidance from the indigenous circle that is part of the operations of the park, and there are regular and ongoing consultations that really allow the park to be sensitive.

There is one thing I have believed a park should do, and I am going to put it out there, because it is something that is quite important. I have had many conversations on this, and I hope at some point it will happen. The Rouge National Urban Park is the single largest display of the federal government within the greater Toronto area, and as such, I believe there is a need for more reflection on reconciliation at the park. For example, there is a need for a truth and reconciliation trail that would enable those who are visiting the park to be able to recognize the long and painful history of indigenous people in Canada, but particularly in the region.

Also, I think there is a greater need to ensure that we use the park to bring people back to nature and bring people back to what is, I think, most important, and probably the most important threat this country and this world are facing today.

I want to also acknowledge the work of Parks Canada's Andrew Campbell, who is the lead for Ontario, as well as Omar McDadl, who is the superintendent of the park. In the minister's office we have Joshua Swift, Kate and Jamie MacDonald, who have been incredible. There is also Janet Sumner of Wildlands as well as both former minister McKenna and the current Minister of Environment and Climate Change.

Private Members' Business

In closing, I think what the member for Windsor West is doing in collaboration with this community and many of the community members who are part of the Friends of the Ojibway Prairie is creating a legacy. It is not his legacy, but a legacy for all Canadians for future generations, where we can look back and say this is what we did in eight, 10 or 12 years of being here; we are protecting the land and making sure there is green space, and we are building a better Canada for all of us.

• (1400)

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and an honour to rise on such a momentous occasion. I think about the work that my colleague from Windsor West has done to preserve such an important piece of his riding. I cannot say enough about his work in bringing all people together. The establishment of the Ojibway national park is a cumulation of many years, if not decades, of work.

I want to salute my colleague, because it takes a lot of work to do even the smallest project when it comes to conservation and to make sure all community members and stakeholders have been heard. Not only has he done that, but he has also brought together and supported the wishes of his local city council. He has brought forward concerns from labour, stakeholders, and obviously the environmental groups and the NGOs of the region. Most importantly, he has been working very closely with Caldwell First Nation, the rights holders of that region. That is absolutely the most critical piece.

To me, someone who has a national park reserve in his region, Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, which was put on the indigenous peoples' lands of the Tla-o-qui-aht, Uchucklesaht, Toquaht and Tseshaht without their permission, this is an example of the collaboration and true reconciliation that are needed. When we see a national park placed on the lands of the traditional landowners, the peoples of those lands, without their permission, it creates resentment.

My colleague from Windsor West has done this in a historic way, the right way to move things along. He has worked with Caldwell First Nation, and I give him huge credit, because this is what it needs to look like moving forward when it comes to respect, conservation and true reconciliation.

I also want to thank members of the Conservative Party, the Bloc and the Green Party, as well as the two members of the Liberal Party who got behind this bill. I was disappointed about the delaying tactics, about the government's trying to block this very important bill and this very important achievement that my colleague has been trying to move forward.

This national park would protect 200 of Canada's 500 endangered species. This is absolutely incredible. It is timely that we are debating this on the eve of Earth Day, which is tomorrow, at a time when we know we are seeing warming temperatures around the world, the threat of climate change and also the loss of biodiversity. It is so important that we do everything we can to conserve those critical pieces.

My colleague has talked about the importance of this location, which is in a temperate environment, and the fact that it has Car-

olinian forests that are a refuge for species at risk. This includes trees, fauna, amphibians and the Massasauga rattler. It is pretty wild for someone who comes from British Columbia to hear this. These are endangered species. As in other places in our country, people are fighting to protect these green spaces.

I think about green spaces in my own riding and the amount of work it took to protect the Kus-kus-sum, which is at the estuary. It is shared with my good colleague from North Island—Powell River. There is the work the community has put in, together with the Comox people, such as Tim Ennis, who led a really important group through the Comox Valley Land Trust to protect that land. I think about Meaghan Cursons and the work she does at the Cumberland Forest Society; Lynn Brooks at Arrowsmith Naturalists, which is trying to save the Hamilton marsh; Denise Foster, who worked with the Qualicum people and Snaw-Naw-As to save the estuary land in Qualicum; and of course the Wild Pacific Trail Society in Ucluelet, which also works with first nations for conservation resources.

I want to go back to the importance of reconciliation. In the creation of the Ojibway national park, one thing that I really like is that it is being done in collaboration with Caldwell First Nation. This is important. We have seen, with Pacific Rim National Park Reserve, promises from the government in a national park reserve where it promised beneficial agreements with first nations but did not deliver them. It is really important, as we see this park come forward, that the Caldwell people would be getting a beneficial agreement with the park so that they are also the operators of the park and ensuring that they get jobs out of it.

I want to quote Chief Duckworth, who spoke at committee. She said, "We know that we need a legislative framework in order to make this national park happen, and I am here to support the hard work that's been done and the hard work going forward." It is really exciting to see this kind of important collaboration. It is really important that I highlight again the important work of my colleague from Windsor West.

• (1405)

As someone who ran the Tofino-Long Beach Chamber of Commerce in British Columbia for five years, I can say that we were the runner-up for chamber of the year, Mr. Speaker, out of 130 chambers of commerce, something that I know you are not used to, because I know people always laugh at the New Democrats and say that we are not small business people, but we are. We are the engine of the working people. We work the closest with working people and workers and small business people.

We really understand the importance of chambers of commerce and business organizations. They understand how important it is to protect the environment, to work with indigenous peoples and reconcile the damage that has been caused by colonial laws, to work closely together so that we can walk forward together. Of course, we know that when we protect the biodiversity and the environment, it is good for the economy. It is good for workers.

Private Members' Business

Also, as the critic for mental health and harm reduction, I know how important it is to get outside. Just the other night, I was with the Canadian Association for Physicians for the Environment, because I am co-chair of the all-party environment caucus, and we talked about the importance of getting outside and being in nature. There is no pill that one can take that is better and that would make one healthier than getting outside or getting on a bike.

My colleague is not only doing something that is good for tourism, good for the people in the community, good for climate action and good for protecting endangered species and biodiversity, but he is also improving the lives and the health of the people in his community. This is a tremendous achievement and, again, I salute him for this important work. It is so exciting to be here and it is an honour to rise and talk about this.

We know that the Gordie Howe bridge is going to be placed next to this area, which is going to create a lot of economic activity, but also challenges for the environment. This is an absolutely critical mitigation piece when it comes to biodiversity.

I do know that the government has committed \$2.3 billion, which is far from adequate, in terms of its nature legacy fund. We need to go much further. The government will spend \$31 billion on the Trans Mountain pipeline, and \$2.3 billion to protect biodiversity. Its priorities are completely out of order. We need more money to support more initiatives like this, and I hope that the government, when it moves forward with this legislation, will invest heavily in this national park, this incredible legacy.

We are talking about really important environmental issues, and I want to talk about one of the greatest environmentalists in my life. It is Wayne Adams, from Freedom Cove. He just passed away. His funeral is going to be on Tuesday, and sadly I am going to be here, so I will not be able to join Catherine, Shane, Shauna and the many people in our community and the Ahousaht people whose territory he lived on. He lived on a floating garden and, really, a paradise and a park of its own, and that is the park of the ocean and our natural environment.

I salute Wayne. We are going to miss him so much. He was a renowned carver. People like Ken Thomson would travel to buy his art and store it. He was just such an incredible environmentalist himself.

Here we are, talking about the environment on the eve of Earth Day. It would be a big mistake for me not to talk about the legacy of Wayne Adams and what he taught us in Clayoquot Sound and the people in our region about how we can live differently, how we can live a much slower life and protect the environment, and the importance of biodiversity and the species and living in nature. I salute Wayne.

Back to the bill, my friend and colleague from Windsor West has been determined and tenacious. He has demonstrated the willingness to work with everybody. I hope that the people in his community really see the determination and effort that he has made. He was seventh in the order of precedence in the lottery for PMB and he chose this. It shows his commitment to the people in his community, to reconciliation and to social, environmental and economic justice.

• (1410)

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to say that I think all of us have a background in chambers of commerce, provincial governments and municipal governments, so I think the member was just looking at the chair and not really looking at me directly.

Also, if I were his whip, I would let him stay home for the week to go to that funeral.

The hon. member for Windsor West, for his right of reply.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise here today. I want to, first, thank all my colleagues who have spoken on this bill in the previous hour of debate and this hour of debate. I have much gratitude for them getting to know my area.

This area is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy of first nations, which includes the Ojibway, the Odawa and the Potawatomi. As appropriately put, this is part of reconciliation. This is a story that is very important because it shows that we can do better.

For my part, I am thankful for the timing of this taking place. One of my heroes is Chief Duckworth. I want to thank Walpole Island First Nation as well. Chief Duckworth from Caldwell First Nation was left out of the consultation for the Gordie Howe bridge. We got to know each other when I invited them to come down to the community benefits, where they did not receive any invitation. We crashed the event together; I would not go in without them. The council let them in. That was the start of a very good relationship with Caldwell First Nations. More needs to be done, but it is a good start.

It is also a great tribute to my past mentor, Senator Earl "Boots" Scofield, who was a Métis senator. He also flew 17 missions in World War II in the bubble of a Mosquito bomber.

I want to quickly thank Janet Sumner and Dave Pearce from the Wildlands League, who have also been partners from the start and amazing heroes of mine. I thank the City of Windsor Council, and Mayor Dilkens, Councillor McKenzie and Councillor Francis in particular. Mayor Dilkens has been instrumental in this. I am grateful for the work that we have done, because this has included our region. The city has been at the forefront, giving up land, and that has been important.

I want to thank Lisa Gretzky, in my provincial Parliament, my colleague for Windsor West, who has always been wonderful to work with. She has been very involved in this. I want to thank MPP Andrew Dowie and also Minister Piccini in the Province of Ontario, who authorized the transfer of land that is coming up.

Of course the Friends of the Rouge are important. The Uniform Environmental Committee with Mark Bartlett, Rick Labonte, Ric St. Denis, Dave Cassidy and others were huge with this.

There is Green Ummah, who have gotten young people involved. There is the Friends of Ojibway, Claire McAllister, Paul Pratt and Mike Fisher. There is Save Ojibway community group. There is Jonathan Choquette from the Wildlife Preservation Canada, and John Hartig, another hero of mine. He is an American who has a Canadian part of his heart.

There is Bill Rousel, Phil Roberts, Derek Coronado, Frank Butler and the Citizens Environmental Alliance. We also have the Detroit River Canadian Cleanup and Windsor Essex Bike Community.

I want to again talk about some of the MPs here. The member for Essex has been instrumental in this, which is very important because the land that he represents is very close to this. I want to thank him for this, and his Bill C-241. It has been fun working together. It is hard to say “fun” in this place sometimes, but it does happen.

I want to thank the member for Windsor—Tecumseh for coming on board. We will need his support in the Senate, as well as for the whole area and this House.

I want to thank numerous ministers that I have had discussions with, even though originally there was a difficulty in getting the government onside. I am glad it is, and look forward to the vote. As well, I thank the Conservatives, Bloc and Green and the two Liberals who voted for it earlier. It is very important.

I do want to say that there is one person who has been a custodian and who sometimes gets overlooked, Peter Berry at the Port Authority. He is a hero. He is actually a former service person from Canada's military, and served in Bosnia. He is very much a hero.

I want to thank Parks Canada staff. I cannot say who is watching right now, but I think people are watching, including my partner, Terry Chow, my good friend, Jeff Mussen, and of course my daughter and son, Alex and Wade.

I want to quickly note Mo Peer and Melanie, the lead in my office, as well as Darlene, Eva, Farah, Heather and Myrna.

I cannot get through everything, but I do want to conclude soon. I want to say that we have been consulting on this a long time. There are so many other people I wish I had time to recognize. Please forgive me if I did not say someone's name.

Private Members' Business

The reality is we have done consultations for thousands of people. There were public meetings, interactions and a whole number of different social events and other things that brought us to this point. I am looking forward to us working together further.

I am going to read a quick poem to close things out. It is from Marty Gervais, a historian in Windsor, who is very much part of the fabric of our history. There are also four other persons who helped collaborate on a book. It is called *Pathway*:

I don't know where this pathway leads as I walk alone.
Trees keep me company, offer shelter from wind, and there is sunlight
enough to soften shadows, to warm me as I continue deeper into the mystery of
this Ojibway day.

The reason I mention that is because tomorrow is Earth Day, and a new chapter starts for this with this vote on Wednesday.

● (1415)

I want to thank all of the members who have been supportive of this process as we went forward because it is not about us. It is about the next generation. That is what is amazing.

The Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question.

The Deputy Speaker: The question is on the motion.

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.

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to order made on Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, April 26, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

It being 2:18 p.m., the House stands adjourned until next Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 2:18 p.m.)

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