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CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

House of Commons Debates

Official Report
(Hansard)

Volume 151 No. 207

Tuesday, June 6, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, June 6, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1000)

[English]

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO PETITIONS

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), 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 two petitions. These returns will be tabled in an electronic format.

* * *

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association respecting its bilateral visit to Dakar, Senegal, from November 5 to 10, 2022.

* * *

[English]

COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present, in both official languages, the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Science and Research. This report is entitled "Pursuing a Canadian Moonshot Program".

I would like to thank the clerk, the analysts, the translators and the people who supported our work, as well as the members for their excellent questions to the wonderful group of witnesses we had. I also thank the witnesses.

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

TEXTILE WASTE REDUCTION STRATEGY ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-337, An Act to establish a national strategy on the reduction of textile waste.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to introduce the textile waste reduction strategy act, with thanks to the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith for seconding this bill.

Consumers are currently buying more clothes and wearing them for less time than ever before. This has caused a sharp increase in the pollution, waste and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the fashion industry in Canada. We send nearly 500 million kilograms of textile waste to landfills every year.

This legislation would help address the impacts of fast fashion by requiring the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to develop a national strategy to reduce, reuse and recycle textile waste.

This bill is the result of the vision of a bright highschool student from Vancouver Kingsway, Kaylee Chou, who attends Windermere Secondary School. Kaylee is this year's winner of my Create Your Canada contest, which invites high school students to participate in our democracy and offer their ideas for a better country. I hope all parliamentarians will support her thoughtful and creative initiative.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

● (1005)

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS TEACHERS DAY ACT

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-338, National Indigenous Teachers Day Act.

She said: Mr. Speaker, today, during Indigenous History Month, it is my great privilege to table this very important piece of legislation, the national indigenous teachers day act, which would designate February 22 of each year as national indigenous teachers day.

Routine Proceedings

I want to thank the member for Winnipeg Centre for seconding this bill, but perhaps more importantly, I want to thank and acknowledge Theodore Anton, a grade 11 student from Old Scona Academic high school in Edmonton Strathcona, for the idea to recognize and celebrate the vital contributions and perspectives in education that indigenous educators bring to our schools. Theodore is the winner of my Create Your Canada contest, and he is in Ottawa with his parents to help me present this bill.

I thank Theodore and all the amazing young people who submitted ideas to make Canada a better place for everyone. I urge my fellow parliamentarians to support this bill, as it would mark an important step on the path toward reconciliation.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

* * *

CANADIAN WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS DAY ACT

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.) moved for leave to introduce an Act to establish a national day to honour Canadian women's contributions to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak about this bill recognizing that Canadian women have made remarkable contributions to and achievements in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This bill would establish a national day to honour Canadian women's contributions to STEM.

(Motion deemed adopted)

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet, I move:

That the House do now proceed to orders of the day.

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 invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, we ask that it be carried on division.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Mr. Speaker, no.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1050)

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

(Division No. 349)

YEAS

Members

Aldag
Ali
Anandasangaree
Arseneault
Ashton
Bachrach
Bains
Barron

Alghabra
Anand
Angus
Arya
Atwin
Badawey
Baker
Battiste

Beech
Bibeau
Blaikie
Blaney
Boissonnault
Bradford
Cannings
Chagger
Champagne
Chen
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier
Dabrusin
Davies
Dhaliwal
Diab
Drouin
Duclos
Dzerowicz
El-Khoury
Fisher
Fortier
Fraser
Fry
Garrison
Gerretsen
Green
Hajdu
Hardie
Holland
Hughes
Hutchings
Idlout
Jacek
Joly
Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Regan
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull

Bendayan
Bittle
Blair
Blois
Boulerice
Brière
Casey
Chahal
Chatel
Chiang
Collins (Victoria)
Coteau
Damoff
Desjarlais
Dhillon
Dong
Dubourg
Duguid
Ehsassi
Fergus
Fonseca
Fragiskatos
Freeland
Gaheer
Gazan
Gould
Guilbeault
Hanley
Hepfner
Housefather
Hussen
Iacono
Ien
Johns
Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Murray
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O'Connell
Petitpas Taylor
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schieffe
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sousa
Sudds
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Members

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
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Calkins
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fortin
Garon
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Gill
Godin
Gourde
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Lake
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Tochor
Trudel

Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
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Brassard
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Cooper
Dancho
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Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeschen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant
Gaudreau
Genuis
Gladu
Goodridge
Gray
Hoback
Kelly
Kmieciak
Kramp-Neuman
Kusie
Lantsman
Lawrence
Lemire
Liepert
Maguire
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)
Melillo
Moore
Morrison
Muys
Normandin
Patzner
Pauzé
Perron
Poilievre
Redekopp
Rempel Garner
Roberts
Ruff
Scheer
Seebach
Shipley
Sinclair-Desgagné
Soroka
Ste-Marie
Strahl
Thériault
Thomas
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Uppal

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PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

BILL C-47—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): moved:

That in relation to Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and not more than one sitting day shall be allotted to the consideration of the third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration at report stage and fifteen minutes before the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on the day allotted to the consideration at the third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the Bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period. I invite members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair can have some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in this question period.

The hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is again a shame that we are moving to closure. We are undermining the parliamentary democracy we have, and the most shameful thing is that the government is being supported by the NDP, which is supposed to be an opposition party but is acting like it is a bunch of Liberals.

Throughout history, normally a government that moves closure can count on only maybe once or twice during a parliamentary session getting the support of any of the opposition parties to support a closure motion like we have right now, stymying debate. In fact, if we look back, since the time of Tommy Douglas under the NDP until Thomas Mulcair, the NDP supported closure only 14 times in the 17 Parliaments during that time span. However, here we are today, under the leadership of the NDP leader, the member for Burnaby South, and the NDP is going to support closure for the 35th time. What has happened to the NDP that it has squandered its principles under Tommy Douglas, of being an effective opposition, and is instead supporting the Liberals and undermining our constitutional right to debate all the bills they bring before the House?

Government Orders

● (1055)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, obviously I cannot speak for the NDP, but I do want to speak in response to the question from the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman. What I want to say is that I know he and I, and his party and mine, disagree about many things, but there are some things we agree on.

I notice he is wearing today a blue and yellow ribbon; I am wearing a blue and yellow bracelet, and I am glad we have cross-party support for Ukraine. Right now, that is particularly important and is relevant to this bill, because this bill includes measures that would help Canada support Ukraine. I do hope, and in fact am confident, that the member opposite knows and understands that. That is one reason everyone in the House should be supportive of this measure going through.

There is another element in this BIA that I would hazard a guess the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman should support, and that is doubling the deduction for tradespersons' tools. He represents working people, and I do too. It is a great measure in the bill that everyone in the House should be able to support.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I ask this question, my community is thick with smoke from the fires. I know the smoke from the fires is in Toronto and I know it is in Ottawa. Our country is on fire, and I have been watching the shenanigans in the House go on. We have work to do as parliamentarians.

My Conservative colleagues are talking about their rights. I support the rights of opposition, but we need to get legislation passed. I am very concerned about the ongoing efforts to obstruct the money needed to get support for critical minerals for clean energy. We know that the leader of the Conservative Party has ridiculed the investments in EV technology. He has been in my region ridiculing EV technology even though our communities are dependent on base metal mining and critical mineral mining.

I want to ask the Deputy Prime Minister not only about the willingness of the government to put money on the table to know we can get a clean energy economy moving as quickly as it needs to be in the face of the climate crisis, but also whether the government is willing to put the legislative tools in place so we can tell Canadian workers, and particularly energy workers in western Canada, that we have their backs, that there is a plan and that this Parliament actually can get something done that is beyond the circus antics we have witnessed.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, the member for Timmins—James Bay and I have, on many occasions, publicly disagreed, but he points to what is surely the heart of this bill and something all Canadians should support. As he rightly says, Canada is burning right now. Alberta has been burning. Right now Quebec and Atlantic Canada are burning. Here in Ottawa, it is hard to breathe. There can be no more powerful clarion call to action.

The good news is that this bill would put into action our clean economy plan. Not only would that help to reduce emissions but, as the member for Timmins—James Bay pointed out, but it would also create great jobs. I want to personally thank the member for Timmins—James Bay for the contribution he made to the labour

conditions we have included in our clean economy tax credits. It is so important to us that these credits build a clean economy but that they do it by creating great-paying jobs with pensions and with benefits, at the union average wage.

● (1100)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the intervention from the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman saying that this is an affront to democracy. It is almost as though he did not even listen to his own leader yesterday saying in the media that Conservatives will pull out every procedural trick to prevent the budget from moving forward. Clearly there is a calculated effort, which we witnessed yesterday and Friday, to do whatever they feel necessary procedurally to prevent moving forward on these important initiatives for Canadians. Perhaps it is time for Conservatives to think about having a less partisan approach and a more collaborative one when it comes to this, in order to deliver for Canadians. I am wondering whether the minister would like to comment on that.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his really hard work in the House, getting the people's work done. It is absolutely essential. Speaking to his point, what I would like to say to us all is that the House is, by nature, partisan; that is how our Canadian parliamentary democracy works. I think all of us understand that and should embrace it.

I think it is also important for us to be responsible in getting the people's work done, in getting support to Canadians and also in showing Canadians that we take seriously the spirit of how parliamentary democracy is supposed to work. That is something that all of us have an interest in because all of us are MPs. All of us are parliamentarians.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am just trying to quickly tally up all the attacks on democracy that have happened since I was first elected in 2015.

I remember that, from 2015 to 2019, even with a majority, the government moved one closure motion after another. I cannot list every single one, but there was an awful lot. I also remember a back-to-work bill to end the postal strike during my first term.

During my second term, certain motions got majority support here in the House of Commons, including a Bloc Québécois motion to increase the disability benefit period to 50 weeks. It was adopted by the majority, but the government has done nothing.

Then there is Chinese interference. Three motions got majority support, but the government has done nothing. I do not agree with the Conservatives' strategy to block debate, but I also disagree with the government's string of closure motions. I would actually like the Liberals to tell me their definition of democracy.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, once again, I do not completely agree with my hon. colleague, and she does not fully agree with me.

However, I think that this bill contains important measures that she and her colleagues in the Bloc Québécois can support. For example, there is a measure aimed at cracking down on predatory lending by lowering the criminal rate of interest. I think that is a measure that everyone here, including my colleague across the aisle, must support.

The extension of the employment insurance program for seasonal workers is another important measure for Quebeckers. I hope that she will support that one as well. The measure doubling the tradespeople's tool deduction is another one that everyone should support.

Lastly, there is the extremely important measure I just mentioned in response to the question from my NDP colleague: our clean tech tax credits to promote economic growth. This is a series of measures that are essential for the green transition, measures that the Premier of Quebec has strongly supported.

Once again, we need the bill we are discussing today to implement these measures that are so important to our green transition.

• (1105)

[English]

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

I listened to the member for Timmins—James Bay ask the Deputy Prime Minister about the need to pass this legislation urgently because of wildfires. I will remind the member, and I will also remind the Deputy Prime Minister, who referenced that question, that when I was knocking on doors during the 2021 election, B.C. was on fire when the government called an election. I take issue with this notion now being trumped up, when B.C. was, in fact, on fire.

The minister refused to appear at committee for two hours, when we are facing what are, quite possibly, the largest debt and deficit increases in Canadian history, yet here we hear that this is being obstructionist and anti-democratic on the Conservative side. Does the Deputy Prime Minister not see the hypocrisy in this position when she would not appear at committee for a simple two hours, and Canadians are being asked to fork over more and more when it comes to inflation, groceries, home heating and taxes?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo has reminded us that the last election, the one that brought us all to this House, was fought while B.C. was on fire. That may be why the member, and all the Conservative MPs, actually campaigned on a commitment to bring in a price on pollution.

Government Orders

In fact, the Conservative platform says, "Our plan will ensure that all Canadians can do their part to fight climate change, in the way that works best for them, and at a carbon price that is...increasing to \$50/tonne". It also says, "We will assess progress...[so] carbon prices [can be] on a path to \$170/tonne".

I believe the people of B.C. understand that climate change is real and that climate action is essential. I think they understood that when B.C. was on fire, and that is why the member opposite made that promise to the people who elected him.

I would call on the Conservatives to remember that they made that promise as so much of Canada is burning. Let us work together to fight climate change.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have been listening to my Conservative colleagues talk about how their ability to debate this bill is being severely curtailed. I would take that more seriously if it were not for yesterday's motion to adjourn the House of Commons. Thankfully, that motion from the Conservatives was soundly defeated, because the rest of us actually want to come here to work for our constituents, rather than call it an early day.

My question for the Minister of Finance concerns the dental care provisions in this bill, as well as the fact that we are going to move ahead with extending coverage to persons with disabilities, to seniors and to children under the age of 18. Could the minister tell us why this NDP initiative is so important and why we have to fight for this measure, including for constituents who live in Conservative ridings?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I am happy, in this House, to thank the member and his NDP colleagues for championing this very important step.

Speaking personally, I was really moved by the reactions to the dental care measures that I heard as I toured the country following the tabling of the budget. Probably a dozen people came up to me with tears in their eyes, thanking me and saying that they were not able to afford dental care for themselves or that their parents could not do so when they were children. Some covered their mouths with their hands. They are very glad that they will now be able to access that dental care.

I have also had people, including young people, come up and ask me when this will come into force, so that they can go to the dentist. They know it is good for their health. I remember, as a kid on the school bus, we could tell how much everyone's parents made by their smiles. That is terrible, and I am very glad that, together, we are able to change that forever.

Government Orders

● (1110)

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance answer my colleague from Repentigny earlier. She spoke about all the good things in her budget, things we could not in good conscience vote against.

It is nice to see what is in the budget, but it is even more important to see what is not in the budget. There is nothing for the housing crisis and nothing for seniors between the ages of 65 and 74, who for years have been demanding that they also be eligible for the increase in old age security benefits.

The cultural industry has been sounding the alarm for years, especially during the pandemic. We even did a study in committee to recommend that the government maintain financial assistance to the cultural sector, because it will be more difficult for the cultural industries in Quebec and Canada to recover. We are seeing it now with our smaller festivals, which are having a hard time. There were clear and precise requests, but they were not addressed in this budget.

As a result, we will be voting against the budget. We will not vote against it because of the measures it contains, but because of the measures it does not contain, which are just as important as what the Deputy Prime Minister is boasting about today.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, with regard to seniors, I think that everyone can be proud and pleased that the number of seniors in Canada and Quebec living below the poverty line has decreased considerably in our eight years in power. This has always been one of our priority targets, and we managed to achieve it.

As for the cultural sector, I reiterate that we understand its value to the economy, as well as its social and political importance. That is why we have always supported this sector and why we will continue to do so.

It is true that we were unable to include in the budget all of the measures each member in the House would have liked to see, because we adopted a balanced approach. We took the measures that were necessary and adopted a compassionate approach. That being said, fiscal responsibility is also important to us, and that is why we could not do everything today.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, to the earlier exchange that the Minister of Finance had on the subject of Ukraine, I think it is significant that the budget implementation bill, for the first time, removes Russia and Belarus from most-favoured-nation status. We are not in this place debating the budget, which I voted against; we are debating Bill C-47, which I voted for and will continue to vote for. There are many measures in it that I support and none that I oppose, unlike the budget itself. I still cannot vote for time allocation.

Even after the amount of debate we have had in this place, I do not think anyone else has put on the record that Russia still has most-favoured-nation status for trade reasons until we pass this legislation. That is lamentable.

I wish we did not have tactics being used that amount to an obstruction to moving forward and that stand in the way of sensible debate on what we are actually talking about here. Therefore, I find myself in the awkward position of being in favour of this legislation, opposed to the government moving to push it through quickly, and very much opposed to meaningless partisan obstruction tactics that do not deal with the substance of the legislation, which I fear most people in this place still have not read.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, one view I hope I can safely say is shared by all members of the House is an appreciation for the professionalism and seriousness with which the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has always approached her work, the thoughtfulness and care she takes, and how she carefully parses out every aspect of her position. I appreciate that very much. I always learn from her, even if we do not always agree. I am grateful to her for pointing out the most-favoured-nation status for Russia and Belarus.

In my answer to the member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, one thing I pointed to that I hope we can all come together on in this bill is support for Ukraine and steadfast opposition to Russia. I think the measure that the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands cited is indeed one aspect of this position that all Canadians support and that we should all taking.

● (1115)

[Translation]

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-47 includes several measures. The Minister of Finance and Deputy Prime Minister did an extraordinary job listening to Canadians. As I often say, Canadians told us three things. Obviously, they brought up the cost of living, health care and dental care, but they also spoke to us about the need to build the economy of the future, a greener economy aligned with the 21st century.

Bill C-47 includes a huge number of measures to help our small and medium-size businesses and entrepreneurs in order to position Canada for success. These measures will help seize generational opportunities and create the jobs of the future, well-paid green jobs.

I would therefore ask the Minister of Finance to remind the Canadians listening this morning, because there are Canadians listening, why it is important to pass Bill C-47. How will the bill help position Canada for the 21st-century economy?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Industry, for his question and for the close collaboration between our two departments. Today we are building Canada's 21st-century economy, and we are doing so by working as a team.

I completely agree that we have the opportunity today to seize the economic moment. We can also fail to do so and miss this opportunity. That is why we do not have much time and must act immediately.

I was in Montreal a few days ago, speaking to a group of Canadian investors. They told me that the measures we outlined in the budget last March were the necessary ones.

However, they also told me that it was necessary to implement them right now because, otherwise, capital will migrate to the United States and will not be invested here in Canada, where we need it.

[English]

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are quite concerned about the Liberals closing down debate.

They are stymying the scrutiny of government expenditures and management, which are out of control. I will give a small example of what is happening throughout Canada, which is big in my riding. We have an underpass that was supposed to be in Pitt Meadows, and it has more than tripled in cost in just the past four years, from \$63 million to \$200 million. The whole project is on the verge of collapsing. Most of the cost is not even for construction; it is for enabling, management and bureaucracy. This is happening across Canada.

This affects all Canadians and hard-working taxpayers. Do the Liberal minister and the government not appreciate the need for more scrutiny and accountability?

• (1120)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, we absolutely appreciate the importance and value of parliamentary debate. That is why I appeared before the committee of the whole for more than four hours last Monday.

We appreciate the hard, important work committees do, although committees can work more effectively when they are not being filibustered. Having said that, we also know that part of the job we are all charged with doing here is to move from words and debate to action. What I have been hearing as I travel around the country is not that our constituents, our voters, want us to talk more. In fact, what I hear is that they would like us to talk a little less and get a little more done.

That is what our government is absolutely committed to. There are so many measures in this legislation that I believe every single member of the House could support. Who is opposed to cracking down on predatory lending? Let us join hands and get important work done for the people.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for joining us. I should not say that, but I thank her anyway.

I would like to ask a question on a topic of great concern to me. In our role as members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, we expect a certain degree of accountability, particularly from the departments, but also from Crown corporations.

Government Orders

In this budget, I see that a huge number of funds, like the Canada growth fund, are going to be managed by Crown corporations from now on. For the public we represent, this will mean less accountability and, more importantly, less transparency.

I wonder if the minister would agree that Crown corporations should be held to the same standard of transparency as the departments?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question and her kind words, which I am pleased to accept.

The member opposite is raising a very specific question concerning the Canada growth fund. This is an important fund, so the question is also important. Right now, the green transition needs public investments. Quebec and Quebecers understand that. It is also understood that these investments require a level of business expertise that public servants just do not have. That is why we will be calling on the services of professionals to invest this money, our money, our constituents' money.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, first, I just want to comment on how disheartening it is to see the Conservatives' many tactics and games to stall the work that is necessary for us to move forward in representing our constituents. I do not understand the desire to ensure that Canadians do not have access to dental care. That is necessary. Constituents are reaching out to me in my riding, talking about how much they need this dental care, and I know many constituents in the Conservatives' ridings are saying the same.

I will turn to my question, however. In the budget there was a commitment to advance the red dress initiative for missing and murdered indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people, and we are not seeing that funding commitment attached to it. Could the Minister of Finance please clarify when we will see the advancement of this vital life-saving tool?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland: Mr. Speaker, I very much agree with the member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith that all of us have to really be thoughtful when it comes to discrediting the institution that we have the privilege to be a part of, and Conservative games risk doing that. They also are delaying the provision of very, very important support to Canadians.

I am glad to hear a second reference to dental care. It would literally transform people's smiles, their health and their lives. It is one of the reasons we have to get this legislation passed.

With respect to the red dress initiative, it is another very important measure we are committed to working with all members of the House to make it happen.

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● (1125)

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the motion now before the House.

[English]

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. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

● (1210)

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

*(Division No. 350)***YEAS****Members**

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Collins (Victoria)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garrison
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly

Jowhari
Kayabaga
Khalid
Koutrakis
Kwan
Lambropoulos
Lamoureux
Lattanzio
LeBlanc
Lightbound
Longfield
MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacGregor
Maloney
Masse
May (Cambridge)
McGuinty
McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McPherson
Mendicino
Miller
Morrissey
Naqvi
Noormohamed
O'Regan
Powlowski
Robillard
Rogers
Sahota
Saks
Sarai
Schiefke
Sgro
Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton South)
Sousa
Sudds
Taylor Roy
Trudeau
Valdez
Vandal
Virani
Wilkinson
Zahid
Zuberi— 175

Julian
Kelloway
Khera
Kusmierczyk
Lalonde
Lametti
Lapointe
Lauzon
Lebouthillier
Long
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Martinez Ferrada
Mathysen
McDonald (Avalon)
McKay
McLeod
Mendès
Miao
Morrice
Murray
Ng
O'Connell
Petitpas Taylor
Qualtrough
Rodriguez
Romanado
Sajjan
Samson
Scarpaleggia
Serré
Shanahan
Sidhu (Brampton East)
Singh
St-Onge
Tassi
Thompson
Turnbull
Van Bynen
Vandenbeld
Weiler
Yip
Zarrillo

NAYS**Members**

Aboultaif
Albas
Arnold
Barlow
Barsalou-Duval
Berthold
Bezan
Blanchette-Joncas
Bragdon
Brock
Calkins
Carrie
Chambers
Chong
Dalton
Davidson
Deltell
Desilets
Dowdall
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)
Epp
Falk (Provencher)
Ferrerri
Fortin
Aitchison
Allison
Baldinelli
Barrett
Beaulieu
Bérubé
Blanchet
Block
Brassard
Brunelle-Duceppe
Caputo
Chabot
Champoux
Cooper
Dancho
DeBellefeuille
Desbiens
Doherty
Dreeschen
Ellis
Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Fast
Findlay
Gallant

Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Kitchen	Kmieć
Kram	Kramp-Neuman
Kurek	Kusie
Lake	Lantsman
Larouche	Lawrence
Lehoux	Lemire
Lewis (Essex)	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
Liepert	Lloyd
Lobb	Maguire
Martel	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seebach	Shields
Shipley	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Steinley	Ste-Marie
Stewart	Strahl
Stubbs	Thériault
Therrien	Thomas
Tochor	Tolmie
Trudel	Uppal
Van Popta	Vecchio
Vidal	Vien
Viersen	Vignola
Villemure	Vis
Vuong	Wagantall
Warkentin	Waugh
Webber	Williams
Zimmer — 145	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

REPORT STAGE

The House resumed from June 5 consideration of Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always interesting when time constraints require us to split our speaking time between two different days, but I was okay with stopping my intervention halfway through last evening in order to accommodate the emergency debate on the wildfire situation.

I would like to express my hopes that everyone remains safe as the fires rage. I helped friends back home in Salmon Arm evacuate in 1998 just before the flames took their home, and I have seen how bad the devastation can be.

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I also want to recognize the expertise and courage of the fire-fighters and emergency response teams for all they are doing to save lives, properties and assist those displaced.

I will go back to my intervention on Bill C-47, the budget implementation act. I was speaking last night about what \$20 billion looked like to everyday Canadians, but I am now going to have to change my question it appears because the Liberal-NDP coalition has set new standards.

The forecast deficit for 2023-24 is now \$43 billion. How do those record deficits affect Canadians? It will affect lower-income Canadians disproportionately more.

In 2015, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment was \$973; it is now \$1,760. A two-bedroom was \$1,172; it is now \$2,135.

When the Liberals took office, it only took 39% of an average paycheck to make monthly home payments. Under the Liberal-NDP fiscal management, or lack thereof, it now takes 62% of average income to make payments on an average home, an increase from what was in 2015, which was \$1,400, to \$3,100 today. Average minimum down payments have increased from \$22,000 for a home to \$45,000 for across Canada numbers. Add to this the sharp increases in interest rates and we have a situation where renters and first-time homebuyers need some relief.

The Conservatives had asked for some common-sense steps in this 2023 budget, but the Liberal-NDP coalition was blind to the problems it continued to create for Canadians aspiring to purchase a first home or upsize to have room for their growing families.

The Liberals inflationary spending has also caused the cost of food to rise and skyrocket. Food prices have risen so dramatically that one in five Canadians are now skipping meals.

When I am out meeting with the good people in North Okanagan—Shuswap, a place where we can grow so much good food, people have been sharing their grocery store experiences, and this is one of the common topics that comes up now. They have been shocked at rising prices in the grocery aisles and have been forced into making choices and not purchasing items they used to purchase.

There were warnings that these issues were coming, rising inflation, higher interest rates, skyrocketing housing costs and higher food costs, but the finance minister ignored those early warning signs. In fact, the minister ignored further warnings, and continues to plan on spending like there is no tomorrow.

In the tomorrows to come, I and my Conservative colleagues will be fighting for and providing common-sense policies and budgets that will give those everyday Canadians hope for their futures, beyond the current government's disastrous tenure.

We will work to have Canadians keep more of their paycheques so they can decide how to spend them instead of sending more to the Liberal government for it to distribute as government sees best.

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● (1215)

Time allocation is now shutting down debate on Bill C-47, and I believe it is because the Liberal-NDP coalition does not want people to hear how bad this year's budget is for them. It is a shame that Liberals are going to shut it down and not allow us to tell Canadians what to expect and give them more hope for the future.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague gave a lot of facts and statistics. Could he expand a bit further on how the cost of living is affecting people, specifically with the carbon tax? We now know there will be a second carbon tax as well. Therefore, with all these extra expenses, an increase in inflation and carbon taxes that make the price of everything go up, could he speak to that?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, we know that carbon tax 1 has done nothing to meet emissions targets. The Liberal government has failed to meet any of the targets it has set. Now it is going to impose carbon tax 2. By the time we combine both of these carbon taxes and then the GST, the tax on a tax, Canadians will be looking at spending 61¢ per litre just because of the Liberal-NDP coalition's taxes on carbon. It is again one of those things Canadians need to be made aware of, and I am happy that I can stand to speak about it.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in listening to my colleague's speech, I take it that he has a very different position on a number of different issues, but I am going to guess that he is for helping people, especially tradespeople and workers who are trying to improve their situation in this current economy. Therefore, I wonder why my colleague is against the automatic advance for the Canada workers benefit, which is very important to my constituents in Châteauguay—Lacolle, and the doubling of the deduction for tradespeople's tools.

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, there are so many pieces in this massive omnibus bill and there may be portions of it that we could support. However, when it comes to \$43 billion in deficit this year, I cannot support that. My colleagues and I cannot support this out-of-control spending that is only going to end up taking more dollars out of the pockets of taxpayers. The government claims it is trying to put dollars in their pockets, but it is just taking more and more from them.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague talked about hope for families. However, right now, hope for families is diminishing for another reason, and that is the climate crisis.

The climate crisis is escalating. Forest fires are growing in number and intensity, and the fire season has only just begun. This creates anxiety for everyone, young and old alike.

Considering what we see when we leave the House of Commons, I would have liked the Conservative Party to say more about the climate crisis. Basically, what I want to say is that I am disappointed to see that the Conservatives have not progressed despite what we are now seeing across Canada from coast to coast to coast.

● (1220)

[English]

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, the hon. member wants to see something different from the Conservatives. She will see something different from us if we form government next. We will see action on climate change through technology, not a tax plan like the current government has, a tax plan that takes more dollars out of the paycheques of Canadians, and it has accomplished nothing credible at this point in time.

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I must rise today to talk about a crisis we are going to have to face in the medium term.

I am not talking about the fact that, right now, after eight years of this Prime Minister, nine out of 10 young people believe that they will never be able to buy a house. I am not talking about the fact that one out of every five Canadians are skipping meals because of the cost of food after eight years of this Prime Minister. I am also not talking about the fact that 1.5 million Canadians need to use food banks to be able to eat. I am not even talking about the fact that, after eight years of this Prime Minister, Canadians have to allocate 63% of their pre-tax income to pay their monthly housing costs. In Vancouver, they are using 98% of their pre-tax income.

That is not the crisis I am referring to. The crisis I am referring to is something no one is talking about, but that could explode if we do not change direction. The crisis is the following. When the government decided, in 2021 and 2022, to print \$400 billion to finance excessive spending, one of the effects was to create inflation, which always happens when you print money. This also caused a huge bubble in our financial system, caused by the mortgage situation.

Huge numbers of Canadians took out mortgages because they were easily available and because of their artificially low cost. In fact, 38% of all current mortgages were taken out between January 2021 and June 2022. Almost 40% of all mortgage debt today dates from that 18-month period, because interest rates were extremely low. People decided to go to the bank, make changes to their mortgage and borrow huge amounts of money, because it cost almost nothing to borrow money from the bank.

The problem is that these mortgages have a five-year term. These high mortgages will all be renewed in 2026 and 2027, at a significantly higher interest rate. We are not talking about billions or tens of billions of dollars. We are talking about mortgages totalling hundreds of billions of dollars that will be renewed at a higher rate. Even the Bank of Canada acknowledged that it was a systemic risk, not only for people who took out mortgages, but also for the banks, which will probably have trouble getting their money back.

If families cannot pay the increased interest rates, what will they do? They will have to sell their homes. However, if everyone is selling their house at the same time and there are no families that can afford the increased interest rates, there will be sellers but no buyers. That could cause house prices to fall. We already have the largest housing bubble in the G7 and almost the largest in the world. What are we going to do about it?

We are stressing the importance of balancing the budget today precisely because that is a key element in avoiding this serious looming crisis. Even all the Liberal experts are saying it: deficits cause inflation. Inflation causes interest rates to rise. If we do not lower inflation rates over the next year, we will be unable to reduce interest rates in time to avoid a housing bubble in 2026 and 2027.

• (1225)

What we want is a government plan aimed at balancing the budget in order to reduce inflation and interest rates. I know that it is the Bank of Canada that sets interest rates, but the economic environment in which it makes these decisions is a determining factor.

If the government drives up inflation with inflationary deficits, the Bank of Canada will be forced to raise interest rates. Former minister of finance John Manley said that, when the Bank of Canada puts its foot on the brake, the government puts its foot on the inflation accelerator. We need to take our foot off the accelerator to reduce inflation and allow the Bank of Canada to reduce interest rates before the crisis hits. That is plain common sense. It is nothing new.

Deficits drive up inflation and interest rates. Balanced budgets reduce both. That is what we are going to do. We will put a ceiling on spending to eliminate deficits and waste in order to balance the budget, reduce inflation and allow all Canadians to continue paying their mortgage and keep their home.

We recommend that the government proceed with the utmost caution, and we are asking that it keep the promise it made six months ago to balance the budget in the medium term. As soon as the government does that, we will allow a vote and perhaps let this budget pass if the votes in the House permit it. It is just common sense. We will bring back common sense.

[English]

There is a crisis in this country, and the crisis is not just that 1.5 million people are eating at food banks or one in five are skipping meals because of the price of food. The crisis is not just that a majority of Canadians now tell pollsters they are struggling to make ends meet or that even nine in 10 young people believe they will never afford a home. The crisis is not even that it takes 63% of average monthly income to make monthly payments on the average home, a record-smashing height. The crisis is not even that it now takes 98% of pre-tax income in Vancouver for the average family to pay a mortgage on the average house. Those things are all insane and unprecedented, but they are the reality after eight years.

The real crisis is that there is massive mortgage bubble that is ready to detonate in the years 2026 and 2027. Here is how this bubble occurred. Today, 38% of all mortgage debt was originated between January of 2021 and June of 2022, all when rates were at rock bottom because the government printed \$400 billion of cash

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and pumped it into the financial system, causing it to be artificially abundant and artificially cheap. People took on mortgages they would otherwise not be able to afford. This inflated housing prices and mortgages together, but those mortgages come up for renewal five years later. That will be between January 1, 2026, and June of 2027. If interest rates are as high then as they are now, these people will run into a brick wall.

The Bank of Canada says that they will face a 40% increase in mortgage payments, so if their payment right now is \$3,000, they will be paying an extra \$1,300 a month, which equals almost \$15,000 a year. If the average Canadian does not have more than \$200 left at the end of each month, they will not be able to pay it. That will lead to mass selling and there will be no buyers because the buyers will not be able to pay the higher rates on those prices. That is a real crisis that we face if we do not change course immediately, so what must be done?

We need to reduce inflation so that the Bank of Canada can reduce interest rates. How do we do that? We do it by doing the opposite of what we are doing now. Even top Liberals, like former finance minister John Manley, have said that deficits are like putting the foot on the gas of inflation. What we need to do is take the foot off the gas to balance the budget, to reverse the \$60 billion of inflationary spending that the government has put forward and to honour the promise the government made just six months ago to have a medium-term plan to balance the budget within a half decade.

If the government will do the common-sense thing, rise to its feet and present a plan to balance the budget, then Conservatives will allow a vote to occur. We know that the only way to rescue people from this crisis is through common sense: by balancing the budget to lower inflation and interest rates, bringing down the tax burden so that there are more powerful paycheques and allowing people to pay less and bring home more. This is just common sense. It is the common sense of the common people, united for our common home: their home, my home, our home. Let us bring it home.

• (1230)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not particularly disagree with the member's concerns about the future and Canadians being able to properly take care of themselves. What I do have a concern with is the approach taken by the opposition party as we talk about deficits.

The one key part of the economic equation that the member is missing out on when he is discussing this is economic growth. The reality is that if we can grow our economy as quickly as it has been growing, it puts us in a position to be able to take on more debt.

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It is not just me saying this. Every Conservative prime minister in the past has run countless deficits. As a matter of fact, if we look at Mulroney and Harper, out of the 16 budgets they introduced, only three did not run deficits.

Can the member comment on how economic growth plays into this equation?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, it plays strongly into the equation. That is why the fact that the government has had the slowest real per capita economic growth since the Great Depression is such a big problem, and debt actually drives down growth because it weighs down the economy.

As for the deficits of previous Conservative governments, the Mulroney government did not have any operating deficits. Its deficits were simply interest on the previous Trudeau government's debt. Of course, I am going to inherit the same kind of mess from his son.

Let me quote Stephen McNeil, former Liberal premier of Nova Scotia, "Happening on the inflation side, if governments both nationally continue to spend beyond their means, not spending for infrastructure, spending to pay the credit card of the government of today, they are going to continue to have inflation that continues to increase, which continues to put pressure on household budgets across country.... Number two, get your spending in order, we would all benefit from all governments being able to manage their own budget a lot...."

That is from a Liberal. Top, common-sense Liberals no longer recognize themselves in this radical, nonsense government. We need balanced budgets to lower inflation and interest rates so Canadians can keep their homes and build a life.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limouilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, in the initial Bill C-47, a \$2-billion transfer for health care was included twice. It did not take very long for the Liberals and the NDP—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I know that the Leader of the Opposition would like to hear the question, but it is difficult to hear it when other parliamentarians decide to talk to one another. I must repeat, as I often do, that if people wish to talk to one another, they should leave and then return if they want to hear what is happening in the House.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limouilou.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, even my secondary school students understood that aspect of basic respect.

The initial Bill C-47 contained \$2 billion in health transfers. It was a repeat of a previous bill. That was a mistake, except that it was a good mistake that could have helped all of the provinces and Quebec, in particular given the aging population, which entails more health care needs. However, this government and its allies decided to withdraw the \$2 billion to Quebec and the provinces.

What does my colleague think, and what does he think the impact will be on health care systems across Canada?

• (1235)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, we know that the Bloc Québécois wants to eliminate 100% of federal health transfers. With sovereignty, the Bloc wants Quebec to receive \$0 for health care. I find it very strange and ironic that the Bloc would stand in the House of Commons to ask for more from Ottawa when its ultimate goal is to receive nothing. It makes no sense. We should not waste time talking about sovereignty.

Quebecers are struggling to pay their bills because of taxes and the government's inflationary deficits. What is the Bloc doing? They are asking for more debts, more spending, more taxes and inflation.

Only the Conservative Party has the plain common sense to control spending and balance the budget in order to reduce inflation, interest rates and taxes.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, the other crisis in our country is the crisis with people not being able to afford to go see a dentist. I am very proud that the NDP was able to force the Liberal government to expand provisions in this bill to make sure that children under the age of 18, seniors and persons with disabilities can now have access to dental care. These people are in the margins of our society and they really need it.

How long has he been able to enjoy the benefits of taxpayer-funded dental care, while his constituents and Canadians across this country have gone without?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, we see the NDP socialist paradise playing itself out on the streets of Vancouver, where we have had, up until recently, a socialist government at the federal level, a socialist government at the provincial level and a socialist mayor, a former member of that caucus, at the municipal level, and what has it given?

It has caused tent cities, massive, raging crime and a situation where it now costs in the city of Vancouver 98% of the average person's family income to make monthly payments on a home. That is the paradise they have been promising. Utopia means "no place" in Greek. Actually, it means "no place" in English too.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to contribute to the continuing debate on Bill C-47, the budget 2023 implementation act, which proposes measures that will help Canadians and build a stronger economy.

Budget 2023, "a Made-in-Canada Plan: Strong Middle Class, Affordable Economy, Healthy Future", arrived at an important time for our country and the world.

It delivers targeted inflation relief for 11 million Canadians and families who need it most, strengthens Canada's universal public health care system with an investment of \$198.3 billion and introduces a new Canadian dental care plan to benefit up to nine million Canadians.

Budget 2023 also makes transformative investments to build Canada's clean economy, fight climate change and create new opportunities for Canadian businesses and Canadian workers. This includes significant measures that will deliver cleaner and more affordable energy, support investment in our communities and create good-paying jobs as part of a responsible fiscal plan that will see Canada maintain the lowest deficit and the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7.

One aspect of Bill C-47 I would like to address today is how it proposes to enact measures to help build Canada's clean economy, and specifically, two important proposals that were first announced in budget 2022.

The first is the Canada growth fund, which would help attract private capital to build Canada's clean economy. The other is the establishment of the Canada innovation corporation as a new Crown corporation, with a mandate to increase Canadian business expenditures on research and development.

I will start with the Canada growth fund. It was incorporated in December 2022 as a subsidiary of the Canada Development Investment Corporation. As a significant part of Canada's plan to decarbonize and build Canada's clean economy, the Canada growth fund requires an experienced, professional and independent investment team ready to make important investments in support of Canada's climate and economic goals.

Therefore, budget 2023 announced the intention to have the growth fund partner with the Public Sector Pension Investment Board, or PSP Investments, to deliver on the growth fund's mandate of attracting private capital to invest in Canada's clean economy. Bill C-47 contains the necessary legislative amendments to enable PSP Investments to manage the assets of the Canada growth fund as a \$15-billion arm's-length public investment vehicle.

PSP Investments is one of Canada's largest pension investment managers, with more than \$225 billion in assets under management, and operates at arm's length from the government. It will provide the Canada growth fund with an independent team that has extensive experience across the range of investment tools that the growth fund will use to deliver on its mandate and attract new private investment to Canada.

By partnering with PSP Investments, the Canada growth fund would be able to move quickly and begin making investments in the near term to support the growth of Canada's clean economy. One of the investment tools the Canada growth fund will use to support clean growth projects is contracts for difference. These contracts can backstop the future price of, for example, carbon or hydrogen, providing predictability that helps to de-risk major projects that cut Canada's emissions. Contracts for difference allow companies to plan ahead, supporting the growth of Canada's clean economy by making clean projects more cost-effective than more polluting projects.

• (1240)

Relatedly, budget 2023 announced that the government will consult on the development of a broad-based approach to carbon contracts for difference that aims to make carbon pricing even more predictable, while supporting the investments needed to build a

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competitive, clean economy and help meet Canada's climate goals. This would complement contracts for difference offered by the Canada growth fund. Notably, the Canada growth fund assets will be separate and managed independently of the pension assets of PSP Investments. However, it will maintain the market-leading reporting framework for public transparency and accountability that the government committed to in the 2022 fall economic statement.

I also mentioned earlier that Bill C-47 proposes to establish the Canada innovation corporation as a new Crown corporation with a mandate to increase Canadian business expenditure on research and development across all sectors and regions of Canada. Currently, Canada ranks last in the G7 in R and D spending by businesses. I think we can all agree that this has to change.

Solving Canada's main innovation challenges, including a low rate of private business investment in research, development and the uptake of new technologies, is key to growing our economy and creating good jobs. Canadian companies need to take their new ideas and new technologies and turn them into new products, services and thriving businesses, and they need support to do that.

The mandate of the Canada innovation corporation will be to promote the improved productivity and growth of Canadian firms, which would contribute to a strong and innovative Canadian economy. It would work proactively with new and established Canadian industries and businesses to help them make the investments they need in order to innovate, grow, create jobs and be competitive in the changing global economy.

It would do this by offering needed support to transform new ideas into new and improved products and processes. It would also support them in developing and protecting intellectual property and in capturing important segments of global supply chains that will help drive Canada's economic growth and create good jobs.

I would like to stress that the CIC will not be just another funding agency. It is intended to be a market-oriented innovation agency with private sector leadership and expertise. The CIC would operate with an initial budget of \$2.6 billion over four years, and with the passage of Bill C-47, it is expected to begin its operations in 2023.

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Overall, these measures from Bill C-47 are just part of the government's plan to build a stronger, more sustainable 21st-century economy. They build on budget 2023's transformative investments to build Canada's clean economy, fight climate change and create new opportunities for Canadian businesses and Canadian workers.

With our made-in-Canada plan, our budget would ensure that Canadians have more money in their pockets and are meeting the challenges of today and tomorrow, while building a Canada that is more secure, more sustainable and more affordable for people from coast to coast to coast. Key measures in the budget implementation bill include, one, an automatic advance for the Canada workers benefit; two, the doubling of the deduction for tradespeople's tools; three, improved registered education savings plans; four, banning cosmetic testing on animals; five, strengthening Canada's supply chains and trade corridors; and six, continuing our efforts in supporting Ukraine by taking action against Russia.

I encourage all hon. members to support Bill C-47 and to contribute to this effort.

• (1245)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith, we have seen rent prices continue to increase. In Nanaimo alone last year, we saw rental prices increase by 30%, and those prices have continued to increase from there. This, as we all know, is disproportionately impacting seniors on fixed incomes, families and people living with disabilities.

When will we see the Liberals put an end to renovictions and put into place a national acquisition fund so that non-profits, for example, will have a chance to keep rents low and people can afford a place to call home?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, rent affordability is a major cause of concern for Canadians from coast to coast to coast. Through our national housing strategy, we have committed billions of dollars to increase the construction of affordable homes. We have also provided funds for private sector companies to have affordable rental properties in their new projects. However, the fundamental thing that has to be addressed is the supply of new construction.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member a question relating to promises made by the finance minister.

Last year, in the budget debate, she made it very clear that her government had a plan to return to balanced budgets. In the more recent fall economic statement, the minister again said that she had a plan to return to balanced budgets, or, in other words, the government living within its means.

The most recent budget has no commitment anymore to returning to balanced budgets, so I would ask my good friend and colleague across the aisle this. Why is it that the government has now abandoned any commitment to returning to balanced budgets?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, these are challenging times in the challenging world we live in. Considering all of the things happening around the world and considering inflation, which

is affecting almost every other country in the world, we are taking very prudent steps in managing the fiscal aspects of our economy.

We continue to have the lowest deficit-to-GDP ratio in the G7. We continue to have the lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio among G7 countries. That is due to the prudent approach we have adopted in the last eight years, which we continue to focus on.

• (1250)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, this budget allocates \$80 billion over 10 years for a green transition fund. However, there will be no accountability to Parliament for that fund.

Moreover, the eligibility criteria involve being able to invest in the oil industry, even though reducing GHG emissions means reducing oil consumption.

How can my colleague find it logical to invest up to \$80 billion over 10 years in the oil industry while pushing for the reduction of GHG emissions?

[English]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, our budget has made it very clear that the investments we are going to make will be in companies that lead to the clean economy of the future. That has been made very clear and we will continue to stand by it.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Nepean for addressing Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

I will point out, for those who are observing this debate, that the budget implementation act covers the variety of measures the hon. member for Nepean mentioned, changes the most favourable nation status for Russia and creates a vessel remediation act and a vessel remediation fund, which are going to be very important for areas in my constituency. Does he have any comments on that?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, as members know, we have covered a lot of things in this budget, and there are many things there for everyone.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madame Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to be able to exchange and share my views as an elected member on Bill C-47.

Before I begin my speech, I would like to offer my warmest thoughts to all residents who are currently facing unprecedented fires in Quebec, but also elsewhere in Canada. I do not know if there are still climate deniers, but I think we must all resolve once and for all to take action to counter and prevent these phenomena.

I would also like to acknowledge everyone on the front lines who is supporting Quebec and ensuring that our natural resources and our citizens are protected, now and in the future.

As a member who is called upon to play the important role of legislator in the House, I find it difficult to have to once again debate a 430-page omnibus bill that amends 59 acts, in addition to the income tax regulations. I find it difficult to have to take a position on such a bill.

The government had promised not to do that anymore, and yet here we are faced with an omnibus bill once again. I would like to acknowledge my colleague from Joliette, who sits on the Standing Committee on Finance and who has done an amazing job at trying to find the best and ensure the best. However, we know that this situation becomes almost impossible. I do not think it is worthy of the work we do here.

I will touch on another point. As elected members, we have a duty to properly represent the people in our ridings, particularly during budget periods. I am certain that I am not the only one to do so. We know that the budget tabled in Parliament will affect many aspects of their daily lives. It is sad to see that the main issues are not being addressed. In my riding, I did a prebudget tour to understand the priorities and realities, to hear ideas from our fellow residents about priorities to be considered to improve their daily lives.

Recently, I even went on a tour of seniors' residences. Health is always the first issue people raise. We hear about everything that is happening, at least in Quebec. We hear about the burnout and the conditions for workers who have been on the front lines for a long time. Unfortunately, this budget does not in any way address the reality of health and social services in Quebec.

As we know, Quebec and the other provinces were calling for a substantial increase in the Canada health transfers they receive. They did that for a reason. This increase would enable them to fulfill one of their main responsibilities. Once again, however, the government decided to use its spending power to slash these health transfers. In addition, it decided to put money into a dental care program that will be difficult to implement because dental care does not fall under federal jurisdiction at all. The federal government is interfering in the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces instead of investing its fair share to strengthen our universal public health care systems. That is one of the priorities, but there is nothing in the budget about that.

● (1255)

The same goes for seniors. There are no measures for them. I already know what the government will say in response. It will say that it is here for seniors and that it increased old age security by 10% for seniors aged 75 and over.

At the federal level, however, OAS is almost universal as of age 65. The government has decided to leave seniors between the ages of 65 and 74 out in the cold. When I meet with seniors in that age range, they say that they are concerned about their financial well-being. They are also concerned about housing.

In Quebec, a number of seniors' residences are closing down for budgetary reasons. There are seniors who say that if they had to move out by tomorrow, they would be unable to find safe, adequate housing they could afford. These are concerns that affect the entire population. In Canada, OAS is not a gold mine. Among OECD countries, we have one of the weakest systems.

Government Orders

However, the government has decided that seniors aged 65 to 74 must wait. We will see. Once they have emptied out their savings, the government may change its mind. That is so ridiculous.

A real vision to support the most vulnerable would require that this budget include robust measures for seniors and for affordable and social housing, not for housing at market prices. The government is investing over \$80 billion in programs under the national housing strategy. That is public money, yet we are struggling to get answers about the role it will play in affordable and social housing.

Fortunately, the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities is currently conducting a study of the financialization of housing. I believe there are things that will need to be resolved once and for all. Investing in off-market properties is the best way we can help seniors and young people, to ensure that affordable housing becomes a priority. It is a shared responsibility. The federal government has a role to play in this respect. In this budget, it is doing nothing. That is astounding to me.

There is another issue that affects both businesses and workers, and that is the labour shortage. It is not imaginary, it is a reality. I do not know about my colleagues' ridings, but the labour shortage is apparent everywhere we look. For instance, I have seen employers offering to hire seniors.

I have met with retirees and self-employed workers who might actually be interested in returning to the labour market, putting their expertise to use and being part of the workforce. However, in the current context, they are totally penalized. They already have low retirement incomes. If, in addition, the tax rules are not revised to ensure that their retirement income is not reduced, why would they go back to work?

These are people who are very involved as volunteers. They are prepared to help out in the workforce but, again, they must not be penalized for that. There is nothing in the budget in this respect.

Workers are making almost historic demands. They are asking the government to reform the only social program that exists in Canada, the employment insurance system, once and for all. In 2015, the Liberals made a solemn promise to reform the system. In 2019, the Liberals made another solemn promise to reform the system. In 2021, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion and the Prime Minister committed to implementing reform. In the wake of the crisis that we have experienced, they said the system needed to be reformed and adapted to the current labour market.

● (1300)

Workplaces have changed. There are non-standard workers and seasonal workers. The government is turning its back on all of these people.

Government Orders

All that to say, this budget does not target—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I gave the hon. member a little extra time, but I cannot give her any more. We have to move on.

The hon. member for Châteauguay—Lacolle.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am always very interested in what my colleague has to say, especially when it is about seniors' pensions. I have two questions.

First of all, I am wondering whether she is familiar with the D'Amours report that was released by the Quebec government about 10 years ago. According to that report, the real need for additional pension benefits begins at age 75.

Here is my other question. Could she comment on the Conservative Party's idea to raise the age of eligibility for OAS to 67?

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, with regard to the member's second question, the government has restored the age of eligibility for the old age security pension to 65, and that was the right thing to do.

However, even though they restored the age of eligibility for the pension to 65, they are abandoning seniors. The elderly are no longer taken into consideration.

The D'Amours report is from another era; it is 10 years old. Yes, I am aware of it, as I was working with the unions at the time. Now it is 2023, and we are in an inflationary economic climate in which seniors have two concerns: housing and their safety. Overall, 60% of seniors live on a fixed pension as their sole source of income.

In my view, it is a disgrace that the Liberal government has decided to abandon seniors and discriminate against them in this way.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned many things I think we agree on. She mentioned the need to reform employment insurance. She mentioned the need to increase old age security for seniors who are struggling. I want to ask her a question about another group that is struggling to make ends meet, and that is people with disabilities. I met with a group on Friday in my riding that told me that half of the clients it works with, adults with developmental disabilities, are having the CERB benefits they received clawed back by CRA.

Does my colleague agree with me that the government should put a stop to the clawback of CERB benefits for people living with disabilities in this country?

• (1305)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, although some people had their meagre CERB supplements cut, I think some compassion is in order.

Concerning people with disabilities, I am proud to say that support is still available in Quebec. People with disabilities are not different, they are unique and should be treated as such. In other

words, they are fully entitled to social inclusion. Every effort must be made by and for them.

We have one major concern in this regard. I think that CERB clawbacks, such as those that have affected some of our seniors, should involve at least some degree of amnesty.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I was listening earlier when my colleague from Châteauguay—Lacolle asked her questions.

I have often wondered how the Liberal leaders managed to pull a fast one on their MPs when it comes to increasing the old age security pension only for seniors aged 75 and up. Now I understand. They led their MPs to believe that a report from 2013 is still relevant today. That explains a lot of things and is very disappointing.

I congratulate my colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville on her speech. She touched on all the issues. The main issue is seniors, and she spoke about them at length.

I would like to ask my colleague what she thinks about the government's inaction when it comes to relief measures or incentives for seniors who are returning to the labour market after just retiring around the age of 65 to 70. I would like my colleague to talk about that.

Ms. Louise Chabot: Madam Speaker, in my opinion, the government does not address the important issues in this budget. It is unbelievable. We need to support these people. They are already contributing to society. They are prepared to lend a hand, but the government is penalizing them. Basically, not only is the government not supporting them, but it is telling them to stay home. I find that unacceptable. I am sure that my colleague hears a lot about that in his riding.

The Government of Quebec made changes to the Quebec pension plan to address these issues. We would have expected the federal government to do the same. The Bloc Québécois very clearly requested tax measures to support this contribution in the current demographic context.

[English]

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a great joy for me to rise today in support of Bill C-47 for a couple of reasons. One reason is that this is a budget that is focused on Canadians. It is a budget that is focused on increasing affordability and improving the quality of life for Canadians. However, it is also important for us to use this occasion to understand and articulate to Canadians what the opposition is standing against and what the Conservatives are choosing to stop Canadians from accessing.

This is a budget about making life more affordable. It is about making investments in health care and making sure that Canadians receive the care they expect and deserve. In budget 2023, we outlined how our government is going to provide targeted inflation relief to Canadians.

This includes a one-time grocery rebate. Conservatives are standing against a grocery rebate, which would be provided for the many individuals and families who are struggling to put food on the table due to the rising cost of groceries. By targeting this grocery rebate to the Canadians who need it most, we would be providing important relief to 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians and families, all without fuelling inflation. That is what the opposition is voting against. This is supposed to be delivered to eligible Canadians on July 5 by direct deposit or cheques through the CRA. This is what the Conservatives have said they are going to stall.

Bill C-47 would implement additional key measures to make life more affordable for lower-income Canadians who are working hard to get ahead and join the middle class. That includes taking action to crack down on predatory lending, so now the Conservatives are standing up against taking on predatory lenders, which I cannot understand. Predatory lenders take advantage of some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, including low-income Canadians, newcomers and seniors, often by offering very high interest rate loans. Bill C-47 would allow the government to make changes to the Criminal Code to lower the criminal rate of interest from the equivalent of 47% to 35%, in line with the lowest cap among provinces, which is in Quebec. Bill C-47 would also adjust the Criminal Code's payday lending exemption to impose a cap on the cost of borrowing charged by payday lenders. This is something that affects Canadians from coast to coast to coast. I cannot understand why Conservatives would stand to oppose that.

We have also chosen to work hard to eliminate interest on Canada student loans and apprentice loans, which is support that would help students and new graduates finish their studies, keep more money in their pockets and successfully transition to the workforce. Over 750,000 post-secondary students rely on federal assistance each year to help them afford the cost of tuition, housing and everyday essentials. Our government chooses to invest in the future by investing in our children. That is again what the opposition has opposed. That is what the opposition is standing against.

We are supporting Canada's skilled tradespeople, who are essential to building our clean economy and who are the people who are going to help double the number of new homes that were built in Canada by 2032. That is, again, something the Conservatives seem to think is not in the interest of Canadians.

With Bill C-47, we would help tradespeople invest in the equipment they need by doubling the maximum employment deduction for tradespeople's tool expenses from \$500 to \$1,000. Conservatives are choosing to oppose that.

This bill would implement automatic advance payments for the Canada workers benefit. This benefit has already helped thousands of Canadians out of poverty, and these improvements would ensure that low-wage workers have timely access to the funds they need to support themselves and their families. Apparently that is not important to the Conservatives either. Starting in July, this would provide \$714 for single workers, and \$1,231 for a family, in three advance payments.

The Conservatives are also standing against stronger public health care. We all know that health care in this country and the workers who support that system are under tremendous strain. To

ensure that Canadians receive the care that they need, budget 2023 would deliver an urgent and needed investment to strengthen our public health care system. Whether it is helping Canadians find a family doctor or combatting the opioid crisis that has devastated too many families and communities, we are committed to ensuring that every Canadian can rely on a world-class, publicly funded health care system. The Conservatives do not support that either.

Government Orders

First, our government is committed to supporting provinces and territories in delivering better health care results for Canadians, no matter where they live, so the budget would deliver on our plan to provide an additional \$198.3 billion over 10 years to support better health care, including \$46.2 billion in new funding to provinces and territories. This would include additional Canada health transfer measures, tailored bilateral agreements to meet the needs of each province and territory, personal support worker wage support and the renewal of the territorial health investment fund. In return for all of this new funding, for the first time, provinces and territories would have to commit to not diverting away health care funding of their own and to improve how health care information is collected, shared, used and reported to Canadians to help manage public health emergencies and deliver better health outcomes. Conservatives, incomprehensibly, oppose this as well. This is supposed to be about working together to improve health care for all Canadians, and somehow it has turned into a partisan issue.

● (1310)

In recognition of the pressures on our health care system, especially in pediatric hospitals and emergency rooms, and to reduce wait times, we are providing an additional \$2 billion CHT, or Canada health transfer, top-up for all provinces and territories to address this immediate pressure. The funding is supposed to be used to improve and enhance the health care Canadians receive. It is not to be used by provinces and territories in place of their planned health care spending.

In addition, the federal government is going to work with indigenous partners to improve and provide additional support for indigenous health priorities by providing \$2 billion over the next 10 years, which would be distributed on a distinctions basis through the indigenous health equity fund. Inexplicably, Conservatives seem to oppose this as well.

Government Orders

As we all know, dental care is an important component of our health, but seeing a dentist is expensive. The Canada dental benefit, which is providing eligible parents or guardians with direct, upfront and tax-free benefits to cover the cost of dental care for children under 12, has supported more than 290,000 children to date, many of whom are in Conservative ridings. In my own riding, we have seen this benefit, and I know many Canadians from across the country, from coast to coast to coast, continue to benefit from this. However, it is not just children; it is also seniors. The government is committed to fully implementing a permanent Canadian dental care plan for uninsured Canadians with annual family incomes of less than \$90,000, with no co-pays for those with family incomes under \$70,000, by 2025. The Conservatives seem to think that making sure those Canadians who need dental care most should not get it is perfectly reasonable. In the House, we must stand against this type of nonsense, because those Canadians deserve and need it, and it should be up to us to ensure that they get it.

By amending several tax statutes, beginning this year, Bill C-47 would be an important step in rolling out this plan. It would facilitate information sharing between departments as part of the implementation of the dental plan, and it would streamline the application and enrolment process to allow Canadians to access dental care sooner. My constituents have been asking for this; they write about this and they call about this. This should be something we make a priority and we get done. The House has a responsibility, to all those Canadians who need dental care, to make sure we deliver it.

Budget 2023 makes targeted and responsible investments that would help to build a stronger future for all Canadians. Our government is moving forward with these measures to address the cost of living in a way that sets Canadians up for greater success without having an impact on inflation. We are making fiscally responsible investments for the future, and we are going to ensure that Canadians receive the health care they deserve. Every member of the House has an obligation to make sure we are doing right by Canadians. We hear a lot of talk about gatekeepers, but what we are doing right now is that the Conservatives are gate keeping Canadians from the benefits they need, the benefits they deserve and the benefits the House has an obligation to provide for them.

• (1315)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, in an earlier intervention, I asked the Leader of the Opposition how many years he has been enjoying taxpayer-funded dental care. He refused to answer, but the answer is 19 years.

While Conservatives are actively fighting against this measure, which is going to provide dental care for the most marginalized people in Canadian society, more than a million Canadians who cannot afford to see the dentist, I would just like to ask for my hon. colleague's thoughts on why the Conservatives seem so hell-bent on "dental care for me but not for thee"? Why are they not going to fight for their constituents who obviously need this? Dental care is a part of health care.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Speaker, I have been plagued by this question for quite some time.

All of us have an obligation to protect the interests of our constituents, to make sure that we improve their quality of life. If those of us in the Chamber can benefit from publicly funded dental care, we have an obligation to protect the interests of our constituents from coast to coast to coast who need it and should have that same benefit. The Leader of the Opposition has been benefiting from this for his entire adult life. I cannot understand why anyone in the House who has taken that benefit would stand here and say that Canadians who need it most, seniors and kids, should not get that dental care.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate hearing from some of the Liberals.

I would like to dig down into one specific part of this bill, which has to do with some of the aspects of the clean fuel standard and some of the regulations associated with that. I have great concern that we are at a point where, as a society, we would be diverting possibly millions of tonnes of food from the food supply chain into the energy supply chain. The results of that, at a time when there is so much global instability and food insecurity, the policies which are being promoted by the Liberal government, could actually have a dramatic, negative effect on global food security.

I am wondering whether the member could comment specifically on that, and whether or not he is aware whether his government has done a full accounting of how many people would be food insecure because of policies that are diverting from food into energy.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Speaker, I think we are all seized with the challenge of food security. We all need to be taking it seriously. There is also a bit of a false dichotomy in saying that we simply cannot be thinking about food insecurity if we are thinking about fuel standards and about how we deal with energy in this country.

It is important for us to be able to make the right investments in promoting food security and in making sure we are building long-term sustainable food supply in this country, but we also have to be taking up the fight with respect to how we think about the future of energy use in this country, how we think about climate change and how we make sure we are making the right investments for the future to ensure that what we are seeing today, fires across this country from coast to coast to coast, does not become the norm.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, the majority of what we are voting on today under ways and means will go into the economy, but through tax credits for questionable environmental projects.

How does my colleague explain that this government says one thing and makes itself out to be a champion of the environment, but then funds fossil fuels, with no means to ensure accountability, to boot?

• (1320)

[English]

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Speaker, I share with the hon. member a desire to deal with climate change in a meaningful and thoughtful way. With respect to the direction of the decisions the government has taken, we have put in some of the most substantial measures ever in this country to combat climate change. Different and changing circumstances require us to be adaptive in the way in which we respond, but our commitment to dealing with climate change in a thoughtful way is predicated on science and seeks to improve the quality of Canadian lives along the way. It is unmatched.

I believe very strongly that staying the course and ensuring that we do the hard work that is required will get us to the future we deserve.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am speaking today from northern Ontario, where the air is thick with the smoke from out-of-control fires. I know that people in Ottawa are dealing with the heavy smoke from out-of-control fires. I just spoke with a senior citizen in Toronto who ended up in hospital because of his lungs, and he was told it is because of the smoke from the fires.

Halifax burns. Abitibi burns. Sept-Îles burns. Alberta has burned for over a month, with 30,000 people evacuated. What we are dealing with is an unprecedented crisis as the climate catastrophe descends upon us, yet in the House, we see shenanigans, game playing, chest-thumping and climate denial.

I am speaking today about the need to get the budget implementation legislation passed so that we can address serious issues facing our country and our planet. Certainly, the people I represent want to know that the dental care plan for seniors is not going to be obstructed by the man who lives in the 19-room mansion at Stornoway with his own personal chef. They have a right to dental care, and they want that dental care passed. I will stay night after night until we get that passed. It is the same for the people who are calling us about food insecurity and inflation; they want us to act.

However, more than ever, I am hearing from people who are deeply concerned about the climate catastrophe that is unfolding. From Lucretius, the Roman poet, we have what is called the “Lucretius problem”, which is that a human being cannot imagine a river bigger than any river they have ever seen. Perhaps, for the longest time, we could not imagine the catastrophe of a planet unbalanced, and then Lytton burned. Then Fort McMurray burned, with nine billion dollars' worth of damages. Then there was the Paradise fire in California. Then Australia burned. Then, last year, the Arctic Circle was burning. This year, in Canada, more land will burn than in the entire history of our country. This is not a one-off; this is the accelerating impacts of the global temperature rise. Parliament does need to show Canadians that we are going to do something about it. Part of this is the work that we have been doing as New Democrats to push the government on embracing a sustainable energy future. The time is now. In this budget, we have seen some significant promises, and we need to make those promises happen.

Government Orders

There is another urgency in terms of the climate crisis, which is the urgency of not being left behind. In the nine months since Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, 31 battery manufacturing plants have come on stream. This will amount to 1,000 gigawatt hours of energy by 2030, enough to support the manufacture of 10 million to 13 million electric vehicles a year. We cannot be left behind while America shoots ahead. In energy production, in the nine months since the IRA, companies in the United States have announced 96 gigawatts of new clean power within an eight-month period. That is enough to power 20 million homes.

This is the work we have been doing as New Democrats, yet we see the Conservatives, who are long-standing climate deniers, make fun of and interfere with this funding, and they are now doing everything they can to block the funding from getting out to kick-start clean energy projects.

When the leader of the Conservative Party, the member from Stornoway, came to my riding, he was making all kinds of jokes about electric vehicles. I checked his work resume, and I know he has never worked in manufacturing or the mines, but my region is going to be dependent on the critical mineral supply chain for jobs and for long-term sustainability. We know that the Conservatives have attacked and undermined the investments at the EV plant in St. Thomas. They have also had nothing to say about the need to get the battery plant in Windsor off the ground, even though that represents thousands of jobs.

Just recently, at the committee on natural resources, the member for Calgary Centre claimed that the critical mineral strategy was a minor contribution to energy. He said that EV plants in the supply chain will have little or nothing to offer for 20 years. That is just false, and I want to get down to that right now, because we have been dealing with disinformation from the Conservatives consistently.

• (1325)

Peak oil is when oil reaches a historic high. This was supposed to be in 2030, but the massive changes in renewable energy have reduced that to 2025 or possibly 2024. This year, the investment in renewable energy was almost twice that of oil and gas. The urgent point is that Canada does not leave its energy workers behind. Just this past week, I held a press conference with the Alberta Federation of Labour, with which I have worked closely on this, and the energy workers there who are ready to embrace the clean energy opportunities in hydrogen and in geothermal. They have the skills and the ideas, but what we all know is that the clock is ticking. We have to address this.

Government Orders

Whether the Conservatives want to admit it or not, the transition is happening. This is what I hear from energy workers in Alberta. They know this. The day after Danielle Smith won the election, 1,500 Suncor employees, 10% of its workforce, were fired. Suncor is getting rid of its workers and shifting to automation. That is where the big money is. Over the last nine years, we have seen Texas lose 110,000 jobs for oil workers. Alberta lost 45,000 jobs over the last nine years in the oil sector. Those jobs are not coming back.

We need to retool. We need to build an economy that is actually focused on creating sustainable energy from our immense resources. There is no other country in the world that has the resources we have or the skilled workers. However, this country is being blocked by an immature opposition, in terms of the Conservatives, who continue to deny the climate catastrophe. I encourage them to step out and go take a big, deep breath of that smoke-filled air, to realize that the fire is here. It is coming. It is not going away. We have to address it.

There are many shortfalls in the present government, which I will continue to call out. There are many shortfalls in this budget, but there are key areas we have to move on with a sense of urgency and a sense of responsibility for the Canadian people. We have to get this passed so that the national dental care strategy is actually able to help seniors this year, as was promised.

We have to get the funding and support out there to start the clean energy strategy so that we are not left behind in terms of our American, European or Chinese competition. We actually need to move quickly on legislation that will enable the protections in place to make sure that communities are part of the sustainable jobs transition and that energy workers are at the table; energy workers are the ones with the expertise, and we need to be hearing from them at this time.

I encourage my colleagues to put the June game playing away for a little bit. People sent us to get a job done. They sent us to work. I am here to work. I am here to make sure that energy workers, natural resources workers, miners in the communities I represent and young people who are watching the planet burn around them are not going to look at a Parliament that ignores that and plays games.

We have a job to do in the midst of a worsening climate crisis, and we have the potential to do it, but the window for action is narrowing. I urge my colleagues to step up. Let us get this thing voted on and then let us get on to other really important matters that are facing our country at this insecure time.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague gave a very important speech. As I listened to what he was saying, I was reflecting on the things that are in this budget, such as dental care, support for improving our health care across the country, dealing with climate change and supporting our most vulnerable.

My question for the hon. member is this: Why are the opposition and the Leader of the Opposition so interested in acting against the interest of Canadians?

• (1330)

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, certainly, the Leader of the Opposition has always acted in his own interest. The guy owns a house in Ottawa, but he gets to move into Stornoway, a 19-room mansion, with its chefs and groundskeepers. He has had public dental care for nearly 20 years, paid for, for him and his family, yet he expects us to disrupt Parliament to the point that senior citizens do not get dental care.

That is not leadership; that is grandstanding. We need to be able to reassure Canadians, at a time when they have good reason not to trust politicians, that we are actually here to do a job. We are not just here to pull stunts and light our hair on fire, but to deliver something.

I do not know what the problem with the member in Stornoway is, but senior citizens on my watch are going to get access to dental care. They deserve it. They have a right to it.

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, when the member ran to be the leader of the NDP, did he say he would never occupy Stornoway? I was here in 2011 with the Harper majority, and the member did not say boo about Tom Mulcair occupying Stornoway.

New Democrats talk a big game, but it is always about them. There is a lack of leadership. The fact that the member makes it so personal against the member for Carleton just shows that he must be feeling the heat from the leader of the Conservative Party. I look forward to the Conservative Party being in his riding and talking about real ideas that matter to that member's riding.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Ouch, Madam Speaker, I am hurt.

I looked up Mr. Stornoway's job record, because I thought maybe I would understand him better. I cannot find that he has ever actually had a job other than professional politician. I was a carpenter and a house builder; I had—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Dan Albas: Madam Speaker, instead of using names here, we use members' titles and ridings. The member is not following the Standing Orders. I would ask you to bring him into compliance.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary has a point of order.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I do not remember the Conservative outrage when they were saying “minister of inflation”.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary's point is a point of debate.

I want to remind members that just because one member is doing it does not mean that it is okay for another member to do it. However, when it comes to respect in the House, yes, we should be recognizing each other by either the riding name or position in Parliament. That applies to all sides.

Government Orders

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, that is a double ouch. The Conservatives certainly have a raw wound there. I was talking only about the member who moved out of his home in Ottawa and moved into Stornoway, which is a fact. That is a 19-room mansion funded by taxpayers.

I was just saying that I had a job; I had many jobs. When I ran my own business, I had to go to dentists to try to get a deal on dental care for my children. The member who lives in Stornoway has never had to do that. He has lived pretty damn well off the taxpayer. He is telling senior citizens in 2023 that they have no right to dental care; he said he will do anything, including jumping up and down all night long in Parliament, to stop this from happening.

He should tell his chef in the morning to give him some eggs, some yogourt, some granola and some green tea to calm him, so he is not just a rage bucket. That way, he can actually show up in Parliament to do some work.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, Bill C-47 included \$2 billion in health transfers that were already voted on in Bill C-46, to be sure, but that were still there.

The NDP joined forces with the Liberals to remove that \$2 billion even though the needs are growing not only because of the current fires, but also because of the growing and aging population.

Does my colleague regret having removed that \$2 billion from Bill C-47?

• (1335)

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Madam Speaker, I certainly think the New Democrats would be more than willing to do a workshop for the Bloc on the years that we have spent, time and time again, fighting for senior citizens and fighting for health care, because it is the right thing to do. We will continue to do that.

As for the member's comments on the fires, yes, we are very concerned about the fires in Abitibi. They are having a huge impact in my region. We are very concerned about Sept-Îles. This is why we need to be seen to be delivering for the Canadian people, and I look forward to working with the Bloc and maybe helping them understand how much work we have done on health care as a party. In fact, we are the party that brought in national health care, and we will continue to defend it.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, allow me to begin my comments by talking a little about the situation in Quebec and Canada. My thoughts are with everyone affected by the fires, whether in Halifax, northern Ontario, or in Quebec in Abitibi, Témiscamingue or the north shore, where I have family and friends who are either out of their homes as a preventive measure, or unable to leave their village because the road is blocked by the fire. I send my love to my sister, my cousin and my niece.

We are here today to discuss Bill C-47. It includes some interesting elements, including the creation of a real EI board of appeal. People who feel cheated will be able to assert their rights. That is a good thing. The air passenger protection system is also being improved. I attended a meeting on the topic in January, and most of the proposals we put forward were accepted, which better protects users. That is also a good thing.

However, several elements are missing. There is no increase for seniors aged 65 to 74. An increase of the tax credit from \$5,000 to \$6,500 is good. However, people who paid taxes for their entire lives still find themselves with rates that are similar to people who are single, without being able to put money into RRSPs or other forms of tax credits. Seniors' pensions are essentially a social program and, constitutionally, are the jurisdiction of Quebec and the provinces. The way things are going, seniors have a better chance of seeing Quebec repatriate all its pension powers for seniors than seeing Canada improve their situation based on current economic realities.

There is little in this budget related to housing. The supplementary estimates (A) include \$973 million, but this one includes almost nothing. In terms of health, the population of Quebec and the Canadian provinces is aging, but is also growing across all age groups. That means that health care costs are higher. The government, with its wires crossed somewhat, had left \$2 billion in health transfers in Bill C-47, which were already voted in Bill C-46. We thought the government had reconsidered its position, that it was acknowledging that the needs are actually greater, that it would increase health transfers and that that would help everyone. In the end, in a dramatic twist, the Liberals joined with the NDP to remove that \$2 billion in health transfers, although the needs are still there.

Now let us now talk about employment insurance. This government has been promising EI reform since 2015. The only thing that has been done so far is a pilot project for seasonal workers, which is a good thing. Their benefits are being extended. Apart from extending the pilot projects, though, nothing else in this budget is new, as I said. The pandemic left a huge hole in the employment insurance fund. The act states that the fund may not run either a deficit or a surplus over an average period of seven years. This means that workers and employers will have to make up for the pandemic-related deficit through their EI contributions. It is important to note that the government does not contribute a penny to the EI fund. Only workers and employers contribute to it.

Over the next few years, there will be surpluses in the EI fund, as was the case before the pandemic, and those surpluses will be used to get rid of the debt brought about by the pandemic. The government could have solved the problem by using the consolidated revenue fund to keep a surplus in the EI fund. It chose not to do so and to make workers and employers pay down the deficit.

Government Orders

• (1340)

The surpluses generated over the next seven years will be used to cover the deficit created by the pandemic. That means that the government has no real intention of reforming the program for the next seven years, in other words, as long as the pandemic deficit is not eliminated.

Employment insurance is also a social program. Just like seniors' pensions, constitutionally, it is a program that should belong to the Canadian provinces and Quebec. At this time, Quebec repatriating its powers and putting in place a modern program is more likely than Canada even beginning to think about maybe continuing to reflect.

There are also surprises in this budget. Among other things, we learn that \$80 billion will be allocated over 10 years to a fund for the green transition. That is good news, except that the fund will be distributed to organizations that are not required to report to Parliament. The eligibility criteria for obtaining funds include investments in the oil industry to create green energy, so oil and gas will be burned to create green energy.

By the way, the energy transition does not mean shifting from fossil fuels that produce a lot of greenhouse gases to fossil fuels that produce just a bit less greenhouse gases. The energy transition means shifting to renewable energy. The last I heard, there was no shortage of wind in Quebec and Canada. That is just one renewable energy that can be used. The technology is increasingly reliable.

There is another little surprise in the budget. While 56% of Canadians and 70% of Quebecers say they are opposed to the monarchy, something was included at the very end of the bill, in clause 510, which is under division 31 of part 4, on page 325. It is recognition of the appointment of Charles III as Canada's monarch, the official head of state of Canada. It is an attempt to slip this by the 56% of Canadians and 70% of Quebecers who are opposed to the monarchy. Some would say that Bloc members are sovereigntists who no longer want the monarchy. That would mean that 56% of Canadians and 70% of Quebecers are also sovereigntists. The will of the people—a majority of them in this case, as I said—ought to be respected.

I will quickly end my speech. To answer the Leader of the Opposition's question, a sovereign and independent Quebec will not need health transfers, equalization payments, housing transfers or infrastructure transfers. That is because Quebec will get to keep all the taxes it collects. It will also keep the revenues from customs duties. It will be the sole manager of monies paid by workers and employers into the employment insurance fund and the pension fund for seniors. It will be the sole manager of monies generated by this new country that Quebec could and must become. Quebec's independence will allow us to manage our own future so we can fully represent Quebecers' aspirations for future generations, unlike this budget, which does not do so.

• (1345)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I certainly agree with one part of the member's

speech, and that is her plea to electrify our grid through the use of more renewable energies. She spoke specifically about wind, indicating there was a lot of opportunity for that, but one critical part to that energy infrastructure change and revolution is our capacity on storage and our ability to store energy in the future.

Could the member speak to other opportunities for us to continue to build upon the transition we are going through?

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, technology is advancing rapidly.

Solar, wind and hydro are types of energy that can be considered renewable. We need them. Increasing GHGs in various ways will not help minimize environmental damage.

By the way, the best energy is always the energy we do not use. Reducing our own consumption across the board will also change people's habits and make a difference.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, as we are all experiencing it today, there is smoke in the skies. We are clearly in a climate crisis. Instead of us moving forward in a direction to begin implementing sound solutions to address this climate crisis and the horrendous impacts we are all experiencing as a result, the Conservatives are playing games with stalling tactics, ensuring these are not being implemented.

Could my colleague share her thoughts on the importance of us putting into place sound solutions to address the climate crisis and to not see hold-ups and unnecessary parliamentary games to keep us from moving forward in a positive direction?

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, in response to my colleague, I would like to remind her of the opposition's role in democracy.

When I arrived in the House, someone told me that my role as a member of the opposition was not to enable the government to function, but to obstruct it at all costs. Personally, I see the opposition's role as being much more constructive.

No single party or individual can see all sides of an issue. It is just not possible for a government to introduce a perfect bill. It is important to consult all the parties and come to an agreement, to have a consensus.

The expression “political games” is wrong; we are not playing games here. This is about every aspect of people's future. This is serious. We have to work together, find consensus and represent the entire population, the people we all represent.

[English]

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people from Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Before I get going, I want to give a quick shout-out to my nephew, who had his 21st birthday yesterday, Noah Bradley.

My colleague from the Bloc spoke about finding consensus. I would like to hear her opinion on whether the way to finding consensus is through cutting debate, as the Liberals have done so often in this Parliament.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, I wish my colleague's nephew a happy birthday.

I know the Remparts beat the Kamloops team and really enjoyed their stay in Kamloops.

With respect to consensus, time allocation is not the best way to reach it. We have to find other approaches, maybe different ways of talking to each other, to make that happen.

• (1350)

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Madam Speaker, first allow me to spare a thought for the people affected by forest fires across Canada. I am thinking of them and channelling my energy toward helping them get through this extremely difficult and tragic situation. I thank the firefighters, members of the military and all volunteers contributing to their well-being.

Today, I am rising in the House to speak to Bill C-47. On March 28, the Liberal government tabled an irresponsible budget that increases both the debt and inflation. The government chose to throw money at everything. It is an obvious ploy. The government is making self-serving decisions to stay in power by using public money to buy the support of the New Democratic Party.

In the highlights of the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report of April 13, Yves Giroux stated:

Budget 2023 does not provide an assessment of program effectiveness that the Government launched in last year's budget under its comprehensive Strategic Policy Review, nor in my view does it identify opportunities to save and reallocate resources to adapt government programs and operations to a new post-pandemic reality.

Take the Canada dental benefit, for example. I support this benefit. It is a very exciting social program, but it has to be considered within the current context. The truth is that this government is throwing so much money around that it is going to trigger a recession. Before offering people the chance to invest in their teeth, how about ensuring that they have food to eat first?

The government is free to rebut this comment with the grocery rebate proposed in its budget, but let us be realistic. A one-time payment will only help some people, and not for long.

Government Orders

In a column entitled “A doubled-edged rebate”, published on March 30 in *La Presse*, Sylvain Charlebois reminded us that this budget, like last year's, contained no section on agriculture or food. I would point out that Dr. Charlebois is senior director of the Agri-Food Analytics Lab at Dalhousie University. He has credibility. I encourage the Liberals to consult him for ideas. Dr. Charlebois says this:

For Canadians, the grocery rebate will be limited in scope and duration, an offshoot of the politicization of food inflation. The PR spin is real, whereas tax changes that could have a substantial impact are not. However, the prospect of injecting \$2.5 billion more into the economy is causing a lot of concern. Such an action could worsen the food inflation problem.

Yes, it is a double-edged rebate indeed.

The government gives with one hand, but it claws back double or more from the pockets of honest Canadian citizens through the excise tax, the carbon tax and the carbon tax 2.0. It is injecting money into the economy, which is causing inflation. In our capitalist system, businesses aim to make a profit. That aim is perfectly legitimate. It is a matter of survival for them. If they cannot turn a profit, they will close their doors and thousands of Canadians will lose their jobs.

In that context, the responsible thing for the government to do would have been to reduce federal spending and collaborate with the Bank of Canada.

• (1355)

That is the way to stop inflation and give some breathing room to Canadians who are increasingly struggling.

There is a major lack of vision here. Maybe the government's vision is restricted by its blinders, leading it to focus exclusively on what is really important to it: the Liberal-NDP coalition keeping it in power.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has shown that the carbon tax will cost the average family between \$400 and \$847 in 2023, even after the rebate. I urge everyone to take a look at the Canadian Debt Clock created by the MEI, the Montreal Economic Institute. It shows that the federal debt in Canada now exceeds \$1.299 trillion and will soon reach \$1.3 trillion. That is huge. It breaks down to \$44,000 of debt per taxpayer. Based on data provided by the Department of Finance in its March 28, 2023, budget, the MEI estimates that, by March 31, 2024, the Canadian debt will have increased by \$42.6 billion, the equivalent of \$116 million per day, \$81,000 per minute or \$1,350 per second.

I have heard members of the government, I think including the member for Saint-Maurice—Champlain, when he was minister of foreign affairs, say that now is the time to borrow, that interest rates are low and will stay low. What a peculiar basis for managing a government's public funds.

Statements by Members

To illustrate the government's incompetence, just last fall, in the economic statement, it forecast a deficit of \$36.4 billion for 2022-23, and deficits of \$30 billion in 2023-24 and \$25 billion in 2024-25. The fact is that, in this budget, the government now forecasts a deficit of \$40.1 billion for 2023-24. That is almost \$10 billion more but, for the Liberals, \$1 billion, \$10 billion or \$100 billion is nothing because they can just print more money.

As I noted earlier, the national debt will soon reach \$1.3 trillion. Do my colleagues know that the debt ceiling is set at \$1.8 trillion? Is the government racing to reach that target? I hope not.

The Conservative Party, to which I am proud to belong, had some very specific asks for the government concerning budget 2023: end the war on work by reducing taxes for workers; end the inflationary deficits that are driving up the cost of goods; and eliminate barriers to building housing for Canadians. The simple truth is that none of the Conservative Party's three demands have been met. None of them have been included in the bill.

That is why the Conservatives will not be supporting this anti-worker, pro-inflation budget that raises taxes. At least, we will not be supporting it unless and until our demands are met. This way of doing things is unacceptable. It is irresponsible, and I hope that, thanks to the actions of the opposition, the government will listen to reason and change course.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

WHITBY FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week in my riding of Whitby our fire and emergency services held their recruit graduation ceremony. It was an incredible event. It recognized the nine new Whitby firefighters who took the oath of service affirming their commitment to protecting our community.

Firefighters are essential to our country, and without their service, Canada could not be the safe place it is today. These national heroes who risk their lives every single day deserve our support, which is why our government has invested over \$900 million to train firefighters, for disaster financial assistance and to support the work of Indigenous Services Canada.

I would like to take this opportunity to also recognize the dedication and service of Captain Bob Brandon, who has trained many recruits and is retiring this August. From the newly graduated firefighters to the many who have served in our community, we thank Captain Bob for his many years of service and his countless contributions to our community.

ISOBEL CUP

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Isobel Cup is the championship trophy of the Premier Hockey Federation. It takes its name from Lord Stanley's daughter Isobel, who shared his love of the game and is known as one of the

first female hockey players in Canada. Isobel encouraged her father to purchase a silver cup to be awarded to the best amateur hockey team in Canada. This cup later became the Stanley Cup.

Another terrific and talented Canadian hockey player is my niece Brittany Howard, who has brought the Isobel Cup here to Ottawa to share with us all.

Britt was a standout player at Robert Morris University, a Division 1 program in Pittsburgh, where she received all-American honours. This past hockey season, Brittany led the Toronto Six in the Premier Hockey Federation as the top scorer with 18 goals in 24 games. This past March, the Toronto Six participated in the Isobel Cup championship in Tempe, Arizona after defeating the Connecticut Whale in the semifinals. In overtime, the team defeated the Minnesota White Caps with a score of 3 to 2 to win the Isobel Cup playoff championship.

This is the first time a Canadian team has won the Premier Hockey Federation. Please help me congratulate Brittany and her teammate Rachel Seeley on winning the Isobel Cup.

FOREIGN REPRESENTATIVES IN CANADA

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, diplomats play a key role in strengthening the socio-economic, political and trade relationships between their countries and Canada.

I would like to recognize and thank the high commissioner of Brunei to Canada, His Excellency PG Kamal Bashah Ahmad, who is leaving Canada after nine years of excellent service in Canada. He is currently the longest-serving diplomat in Canada and the only one still here as a diplomat since I got elected in 2015.

I also would like to recognize and thank the ambassador of Vietnam to Canada, His Excellency Pham Cao Phong, who is retiring soon. Vietnam is Canada's biggest trading partner among ASEAN countries.

I would like to once again thank both these diplomats and wish them all the very best in their future endeavours.

[Translation]

PORTNEUF-SUR-MER TRAGEDY

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, as the member for Manicouagan and on behalf of the Bloc Québécois, it is with great sadness that I rise to extend my sincere condolences to all those who were touched by the tragedy in Portneuf-sur-Mer.

Statements by Members

On June 3, a few adults and children were fishing on the edge of the St. Lawrence River when they were surprised by the rising tide that surrounded and trapped them. Six of them were saved from the waters, but over the next few hours, the sea returned the bodies of the five it had taken. Today, we mourn four children and the father of two of them and, today, we pay tribute to them.

The people from the north shore send their warmest sympathies and their love to the people of the Haute-Côte-Nord, Bergeronnes, Tadoussac and Portneuf-sur-Mer, to the parents, friends, families and loved ones. In the darkness, love continues to grow and shine like the sun.

* * *

[English]

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating National Indigenous History Month.

Fifty years ago, a delegation of Yukon first nation leaders journeyed to Ottawa to bring their plan for their future, Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow, to present to then prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Yukon first nations have since signed self-governing agreements, marking the beginning of modern treaties and the pathway to modern nationhood.

Today, Yukon first nations are leading a cultural renaissance. Last week I attended the annual Yukon first nations graduation ceremony where 129 proud and joyful graduates marched across the stage to the singing and drumming of the Dakhká Khwáan Dancers. Later this month, the Adäka Cultural Festival in Whitehorse will feature the rich and vibrant cultures of Yukon first nations and northern Dene nations through art, music, storytelling and more.

As we work together to heal from the wrongs of Canada's colonial past, I encourage all my colleagues to learn about and embrace indigenous traditions and culture as critical steps in our reconciliation journey. Let us honour indigenous history across Canada, not just this month, but throughout the year.

Gunalchéesh.

* * *

● (1405)

[Translation]

QUEBEC REMPARTS

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is some very good news for Canada: The Memorial Cup is staying in the country because the Remparts de Québec won and captured the trophy of junior hockey supremacy. What a dream season. Out of 90 games, the Remparts won 76. They are the Quebec league champions, the playoffs champions and the Memorial Cup champions.

[English]

We want to thank the people of Kamloops for their great organization and salute the Peterborough Petes, the only team who have beaten the Quebec Remparts.

[Translation]

From goalie William Rousseau to forward James “Melatesta”, as “Ray the sports” says, the Remparts triumphed as a team. The players were skilfully led by the exceptional Patrick Roy. It is worth noting that he could have taken it easy for 13 years. Instead, he chose to share his knowledge with the junior players.

This is our third Memorial Cup. We won it in 2006, we won it in 1971 with the Remparts en or, and, half a century later, we can say that the flame of victory burns brighter than ever. As the song goes, “they are golden, they are golden...there is no one in Canada [or even the States] to take our championship from us, they are golden, they are golden”.

Congratulations to the Remparts.

* * *

[English]

PORTUGUESE HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on May 13, 1953, a group of Portuguese immigrants arrived on a boat named *Saturnia*, docking at Pier 21 in Halifax. These new immigrants started the first of many waves of Portuguese to start a new life in Canada. Now, 70 years later, Portuguese Canadians are almost half a million strong. Living in communities right across Canada, they are builders, musicians, athletes, business leaders, chefs, teachers and politicians, among so many other professions. Their contributions and stories have enriched Canadian society and have transformed Canada into not only a better country, but also into one of the best countries in the world to live in.

As the member of Parliament for Davenport, the riding with the largest number of Portuguese Canadians, I am proud to rise in the House today to mark the beginning of Portuguese Heritage Month in Canada.

Whether it is by listening to fado, drinking vinho verde, or eating a *bifana* or *pastéis de nata*, I invite all Canadians to join me in celebrating all things Portuguese this month.

Feliz mês de Portugal.

*Statements by Members***HOUSING**

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the actions our government is taking to meet the housing needs of Canadians. Since the release of our national housing strategy in 2017, we have leveraged over \$80 billion of investment, creating thousands of new units across the country and utilizing those same investments to renovate and repair decades-old, affordable housing units in every corner of the country. As an extension of this work, the minister recently announced the Canada greener affordable housing program that will provide \$1.2 billion in funding over four years for much needed renovations to existing affordable housing units. The funding will allow affordable housing providers to make improvements to aging buildings that will improve energy efficiency and extend their lifespan, improving the living conditions and quality of life for tenants across the country.

While the leader of the official opposition villainizes our municipal partners, our government continues to work with municipalities and non-profit housing providers, ensuring our housing investments improve our affordable housing stock while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and combatting climate change.

* * *

ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 79 years ago today, on June 6, 1944, the world witnessed an event that would shape the course of history.

[Translation]

This day marked the beginning of the end of the Second World War and was a very proud moment in Canada's military history.

[English]

Early that morning, Canadians stormed the beaches of Normandy. By sunset, more than 1,000 Canadians had made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of our freedoms. Though the price was high, the valour of that day laid the foundation for an eventual Nazi surrender and made a proclamation to the world that Canada would give no quarter to tyranny.

● (1410)

[Translation]

Our history shows, and our presence confirms, that brave Canadians will always answer the call to defend our country and our values.

[English]

On the anniversary of D-Day, I ask every Canadian to reflect on the selfless sacrifice of the Normandy landings that was pivotal in securing the free and prosperous nation we cherish still today.

[Translation]

We will remember them.

[English]

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Pickering—Uxbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Simin Barakzai is a former member of Parliament for Afghanistan, but when the Taliban took over, she was removed from office and came to Canada for safety. Her voice will not be silenced, and I would like to share a message that Simin would like us to hear.

She writes:

“Today, I write with a heavy heart, burdened by the unimaginable suffering endured by the women and girls of Afghanistan.

“Where dreams once blossomed and aspirations soared, the shadows of tyranny have cast a suffocating veil upon its courageous women and innocent girls. Their voices, once vibrant and filled with hope, have been silenced by a regime that seeks to strip them of their rights, dreams, and very essence.

“We are witnessing significant changes in Afghanistan, and it is our duty to pay attention and take appropriate actions. With Canada being a prominent leader in advocating for women's rights, I hope we continue to pursue these powerful goals and raise our voices for Afghanistan. The Afghan people need our support, and we cannot leave them alone in this struggle.”

Simin's bravery and determination to never stop fighting for the rights of Afghan women and girls is truly inspiring.

* * *

[Translation]

NORMANDY LANDING

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians landed on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944, and helped liberate Europe. The 3rd Canadian Infantry Division that was training in England was called upon to face Hitler's German divisions.

After France surrendered in June 1940, Canada, whose military forces were entirely composed of volunteers, became Great Britain's best ally. Risking their health, their personal ambitions and too often their lives, Canadian volunteers committed themselves body and soul. Worse than the tragedy of war, it would be a tragedy to forget their sacrifice, to forget their names and to forget to teach their values to our children. We will not forget our heroes from the Canadian units that landed on the beaches of Normandy 79 years ago.

I am especially thinking of the soldiers from my unit, the Régiment de la Chaudière, who fought proudly. On June 6, 1944, the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division lost 340 men, while 577 were injured and 47 were taken prisoner. If Canada is a free country that is able to defend human rights internationally, it is largely because of their sacrifice.

Aere perennius; let us remember.

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal-NDP costly coalition's out-of-control spending and sky-high taxes have made life unaffordable for Canadians. More Canadians are visiting the food bank than we have ever seen before, more seniors are choosing to delay their retirement just to make ends meet and more families are finding themselves on the brink of insolvency. By every objective measure, the Liberals' war on work is making life more expensive, with inflation and higher taxes resulting in expensive gas, heat and groceries, which leaves hard-working Canadians with less in their pockets every month.

With budget 2023, the Liberal government doubled down on these failed policies, adding over \$40 billion to the national debt. Next year, Canadians will spend over \$43 billion in interest payments alone.

Canada's Conservatives are demanding a plan to balance the budget and bring an end to inflationary deficits, and for the Liberals to axe the carbon tax. Only Conservatives will bring home powerful paycheques, lower prices and make Canada work for the people who work.

* * *

[Translation]

CLUB FADOQ DE SAINT-RÉMI

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure and an honour today to mark the 50th anniversary of the Club FADOQ de Saint-Rémi.

I would like to take this opportunity to give a shout-out to its president, Jacques Lavigueur, and all the members of the current board of directors.

I am blown away when I think about all the dedicated volunteers who have led this organization over the years to make it into the success we celebrate today. Throughout my riding of Châteauguay—Lacolle, FADOQ clubs like the one in Saint-Rémi, but also in Châteauguay and in Napierville, work actively for the benefit of their members. Let us think about these volunteers who step up year after year to enable thousands of members to participate in a wide range of fun activities.

I wish the Club FADOQ de Saint-Rémi a happy 50th anniversary and many happy returns.

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• (1415)

[English]

ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on June 6, we celebrate the courage of Canadians who took part in the Normandy landings with the goal to free Europe from the grips of an extremist right-wing regime. It has been 79 years since Canadian soldiers took part in the landing, where many soldiers gave their lives to build a more peaceful, just world. We must honour their fight and their sacrifice. They put everything on

Statements by Members

the line at Juno Beach so we could stand here today, freely, with all the privileges we have.

More than 20 years ago, I too stood on that beach and visited the cemetery at Beny-Sur-Mer. I walked among the graves of those who never came home, and it was something that I will never forget.

On behalf of the New Democrats, on the anniversary of D-Day, we commemorate the courage shown against such destructive forces, we thank the veterans and their families for their sacrifice and we vow to hold true to the values for which they fought: justice, equality and democracy. We will remember them.

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[Translation]

GEOFF REGAN

Mr. Louis Plamondon (Bécancour—Nicolet—Saurel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Bloc Québécois and as dean of the House of Commons, I am pleased to recognize Geoff Regan, who served as the Speaker of the House from 2015 to 2019.

His portrait will now hang in the halls of Parliament as is the custom. He was the 36th Speaker of the House, but the first Speaker from Atlantic Canada in nearly a century.

Mr. Regan proudly represented the people of Halifax West from the time he was first elected in 1993 until he was elected for the eighth time in 2019. He served on both the opposition and government benches, and even served as the fisheries and oceans minister. However, it is for his role as Speaker that we are paying tribute to him today.

I had the honour to preside over the election where he was elected Speaker by his peers in 2015.

The Bloc Québécois will remember Mr. Regan as a Speaker who was fair and tough when dealing with the occasional, and sometimes not so occasional, turmoil in the House. He had the integrity, patience and expertise required to occupy that chair. That is how we will remember Speaker Geoff Regan.

* * *

[English]

THE BUDGET

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Liberal inflation is crushing Canadians. One in five Canadians is skipping meals, and food bank usage is skyrocketing. What is the Liberal government's response? It is a massive \$60-billion inflationary budget deficit and carbon tax 2.

We all know the sequel is way worse than the original. Carbon tax 2 will add 61¢ a litre in tax to gas, making everything more expensive. Even Liberals are shaking their heads, and not just random former Liberals this time. Former finance minister John Manley has said that Liberal spending is making it harder to control inflation, and things are getting worse. The Bank of Canada is now signalling another interest rate hike.

Oral Questions

Canadians, do not lose hope. The Conservatives are going to fight this budget until the Liberals agree to a plan to balance the budget. If they do not, maybe it is time to give them the boot.

* * *

36TH SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the achievement of my predecessor and yours, the Hon. Geoff Regan. I first met Geoff in 1990 when I was articling and he was a practising lawyer. We stayed in touch and our paths have crossed often.

For 27 years, Geoff was an honest and dedicated representative for the people of Halifax West. He served in a number of parliamentary capacities, including as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and most recently as the 36th Speaker of the House of Commons. He gave so many years of his life to public service, which was made possible by the support of his wife Kelly, his kids Caitlin, Nicole and Harrison, and his extended personal and political family.

Today, Speaker Regan's official portrait will be unveiled during a ceremony on Parliament Hill, a wonderful testament to his legacy and contributions to our democracy. I am grateful for Geoff's years of hard work in serving the people of Halifax West, parliamentarians and all Canadians.

• (1420)

[Translation]

Congratulations, my friend.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we learned today that David Johnston's report was not written by him alone, in other words, by a former family friend and member of the Trudeau Foundation. We learned that the assistant who wrote the report is a Liberal donor. On top of that, Mr. Johnston also hired Liberal and NDP consultants to help him with PR matters.

When will the Prime Minister finally put an end to this farce and launch a real public inquiry?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Conservative Party is continuing with his baseless attacks on the former governor general and his team. He says he wants real answers. All he has to do is accept the confidential, top secret briefing being offered to him by our security agencies so he can find out exactly what is happening with foreign interference.

He refuses to accept the briefing, however, because he prefers to remain in the dark so he can continue his baseless personal and partisan attacks.

[English]

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Johnston was forced to remain behind a veil of ignorance. By his own admission today, he said that he was not aware of information that the former Conservative leader already knew about the government in Beijing spreading disinformation using state organs. This is on top of learning today that Mr. Johnston hired a lifelong Liberal donor who was at a fundraiser with the leader of the Liberal Party just two years ago.

In addition to other Liberal consultants and NDP strategists to do damage control, will we put an end to the act, fire this rapporteur and call a public inquiry now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me read a quote on the former governor general:

I think we're dealing with a very credible individual, and I think that that distant history bears little relevance to the fact that he has a very distinguished career. If we're suggesting just because at some point in history he was appointed by a former Conservative prime minister that he should be disqualified from participating in public life, I think that is a little bit extreme. This is a very qualified individual, and frankly, I haven't heard anybody question his integrity, and I have no reason to do so.

That was the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that is another reason it is so tragic that the Prime Minister has destroyed the reputation of this man. By putting a former member of the Trudeau Foundation in this terrible position and surrounding him with Liberal staffers, Liberal donors and Liberal lawyers, he has ruined perceived objectivity and caused a conflict of interest, one that he could reverse at any time.

Why will the Prime Minister not put an end to the charade and launch a full public inquiry now?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition formerly said, David Johnston is a man of integrity, and when I chose to appoint him to be an independent expert, I did not hold against him the fact that he had been appointed by Conservatives in the past. I knew that his judgment was top-notch, and that is what he has demonstrated every step of the way.

The judgment in question is the judgment of the Leader of the Opposition, who continues to refuse to get briefed on top secret matters that would allow him to understand what is actually going on with foreign interference, instead of making baseless personal attacks.

HOUSING

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is no longer just me who is pointing out that deficits cause inflation. It is the former Liberal finance minister John Manley, who said the government is putting its foot on the inflationary gas while the Bank of Canada is slamming its foot on the brakes by raising interest rates on Canadians. There are literally hundreds of thousands of families that took on big mortgages when interest rates were artificially low that will face massive increases in their monthly payments when they come up for renewal if the rates do not go back down.

Will the Prime Minister balance the budget to bring down inflation and interest rates so that Canadians can keep their homes?

• (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the name of austerity, the Conservative Party continues to filibuster and block our measures. They—

The Speaker: I am going to interrupt. We are starting to build up again. Yesterday was such a nice day, and I would like a repeat of it. Everyone can take a deep breath.

The right hon. Prime Minister can begin from the top, please.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party continues to focus on austerity and cuts rather than being there to help Canadians. It is blocking and using parliamentary games to hurt Canadians who need help right now.

He is busy blocking an anti-flipping tax for residential properties to help out homeowners. He is blocking the doubling of the tradespeople's tools deduction at a time when we know that we need our tradespeople to continue delivering new housing across the country. He is even blocking the enhanced Canada workers benefit.

His partisan games are hurting Canadians. When will he let the BIA pass?

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, families are already dealing with austerity.

Speaking of cuts, parents are being forced to cut back on how much food they eat and on other needs for their family. What we are blocking is the \$60-billion inflationary deficit that is driving up the cost of living and the interest rates. Even the Minister of Finance admitted that deficits add fuel to the fire of inflation.

Will the Prime Minister finally listen to his own Minister of Finance and stop throwing that fuel on the fire of inflation for Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is more nonsense from the opposition leader.

He accuses us of imposing austerity and in the same breath accuses us of investing too much to help Canadians. Come on. The opposition leader is making no sense.

Oral Questions

What he is doing is blocking measures that will help Canadians, such as the anti-flipping tax and the doubling of the tradespeople's tools deduction, and he is against the enhanced Canada workers benefit.

Just as he voted against dental care for children and blocked it, he also blocked help for low-income renters—

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

* * *

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the not very independent rapporteur has tabled a preliminary report that the Prime Minister is quite happy with.

In writing that report, he did not talk to the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, he did not talk to Canada's election commissioner, he did not talk to anyone from the Chinese diaspora who has been targeted for intimidation, yet he decided, in his great wisdom, that an independent public inquiry was not necessary.

Who did David Johnston talk to?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know full well that the leader of the Bloc Québécois is eager for Mr. Johnston to go on a tour this summer to talk to communities, such as the Chinese communities that have been affected by foreign interference, and for him to continue his work.

Let us talk about wilful ignorance. That is exactly what the Bloc Québécois leader is choosing by refusing to accept top secret briefings on the content of the reports and the concerns of our intelligence agencies.

For him to choose to continue his baseless partisan attacks by refusing to accept the facts is not—

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

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, when I refer to the Prime Minister's ignorance, I get chastised, but he gets away with it.

I believe the rapporteur, the Prime Minister's friend, spoke to the Trudeau Foundation. Things are easier among friends. I believe the rapporteur spoke to the Prime Minister. The question is whether he was in fact reporting to him.

As he explained this morning, his belief is that a commission of inquiry takes too long and costs too much. Keeping secrets is better; it is faster and cheaper.

Oral Questions

Is Mr. Johnston's true mandate actually to sweep this Chinese interference business under the rug?

• (1430)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc Québécois might need a little more credibility before he talks about keeping secrets.

He refuses to accept information that would enable him to get to the bottom of things regarding foreign interference. He refuses to allow our security and intelligence agencies to give him the information he needs to understand what is going on when it comes to foreign interference.

For him to choose ignorance over facts on an issue as serious as foreign interference shows that the members on that side of the House just do not get it.

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[English]

HOUSING

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the cost of a house has exploded under the Prime Minister. If we look at the rising interest rates, they are making things even worse. Here is the situation in the city of Toronto: Someone earning \$236,000 a year has to save for 25 years before they would have enough money for a down payment, according a CTV article. That is absurd. That is something very serious.

When will the Prime Minister take this seriously and start taking steps to deal with the housing problem?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know Canadians are struggling with the rising cost of housing, whether it is a young family looking to buy its first home or a student trying to rent an apartment near campus. That is why we are taking action on so many fronts.

We are helping Canadians save up for their first home. We are investing in building and repairing more homes, including supporting local governments to fast-track the creation of 100,000 new homes. We are providing support for low-income renters, and we are assuring housing is used as homes by curbing unfair practices that drive up prices, which includes bringing forward an anti-flipping tax. Unfortunately, Conservatives are choosing to block this for political games instead of delivering for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants us to believe that he understands people, while he lives in a residence paid for by the state, and has a cook and a gardener. He is only here to protect the rich who are profiting from this crisis.

Rising interest rates are hurting ordinary Canadians. There is even a rumour that the Bank of Canada is going to raise interest rates again—

The Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the member. I will ask him to repeat his question because there is a bit of noise in the chamber. I do not know where it is coming from. Folks are talking a bit loudly.

[English]

I am asking people to whisper if they are going to speak to each other. The noise is starting to creep up again, and I do not want it to get out of hand.

The hon. member for Burnaby South can begin from the top, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition wants us to believe that he understands Canadians, while he lives in a residence paid for by the state, and has a cook and a gardener. He is only here to protect the rich who are profiting from this crisis.

Rising interest rates are hurting ordinary Canadians. There is even a rumour that the Bank of Canada is going to raise interest rates again.

Does the government have a plan to limit the disastrous impact these rates will have on the majority of Canadians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we know that Canadians are having a hard time paying for their housing. That is why we are taking action on multiple levels. Our plan involves co-operating with the municipalities, particularly by investing \$4 billion to speed up residential construction approvals, and by creating 100,000 new homes. It creates a link between infrastructure investment and housing. Our plan helps Canadians save up to buy their first home, offers assistance to low-income renters, a measure the Conservatives are voting against, and converts surplus federal lands to affordable housing.

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[English]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister admitted that deficits fuel inflation. It is hard to believe she even understands this concept, as her government piled on more debt on to Canadians than every government before it combined. This led to the highest bank interest rate hikes seen in a decade, and now 63% of Canadians' paycheques go toward monthly mortgage payments alone. After knowing all this, she still threw a \$63-billion jerry can of fuel onto the inflationary fire she started with her failed budget, and now a mortgage crisis looms.

Can she tell us on what date she will stop her inflationary spending and balance the budget so interest rates can finally come down?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite represents an Alberta constituency, and I am sure he and his constituents, like me, are proud of Alberta's Ukrainian-Canadian heritage.

I wonder if his constituents know that the Conservatives' blocking tactics are stopping measures in the BIA that would support Ukraine. They are preventing us from withdrawing most favoured nation trading status from Russia and Belarus. That is the practical consequence of the blocking, filibustering and partisan jockeying of the Conservatives.

• (1435)

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my constituents, like all Albertans, rejected the Liberal-NDP government and elected a strong Conservative government just last week. She can spare us her Disney+, Mickey Mouse lectures because not all Liberals are as incompetent as the government is. Former Liberal finance minister John Manley said that Liberal spending fuelled inflation. The former Liberal premier of Nova Scotia Stephen McNeil said that governments continuing to spend beyond its means would only increase inflation.

How come random Liberals understand the importance of balancing a budget and the incompetent Liberal government does not?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it is worth ensuring that Canadians know the other vital measures that this partisan, posturing Conservative opposition is denying them. The Conservative filibuster is preventing Canadians from getting advance payments of the Canada workers benefit. They are blocking a crackdown on predatory lending. Who would oppose that? They are blocking the extension of seasonal EI.

Again, I would like to know if their MPs from Atlantic Canada are aware of that and support that outrageous, appalling action.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the finance minister recently said, "What Canadians want right now is for inflation to come down and for interest rates to fall. And that is one of our primary goals in this year's budget: not pour fuel on the fire of inflation", but that is exactly what the Liberals did. Budget 2023 adds \$60 billion of new spending. That is \$4,200 for each Canadian family. That is higher cost, higher inflation, higher taxes.

When will they get their budget under control and control their out-of-control spending?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us talk about some facts. When COVID hit, Canada suffered the deepest recession since the Great Depression, but today unemployment is at 5%. Under Stephen Harper, the lowest unemployment got was 6%, a full percentage point higher than it is today. What else? Today, for women in their prime working years, the employment rate is more than 85%. Under Stephen Harper, the highest that ever got was 83%.

Our policies are getting Canadians back to work. That is what they need.

Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after eight years, what their policies have done is doubled rent payments and mortgage payments for Canadians. Most young Canadians have even given up the hope of ever owning a home in Canada, and now Canadians are concerned that the Bank of Canada will have to raise interest rates again just to keep up with their inflationary spending.

Oral Questions

Once again, when will they balance the budget and solve this inflation crisis?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand why the Conservatives prefer rhetoric over facts, and the reason is that their policies led to such a lacklustre recovery from the 2008 recession, which was much more mild than the COVID recession. It took Canada, after 2008, 110 months to recover to the prerecessionary unemployment rate. After the COVID recession, it took just 24 months.

Things have been hard for Canadians, but thanks to our government's support, people are back at work. That is what matters the most.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members will perhaps recall one of the most ridiculous statements made in the history of Canadian politics when the Prime Minister said that budgets balance themselves.

No one repeated it because it makes no sense. The problem is that, after eight years of Liberal governance, budgets have never balanced themselves. We have had deficit upon deficit.

I will share something. Last November, we thought we saw the light at the end of the tunnel when the Minister of Finance said that we should not throw fuel on the inflationary fire, meaning that spending must be controlled.

Why did she change her mind, with the disastrous results we are seeing today?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent for his question.

I hope that the Canadians watching today will realize that the Conservative Party is delaying the adoption of a tax credit for clean electricity, a tax credit for the manufacture of clean technologies and a tax credit for clean hydrogen.

Do the Conservatives actually listen to Canadians once in a while?

We are building the economy of tomorrow and seizing generational opportunities, while the Conservative Party is preventing Canada from advancing the economy of the 21st century. That is shameful.

Oral Questions

● (1440)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I find shameful and embarrassing for the Liberal Party is to watch the Minister of Industry prevent the Minister of Finance from answering a question that is 100% under her responsibility.

We can understand that there may be some bickering at play here, because both of them want to become Prime Minister. That is not going to happen any time soon. Maybe the Deputy Prime Minister has also realized that there is many a slip twixt cup and lip, especially when the cup is full of champagne these days. Champagne is expensive.

I have a clear question and I think the Minister of Finance wants to answer it. Things are looking up, she has a smile on her face.

Can the Minister of Finance explain with a straight face why she said that it was fuel on the inflationary fire—

The Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the economy, it is important to talk about the facts and not use partisan rhetoric. I want to remind Canadians that after the budget was tabled, S&P reaffirmed Canada's AAA credit rating. I also want to remind Canadians that Canada has the lowest deficit of all the G7 countries. Canada also has the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio of all the G7 countries. That is the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

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DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, during this morning's committee meeting investigating Chinese interference, David Johnston explained why he believes a public inquiry had to be avoided. His reason? In his opinion, an inquiry would be expensive and time-consuming.

Does anyone know what else is expensive and time-consuming? That would be the three months of work in progress since February that we have spent calling for an independent public inquiry, which is supported by everyone except the Liberals and their special rapporteur. The Liberals' resistance to shedding light on this matter is the expensive waste of time. It is damaging public confidence. When can we expect an independent public inquiry?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, how unsurprising to hear that another of my ideas has been branded a waste of time. The Bloc Québécois leader refuses to receive reliable top secret information from our intelligence agencies. Furthermore, Mr. Johnston was invited to appear before a parliamentary committee, which he did, for more than three hours, during which he was asked no questions of substance on foreign interference, but simply grilled on his integrity. In our opinion, that is the real waste of time.

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what does Mr. Johnston recommend in lieu of the independent public inquiry that everyone is calling for? Mr. Johnston recommends himself. That is what he is offering us. Mr. Johnston is substituting

himself for an inquiry, despite the fact that the House is asking him to step aside. He wants to hold his own hearings that will in no way be independent. David Johnston is the man who dismissed the idea of a public inquiry on the basis of information that he refuses to disclose. David Johnston wants to control what might be discussed in public at his own hearings. It may be less expensive, it may take less time, but it will be less clear.

Is there anyone who would claim that this is not smoke and mirrors?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as everyone in the House knows, information from national security agencies must remain secret. Those circumstances exist in every one of Canada's allied countries in this important area.

The good news is that we have offered the leaders of the opposition parties, including the Bloc, access to this information and the opportunity to judge Mr. Johnston's findings for themselves. They simply prefer to play partisan games and attack Mr. Johnston instead of looking at the facts and fully understanding the reality of foreign interference.

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, David Johnston has yet to answer what is actually a simple question, and the same goes for the government. If the federal government was able to hold a public and independent inquiry in the Maher Arar affair, which implicated the secret services of foreign countries, if the federal government was able to hold a public and independent inquiry into the Air India bombing, which implicated terrorist entities and foreign governments, why is it suddenly too complicated to hold one on Chinese interference right here in Canada against our democracy—

● (1445)

The Speaker: The hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, if the Bloc Québécois really cared about what is going on in Quebec, if the Bloc Québécois really cared about what is worrying Quebecers right now, it would be asking questions about the wildfires, because that is what is worrying Quebecers. If the Bloc really cared and had asked a question about the fires, I would have told them that my colleague is in constant contact with the Quebec government. We have received specific requests to which we have responded promptly. We will always be there for Quebec.

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[English]

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to quote former Liberal Premier McNeil, "we would all benefit from all governments being able to manage their own budget a lot better." Go figure. After the budget was released, inflation went up. After the carbon tax increase, inflation went up.

The Liberals must give Canadians a plan to end their deficits and bring down spending so that we can stop inflation and interest rates. They must cancel their carbon taxes that are hurting struggling Canadians the hardest. When are they going to do this?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is really appalling that the Conservatives continue to talk down the Canadian economy, but the reality is that Canada's AAA credit rating was reiterated after we tabled the budget.

The reality is that our economy grew by 3.1% in the first quarter of this year. We have the strongest recovery in the G7. When it comes to inflation, it has gone down from 8.1% last June to 4.4%. It is lower than the inflation in Germany, the U.S., the U.K., the OECD average, the EU average—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Kenora.

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what is appalling is that the government has done absolutely nothing to help struggling Canadians.

We know the Liberals already have one carbon tax in place that will add 41¢ a litre to the price of gas. Now they have carbon tax 2, the terrible sequel that will add another 17¢. Of course, on top of that, they have added the GST. When we add that all up, we have an extra 61¢ a litre that will cost people in Ontario \$2,300 more.

The Liberals' plan has failed to do anything but make life more expensive. Therefore, why do they not finally scrap this carbon tax?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what is appalling for Canadians who are watching at home today is that they realize the Conservatives are blocking the clean technology manufacturing tax credit, a clean electricity tax credit and a clean hydrogen tax credit.

At a time when the world is looking to build the economy of the 21st century, at a time when we need to fight for workers around our country, at a time when we need to position ourselves for the 21st century, the Conservatives' answer is delay, delay, delay. We need to act in the interest of the country.

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THE ECONOMY

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in February 2022, the finance minister said that deficits must be reduced and that this was a line that could not be crossed. We all know now that this was a broken promise. When the budget was introduced, inflation went up. When the carbon tax increased, inflation went up.

When will the Prime Minister commit to eliminating inflationary deficits, eliminating inflationary spending and cutting the carbon tax so that Canadians will have lower interest and lower inflation?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as I said, Canada has the lowest deficit in the G7. We have the lowest debt-to-GDP ratio in the G7. Our AAA credit rating was reaffirmed after we tabled the budget.

What is truly astonishing is that at a time when Alberta has been burning, when Quebec is burning, when Atlantic Canada is burning, when we are struggling to breathe here in Ottawa, that party continues to resist climate action. That is a huge disservice to every single Canadian.

Oral Questions

Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we have the lowest growth out of all developed countries.

When the budget was released, inflation went up. When the carbon tax increased, inflation went up. Former Liberal finance minister, John Manley, said that these fiscal situations had to be managed otherwise taxpayers would run out of money. Well, the time has come, Canadians are out of money.

When will the Prime Minister commit to eliminating inflationary deficits, eliminating inflationary spending and cutting the carbon tax so that Canadians can have lower inflation and lower interest rates?

• (1450)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance said it quite well.

It is shocking, but I guess it is not, because the Conservatives continue to deny climate change. They continue to deny the fact that we need to act when right now, here in Ottawa, we are feeling the impacts of the forest fires. The Conservatives continue to put their heads literally in the sand and typically say, "Let us do nothing".

We do not do that on this side of the House. We say that we need to act for today but also for future generations.

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TAXATION

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as wildfires rage destruction across the country, we are haemorrhaging the volunteer firefighters we need. There are 15,000 firefighter vacancies across Canada, and understandably so. Our volunteers, who make up 70% of our firefighting efforts, are not getting the recognition from the government that they deserve.

I have a private member's bill to support our volunteer firefighters by increasing their tax credit from \$3,000 to \$10,000. Will the Liberals finally show our volunteer firefighters the respect they deserve by increasing their tax exemption?

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for his advocacy. Those volunteer firefighters in virtually every community across the country provide an extraordinary service. They deserve our support and we are committed to finding the best ways to continue to support them through training, equipment and other supports.

*Oral Questions***CANADA REVENUE AGENCY**

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, last Friday, I met with a group in New Hazelton that works with adults with developmental disabilities. They told me that about half their clients were receiving letters from the CRA clawing back CERB benefits.

The Liberals know full well that people living with disabilities are struggling to make ends meet, that they are twice as likely to be living in poverty, yet instead of helping them, they are harassing them with these CERB clawback letters.

Will the minister do the right thing, stand today and commit to ending the CERB clawback for people with disabilities?

[Translation]

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question. I too am grateful for all the work that was done during the pandemic to help people get through such tough times.

As we have indicated, the Canada Revenue Agency is proceeding on a case-by-case basis. We invite people to contact the CRA and take the necessary steps. We are here to help people.

* * *

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development members hear that NATO plays a key role in peacekeeping and security on both sides of the Atlantic. Canada is currently in charge of setting up the NATO climate change and security centre of excellence in Montreal.

With the smoke blanketing Canada right now, this is top of mind. Our government is focused on climate. In contrast, the Conservatives are impeding the debate on budget implementation.

Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs explain to us why our climate leadership and our support for the alliance are so important?

Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague asked an excellent question. I want to thank him for his work.

I just came back from the NATO meeting in Norway. We know that climate change has an impact on our health, but it also has an impact on our security. The situation is just going to keep getting worse over time.

It goes without saying that we need to understand the impact of climate change on defence in the North Atlantic region. That is why Canada is going to lead this new climate change centre. We will help our allies. We are pushing the Conservative Party to—

[English]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Foothills.

CARBON PRICING

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is fuelling food inflation as grocery prices are up another 10%, costing Canadian families another \$1,000 a year just to put food on the table. Canada's Food Price Report predicts that food prices will go up a stunning 34% over the next two years.

That is not even the bad news. That does not include the implications of the Liberals' second carbon tax, a carbon tax that would add 61¢ a litre to the price of gas, which will increase the cost of food production and transportation.

How much more will Canadians have to pay to feed their families when the Liberals implement a second carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague has risen in the House on a number of occasions to speak on behalf of farmers. In front of me, I have a press release from the Canola Council of Canada congratulating our government on the clean fuel regulations. It states, "We're pleased to see the CFR provides options that would minimize regulatory burden and allow canola to be used to reduce GHG emissions through biofuel production." It talks about the \$2 billion of expanded canola processing capacity that our clean fuel regulations will provide to Canadian canola grocers.

The member and that party are saying no to all of these investments.

● (1455)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is the reality of the carbon tax on Canadian farmers. An average 5,000-acre farm would pay \$150,000 a year in carbon taxes. Alberta ranchers who use gas co-ops are paying 60% more in federal carbon taxes than they are for the actual natural gas. Forty-four per cent of fruit and vegetable producers are selling at a loss. Food bank use is up a stunning 60%, with more than eight million Canadians using them every single month. This is before the knock-out blow of a second carbon tax.

Again, how much more will Canadians have to pay to feed their families when the Liberals implement a second carbon tax?

Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what my colleague calls a typical farm is actually the 3% biggest farms in Canada. The projection he is talking about is based on a scenario where farmers would take absolutely no action, would adopt no good practices and would not use any new technologies to improve the agriculture to make it more resilient. This is what my colleague is referring to.

I know that farmers are very committed to reducing emissions to have more sustainable agriculture and to be more resilient in the case of all these extreme weather events.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government is so out of touch. Many Canadian families are struggling to put food on the table. One in five Canadians are skipping meals, and the use of food banks in my riding has gone up by 30%.

The carbon tax is driving up the costs of farm production and groceries. Canadians cannot afford to pay the extra \$1,065 being imposed by the government.

When will the government do away with the carbon tax so that families can once again become food self-sufficient?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about the agricultural industry and the measures that we are putting in place to help that industry, like all industries, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

I am looking at a news release from the Canadian Canola Growers Association commending the government for its clean-fuel regulation that will make it possible to invest \$2 billion in Canada's canola farmers to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the agricultural and transportation industries.

What the Conservatives are doing is saying no to those investments and yes to more climate change.

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that my colleague opposite is not telling me that Quebec is not affected by the carbon tax, as he tends to do. I would still reply that, yes, Quebec is affected by the carbon tax.

The first carbon tax affects us directly when fruit and vegetables are imported from Ontario, for example. Transportation costs and other inputs play a big part in setting prices.

The second carbon tax also affects us directly, at a cost of \$436 per family, as noted by the Parliamentary Budget Officer.

Once again, when is the government going to scrap the carbon tax?

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we see a lot of our Conservative colleagues from Quebec being forced to defend the Leader of the Opposition's cruel macro-economic theories.

How does the Leader of the Opposition explain the cruelty of his comments when he says that global inflation was caused by low-income Canadians needing help from the Canadian government? How does he explain the cruelty of his advice to invest in Bitcoin and cryptocurrencies as a hedge against inflation, which would have led to people losing half of their savings? Finally, how does he explain to the member for Beauce the 600 households that he claims are not entitled to dental care assistance from the Canadian government?

* * *

NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, oil giant BP has complained that it is being accused of oil exploration in the middle of a marine refuge in Newfoundland. It is a little frustrating

Oral Questions

for BP because, while the company does unfortunately have the right to look for oil, it does not have the right to exploit it.

According to CBC, however, the Minister of Natural Resources has told BP that if it discovers enough oil, the boundaries of the marine refuge could be redrawn.

Will the minister retract that comment immediately and confirm that the boundaries of a marine refuge will never be modified to drill for oil?

● (1500)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when we first took office, only 1% of our waters and lands were protected. Now our goal is to protect 30% by 2030, and we are already at 14%. We are doing some good work.

We could also talk about what we did last week with the Atlantic accords. We presented a framework for wind power projects in Newfoundland. This is going to be very important for the economy and for the environment.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we would not believe it if it were not coming from a government beholden to the oil companies. When BP Oil complains about not being able to drill for oil in a marine refuge, the government's response should be that they look elsewhere.

However, the Minister of Natural Resources said the opposite to BP. He said that if they found oil in a marine refuge, then, poof, it is no longer a marine refuge and the problem is solved.

When will this government stop fuelling climate change?

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first I will say that these are exploration permits and not production permits. That is important. In the case of a production permit, there is an environmental assessment process that oil companies must go through.

Second, we continue to protect our waters and our land. When we formed government, 1% were protected; we are now at 14% and we are aiming for 30% by 2030.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ECONOMY**

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what should we call a Liberal finance minister with an NDP credit card? We should call them inflationary. However, it is no joke. The Liberal spending spree is fuelling inflation and putting pressure on households right across the country. With all of their deficit spending, they are even making former Liberal finance ministers, such as John Manley and Bill Morneau, blush fire-engine red.

Speaking of fire, do the Liberals and their spENDP backers understand that their reckless spending is torching the economy, or do they simply want to burn it all down?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, right now, the forests of our country are burning. This is a desperately serious moment when we have had forest fires burning in Alberta, in Quebec and across Atlantic Canada. We breathe the smoke when we walk outside this very building. This is a moment for utter seriousness and for climate action.

However, in blocking our BIA, the Conservatives are blocking our clean energy plan, which will help create jobs and—

The Speaker: The hon. member for York—Simcoe.

* * *

CARBON PRICING

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are on the ropes, trying to pay this Liberal carbon tax. It raises gas prices by 41¢ a litre every single time they fill up. However, like a one-two punch, the Prime Minister is now forcing a second carbon tax on Canadians, adding another 17¢ to the cost of fuel. Canadians are already down for the count, having to take on extra jobs and turn to food banks just to get by.

Instead of sucker-punching Canadians, will the Liberals axe the carbon tax?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I would like to read a weather alert on Environment Canada's website. A "special air quality statement" says that "smoke plumes from forest fires in Quebec and northeastern Ontario have resulted in deteriorated air quality." Moreover, "High levels of air pollution [have developed] due to smog from forest fires".

The air quality in our nation's capital is worse than it is in Mexico City, in Jakarta and in Kolkata. We have all this because of the forest fires. What is the response from the Conservative Party? Let us make pollution free again. It will not happen from this side of the House.

[Translation]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this government has been in office for eight years now and the only thing that it has done for the environment is impose a carbon tax. Clearly the plan is working. Just look at the wildfires burning outside.

To make matters worse, the Liberals want to add a second tax through the GST. They promised to plant two billion trees, but they are taking the quicker route by imposing a second tax with no results.

When will this government wake up, stop taking money out of Canadians' pockets, give them some breathing room and cancel this tax?

● (1505)

Hon. Diane Lebouthillier (Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am always astonished when the Conservatives try to convince us that they are the party of common sense.

Let me refresh their memories. They deny climate change, revoke women's rights, take help away from families, give ridiculous advice on Bitcoin and dine with extreme right-wing politicians. I could go on like this all afternoon.

Is that really how the Conservatives show common sense? It is high time they started using their judgment because Canadians do not want that kind of common sense.

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*[English]***FINANCE**

Ms. Lisa Hepfner (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect the House to be a place of debate and for political parties to disagree on issues. What they do not expect is for party leaders to delay and avoid these debates with parliamentary tricks and obstructionist tactics. That is why Canadians were appalled when the leader of the Conservatives bragged that he is intentionally delaying the budget implementation act—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Speaker: I am trying to hear what the hon. member is saying, but there is noise, and I really cannot make it out. I want to hear what she has to say. She can start over, and I can see whether it is offensive or not.

The hon. member for Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Lisa Hepfner: Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect this House to be a place of debate and for political parties to disagree on issues. What they do not expect is for party leaders to delay and avoid these debates with parliamentary tricks and obstructionist tactics. That is why Canadians were appalled when the leader of the Conservatives bragged that he is intentionally delaying the budget implementation act.

Can the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance remind this House of the significant measures that the Conservatives are blocking with their immature games?

Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for the Conservative leader to appear in front of the press and brag that his party is going to delay the debate on the BIA is the height of irresponsibility. The Conservative delays are holding up tax deductions and benefits for working Canadians. They are holding up protections for air passengers and, shamefully, they are holding up the codification of sanctions against Russia for its illegal war on Ukraine.

It is the height of irresponsibility, and it is shameful of the Conservatives.

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CARBON PRICING

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is out of touch, and Canadians are out of money. What is the Liberal solution? It is more tax and, in fact, a tax on a tax. The original carbon tax added 41¢ a litre on gas. This second carbon tax is going to add an additional 17¢ a litre on gasoline.

When we factor in carbon tax and GST, that is 61¢ a litre on gas. People who live in rural Alberta drive a lot. It is a fact of life; they travel to go to work, to medical appointments and to grocery stores.

My question is simply this: When will the Liberals do the right thing and axe the tax?

Hon. François-Philippe Champagne (Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is out of touch to delay the implementation of clean technology, clean electricity and clean hydrogen while there are forest fires burning in my riding and her province. There are families being displaced in my riding today, and they cannot understand why anyone who has been elected would delay clean electricity, clean energy or clean hydrogen.

It is not only delaying; it is irresponsible, because our country is burning. It is incumbent on each and every one of us to act to make sure we save what is left.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians are struggling with the costs of food and fuel. They are facing a cost of living crisis, but what is the Liberal government doing about it? It is adding a second carbon tax.

Canadians need a break, not a tax, and 61¢ a litre could mean the difference between buying food and paying the rent.

Why will the Liberal government not do the right thing, give Canadians a break and axe the tax?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, the government is doing the right thing. We are fighting climate change, and we are working to make life more affordable for Canadians. We understand that there is neither a future economy nor a future for Canadians if we do not tackle the climate emergency that we are facing.

We can actually all taste the smoke from the forest fires in this chamber right now. This is unprecedented.

While we fight climate change, we are also putting forward such things as the grocery rebate to help Canadian families with the high

Oral Questions

cost of food. We are also cutting child care fees in half, which is saving Canadian families thousands of dollars a month—

• (1510)

The Speaker: The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

* * *

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, several years ago, a group of shady consultants gave fake admission letters to mostly Punjabi students who came here in good faith to study and be part of the Canadian family. They came here. They followed the law. They studied. Many of them completed their programs. It was the incompetent Liberal government that had accepted the letters in the first place.

Now, the government is kicking them out of the country and sending them home to poverty and bankruptcy for their families.

Why will the government not reverse its incompetence and show a little bit of common sense and compassion? Why will it not halt the deportation and allow those who came here in good faith and are contributing to our economy to apply for permanent residency?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I will not take any lessons from the members of the official opposition on immigration cases. What I will say to the House, though, is this: We want to ensure that those who are not responsible for fraud will have an opportunity to demonstrate their situation and present evidence to support their case.

At the same time, the integrity of our immigration system remains of utmost importance. We are actively looking at these reports on a case-by-case basis, and we will make good on our commitment to helping international students.

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CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. George Chahal (Calgary Skyview, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, during Environment Week, I want to acknowledge Canada's progress since 2015. We are reducing emissions with our emissions reduction plan and getting to net-zero nationwide, while creating clean jobs. We are investing in net-zero emissions vehicles and eliminating harmful single-use plastics. We have accomplished a lot, but there is more to do.

Could the Minister of Environment and Climate Change tell the House more about our government's ongoing environmental efforts?

Government Orders

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we are, in fact, battling climate change, and we have the strongest economic growth of all the G7 countries. We have put in place measures that will create thousands of jobs in Canada, boosting Canada's economy for the coming years and for the coming decades. We are doing that while we reduce climate pollution by 50 million tonnes, the equivalent of removing 11 million vehicles from our roads.

We can fight climate change and we can have a strong economy, while supporting Canadians. Unfortunately, the Conservatives want to do none of these things.

* * *

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, before colonialism, Inuit, first nations and Métis had their own forms of policing. For decades, genocidal policies have been enforced by the RCMP and local law enforcement. First nations in northern Ontario undertook their own community policing. The current federal government is going against reconciliation by refusing to renegotiate new agreements. This leaves 30,000 indigenous people without local police forces.

When will the government provide funding to keep indigenous communities safe?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a government that has made historic investments in first nations policing, over \$860 million, which we are rolling out in communities right across the country. We know that the path to reconciliation lies in empowering first nations and Inuit communities right across the land so they can drive the solutions that will best protect their communities. That is precisely the work we are committed to doing, in trust and in respect, with first nations and Inuit communities right across the land.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it has been two years since the Afzaal family was targeted and brutally murdered in London. It is unthinkable that this could happen to a family in our city, but we have seen the amazing resilience that can counter white supremacy and Islamophobia. Communities are calling for the government to combat online hate and to support survivors of hate-motivated crimes.

Will the government commit to establishing a national support fund for victims of hate-motivated crimes and support the NDP's online algorithm transparency act to help the Afzaal family and countless others?

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for her advocacy for the Muslim community in London, Ontario. The issue of Islamophobia is one that affects Muslims around this country and, indeed, around the world. It is an issue we must all continue to work vigilantly on.

What I find very concerning is that today, a day when we are debating the budget, that very budget includes dedicated funds of over \$50 million toward combatting racism and Islamophobia. Those are the types of initiatives all members of the House need to get behind.

* * *

• (1515)

PRESENCE IN GALLERY

The Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of members to a presence in the gallery.

[Translation]

I wish to draw the attention of members to the presence of the Hon. Geoff Regan, the 36th Speaker of the House of Commons.

[English]

Speaker Regan is here today on the occasion of the unveiling of his official portrait.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

The Speaker: The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent on a point of order.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago, the member for Calgary Skyview talked about Environment Week and Canadian success stories from around the world. The UN released a scientific report in 2023 on how countries are performing, and Canada ranks 58th—

The Speaker: Is there something written on the back of the member's papers? I am sorry, but that is not allowed. I just want to remind the member.

The hon. member can continue his intervention.

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, the report concluded that Canada ranks 58th out of 63 countries. I am sure that everyone will consent to this scientific document produced by the UN on Canada's performance respecting the environment being accepted and tabled in the House.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ACT

BILL C-35—TIME ALLOCATION MOTION

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.) moved:

That in relation to Bill C-35, an act respecting early learning and child care in Canada, not more than five further hours shall be allotted to the consideration of the report stage and five hours shall be allotted to the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill; and

That, at the expiry of the five hours provided for the consideration at report stage and the five hours provided for the consideration at third reading stage of the said bill, any proceedings before the House shall be interrupted, if required for the purpose of this order, and in turn every question necessary for the disposal of the said stage of the bill then under consideration shall be put forthwith and successively without further debate or amendment.

[Translation]

The Speaker: Pursuant to Standing Order 67.1, there will now be a 30-minute question period.

[English]

I invite hon. members who wish to ask questions to rise in their places or use the “raise hand” function so the Chair has some idea of the number of members who wish to participate in the questions.

The hon. member for Peterborough—Kawartha.

• (1520)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I just got off the phone with a child care provider who was in extreme distress because she has been in this program now for 15 months and she does not see any light at the end of the tunnel. The reality is that parents are sounding alarms, and 50% of children are living in child care deserts. These agreements under Bill C-35 are provincial and territorial agreements that have already been signed; they are in the works.

We went to committee. We have tried to raise the alarm bells to ensure that every child is included and that parents do have choice. We see a rush by the Liberal-NDP government to push this through instead of making it right. They say they want to enshrine this for generations to come, so why would they time-allocate this so it is not being done properly? Is it not better to get it done right to ensure that all parents have choice? Right now, we have someone like Erin Cullen, who lives in Newfoundland and Labrador. She has no access to child care. Seventy per cent of those folks need access to child care facilities that are private. Why rush something, if they really care about all children and all parents?

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as my hon. colleague knows, I was here for the report stage debate and can attest that no new arguments came from the Conservatives during the six hours of debate, so I do not think we are rushing anything. Let us recall that the only thing the Conservatives were looking to amend was the short title of the bill, which actually does not propose any real amendment to the legislation. If the Conservatives do not have anything actual to propose, then I think it is fair, and Canadians would expect, that we move this important piece of legislation—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The minister is not allowed to, even inaccurately, refer to the presence or absence of members. I do not think she was actually here for the whole debate, but regardless, she is not supposed to claim she was here, if I understand the rules around presence and absence.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan may want to revisit the rules. Members are allowed to refer to the absence or presence of themselves.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Government Orders

The Deputy Speaker: I am just going to wait for this debate to subside, and then I will move on.

Members can refer to whether they are here or not, but they cannot refer to other members' being here or not.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I remember the 10 dismal, terrible years under the Harper regime, when there was no support at all for child care in this country.

It is time now for things to change for child care. The NDP has been a strong advocate for putting in place agreements that would actually allow parents, who are sometimes paying up to \$2,000 a month, that relief. This is part of the NDP package that includes dental care, the grocery rebate and affordable housing. These are things that opposition parties should be working on. Tragically, we have seen the Conservatives block every single piece of legislation that would actually benefit people. While NDP members, the worker bees of Parliament, have been working hard to actually make sure the government does the right thing, Conservatives have blocked everything.

Would my colleague tell us why the Conservatives would block something as valuable as child care? It just does not make sense when we know the needs of parents and families right across this country.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's question is one that stumps all of us.

During the report stage debate, the Conservatives kept saying that they care about child care, yet they were doing everything they could to delay the advance of Bill C-35. We believe very strongly in making sure this legislation is in place.

As my hon. colleague was referring to, one of the very first things that former prime minister Harper did when he formed government in 2006 was rip up the child care agreements with provinces and territories. We hope that Bill C-35 would make it harder for a future Conservative government to do just that. Conservatives would have to justify to Canadians why they do not actually believe in providing them affordable child care.

• (1525)

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her intervention.

In the child care program, the government was kind enough to recognize Quebec's expertise and the fact that Quebec already has a good system. It gave Quebec the right to opt out with full compensation.

Government Orders

Is the government considering doing the same thing with its dental care plan?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, what I can say is that the substance of Bill C-35 falls squarely within federal jurisdiction. It does not impose conditions on the provinces and territories. This bill is exclusively federal in scope.

We have an excellent relationship and an excellent agreement with Quebec. It is an asymmetrical agreement with the Province of Quebec recognizing its leadership on child care and early learning.

Since we are debating Bill C-35, I will stop there.

[*English*]

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I come from a rural area and hear from young moms and other moms all the time. We do not have child care spots available; that is just the reality in our rural areas.

Privatized child care spots are all that can be found, if people can find them in home day care. We do not have enough workers. There are not enough people going through programs in colleges to support the day cares that we do have. We cannot get after-school or before-school child care for hours for people who work shift work.

What would the member like to say to those moms in rural areas who just cannot find child care, when this bill would actually do nothing to help them find child care?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I would say through you to the member and those moms that this is exactly why Bill C-35 exists. It is so typical of the Conservatives to say there is a problem, throw their hands up and do nothing. What Bill C-35 would do is commit the federal government to long-term funding to create additional spaces to make sure there is that access right across the country. In fact, included in the legislation is a comment specifically about rural child care. The member should talk to the provinces and territories, because they have really good access plans when it comes to increasing access to child care.

However, if it were not for this legislation and those agreements, none of those problems would be solved. We are working to do that.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the minister really hit the nail on the head. Conservatives are complaining that they want to get this bill right and want to do all this work on it, yet the only amendment they brought forward was to change the short title. Let us think about that. They are satisfied with everything except the name of the bill, as if that has any significance to Canadians.

This is a bill and a program that has been adopted by every jurisdiction in the country, including those of all the Conservative premiers throughout the country. I wonder if the minister could comment on the success of getting a program together that has been bought into by the entire country.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Kingston and the Islands is right. There is only one political party in this country that is opposed to it, and it is the federal Conservatives. Every provincial Conservative party has signed on to the early learn-

ing and child care agreement. It does raise the question as to what is wrong with the federal Conservatives that makes them not believe in affordable, accessible, high-quality, inclusive child care.

Even some of the provinces that were the last to sign on, provinces led by Conservatives—Alberta, New Brunswick and Ontario—have fully embraced the Canada-wide early learning and child care initiative and are doing an excellent job of rolling it out. It is not going to be built in one day, but they are doing a really significant job in terms of adding additional spaces, creating more affordability and ensuring high quality.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank everybody who has contributed to this debate, a debate that feels like it is going to go on forever with the Conservatives' stalling tactics.

I certainly agree that we are in a child care desert. The Conservatives made note of the CCPA report time and time again. It was never about privatization of child care, however. It was about a worker shortage and the need to ensure that workers are provided with benefits, livable wages, retirement provisions and better working conditions, and the need to put forth a real workforce strategy in the child care field so that we have caregivers who can help deal with this crisis.

I am wondering if the minister can confirm whether or not her government is ready now to put forward a comprehensive workforce strategy that is funded and supported by the federal government.

● (1530)

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her collaboration on Bill C-35. It has been an absolute pleasure to work with her on advancing this bill. We have had many conversations, and I share her deep commitment to ensuring that workers are fairly compensated and have the supports they need to thrive as child care workers.

Workforce supports are indeed part of each of the bilateral agreements and action plans. I will be meeting with my provincial and territorial counterparts this summer to come up with a more comprehensive workforce strategy.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is really frustrating to hear nonsense coming from the member for Kingston and the Islands, but that is nothing new.

He said that Conservatives only had one amendment; that is not true. In committee, there were a lot of Conservative amendments, a lot of very thoughtful, reasoned amendments that were brought forward to try to improve the bill. To then say that we are going to prevent any further debate on this bill because we do not like what the Liberals are bringing forward is frankly disrespectful to all parents who are struggling to find child care right now. That is so disrespectful.

I have heard from hundreds of families, parents, moms and dads who cannot even find a space. They need flexibility. They do not need Monday-to-Friday, Ottawa-knows-best child care. Frankly, the government has not been listening to them. I am asking not to have this time allocation and to listen to the families and allow some time for this flexibility.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague on the birth of her second child and welcome her back to the House. It is great to see her here with her baby.

I would just like to set the record straight, though, because there is actually nothing in the legislation that would prevent flexibility. In fact, in her home province of Alberta, when it comes to auspice, there is a mix of for-profit and not-for-profit care in the growth plan. There are also some really creative ideas about after-hours care and irregular time schedules in her own home community to make sure that child care is available.

Despite what the member was saying and despite what the Conservatives are saying, there is nothing in the bill that would prevent that kind of innovative, flexible child care from advancing. Home care is included as well.

We want to make sure parents have choice across this country; they do not currently have it, because it is not available.

Mr. Gord Johns (Courtenay—Alberni, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I just went to the Boys and Girls Club in Parksville and met with the staff there. They shared with me that there are 45 kids on their wait-list and talked about the impact of child care and the agreement with British Columbia and Canada and how critical it is that we continue to move forward.

This is also well supported by the chambers of commerce and the business community in my riding. It is absolutely critical in helping to solve the labour market shortage. As cited by my colleague from Winnipeg Centre, the biggest challenge is the workforce and to make sure there are early child care educators who are trained and will be able to be paid well and receive a living wage. That was absolutely essential. Of course, affordable housing came into the mix.

Is the minister going to come back with a comprehensive strategy on how she is going to resolve these differences? Absolutely, the situation is urgent in all the communities in my riding, and it is urgent that we move forward rapidly.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the NDP members as well as the Bloc Québécois members for their support, because we are going to be able to move forward with Bill C-35 despite the delay tactics of the Conservatives. For all of the reasons he mentioned, it is important to move this legislation through the House so that we can ensure Canadians have access to high-quality, affordable and inclusive child care.

When it comes to the workforce, British Columbia is doing some excellent work. It has instituted a \$4-an-hour increase for all child care workers. It will be coming out with a wage grid soon. We are going to continue to work in partnership with British Columbia and in fact all provinces and territories to make sure the workforce is well compensated and well respected right across this country.

Government Orders

• (1535)

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by applauding our colleague's leadership. I thank her for what she said about the connection with Quebec families who have reaped the very real benefits of affordable and accessible child care for almost 25 years now. I have certainly experienced it myself.

I would also like to mention the \$6 billion allocated to the Government of Quebec to further improve the system, which is not perfect yet.

I would like her thoughts, as a young mother, on how investing in accessible and affordable child care can have a positive impact in terms of promoting gender equality, reducing poverty and ensuring the equitable, meaningful development of all children across the country.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, my colleague held my position before me and I know he is also a champion of child care and early childhood development centres.

This is an excellent question. We are seeing results already. Since November, more women have been active in Canada's workforce than ever before. Part of the reason is our early childhood and child care program. We are seeing an increase in women's economic empowerment.

I wonder why the Conservatives do not support economic empowerment, based on their track record over the past 25 years in Quebec.

We also know that early childhood is the most important stage of development in every person's life. This program, which is based on quality and inclusion, is critical to ensuring that current and future generations of children have greater opportunities than we did.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by thanking the hon. Minister of Families for her work, her non-partisan spirit, and the fact that from day to day, frankly, she inspires me, so she may be annoyed to find that I cannot vote for time allocation on Bill C-35, because we need to stop using time allocation in this place as if it is routine.

I protested it when it was done to us time and time again when the Conservatives were in power. In a majority government under former prime minister Stephen Harper, it was used abusively. I knew then that if it happens once, it keeps happening, so now it is being used abusively by the Liberals.

I know there are good reasons and serious provocation behind why the governing party wants to do this. I would say to my dear friends across the aisle that it does not help when the leader of the official opposition tells the Canadian media and the Canadian public that the Conservatives are going to use every sneaky trick they can to gum up the works.

Government Orders

The truth of the matter is that if this place used our rules, which would be that no one is allowed to read a written speech, or if every member in this place did not fill up all the time by forever giving speeches that are not always truly inspiring but definitely take up the time, we could make this place work better.

I appeal to all sides in this place to let good legislation like Bill C-35 move through this House properly without time allocation.

[Translation]

A gag order is not a good idea, regardless of the party in power.

[English]

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, of course the affection for my hon. colleague is mutual. I also feel inspired and deeply respectful toward her as well.

I understand where she is coming from. I do not think this is something we want to do, but unfortunately the Conservatives have forced our hand in a way, because they are not letting good legislation through simply by the fact of being opposed to it.

As I said, there is not another political party across this country that is opposed to this child care legislation; it is only the federal Conservatives. Every single provincial Conservative party is for this legislation. In fact, most of them have signed bilateral agreements with us to move this measure forward.

Therefore, in many ways I share the regret of my hon. colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands, but unfortunately the Conservatives have decided that they are going to gum up this place and are not going to let good legislation pass that will truly benefit Canadians. Honestly, I think that needs to reside within their conscience.

• (1540)

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, how can Canadians trust a government that is quite happy to talk about an announcement and very unhappy or unwilling to talk about results?

We asked the government how many child care spaces in the communities have been created across Canada and how many families have access as a result of this legislation. It said that it is not tracking the data.

We do not know if the child care agreements with the provinces are leading to more spaces. In fact, in my community, there is not one space available for \$10-a-day day care, yet the government said it has increased access to Canadians all across the country.

Will the Liberals commit to even just reporting on the progress they make, or are they just going to hide their heads in the sand and bury them with the failures as they always do?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I find it very unfortunate that my hon. colleague is not basing his question on facts, because when I was at committee I was very clear that we have created 50,000 new spaces across the country.

In fact, we do have reporting in the legislation. The legislation requires the government to report on an annual basis as to the progress we have made. I can tell the hon. colleague that across this country there are now six provinces and territories that have already

achieved \$10 a day, and those remaining have reduced fees by 50%.

If the hon. colleague had taken the time to read the legislation, the action plans and the reports, he would have a question based in fact.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for her speech. There is still one thing missing from Bill C-35, and I would like to hear her comments on that.

It should be pointed out that the early childhood centre model and the vision of offering education to children who are not yet of school age was implemented in Quebec. That is where the model comes from. That expertise is even recognized throughout the world.

Quebec's contribution was recognized in black and white in a previous bill. This bill, Bill C-35, currently mentions a five-year period. What will happen after five years? Will the federal government start another dispute over Quebec's right to opt out with full compensation in recognition of its expertise? Why was this not included in black and white in this bill? For now, it is all right, but what will happen in five years' time?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I think there are two things that need to be separated. There are the five-year agreements we signed, and there are laws, which have no expiration date.

The important thing is that this bill applies to the federal government. It does not apply to the provinces and territories, which have their own laws because that is their jurisdiction. The amendments proposed by the Bloc Québécois to recognize Quebec's leadership were deemed inadmissible by the House of Commons, not by the government. They exceeded the scope of the bill.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to take a brief moment to thank the minister for her work establishing a new passport office in Prince George to serve northern B.C. It is something I pushed hard for and it is going to make a real difference for the 300,000 people who call that region home.

Moving to child care, the government's agreement with the Province of British Columbia is making a difference in the north-west. I know a lot of people are pleased to have access to lower cost child care. However, the big challenge we face is, as she well knows, recruitment and retention of new early childhood educators. These positions are not paid nearly enough for the role that they play in our society.

What role does she feel the federal government has in ensuring that these positions are compensated properly and that we are able to recruit good people into these important roles?

Government Orders

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I, too, was very pleased to see the opening of the Prince George passport office. There will be about 20 additional offices that will be providing passport services across the country over the coming months.

I do want to commend the leadership of the Government of British Columbia when it comes to workforce. It has some very innovative ideas when it comes to recruitment and retention. One of the things that they are leading the country on when it comes to recruitment is that they have created a new high school accreditation program for ECEs that is going to allow high school students to do their grade 11 and 12 combined with the college ECE program, so that once they graduate from high school, they can enter straight into the child care workforce. It is innovative ideas like these, which are happening through the funding that we have provided to the provinces and territories, that are really going to make a difference when it comes to recruitment and retention.

The federal government will continue to work in partnership with provinces and territories, to ensure that we address the challenges that we are facing within the child care sector.

• (1545)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, the legislation that we are going to be trying to get through the House, with or without Conservative support but I tend to think that it will probably be with, is the legislation that will genuinely impact so many Canadians. This is going to change not just the manner in which parents are able to care for their children, but it is going to change the way that our economy works. It is going to change the labour force participation.

I am wondering if the minister could comment specifically on the impact that this will have in so many more people getting into the labour market and what that will mean for our economy, as our economy continues to grow as a result.

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I am genuinely excited about this. This is a really exciting nation-building project that we are embarking on. All 13 provinces and territories have signed on. Are there challenges? Certainly.

Is this legislation working to fix them and to create a vision of access to early learning and child care across the country? Absolutely.

It is looking to grow our economy. We know that for every dollar invested in early learning and child care, we see \$1.80 to \$2.40 returned to the economy. We estimate that this will grow our GDP by up to 1.2%. That is significant. We see, with the example of Quebec over the last 25 years, what it means for female workforce participation. Quebec has the highest rate of women with children under the age of four working in the OECD.

We are looking forward to that across Canada. What does that mean for female economic autonomy? It means a huge amount. It means that women will have control over their finances. It means that as they age, I anticipate that we will also likely see a reduction in senior women's poverty.

These are huge opportunities for our country. I am glad that the NDP and the Bloc are supportive of this, that they are excited about

it, and that the provinces and territories are excited about it. I would just hope that the Conservative Party of Canada would join me in that excitement and move this forward for Canadians.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the minister may not have an answer to this question right off the top of her head, but I would ask that she come back to the House with an answer or send it to my office within one week.

How many new spots have been opened up in Northumberland County because of this program?

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, I do not have the specific number for the member's county, but I could send it to him today if he would like, with regard to what Ontario's plans are for opening new spaces for the county and municipality by municipality. This program has only been in place for just under two years, but let us remember that Ontario only signed just over a year ago. It was the last jurisdiction to get on board, but it has a really thoughtful expansion plan and it is working on rolling that out.

No one thinks that Rome was built in a day. It took time to do that and that is what we are doing. However, let us not take the Conservative approach of throwing up our hands, sitting down and doing nothing. Let us actually work together to build this, to build the system and to ensure that Canadians have access to child care that it is affordable, that it is high quality and is inclusive of our diverse children's needs.

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my daughter Julia has an eight-month-old daughter, Mirabel, my granddaughter. She put her daughter on the list for child care before she was born, and yet she still has no prospect of getting that child care. I was very proud to see Julia and Mirabel featured on the front page of the Vancouver Sun the other day in an article about how difficult it was to get child care.

Could the minister comment on the hopeful words she could give to my daughter about the prospects of getting child care and on what this bill would do for them and thousands of others across the country?

• (1550)

Hon. Karina Gould: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague asked a very good question of the Conservatives during the report stage on what the amendment was that they had proposed, and they were unable to answer. I congratulate the member for that.

In response to the member's question, the agreement that we have signed with British Columbia commits British Columbia to creating 40,000 additional child care spaces. What I would say about this legislation in particular and why it is so important is that it would commit the federal government to funding, to child care and involvement in child care indefinitely, for the long term. Without this legislation, we could see, as we saw in the past in 2006, a Conservative government coming in, ripping up those agreements and leaving Canadian families in the dust. That is what they did almost 20 years ago.

Government Orders

The legislation says to the member's daughter and his granddaughter that the federal government believes in their access to child care. It believes that people have a right to affordable child care and that we are committing ourselves, as a federal government, as Canadians, to building this system so that they too can have access to that child care. They can pursue their career and their dreams and we will be there for them.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith the question on the motion now before the House.

The question is on the motion. If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes 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.

Mrs. Rachael Thomas: Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: Call in the members.

• (1635)

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

(Division No. 351)

YEAS

Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Battiste
Beech	Bendayan
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Boulerice
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Casey
Chagger	Chahal
Champagne	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fergus	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Garrison
Gerretsen	Gould
Green	Guilbeault
Hajdu	Hanley
Hardie	Hepfner
Holland	Housefather
Hughes	Hussen
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns

Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Lattanzio
Lauson	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacAulay (Cardigan)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor
MacKinnon (Gatineau)	Maloney
Martinez Ferrada	Masse
Mathysen	May (Cambridge)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Miller
Morrice	Morrissey
Murray	Naqvi
Ng	Noormohamed
O'Connell	O'Regan
Petitpas Taylor	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Robillard
Rodriguez	Rogers
Romanado	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Scarpaleggia	Schiefke
Serré	Sgro
Shanahan	Sheehan
Sidhu (Brampton East)	Sidhu (Brampton South)
Singh	Sousa
St-Onge	Sudds
Tassi	Taylor Roy
Thompson	Trudeau
Turnbull	Valdez
Van Bynen	van Koeverden
Vandal	Vandenbeld
Virani	Weiler
Wilkinson	Yip
Zahid	Zarrillo
Zuberi — 173	

NAYS

Members

Aboultaif	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Barsalou-Duval	Beaulieu
Berthold	Bérubé
Bezan	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Block
Bragdon	Brassard
Brock	Brunelle-Duceppe
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chabot
Chambers	Champoux
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	DeBellefeuille
Deltell	Desbiens
Desilets	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay

Government Orders

[Translation]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my regards to you and to all our valiant colleagues who are here with us.

This is a debate at report stage on the budget, specifically Bill C-47. It is the month of June. The Stanley Cup finals are going on. It is hot out, we still do not have a budget and we have a minority government. As we have seen all this week and today, there is a blockage in Parliament. Everything is delayed, everything is moving slowly. These blockages clearly have an impact on government policies, Quebecers and Canadians.

In a minority government, we would expect the government to use methods that foster a consensus and the advancement of the work of Parliament. We would expect the government to propose a budget that we could agree on, one that could achieve a consensus, especially since there is great potential for blockage here on the part of the official opposition.

The Conservatives have many faults, including being against women's right to control their own bodies, being against environmental policies and being pro-oil, but they do have one good quality, and that is that they are predictable. We know that they will block everything.

We expected the government to have the foresight to propose a budget that we could work on. Instead, the government did exactly what it had promised it would never do. It is something the Harper government did time after time, namely present an omnibus bill, a colossal bill that is basically impossible to rework and that is almost designed to be delayed.

It almost seems like the government has no respect for the House and is looking for trouble. This bill amends 59 acts, in addition to the Income Tax Regulations. Anything and everything is in there. There is even a royal provision in the budget to recognize Charles III as sovereign. After all that, the government members are surprised that it is being blocked. They are surprised to see the Conservatives propose 900 amendments. They will say that everyone else is being unreasonable, when they are the ones who tabled an omnibus bill. They will ultimately invoke closure. The NDP will get into bed with the Liberals and support closure as usual. After that, they will accuse the other parties of picking fights.

As a responsible opposition party, all we ask is to debate and be able to do our work on each element of the budget bill.

Fortin	Gallant
Garon	Gaudreau
Généreux	Genuis
Gill	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gray	Hallan
Hoback	Jeneroux
Kelly	Kitchen
Kmieć	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Larouche
Lawrence	Lehoux
Lemire	Lewis (Essex)
Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	Martel
May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Michaud
Moore	Morantz
Morrison	Motz
Muys	Nater
Normandin	O'Toole
Patzer	Paul-Hus
Pauzé	Perkins
Perron	Plamondon
Poilievre	Rayes
Redekopp	Reid
Rempel Garner	Richards
Roberts	Rood
Ruff	Savard-Tremblay
Scheer	Schmale
Seeback	Shields
Shipley	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Small
Soroka	Steinley
Ste-Marie	Stewart
Strahl	Stubbs
Thériault	Therrien
Thomas	Tochor
Tolmie	Trudel
Uppal	Van Popta
Vecchio	Vidal
Vien	Viersen
Vignola	Villemure
Vis	Vuong
Wagantall	Warkentin
Waugh	Webber
Williams	Williamson
Zimmer — 147	

PAIRED

Nil

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

We have a point of order from the hon. member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I have a question for you.

In an Order Paper question, Question No. 1270, I asked the Minister of Families and Social Development how many child care spaces were provided by the government's commitments. In response to that question, the minister said there was no answer. However, the minister today, in response to the same question, said she has the data. I am curious and want to give her an opportunity to clarify—

The Deputy Speaker: That is getting into debate.

Government Orders

For example, we wanted to be responsible and work intelligently on the royal provision. There is an appointment in the bill. Charles III is to be appointed head of state in a sovereign country. We thought we would do what we do for all appointments of all commissioners and officers of Parliament. We thought we would call His Majesty and have him come to committee. We wanted to give him a chance and see if he is competent to be head of state. There is no one more sporting than us. We are square dealers.

We therefore asked the clerk of the Standing Committee on Finance to contact Rideau Hall and ask them to invite His Majesty. This is, after all, part of his kingdom. We were told that they do not have his phone number. We were surprised to see that the Governor General did not serve much purpose. Honestly, I was surprised. I did not expect that. Then we went back to the clerk to see if he could contact Buckingham Palace and ask them to have His Majesty come testify. An email was sent to Buckingham Palace. The response we received from Buckingham Palace was that His Majesty is a bit old-fashioned and only opens snail mail, so the invitation would have to be mailed to him. I do not know if mail addressed to His Majesty can be sent postage free. That should be checked. Nevertheless, he was supposed to be invited by mail.

How should we interpret that? First, we have a head of state who cannot open emails. Do we really need to invite him to committee to know that he cannot deliver results? Would we hire an ethics commissioner or a privacy commissioner who could not open emails? Maybe we should have sent him a homing pigeon. Government do not work that way.

We have to wonder. Does a refusal to come pay a short visit to parliamentarians not show contempt for Canada, its institutions and its Parliament? I see that as contempt.

• (1640)

I cannot believe that, in order to send an invitation to His Majesty, we have to send him a letter on papyrus and wait for the letter and his response to travel across the Atlantic Ocean. I thought it seemed obvious. Even His Majesty is embarrassed about the budget and ashamed to be associated with it. I think members can understand why. The reason is that the things that are most important to Quebeckers and Canadians have been left out of the budget. Even the King is embarrassed.

Take, for example, employment insurance. The government was supposed to have learned from the crisis. During the COVID-19 crisis, the government went from one temporary measure to another. That is because we have an EI system where 60% of people who lose their jobs are not eligible. It is not right that six out of 10 people are not eligible. What is more, women and young people are particularly affected because many of them hold non-standard jobs. They have a hard time qualifying. It also has more of an impact on those who are vulnerable because of the new realities of work, or what is referred to as the sharing economy, which is a way of artificially turning a salaried employee into a non-salaried employee so that they do not have access to all the benefits that a social safety net could provide.

The Liberals have been promising to reform EI since 2015. They promised not once, not twice, but three times. It was supposed to happen in August. Then we saw the actuarial forecasts in the bud-

get. We realized that not only was a reform off the table, but they were going to pick \$25 billion from the pockets of SMEs and workers through a payroll tax to pay off the EI fund deficit that built up during COVID-19, even though all the other pandemic measures implemented were funded by the entire population.

That is why His Majesty is embarrassed to come. He no longer wants to have anything to do with the Liberals. It could be that His Majesty is embarrassed over the environmental policies. We are giving away \$20 billion to \$30 billion in dirty oil subsidies, allegedly for carbon capture, even though the problem is immediate.

The government tells us that the environment is important. On May 31, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change boasted to the New Economy Canada conference that there was a plan for transitioning to the green economy.

That same day, the Minister of Labour told an audience of business people, "Don't tell me a green energy future doesn't include oil and gas."

What colour is oil? It is not the colour of the chairs here in the House of Commons. It is definitely not green. The environment is being completely neglected.

Here we have the government creating its much-touted green fund, the \$16-billion Canada growth fund. This fund will be managed by PSP Investments, a company that does not report to Parliament and will not be accountable. The only mandate it has ever had is financial performance. Through no fault of its own, this company has absolutely no expertise in this area. At the moment, it sees carbon capture as the green development model. That technology is not yet up and running, but we are being promised that it will exist in 30 years' time. However, the problem is here now. There is even talk of using small modular nuclear reactors to extract more oil by using less oil to export more. That is what PSP Investments is all about.

In the budget, there is nothing for seniors who dealt with the crisis and were hit hard by it. Even before the crisis, their purchasing power had declined.

There is nothing for our regions either, nor for discount regional flights. I am thinking about Abitibi, the Gaspé and the north shore. We know that for regional development, for economic development, we need regional flights. It is very important. There is absolutely nothing in the budget. It is always promises, promises.

The budget includes changes to the equalization system that deny Quebec of \$400 million in short order. Let us talk about equalization. We are still in this mode where the Liberals are not meeting their commitments. That being said, they are doing some things. It is not all bad, but they are not getting results where it counts.

They will tell us that we should support this because the best is yet to come, but we know all about Liberal promises. We knew about them in 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. We still know about those Liberal promises, but we no longer believe them. That is why we are going to do what King Charles III would do if we were in our shoes: We are going to vote against the budget.

• (1645)

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if I am not mistaken, my colleague is an economist and has taught economics.

As recently as February of this year, the Minister of Finance said that higher deficits would add fuel to the fire of inflation. That statement from the finance minister is the exact opposite of what she proposed in the last budget.

Does my colleague think that makes sense? Does he believe that the government has failed in its duty to manage the country properly by adding fuel to the fire of inflation, with such high interest rates and skyrocketing inflation?

• (1650)

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, what is happening is that the government has developed a habit of overspending given the flexibility that it has.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer has shown that, to maintain its debt-to-GDP ratio, the government has roughly \$40 billion in fiscal flexibility. However, the government has developed a bad habit of using its fiscal advantage to take over areas of provincial jurisdiction. We saw this in the case of child care and the infamous dental plan. The government has encroached on many areas of jurisdiction.

I believe my colleague will agree with me in part. I think the government could be more fiscally responsible if it took better care of its own areas of jurisdiction and let the provinces do their work as they should.

I think there is some confusion in Ottawa at the moment. All the Liberals want to do is stick their noses into just about everything, in order to win votes. It is highly unproductive.

I am sure my Conservative colleague will agree with my take on the situation.

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, the member for Mirabel, on his excellent speech. He gave us a very clear picture of the situation.

I agree with him completely on the fact that Charles III is not the only one embarrassed to support the Liberal budget, but also on the fact that contempt is being shown for democracy.

Here is my question for my colleague. I would like to know what he thinks about the fact that, since the NDP and the Liberal Party formed an alliance, 26 time allocation motions have been used to speed up debates. Commonly called a gag order, this practice is anti-democratic.

Government Orders

In the House, the NDP, this new party that calls itself democratic, is engaging in anti-democratic procedures. It is taking speaking time away from parliamentarians.

There is a limit to the boundaries of contempt for our institutions. There is a limit to the boundaries of contempt for democracy. There is a limit to the boundaries of contempt for the right to speak. In a democracy, we have the right to discuss bills and the budget, as we are now.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, I am not a New Democrat, thank God. I do not agree with the approach the New Democrats took when they decided to support the government no matter what.

I think they took their own risks, and at some point they will have to figure out when it stops being a compromise and starts being a denial of who they are and what they believe in.

I think my colleague said it well. I can think of two examples, which I will briefly summarize.

The first is time allocation, gagging Parliament. It is very rare for opposition parties to support such a measure at all, let alone so often.

The second is the special rapporteur, David Johnston. Because of their agreement, they are conflicted. They go from one position on Monday to another on Tuesday and a third on Wednesday. It is obvious. As a result, they cannot do their job as an opposition party. It is becoming more and more obvious.

I am very glad I am not in their shoes.

[*English*]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Mirabel, for his comments, notwithstanding some of the little partisan digs he managed to fit in there.

Our goal is to make life better for Canadians. I am sure his goal is to make life better for Quebecers in his riding. Does the member not see anything in this budget implementation act that would improve the lives of his constituents?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Mr. Speaker, what kind of a world is this when we state the facts and get accused of being partisan?

What would make life better for Quebecers is if the government respected the Quebec National Assembly and respected the unanimous motions from the Quebec National Assembly.

The 125 elected members in Quebec City are standing up for policies in Quebec's own jurisdictions. It is not partisan when every party stands up. They are calling for the right to opt out of the dental care plan with full financial compensation. They are calling for health transfers.

The NDP supported agreements under which the provinces got only one out of six dollars they had asked for, and yet it boasts about wanting to take care of people.

Tell me who is partisan here.

Government Orders

● (1655)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, Democratic Institutions; the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, Climate Change; the hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, Housing.

Mr. Bernard Génereux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to share my thoughts on budget 2023, which is at report stage.

This government, under this Prime Minister, who has turned out to be the biggest spender in history, has delivered a reckless, irresponsible and free-spending budget. It has upset the fiscal balance that Stephen Harper's Conservative government had managed to restore. Let us remember that in 2015, the Prime Minister, who was driving a backhoe, promised three small deficits before returning to a balanced budget in 2019. What happened? For eight years, this government has posted deficit after deficit, the biggest deficits ever seen in Canada.

In her fall economic statement in November, the Minister of Finance gave us a glimmer of hope. She said a small budget surplus would be recorded in 2027-28. I remind members that it is 2023. Just a few months later, in the budget we are now discussing, where is the return to a balanced budget? Poof. It has evaporated, it has flown away. It has disappeared into thin air. It has gone up in smoke.

I will give my colleagues some staggering figures that illustrate just how irresponsible this budget is and how spendthrift this government is. Since 2015, the national debt has risen from \$650 billion to \$1.3 trillion. It boggles the mind. Sadly, the Liberals have managed to double the debt in just eight years. If this Prime Minister were to be awarded a prize, it would be for the prime minister who has increased the debt by more than all the other Canadian prime ministers combined in 155 years.

We know that the Liberals will point out that there was a pandemic. We know that. However, our expectation was that this government would return to more sensible spending after the pandemic. It is incapable of that. The minister told us that hers was a prudent budget. On the contrary, this budget is written in very dark red ink, and we see no end to the deficits.

In 2008-09, the Harper government was forced to invest \$60 billion to kickstart the economy after the 2008 crisis. We then managed to recover very quickly. Canada was the first of the G20 countries to recover from the economic downturn, which some compared to the 1930 crisis.

The minister told us that her budget was prudent; however, it is anything but. I am certain the government members will say we are too partisan. That is what they always say. However, I have a few quotes here from independent economic experts and commentators that confirm the opposite.

Gérald Fillion, from Radio-Canada, said the following:

So, where is the prudence and discipline that the Minister of Finance was talking about before publishing her budget? Even back in November, we knew that eco-

nomie growth was going to be weak in 2023 and that interest rates had risen rapidly. Why add so much to deficits, debt and, consequently, public debt charges?

Public debt charges have doubled. They went from \$24 billion to \$48 billion. Imagine what we could do with \$24 billion. My colleague mentioned health transfers earlier. This is money that was requested by all the Canadian provinces, but they were given virtually nothing.

Derek Holt, an economist with the Bank of Nova Scotia, said this:

Big spending, big deficits, big debt, high taxes, high inflation and bond market challenges are not the path to prosperity. [The Minister is] wrong to describe the budget as prudent, with overall program spending set to balloon to 51% above pre-pandemic levels by 2028.

Michel Girard, a leading economist with the Journal de Montréal, wrote an article with the headline "Ottawa is taking \$102 billion more out of your pocket". I will quote from the article:

\$46.1 billion more in personal income tax

\$35.4 billion more in corporate income tax

\$14 billion more in GST

\$2.8 billion more in other excise taxes and duties

With such a deluge of money into the federal coffers, one might have expected the Trudeau government to finally announce a return to balanced budgets.

The fact is, Canadian families are currently being heavily taxed by the government. This is to say nothing of the carbon tax and the second carbon tax that is right around the corner.

Michel Girard continues with the following:

Well, no. According to finance minister Chrystia Freeland's latest budget, the federal government will remain in the hole for the next five fiscal years.

This completely contradicts what the Minister of Finance had said a few months earlier. It is completely backwards.

Have the Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance read or heard these words? I do not believe they have. They continue to spend lavishly and to propose inflationary policies.

● (1700)

This is very unfortunate because the biggest losers in all this are Canadians who work hard and are seeing the fruits of their labour slip away more and more each day.

I have a company with 30 employees and we had to make a major salary adjustment in the past few months because of the rising inflation and interest rates. I have employees whose mortgage payments have gone up by \$700 a month. Wages have not kept pace with inflation.

Inflation is at its highest level in 40 years, and the impact on food prices is dramatic. Here are a few examples: The price of butter is more than \$8; a loaf of bread costs \$5.50, compared to \$1.50 four years ago; a pound of bacon costs \$10.

A family of four, meaning two parents and two children, will spend \$1,065 more on groceries this year alone. That is a lot. It is way too much. It also does not help when we add to that the price of gas, which is hovering around \$1.80. Obviously, there is transportation. The Liberals are always telling us that the carbon tax does not affect Quebec, which is completely false. The food that is sent to us from across the country travels between the provinces. Obviously, there is trade happening. All of the items that need to be transported are subject to all of these taxes, which are inevitably inflationary.

Some parents have to skip meals so they can feed their children. The use of food banks has skyrocketed. In Canada, 1.5 million people are using food banks every month. That is a source of daily stress for families, and yet nothing stops this government's out-of-control spending, which is driving up the cost of everything.

That is not even to mention the cost of housing. Since this Prime Minister took office, the cost of housing has doubled. Just last year, the price of houses increased by 21% in the Quebec City area. That is unbelievable. Successive interest rate hikes have doubled the average mortgage payment, which is up to almost \$3,000 a month. It is the same thing for rental units. It is not unusual to see ads for one-bedroom apartments that are renting for \$2,000 a month.

As a result, young families are abandoning their dream of owning a home. I have been an MP for eight and a half years and, for the first time, young people are coming up to me and saying exactly what we have been saying for months. They are asking me how they can one day become homeowners. No one had ever talked to me about that before, but now that is their reality.

The list of negative effects and wrongs caused by this government's policies is too long to fit into a 10-minute speech. I am not even talking about the other problems caused by this government, such as violence, which is constantly on the rise, or the inadequate services to citizens.

Just think about last year's passport crisis. I have never seen anything like it in my life. The number of federal employees has increased by nearly 70,000 over the last eight years and we have never had such bad service. This is truly poor organization from this government.

I am not going to touch on the other problems. I am not going to talk about foreign interference, about everything that is going on at the moment or about our colleagues who have been spied on, and even threatened in some cases, by Beijing.

Canadians deserve a lot more and a lot better. They deserve a government that puts them first, that thinks about their paycheques, their homes, their families and, most importantly, their future. They deserve a government that recognizes the hard work they put in every day and that is not always trying to squeeze more out of their paycheques. They need a government that will bring back some common sense. They need a Conservative government.

I really look forward to the day when we are back in government. We will simply stop spending, and we will still have plenty of money to deliver all the programs people need.

Government Orders

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a question that perhaps the member can answer.

Why do the Liberals and the NDP insist on imposing a carbon tax when it clearly is not working?

Emissions continue to rise, so why are they imposing this?

● (1705)

Mr. Bernard Gagné: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his important question.

The carbon tax was effectively put in place by the government to get people to change their behaviour. The people who pay this tax were to receive the equivalent amount in the form of a rebate. Obviously, that is not what is happening, because the math does not work.

Furthermore, the government has had environmental targets in place to reduce greenhouse gases for seven and a half years now, and none of those targets have been met, even with the carbon tax.

Now, they want to add carbon tax 2.0, and they want to add the GST on top of that. We are talking about 61¢ a litre. That is going to send the cost of every food item and product in Canada sky-high.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I find it very troubling, as my colleague from Mirabel said so well earlier, to hear and see the Conservatives manoeuvring to block the business of the House. What fascinates me even more is the misinformation being conveyed by the members of that party. It is still quite fascinating.

I was just doing some research on my phone. I did not find the price, but I gather that the member has not gone grocery shopping for a long time, since he said that bread cost \$1.30 four years ago.

What is really extraordinary is that when the Conservatives come to power they are going to fix everything. They have magic solutions for the labour shortage and inflation. It is as though they could fix everything by waving a magic wand. I would like to know their abracadabra formula.

Lastly, it is funny, but in Quebec seniors do not talk to me about the carbon tax. They talk about real support that the government could provide, such as an increase in old age security or a review of the guaranteed income supplement. I do not see a lot of seniors in Quebec stopping me on the street to talk about the carbon tax.

Mr. Bernard Gagné: Mr. Speaker, there are some good bakeries in my riding. Four years ago, I could still get a loaf of bread for less than \$2. That was perfectly normal. I go grocery shopping regularly. I am also very pleased to tell my colleague that.

Government Orders

In the past four, five or six years, I have seen prices skyrocketing, particularly in the past two years. The inflationary taxes that the government continues to impose on Canadians are inevitably driving up the cost of food in Canada. There is a reason why 1.5 million people across Canada, my riding included, are turning to food banks. I spoke with the director of Moisson Kamouraska just last week and she told me that this is unprecedented. Every month there is a significant increase in demand.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's party has said that, instead of carbon pricing, it is going to focus on technology, yet every single economist out there, including my friend from Mirabel, will tell us that directly subsidizing technology is a far more expensive approach than carbon pricing, which relies on the market.

I am wondering why the Conservatives are insisting on a more expensive approach to addressing climate change.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Gagné: Mr. Speaker, we believe in the science of technology. It is actually surprising that the NDP and Bloc Québécois members do not want to believe in new technologies. It is as if we were going back in time. We only have to look at communications technologies, for example. We hold those in our hands every day. We did not have that 25 years ago. We were still sending letters by mail, as my colleague pointed out earlier.

Obviously, things evolve, including in the world of oil and gas. It is a lot less polluting than it was before. In fact, I really applaud the people of western Canada who have made huge efforts to reduce their carbon footprint over the years with the help of new technologies.

[English]

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a genuine pleasure for me to be able to be here to speak to the substance of Bill C-47, the budget implementation act. I say this because so much time has been spent dealing with whether we should now adjourn the House or adjourn debate, or whether one member or another of the Conservatives should now be heard. We have spent time sitting mute during a lengthy filibuster at the finance committee, where there was a detailed elocution on the fishing of eels, or seeing members insist that the bells ring for 15 minutes at the end of question period before a vote. These are not the reasons why the good people of Charlottetown sent me to Parliament. They sent me to be the voice of Charlottetown here in Ottawa and to speak to substantive issues such as those presented in the legislation, Bill C-47, so I am particularly pleased to be here and have the opportunity to carry out that role.

Before we can look forward, it is important to know where we are at currently. I would like to, of course, bring a Prince Edward Island perspective to this debate. I will start by highlighting a recent report from the Public Policy Forum entitled "The Atlantic Canada Momentum Index". This report outlines the progress made across the Atlantic region over the last decade.

Members may also be interested to know that just today there was an op-ed in the local newspaper, penned by former Progressive

Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney, talking about the remarkable progress that has been made in our region since he was prime minister and was overseeing the establishment of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

Going back to the "Atlantic Canada Momentum Index", the report outlines the progress made across the region over the last decade, looking at 20 key indicators. In particular, I want to highlight the great work that has been done in Prince Edward Island. In the 2015 to 2022 period, 17 of the 20 indicators experienced an improvement in P.E.I. These are things such as housing, immigration, business investment, and R and D spending. Prince Edward Island had the highest and best performance of all of the Atlantic provinces. This is fantastic news for Islanders. It demonstrates that real progress is taking place.

The Conservatives do not like when we trumpet positive economic news about the region. The common critique we hear is that we are saying that things have never been so good. There is no denying that there are significant challenges. We have made positive growth, but Canadians and Islanders face significant challenges. When I talk to people in Charlottetown, whether while door knocking or when at the farmers' market on the weekend, the three challenges they want to talk about are the cost of living, health care and climate change. Undoubtedly, as a government, there is much more to do. We cannot sit on the sidelines. That is why the budget implementation act and budget 2023 have been brought forward, specifically to make sustainable steps to address these challenges.

I want to talk for a minute about the grocery rebate and its importance. It is undoubtedly more expensive to put food on the table. Islanders have had to carry the burden of some of the highest inflation rates in the country. Aside from one month, Prince Edward Island had the highest inflation rate in Canada every month for two years, from March 2021 to March 2023. This is in large measure because of the disproportionate dependence on home heating oil and the increase in price in that regard.

In Charlottetown, the median after-tax household income is \$58,000, so in general, Islanders have to pay more but earn less. We know that the burden of inflation is impacting the pockets of many people across the country. That is why the government has responded in this budget, and in this budget implementation act, with the grocery rebate to support those most in need.

Government Orders

• (1710)

For 11 million low- and modest-income Canadians, the grocery rebate will provide eligible couples with two children an extra \$467, single Canadians without kids an extra \$234, and seniors an extra \$225 on average. It is absolutely unfathomable that with all of the stories of hardship I hear, especially from seniors, we have these procedural, partisan games blocking those payments. It is my sincere hope that people will come to their senses and accept the reasons they have been sent here, that debate in a substantive way will proceed on Bill C-47 and that it will get to a vote and get to implementation so that people who need that money in these inflationary times will be able to get it. I hope other priorities will not stand in the way of that progress.

We know that many Canadians have had to choose between putting food on the table and other necessities. One thing that is often on the back burner is dental care. In 2018, more than one in five Canadians reported avoiding dental care because of the cost. With the recent increased cost of living, we can assume even more Canadians cannot access dental services due to cost.

That is why in the fall of 2022 we introduced the Canada dental benefit. Since December, over 300,000 Canadian children have accessed dental care services. To build on this, in budget 2023, our government will invest \$13 billion over five years in the Canadian dental care plan. The plan will provide dental coverage for uninsured Canadians with annual family incomes of less than \$90,000, with no copays for those with family incomes under \$70,000. This includes seniors, children and people with disabilities.

I have heard seniors in my riding, after hearing coverage of the budget, asking when the dental care plan will start and when they can start to access it. The news is out there and people are looking forward to it. There is absolutely a need, especially for seniors who are struggling, and quite frankly we need to get on with it.

In addition to budget 2023, the budget implementation act demonstrates a clear effort to address the cost of living by supporting those in need. I mentioned earlier how often I hear from seniors who are having a hard time and how very frustrated they will be if the grocery rebate is further delayed.

One other measure that has been taken, not for seniors on the lower end but for those in receipt of federally regulated pensions, is adding some flexibility to the payments under those pensions. That will help those in the middle class among retired people. That is important in my area, because Prince Edward Island is the only place in Canada outside the national capital region that has a national headquarters of a federal government department, that being the Department of Veterans Affairs. We have a disproportionate number of retired federal servants. This matters to them and it needs to go forward.

The last thing I will touch on before wrapping up is the tools deduction. In P.E.I. we have among the lowest vacancy rates in the country. For apartments it is 0.9% and for bachelor apartments it is 0%. For love or money, one cannot find a bachelor apartment in Prince Edward Island. One of the measures in the budget implementation act is to give a break to tradespeople. We need to show as much love to tradespeople as possible, because with 1,500 va-

cant construction jobs in Prince Edward Island, there is a major bottleneck in getting the houses built that we need.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that Prince Edward Island has experienced positive growth and momentum in recent years. While we have made progress, the cost of living, health care and climate change continue to be major concerns of Islanders and Canadians. I encourage all of my colleagues to help address these shared challenges and to focus efforts on the things that matter to our constituents, not partisanship and not procedural games. Let us support Bill C-47, the budget implementation act.

• (1715)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I keep hearing from those on the other side of the House that the government is investing, that they will do this and they will do that. I wonder if they recognize that there is no such thing as government money. It is the money of hard-working Canadians. It is important to live within our means or we will go further into debt.

Will the member not recognize that massive deficits and debt are fuelling inflation and making life more expensive for all Canadians?

• (1720)

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, as someone who was here in the tail end of the decade of darkness and witnessed the Harper government run deficit after deficit after deficit, attempting to cut its way to economic growth and exhibiting a period of economic growth that was the worst since the Great Depression, I really am loath to buy into the idea that austerity and cuts can get us to prosperity. Those cuts were disproportionate in our part of the country. They struck us particularly hard. I will make absolutely no excuse and absolutely no apology for the philosophy of this government to invest in Canadians and especially in our regions.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on July 1, while Canadians are celebrating Canada Day, Quebec will be marking a special day. It is moving day.

That is the day everyone moves. All the leases come to an end. The vast majority of Quebecers who move to a new place or buy a home, although I do not think that anyone is buying a home right now, do so on July 1. Last year, in Montreal alone, 600 people did not find housing. This year, every organization is expecting it to get worse.

Government Orders

We are halfway through the national housing strategy that started five years ago. For five years, the Liberals have been saying that they are getting things done. Just this afternoon, the Prime Minister said that they are investing, that we are going to see a housing accelerator and that housing will be built. However, every organization is saying that this year, the situation is going to be worse than ever.

What is being done to deal with the housing crisis?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, the member is right. Canada really does have an affordable housing crisis. We have indeed invested in a lot of programs to address that. There is still a lot of work to be done because it is true, the statistics cannot be denied. We continue to work hard to develop and finance good programs to try to make a difference.

I think it is very important for everyone here, the members from all parties, to work together to give advice and collaborate. We all have the same goals. We must recognize that it is a real problem; we have invested in possible solutions, but it is still a problem, I agree.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my colleague from Charlottetown a question that I asked earlier in question period. Given what we know about the financial hardships faced by people living with disabilities, does he agree with me that the CRA should stop clawing back CERB from people in our country living with disabilities? People with disabilities are twice as likely to live below the poverty line given the challenges they face getting their bills paid and given the fact that the government has long delayed the Canada disability benefit. Does it not add insult to be clawing back the few benefits that these folks have received over the past two years?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, it is a difficult question. For the CERB program to have integrity, there need to be checks at the end of the day to determine eligibility. It is my firm belief that the CRA should be acting with compassion with respect to collection efforts. It is my understanding that it is.

The record of this government, particularly with the onset of Bill C-22, is one where people with disabilities have made and will continue to make better progress than they have under any other government. However, compassion in collection efforts is absolutely critical. I do not think they should be wiped out.

• (1725)

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill C-47, the government's budget implementation bill.

The cost of everything is going up. Why? Because the Prime Minister is directly responsible for creating the cost of living crisis. The Prime Minister has created that cost of living crisis through his out-of-control spending and through his inflationary policies.

The Prime Minister is trying to ram \$67 billion of new spending through Parliament before he takes the summer off. We would think that there would be a plan to return to a balanced budget, but there is not. We would think that there would be a detailed plan for how the \$67 billion in new spending would be used, but there is not. We

would think that the government's finance minister would answer questions about her spending, thoroughly, in Parliament, but she has not. We would think that the Prime Minister would stop raising taxes on Canadians during a cost of living crisis, but he has not.

That is why the Conservatives are blocking the Prime Minister's inflationary budget until he changes course. The Conservatives have asked for two things.

First, the Prime Minister must present a plan to end his inflationary deficits and spending. The Prime Minister has added more debt to our country than all other prime ministers combined. Let that sink in for a minute. It is staggering. Now Canadians are paying the price. Food price inflation is at a 40-year high, and 1.5 million Canadians are eating at food banks.

With higher inflation comes higher interest rates. Recent reports predict that the Bank of Canada will continue to raise interest rates on Canadians. Canadians cannot afford more interest rate hikes to keep up with the Prime Minister's inflation. The down payment needed to buy a house has doubled under the Prime Minister. Mortgage payments for a new house have doubled under the Prime Minister. The cost to rent in Canada has doubled under the Prime Minister.

According to the CMHC chief economist, Canadian households are more in debt than those in any other G7 country, and the amount they owe is now more than the value of the country's entire economy. Even Statistics Canada has proved that Canadian households are paying 72.25% more in interest payments since the Prime Minister took office. It is just staggering.

At what point does the Prime Minister look in the mirror to understand where the problem lies?

The second thing Conservatives are demanding is an end to the Prime Minister's carbon tax hikes. Canadians know that the Prime Minister's carbon tax is not an environmental plan; it is a tax plan. That is why the government's own budget watchdog proved that the Liberals' first carbon tax would cost Canadians \$1,500 more than they would get back in rebates.

However, one carbon tax is not enough for the Prime Minister. That is why he introduced a second carbon tax that would drive up gas prices 61¢ a litre, further hiking the price of gas, heat and groceries.

The Canadians I talk to, especially those who live in rural Canada, cannot afford the Prime Minister's carbon tax. Rural Canadians have no other choice but to drive. There are no subway stations in rural Canada. They cannot rely on bikes for transportation. Rural Canadians rely on gas-powered vehicles to live their lives. The Prime Minister wants to change the behaviour of Canadians but, in doing so, he is making it impossible to live the rural way of life.

One of the most troubling aspects of the Prime Minister's spending is that he is spending billions of taxpayer dollars with little to show for it. Do members notice how the government always talks about how much it is spending instead of how much Canadians are getting in return?

Let us just look at the Liberal government's record when it comes to connecting Canadians with high-speed Internet. The Liberals have announced billions of dollars, paid for by taxpayers, in an attempt to connect Canadians. There are at least—

• (1730)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member who will be able to come back to his speech after Private Members' Business. The member still has five minutes and 10 seconds to complete his speech.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

CORRECTIONS AND CONDITIONAL RELEASE ACT

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC) moved that Bill C-320, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (disclosure of information to victims), be read the second time and referred to a committee.

He said: Madam Speaker, as I rise to speak to Bill C-320, I would like to talk about a special event that took place on Saturday, May 27, in which I was honoured to take part. Durham Region Remembers was a victim awareness and candlelight vigil that provided community support for those bereaved by homicide and to remember those we have lost. This very important event, which will now become an annual occurrence, was organized by Lisa Freeman, and I am happy to say that Lisa is here in Ottawa with me today. She is the person who inspired Bill C-320, a bill that we like to call the “truth in sentencing act”.

Since 2019, Lisa and I have made efforts to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act regarding disclosure of information to victims; at Durham Region Remembers, Lisa and I had the opportunity to share our efforts with the families of victims who were present. I can say that this was well received, with murmurs of hope that we might be able to help families that are plunged unasked into unfathomable situations. These families have then been further demoralized and retraumatized by the actions of the government through the Parole Board of Canada and Correctional Services, institutions that say they are supportive of victims of crime. Unfortunately, at best, this is an illusion.

Private Members' Business

Lisa is an inspiration not only to me but also to a very special community. This is a community, sadly, that has been forgotten by our criminal justice system. It is made up of victims, families and friends who have had to endure and re-endure trauma, emotional pain and endless suffering regarding their families' safety. Ms. Freeman is the author of the 2016 book, *She Won't Be Silenced*, described as the “story of my father's murder and my struggle to find justice WITHIN the Parole Board of Canada.”

After years of fighting to have her family's voice heard, while decisions were made about parole and the passage of information concerning her father's murderer, Ms. Freeman has petitioned the federal government to amend the ineffective Canadian Victims Bill of Rights and the opaque Corrections and Conditional Release Act to provide improved transparency to victims of violent crime and their families.

This “truth in sentencing” bill was first tabled in the House of Commons as Bill C-466 by the Hon. Lisa Raitt in June 2019 and then again in the Senate by the Hon. Senator Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu in December 2020 as Bill S-219. I want to thank Ms. Raitt and Senator Boisvenu for their work on this file. Now, I am hoping that I am three times lucky, and that this bill will finally make it through our process and become the law of the land.

It is important to recognize that this bill is a short bill; it would add just a few words, a common-sense phrase. It may make a small change in the law, but it would make a huge difference to victims. This bill would add the following words: “and an explanation of how that date has been determined”.

The aim of Bill C-320 is twofold. It would amend the current Canadian legislation to better meet the needs of victims of crime by providing timely and accurate information upon sentencing of an offender and avoiding the false comfort of misleading parole eligibility dates. It would also ensure that the victims of crime are provided with improved transparency and passage of information from the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada. I admit that these changes would not fix the system, but they would certainly be a step in the right direction, and they could not occur at a better time.

Private Members' Business

In Canada we are now starting to see the effects of changes made to our justice system through the government's bill, Bill C-75, the bill that accelerated the government's catch-and-release bail system and bail policies. This change has unleashed a wave of violent crime across the country. We are hearing from Canadians that they do not feel safe walking down the street or taking transit. Canadians are telling us that our communities feel less safe. It is our responsibility to turn this trend around and avoid making the situation worse. We cannot allow violent offenders to repeat—

• (1735)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will just interrupt the hon. member to ask him to remove the cellphone from near the microphone. It is causing some problems for the interpreters.

The hon. member.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, we are hearing from Canadians that they do not feel safe walking down the street or taking transit. Canadians are telling us that our communities feel less safe; it is our responsibility to turn this trend around and avoid making the situation worse. We cannot allow violent offenders, and repeat violent offenders, to access easy bail. As Canadians know, Conservatives believe in jail, not bail, for repeat violent offenders.

The numbers are staggering. In the past eight years, violent crime has increased 32%, and gang-related murders have doubled. In Vancouver, 6,000 crimes were committed in one year by just 40 individuals. Does that sound like a system that is working?

Sadly, this week, we are reminded of Canada's most heinous murderer. They were moved from a maximum-security prison to a medium-security prison. As Lisa Freeman said, "In this killer's case—just like my late father's axe murderer—the level of prison security in no way matches the severity of the crimes committed by these wicked individuals."

With this transfer, we see the system retraumatize the victims' families by not allowing them timely access to information related to their loved one's killer. As reported in the media, "The lawyer for the families of two of Paul Bernardo's victims says they were given no warning or explanation about [the] recent prison transfer..., a move they oppose."

Timothy Danson is the lawyer for the families of Kristen French and Leslie Mahaffy, the teens who were kidnapped, sexually assaulted, murdered and dismembered by Bernardo and his then wife, Karla Homolka. Mr. Danson said that the Correctional Service of Canada informed him by phone this past week that Bernardo had already been moved from a maximum-security institution in Ontario to a medium-security prison in Quebec. Mr. Danson had to tell the families the news of the transfer and communicate the results of a failed system that forces families to feel victimized over and over again. It is totally unacceptable.

Who is looking after the rights of victims? If we do not, who will? As Mr. Danson explained, "This just brings back all the horrible memories that they've been trying to suppress and control over these last number of decades. So it just brings sadness and despair and disbelief to them."

By failing to change the system, we are creating more victims. More families have to live without a mom or a dad, a brother or a sister, or a daughter or a son. We cannot continue on this trajectory. Bill C-320 is an attempt to change that trajectory and restore some semblance of respect to the system and to victims' families.

Often, victims of crime, such as Lisa Freeman and her family from my riding of Oshawa, are caught off guard when they are notified that an offender is eligible for forms of parole before the 25 years indicated on their certificate of conviction. Lisa's father was tragically bludgeoned to death by an axe murderer in 1991. I think it is also worth noting that this murderer was out on parole when this horrific crime took place. Lisa was caught off guard when her father's killer was eligible for early parole, only 20 years into his sentence of 25 years to life. She believes, and I agree, that the lack of transparency regarding how parole dates and eligibility are determined cause the victims of crime to experience confusion, frustration, trauma and resentment for the justice system.

It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that victims of crime are treated with the utmost respect and dignity. This legislation, Bill C-320, makes a simple amendment to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, in terms of disclosure of information to victims, that would provide such respect and dignity. It would require that information regarding the review and eligibility for all forms of parole be communicated, in writing, to offenders' victims. This would include an explanation of how the dates for parole were determined and explain the process in an effort to be as transparent as possible. We cannot argue with the logic of this bill, and I am sure that I shall have full support from my colleagues, the members of this House.

• (1740)

Currently, the system is designed to support the criminal and not the victim. Victims do not have any support compared with the support our government gives to the criminal. I would like to remind my colleagues that it is a matter of public safety, and it is the job of the Minister of Public Safety and the government to keep the public safe. The job description is "public safety", not "axe-murderer safety". To victims of crime, this is clear: A murderer's rights trump a victim's rights every single time.

Victims and the public deserve this bill. It would provide accurate and timely information regarding the parole process to victims and avoid providing a sense of false comfort by misleading them and the general public regarding parole eligibility. Such a sentence as life in prison without the possibility of parole for 25 years is meant to imply severity. However, it is simply not true that the punishment is severe; this is misleading to the families and to the general public. The system uses these words that imply severity, that imply punishment. To any passing observer, it does look severe and harsh, but the words uttered by judges and echoed by the media give false information to the general public. These words are a false comfort to families and to the public.

Offenders serving a life sentence without parole for 25 years can actually be released on other forms of parole for personal development, temporary absences and community service work. This can happen well before their so-called sentence ends. In prisons across the country, offenders who have committed some of the most heinous crimes, such as murder, are housed in minimum-security prisons; families are constantly aware that the level of security does not match the severity of the crime.

Lisa Freeman said:

“When the axe murderer who killed my father received a ‘life sentence’ never did I think it would include living in a halfway house, with a job, a car, a very comfortable home and catered meals made by an in-house Chef. Most hard-working Canadians don’t live as well as this! The offender was moved across the country to Alberta because the program he wanted to attend wasn’t ‘available in Ontario’ but in transferring him, they placed him in an institution 10km from my sister’s house, and only notified me 24 hours later because he ‘has the right to delay the information by 1 day’. Full parole for this axe murderer was denied in October of 2020—but I wasn’t allowed to attend the parole hearing to object—Covid didn’t deny me the right to attend in person—the Parole Board did. As per the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, the offender has the RIGHT to an office decision once they have passed their parole eligibility date, a decision made by a sole panel member. My rights—victims’ rights—didn’t exist.”

The families of homicide victims should not have to be subjected to any of this. They are busy grieving, trying to repair broken lives and trying to keep the trauma at bay. However, compounding the trauma is dealing with Correctional Services Canada, the Parole Board of Canada and the justice system. It is our job to keep dangerous people incarcerated and Canadians safe, but we are failing miserably. From brokered, watered-down sentences for violent crimes to mismanagement of parole and the bail system, Canadians are just not safe anymore.

Families who have suffered as a result of an offender’s action do not deserve to be revictimized by the parole system; victims of crime have enough to carry. Under the guise of rehabilitation, victims of crime are often forced to stand back and watch while violent offenders exercise their rights, which most victims of crime find are nothing more than a mockery of justice and basic common sense. Where are the victims’ rights? Victims deserve better. They at least deserve accurate information.

Private Members' Business

• (1745)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know that the hon. member is aware that the justice committee conducted hearings on victims’ rights. In those hearings, we heard about the topic that he talked about, which is the importance of accurate and timely information for victims.

We also heard from victims of sexual assault that, very frequently, publication bans were imposed on them that prevented them from talking about their assaults and inadvertently protected the perpetrators. One thing they asked for was accurate information and the ability to give consent for publication bans. This is part of a Senate bill now and part of a private member’s bill from the member for Victoria. Will the hon. member support that proposal when it comes forward to this chamber?

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my colleague for his work.

I am not exactly familiar with the bill he is quoting, but it is hard to argue against any bill that will provide victims of these horrible, horrific violent crimes with more information and more transparency. I promise I will take a look at it, and perhaps we can touch base off-line to see what we can do for that bill.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his bill, which is essential in a context where femicide is unfortunately on the rise.

However, until we take on the issue of coercive control and we broaden our recognition of the types of violence that can be inflicted upon women and girls, it will be difficult to take meaningful action toward preventing and recognizing as comprehensively as possible the different types of violence that can be perpetrated against women.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say on that. Has he looked into this notion of coercive control?

[*English*]

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, when dealing with this bill, we looked at the reality facing families that have had horrific crimes perpetrated against them. As I said in my speech, this bill itself is not going to fix all the issues that we have to deal with in the criminal justice system. The member brought up another very important aspect of it.

Private Members' Business

I am hopeful that she looks at this bill and understands that while it is a very short bill of only a few words, it will make a significant change. The small change in wording will make a great difference to those families, but she is correct that this is just a small part of fixing bigger problems in the system we have.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Oshawa for this work on this bill and his intervention today.

I am looking at the governance of our criminal justice system and the role that parliamentarians play versus the role that correctional institutions play and how important it is to keep the two roles separate so that politicians are not the ones telling the justice system what to do.

The member mentioned the terrible situation right now that is being investigated around Paul Bernardo being transferred. Could the hon. member comment on our role in not making that decision and leaving it up to the justice system to make the decision, but our role in terms of asking the questions about how that decision was made?

• (1750)

Mr. Colin Carrie: Madam Speaker, frankly, if we listen to the different rhetoric coming out, I believe quite strongly it is our role here to make the laws. How they are interpreted will be argued, but the minister has it within his power to look at the interpretation of those regulations and to help in giving directives.

The member mentioned the horrible, heinous case that most Canadians are aware of. I would ask members to imagine, when a decision is made to the benefit of this murderer and killer, what the families' feelings are when their rights are not being looked at with the same weight as the rights of a killer. This is something we need to correct for people who have been victimized. All we are asking for is better transparency so that they understand why these decisions are made and the dates that are applied.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you would find unanimous consent for the following motion.

I move, one, that in relation to its study of pre-budget consultations in advance of the 2024 budget, seven members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Fredericton, New Brunswick; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador in the fall of 2023 during an adjournment period and that the necessary staff accompany the committee; two, that in relation to the study of pre-budget consultations in advance of the 2024 budget, seven members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Quebec, Quebec; Toronto, Ontario; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Edmonton, Alberta; and Vancouver, British Columbia in the fall of 2023 during an adjournment period and that the necessary staff accompany the committee; and, three, that seven members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to travel to Whitehorse, Yukon, in the summer of 2023 during an adjournment period to attend the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees and Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors annual conference.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to discuss Bill C-320, An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (disclosure of information to victims). I want to thank the members for Milton, Oshawa and Cariboo—Prince George for their efforts in moving this bill for our discussion today.

Victims who share their contact information with the Correctional Service of Canada and/or the Parole Board of Canada and who meet the definition of “victim” outlined in the Corrections and Conditional Release Act are entitled to receive certain information about the person who harmed them.

This information includes review and release eligibility dates, which are provided to victims in an initial contact letter. Bill C-320 would require that victims be provided with an explanation of how those dates are determined.

Across the country, victims of serious crimes may be surprised to learn how sentences are administered, including eligibility for temporary absences and parole. We have heard that victims of crime and their families want clarity. They want transparency—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member may have a phone near his microphone, and it is buzzing.

Thank you very much.

The hon. member.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, my apologies.

Across the country, victims of serious crimes may be surprised to learn how sentences are administered, including eligibility for temporary absences and parole. We have heard that victims of crime and their families want clarity and they want transparency, and that is why I look forward to debating Bill C-320 in the House.

I will provide an overview and some context from a federal public safety perspective.

As members will know, we are discussing this bill just weeks after the Victims and Survivors of Crime Week. Victims deserve to be treated with respect and compassion and to be provided with accurate and timely information, so let us look at what is in place.

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As I mentioned, the eligibility dates for reviews and releases are currently provided to registered victims in an initial contact letter. We have also very recently moved forward with new legislation to continue to support victims' rights, in the form of Bill S-12. That legislation would ensure that victims receive ongoing information about the offender after sentencing and would improve the law on publication bans by giving a greater voice and clarity to victims in regard to imposing and lifting a publication ban.

Let me delve a bit further into the topic.

As members will know, the CCRA governs both the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada. It is the foundation on which people serving federal sentences are supervised and conditional release decisions are made. It also recognizes that victims of crime have an important role to play in the criminal justice system. It provides victims with an opportunity to access certain information and participate in the federal corrections and conditional release process. With the CCRA and the Canadian Victims Bill of Rights as a foundation, a variety of government departments, including the Parole Board of Canada and the Correctional Service of Canada, work together to provide information services to victims.

The Canadian Victims Bill of Rights expanded the information available to victims as it relates to hearings by allowing victims who were unable to attend a hearing to request to listen to an audio recording of the parole hearing. At any time, victims may also submit information that details the physical, emotional or financial impact the offence has had on them to the Parole Board for consideration in its decision-making. They may also raise any safety concerns they may have related to the offender's risk of re-offending. As part of the victim statement, victims can also request that the board consider imposing special conditions on an offender's release.

All this information assists board members in assessing risk and determining if additional conditions may be necessary to impose if release to the community is granted.

The—

• (1755)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I really do apologize, but the phone is still near one microphone that is open, and it is buzzing repeatedly. If the hon. member could put it on the chair, that would be much appreciated.

The hon. member for Whitby.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, they may also raise any safety concerns they may have in relation to the offender's risk of reoffending. As part of the victim statement, victims can also request that the board consider imposing special conditions on the offender's release. All this information assists board members in assessing risk and in determining if imposing additional conditions may be necessary if release to the community is in fact granted. The protection of society is the paramount consideration in all parole board decisions.

I will point out that together the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada have over 8,000 registered victims.

I will also note that Public Safety Canada plays a role in improving victims' experience with the federal corrections and conditional release system. The National Office for Victims engages with victims and their advocates and service providers, hosting annual round tables and developing information products about victim rights and services and applying a victim's lens on corrections and conditional release policy development. Victims can also receive information in the format of their choosing, including through the Victims Portal. They can submit information electronically, including victim statements. These services respect a victim's right to information, and this information serves to engage and empower victims to make informed decisions in relation to their rights to participation and protection.

We know that Canada's criminal justice system writ large needs to get better at supporting victims and survivors, whether by providing information or simply showing greater empathy and respect.

We continue to explore ways to better address the needs and concerns of victims in the federal corrections and conditional release system. For example, we are taking steps to provide more choice and options for victims when participating in the parole hearing process. The Parole Board of Canada announced, during the COVID-19 pandemic, that victims of crime across the country can participate in parole hearings by video, while protecting participants' privacy and confidential information. Victim participation at hearings increased, and the Parole Board of Canada will continue to offer victims the choice to attend hearings virtually going forward.

I will also point out that the Correctional Service of Canada and the Parole Board of Canada are committed to increasing outreach initiatives with victims. The Correctional Service of Canada outreach strategy ensures that more victims are aware of the information available to them and of the role they can have in the corrections and conditional release system. The Parole Board of Canada has also developed communications products to inform victims about the conditional release process and its services, including a new victims video released last year.

The public safety portfolio is also working with federal partners to streamline information available to victims online and to build a centralized victim-centred website.

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Clearly, Canada has made significant progress in improving the system for all, but more can always be done, including in how inmates are supervised. Further collaboration is needed among all levels of government, among non-governmental organizations and across sectors. Work is ongoing by the CSC and PBC to raise awareness of victims' rights and services available through the federal corrections and conditional release systems.

Work continues to strengthen collaboration with provincial and territorial partners to support a continuity of seamless service for victims and survivors of crime when the offender who harmed them moves between jurisdictions.

I am fully committed to ensuring that victims have an effective voice and that their rights are respected throughout the federal correctional and justice system. I welcome members' discussion on Bill C-320 and on how we can further support victims of crime.

• (1800)

[Translation]

Ms. Andr anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I rise this evening to speak to Bill C-320, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act with respect to disclosure of information to victims. I would like to begin by saying that the Bloc Qu b cois supports Bill C-320. This bill is an essential measure to ensure greater transparency in our justice system and to strengthen our fight to end violence against women and girls.

As vice-chair of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, I was involved in the study on domestic violence in the fall of 2021. Sadly, as I listened to the extensive committee testimony, I realized that we live in a world where violence against women and girls is all too common. These abhorrent acts leave indelible scars that prevent many people from achieving their full potential. That is why we have a duty to take firm action and send a loud and clear message that we will no longer tolerate it. I would like to explain a little more about the Bloc Qu b cois's position. I will then talk about the progress made in Quebec. I will conclude by talking about other initiatives that will need to be monitored and analyzed, with the aim of working to end this scourge once and for all.

First, the Bloc Qu b cois's position is consistent with its commitment to supporting initiatives that keep women safe and that address violence against women. We believe that victims have everything to gain from getting as much information as possible about their assailant and the situation surrounding the assailant's parole, when applicable. Our position is therefore in keeping with the Bloc Qu b cois's support for Bill C-233. Let us remember that that bill amended the Criminal Code to require a justice, before making a release order in respect of an accused who is charged with an offence against their intimate partner, to consider whether it is desirable, in the interests of the safety and security of any person, to include as a condition of the order that the accused wear an electronic monitoring device, also known as an electronic bracelet. The Bloc Qu b cois will always stand up to protect victims of crime and strengthen the relationship of trust between the public and our institutions.

Bill C-320 essentially seeks to amend the Criminal Code to enable victims of an offence to be given an explanation about how certain decisions were made about their assailant. This includes, for

example, the eligibility dates and review dates applicable to the offender in respect of temporary absences, releases or parole. It would strengthen the justice system to have a mechanism that would give victims access to additional information about their assailant's situation and the decisions being made about their assailant.

Second, over the past few years, Quebec has positioned itself as a world leader in enhancing victim protections and strengthening victims' trust in the justice system. For example, the Government of Quebec has launched a pilot project to create courts specializing in sexual assault cases in certain courthouses, like the one in Granby, in my riding of Shefford. It also launched a pilot project requiring electronic monitoring devices to keep victims and their abusers apart, which has been a success and has been deployed across the province. These advancements meet the objective of recognizing how vulnerable victims of an offence are and putting all the tools at their disposal so they can be safe. This way, the justice system can evolve and adapt to better serve the needs of victims of crime.

In an effort to be consistent, the Bloc Qu b cois will support Bill C-320. If it passes, these legislative changes will represent an added value for the victims, including female victims of domestic or sexual violence. The justice system has to be more effective and transparent, not just to facilitate the legal process and ease the long-term effects on victims or their family, especially when a decision is made about releasing the assailant, but also to strengthen public trust in the justice system so that no other victim of a crime will hesitate to report it to the police, which still happens far too often, unfortunately.

Statistics show that there has been a spike in femicide and domestic violence. Between 2009 and 2019, there was an increase of 7.5%. We all know that this situation was exacerbated during the pandemic. As parliamentarians, we have a responsibility to help reverse this troubling trend. The reality on the ground highlights the gaps, including the status quo in the justice system: Many victims continue to fear their assailant, even while that person is being detained. We can only applaud an initiative that seeks to improve the victim's experience of the justice system throughout the process, starting from the moment she decides to file a report.

• (1805)

I believe that we could work on this bill without too much partisan bickering, because I fully expect that Conservative members will support this bill to further punish offenders and above all to restore victims' confidence in the justice system, which the Conservatives often say is soft on crime.

The member for Oshawa, who is the sponsor, says he presented the bill to empower victims and their families to obtain more accurate and timely information about the court's decisions concerning their assailant. In his opinion, too many victims and their families have been surprised to learn the assailant was released early, well before 25 years were served, for example.

It would seem that the Liberal caucus is also in favour of this bill to increase transparency in the judicial process. The same goes for the NDP caucus, which believes that this bill could possibly increase transparency in the judicial process.

Third, I will also be monitoring the implementation of the recommendations in the report "Rebâtir la confiance", a report produced in Quebec that seeks to address violence against women in a targeted and non-partisan way. It recommends the creation of a special court, which I spoke about in the first part of my speech.

In fact, a member of the Quebec National Assembly, the MNA for Sherbrooke, recently contacted me to suggest that we look into the notion of coercive control, which could broaden the possibilities of action in the face of domestic violence.

I fully intend to listen to women's groups and to the requests coming from elected officials in Quebec City, who are also asking that this issue be addressed at the federal level, since it falls under the Criminal Code. That is why I will be going back to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women with the following motion: that the committee undertake a study on coercive behaviour, with an emphasis on studying countries or jurisdictions around the world that have already passed legislation on this issue.

The concept of coercive control was first introduced by American researcher Evan Stark, who has proposed a shift away from an understanding of domestic violence based essentially on acts of violence and visible signs of abuse. Although considerable efforts have been made in recent years to ensure the recognition of forms of violence other than physical violence, including psychological violence and harassment, domestic abuse still tends to be regarded as acts of violence committed by an individual.

As an alternative, the concept of coercive control advocates an understanding of the complex dynamics that enable abusers to establish and maintain control over their partners or former partners. This should lead to a better assessment of domestic violence situations and the risks they pose to the safety of women and children.

Coercive control was recently introduced into the criminal codes of England and Scotland.

The concept of coercive control makes it possible to analyze female victims' accounts in their entirety before looking for a discrete incident that corresponds to a particular offence. It highlights the different techniques an abuser may use to maintain power and con-

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trol, because violence is not always about hitting, but it always hurts.

If we want to take serious action, these two measures, namely specialized courts and coercive control, should be examined carefully. We must also remember that lack of housing has repercussions on women's ability to regain power and on their opportunities to break the cycle of vulnerability that keeps them in a cycle of violence.

In conclusion, by strengthening the ties between victims and judicial institutions, we are providing a meaningful response to the insecurity that many victims experience.

To come back to the bill that is before us today, this bill would be a valuable tool, one more tool to help us stop violence against women and girls, but it will not fix everything. At least it will make information on the possible release of offenders available to victims, so that they are better able to protect themselves and take the necessary steps to keep themselves safe.

In the long term, this measure could help prevent further acts of violence by giving victims a way to report any suspicious activity to the proper authorities.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations recently referred to violence against women as the shadow pandemic. Let us therefore ensure that victims have as much information as possible so that they can get into the light and break the cycle of violence.

I would be remiss if I did not mention an absolutely wonderful meeting that I had last week. My colleague from Mirabel invited me to meet a group of students from Oka Secondary School, who came to Ottawa to read me their plea to stop femicide and to implement effective public policies to keep women and girls safe.

I want to commend them for that. They were heard. I will share their plea and try to find ways to be their ally in this fight against violence against women and girls. I thank them.

• (1810)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, as a New Democrat, I am pleased to rise in the House and say that we do support this bill as part of our commitment to the protection of victims' rights. Also, we encourage all members of the House to support the attempts to provide victims with the services they need in terms of rehabilitation or to compensate for losses they have suffered as a result of being victims of crime.

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We conducted hearings in the justice committee, where we heard from victims, and we heard very clearly that one of the things they want is accurate and timely information about the parole process. For that reason, I am quite happy to see this bill come forward and to support it. One of the additional things we heard from victims was on the specific case of sexual assault victims, who asked to be consulted and to be informed about publication bans, and have the right to opt out of publication bans on their assaults. Many of them felt a publication ban without their consent denied their agency and their ability to speak about their own experience, and often it inadvertently protected the perpetrators when their names were suppressed. That is in a bill that is before the Senate, Bill S-12. It was in committee in the Senate today, and I think most of us look forward to that provision getting here to the House very soon.

There are other important measures, and I thank the member for Shefford for talking about the attempt to move coercive and controlling behaviour into criminal law. That was originally in a private member's bill I sponsored, but it is now being brought forward by the member for Victoria as Bill C-332. I hope we will be dealing with that this fall. Again, by making coercive and controlling behaviour a criminal offence, we can prevent victims of violence in the future, since coercive and controlling behaviour in intimate partner relationships is almost always a precursor to actual violence in that relationship.

I spent 20 years, before I came here, as a criminal justice instructor, and one of the things I know from working with and talking to victims is they are concerned about public safety, and in the very specific sense that almost every victim wants to make sure we take measures to make sure the same experience they had does not happen to others. That concern for public safety is always front and centre with every victim I have met with.

It is unfortunate when rhetoric around crime, punishment, parole and bail veers off into what I would call an ideological position that tougher, longer sentences actually keep people safe. It really misunderstands the purpose and function of our parole system. We know that, in Canada, people are eventually going to be released from jail, except for a very small number of them. The parole system does not provide a "get out of jail free" card or earlier release; it provides incentives for good behaviour in the corrections system and it provides incentives for people to participate in rehabilitation, to take drug and alcohol counselling and to take anger management courses. It is hard to get parole if one does not engage in good behaviour in the system and does not engage in those rehabilitation activities. A person will not actually get parole and will not get the privileges of a phased release, being in a halfway house or any of those other things that are seen somehow as privileges. Those things are actually the phased reintegration of people into the community.

We know that people who successfully complete a parole process have a much smaller chance of reoffending. If we make parole almost impossible to get and if we insist on very long sentences, we actually have a negative impact on public safety, in that those who have committed crimes will serve their sentence in the institution, will not participate in rehabilitation activities and will be released at the end of their sentence with no supervision, no access to public services and no monitoring of what they are doing in the communi-

ty. Parole is a way of keeping people safe; it is a way of promoting public safety. It is a way of encouraging rehabilitation. It is important we not lose sight of that. Having said that, victims obviously need to have accurate information about how this works and what is happening at each stage of the process. In that sense, of course, I am still supportive of this bill.

At this point, it is important to mention what I will call the unsung heroes of public safety, who are not as high profile as the police or as corrections workers. Those are the parole officers in this country. Parole officers work very hard with those who are being phased back into the community, to make sure they are successful. In doing so, they help promote public safety. I salute the more than 1,600, I think it is now, parole officers who work for Corrections Canada and belong to the Union of Safety and Justice Employees.

● (1815)

They have recently released a report, within the last year, that points out the challenges they face. Parole officers have very high levels of operational stress injuries in their occupation. That has to do with the stress of dealing with the offenders and the lack of resources in our system.

One of the things they have called for is the hiring of additional parole officers. This would help each of them do their job in a healthier manner, but also reducing caseloads would mean there is more time for those parole officers to spend on the people who are being released, so they can provide better supervision, more monitoring of things like curfews, or more monitoring of whether they are actually where they are supposed to be while they are on parole.

In addition, they called for increased mental health services for parole officers. One of the things they pointed out was that this, in actual fact, saves money. If we provide better mental health services, we avoid the burnout that leads to long-term operational injuries and long-term sick leave.

The other thing they asked for, and I think this is interesting because it shows their professionalism, is increased funding for more mental health professionals working inside our correctional institutions and as part of the parole system. Quite often what we see now, unfortunately, is offenders who have very complex psychological and substance abuse problems to deal with. We need those highly skilled professionals to help design the programs that would help rehabilitate them into the community with the least risk possible to the public.

Again, it is important, whenever we are talking about probation, parole or bail, to remember that things like parole and bail are designed to help keep the public safe—

An hon. member: Do we have quorum?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There is a quorum call.

And the count having been taken:

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We do have quorum.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, I must say I am bit perplexed as to why the Conservatives would do a quorum call in the middle of my speech. Maybe they do not want to hear what I have to say about parole and the importance of parole to public safety, or maybe they do not want to hear what I am about to say about bail.

One of the things we have been talking about as New Democrats, which is now in the government's bail bill, a bill we have not been able to get to because of the delays of the Conservatives, is community-based bail supervision. That is the idea that we would take similar principles to parole and apply them to bail.

Right now, in the system we have in this country, when someone is on bail, there is actually no supervision whatsoever. The government's bill, Bill C-48, would provide that judges could refer people to community-based bail supervision programs. That means that people who are on bail would actually be supervised if they have a curfew, if they are supposed to be at a certain address or if they are supposed to be going to work, whatever the conditions of bail are. We do not really supervise that now. Community-based bail supervision would be important.

The other thing the bill would do is help with what I see as the real problem with bail in Canada, which is that we detain way too many people before trial, people who have not been convicted of anything. In particular, we detain way too many indigenous people, way too many racialized people, way too many poor people and way too many people with mental health challenges.

We do that because our system says that to get bail, people need a surety. They need somebody who is a friend or family member, who has a stable address and a stable job. They, themselves, also need a stable address, a telephone and usually a car before they could actually get bail. What we are doing is taking a lot of people and keeping them in detention, at very high costs, sometimes over \$1,000 a day to keep people in detention.

Private Members' Business

If we use community-based bail supervision programs, the average cost of those pilot programs that the John Howard Society runs is five dollars a day. What we would get out of that is better public safety outcomes, fewer people in detention, and better public safety because we have better supervision for those on bail.

I am talking about this because it is the other end of the system from parole. Both of these are measures to keep the public safe. If we invest in parole and if we invest in community-based bail supervision, we would have fewer people who are victims of crime in this country. I hope that people in this House will see the wisdom of investing in these ways of rehabilitating and reintegrating people into our society.

● (1820)

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am so pleased to stand and speak to my hon. colleague's long overdue bill, Bill C-320, an act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, or the truth in sentencing bill.

Unlike many of the bills we are dealing with at the moment, this one is simple, yet I believe it will have one of the greatest positive impacts on the way we treat victims of crime in our country. The bill would add some simple amendments to the Corrections and Conditional Release Act. Any time a change is made to a parole date, temporary absence or work release, an explanation of how those dates were determined must be disclosed to the victims of the offence.

At the core of the bill is transparency. Canada's justice system ensures that victims and their families, through no choice of their own, are drawn into arduous and protracted legal proceedings. Of course, these are necessary to ensure that every letter of the law is followed to avoid any possible miscarriage of justice. They are subjected to the facts of the case many times over, and when a sentence is delivered, it may not align with what was originally sought. It can be a very traumatic experience from start to finish, and indeed for the years that follow. The least we can do for Canadians who are impacted by crime is to be consistently transparent with how decisions after sentencing are made.

Victims of crime are in dire need of a change of direction. We increasingly see that the government is determined to place the rights of perpetrators ahead of those of the victims. We have seen this playing out in real time through a sharp increase in random attacks and a record number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty since September of last year.

Private Members' Business

Since the Prime Minister took office, violent crime has increased by 32% and gang killings have gone up by 92%. Eight years of this government's catch-and-release bail policies have unleashed a wave of crime across our country. Many Canadians no longer feel safe walking down the street or taking transit, but even in its attempt to respond to Canada's collective outrage on its soft-on-crime policies, the government refuses to reverse them. Through its so-called bail reform bill, the accused killer of OPP Constable Greg Pierzchala and countless other repeat violent offenders would still be released on bail. Canadians, and above all the victims of these crimes, know that this is unacceptable.

Meanwhile, the government continues to place much of the burden of rural policing on rural communities. In my part of the country, the government's retroactive pay deal for the RCMP was negotiated without consultation with the Government of Saskatchewan or rural communities themselves, which are now on the hook for the entire pay increase. I want to stress that this is not in any way about wanting to deny our RCMP officers the pay increases they received, but local mayors and councillors are being left to explain these unfair and unexpected costs to my constituents. Since these municipalities cannot run deficits, their taxes have to go up. Added to this, the federal government has chosen to stay silent on whether it will do its part. That, too, is very unacceptable. It is another example of its "fail to act and ask questions later" approach to public safety.

All this is to say that we have seen a dramatic shift over the past eight years away from a victim-centred approach to criminal justice. The bill before us is an excellent attempt to fill just one of the many gaps that we now see. I would like to thank my colleague for responding to real-world deficiencies with a common-sense solution. In fact, I understand that this is truly a grassroots bill and that the motivation came from the experience of one of the member's own constituents.

Lisa Freeman's father, Roland Slingerland, was brutally bludgeoned to death in 1991. In 1992, the killer was sentenced to life in prison, or at least that was what Canadians were told. Lisa was caught off guard when her father's killer was made eligible for early parole 20 years into the 25-year parole eligibility of his life sentence. She was left with no information as to how that decision was made.

On top of that, Lisa and her family now live with the reality that her father's killer enjoys the use of his own car, access to employment and catered meals at a halfway house. That would be enough of an insult to most Canadians, as most law-abiding citizens do not live that well, and this individual, who committed a serious murder, does.

● (1825)

Recently, he was transferred to an institution in Alberta, because the program he wanted was not available in Ontario. The Alberta facility is located just 10 kilometres from Lisa's sister. I have no words to put to this. It makes absolutely no sense, regardless of what this particular criminal wanted in the way of opportunities to become better, that they would put him that close to her sister. That is right: Their father's killer was relocated just a few minutes away without their consent or even their prior knowledge that this was

going to happen. Lisa, her sister and the rest of the Freeman family were informed of the transfer 24 hours after the fact. In other words, they were given no opportunity to have any input into this decision. They were simply told that this was what was happening. It is safe to say that they feel betrayed and left behind by our justice system.

This bill would mean that there would be no delay in the sharing of critical information with victims of crime, like Lisa Freeman, when it comes to an offender's movements or relocation. It would provide the information that victims need when preparing an impact statement for parole hearings.

We heard tonight about the case with Paul Bernardo, so I am not going to go into that again, but it certainly is an example of a horrific situation where the victims of this crime faced such a difficult circumstance, which they really should not have.

Just today on CTV News, it was reported that convicted killer Michael White has been granted full parole. In 2006, White was convicted of the second-degree murder of his pregnant wife Liana White, with no possibility of parole for 17 years. I think many Canadians expect that a minimum sentence for second-degree murder would be fully served behind bars, but that is not the reality, it seems, in this case. I have not had a chance to talk to Liana's mother, as the story just hit the airwaves this afternoon, but I would be very interested to know how often she and her family were consulted before each decision to release Michael White into society was made.

What victims experience is a lack of clarity and transparency from our justice system on how significant changes to an individual's passage through the prison system are determined. Unless we have been in their shoes, I do not think we can fully appreciate how traumatic these unexpected changes can be. I do not think we can properly measure the toll that it takes on families, which are essentially retraumatized each time a decision is made with unclear parameters.

Therefore, this bill is the least we can do for victims and their families, and I urge this House to give victims some peace of mind by passing Bill C-320.

● (1830)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

We have a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

COMMITTEE TRAVEL

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I attempted to move a unanimous consent motion earlier, and I will attempt to do it again now. I have in my possession, as it is after 6:30 p.m., the email correspondence between the whips' offices. They are all time-stamped prior to the last time I moved it. Nonetheless, I will try again.

There have been discussions among the parties and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent for the following motion. I move:

1. That, in relation to its study of the pre-budget consultations in advance of the 2024 budget, seven members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Fredericton, New Brunswick; Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Halifax, Nova Scotia; and St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, in the fall of 2023, during an adjournment period, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

2. That, in relation to its study of pre-budget consultations in advance of the 2024 budget, seven members of the Standing Committee on Finance be authorized to travel to Quebec, Quebec; Toronto, Ontario; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Edmonton, Alberta; and Vancouver, British Columbia, in the fall of 2023, during an adjournment period, and that the necessary staff accompany the committee.

3. That seven members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be authorized to travel to Whitehorse, Yukon, in the summer of 2023, during an adjournment period, to attend the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees and Canadian Council of Legislative Auditors annual conference.

It sounds like a really interesting conference. I am sorry I am going to miss it.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have been advised by all the recognized parties that they agree with this request.

All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Agreed.

[English]

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

Hearing none, the motion is carried.

(Motion agreed to)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION ACT, 2023, NO. 1

The House resumed consideration of Bill C-47, An Act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, the cost of everything is going up. Why? It is because the Prime Minister is directly responsible for creating the cost of living crisis. The Prime Minister has created a cost of living cri-

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sis through his out-of-control spending and through his inflationary policies.

There is \$67 billion in new spending. That is how much the Prime Minister is trying to ram through Parliament before he takes off for the summer. We would think there would be a plan to return to a balanced budget, but there is not one. We would think there would be a detailed plan on how the \$67 billion in new spending would be used, but there is not one.

We just have to look at the Liberal government's record when it comes to connecting Canadians with high-speed Internet. The Liberals have announced billions and billions of dollars, paid for by taxpayers, in an attempt to connect Canadians. There are at least eight bureaucratic programs under the government's connectivity plan. There are eight bureaucratic programs chasing the same goal. What is there to show for it? Over one million Canadian households still do not have access to high-speed Internet.

Over 50% of first nation communities still do not have access to high-speed Internet, despite billions of dollars' worth in taxpayer-funded announcements over eight years. This is not a record to be proud of. It is a record of failure. I wish the government would realize that announcing money is not the same as getting things done.

It is the same pattern displayed by the government when it comes to the economy. We have a record amount of new debt added by the Prime Minister, and now we have \$60 billion in new spending. What are the results? According to The Globe and Mail, Canada will have the weakest per capita growth among its member countries from 2020 to 2060. That is not an economic record to be proud of.

As members know, I represent a rural region. It is a region that is proudly home to thousands of farmers who work their land to feed the world. The longer the Prime Minister remains in power, the more difficult it becomes to farm in Canada. Not only is the Liberal government's costly carbon tax preventing Canadian farmers from feeding the world, but the Prime Minister's inflationary policies are too.

I recently read a report that stated the cost to purchase farm equipment rose 11.7% in 2021 alone. Farmers cannot afford to keep up with the ever-increasing cost of farming. The cost of everything is going up, but the value of one's hard-earned dollars is going down. The rising rate of interest is now preventing farmers from borrowing the money needed to do their job. I challenge anyone to find a farmer who believes the government is working for farmers.

I will remind Canadians that it was the Liberal government that voted against a Conservative bill to remove the carbon tax from grain drying and barn heating. Thankfully, the bill passed the House of Commons, and it is now waiting to be passed in the Senate. Any Liberal who thinks it is okay to punish farmers for producing food is failing to stand up for Canadian agriculture.

The Canadians I represent oppose the Liberal government's out-of-control spending. They oppose the billions in dollars in new spending without a plan. They oppose inflationary policies that drive up interest rates. They oppose the government's carbon tax hikes.

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Canadians cannot afford the Prime Minister and his policies. Inflationary policies and constant tax hikes are not sustainable. That is why Conservatives are blocking the Prime Minister's inflationary budget. I will be voting against Bill C-47 and will continue to work with my Conservative colleagues to fight for Canadians.

● (1835)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, for a long time, we have been listening to a very disingenuous argument from the Conservatives about the cause of inflation in Canada.

Big oil racked up \$38.3 billion in profits straight from the after-tax money in the pockets of Canadians right across Canada. Big grocery has been racking up hundreds of billions of dollars in profits. Again, that is after-tax money coming out of the pockets of Canadians right across the country.

Why are the Conservatives not talking about them? They are doing far more damage to the affordability of things for people in Canada than the government or anybody else.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, the Liberals' approach does puzzle me as well. They tax everything that moves.

For the first time in Canadian history, during COVID, the Liberal government charged our hospitals to heat themselves. It charged a carbon tax on hospitals, universities and schools. The Liberals actually charged them a carbon tax to heat their buildings, and they have no ability to get that money back. I do not know about that Liberal member. Never mind about the oil and gas industry. These institutions just wanted to heat their buildings, but the Liberals are taxing our publicly funded facilities.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Conservatives keep repeating themselves. It is always more or less the same speech. They talk about the carbon tax being tripled.

Since the beginning of the session, the Conservative opposition days, the budget, it is always the same thing. We have to get rid of this and eliminate that. They just sidestep the major issue of our time, which is the fight against climate change.

The earth is burning right now and that is not just a figure of speech. Quebec is literally on fire. This is certainly related to climate change.

I would like to know the plan. If we get rid of the carbon tax, what would be the Conservatives' plan? We know that in this country, there is a back and forth between the reds and the blues. Sooner or later, the blues are going to return to power.

What are they going to do to address the major challenge of our time, the fight against climate change?

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, we have to address inflation. The problem with the carbon tax is that it impacts everything. We are a big country, and we move goods all over the place. Quebec is somewhat insulated from this because there is no backstop program, but there are six other provinces out there that are charged

this directly and paying a disproportionate portion. Ontario is one of them, and in Manitoba, where I live, we are paying a carbon tax that the Quebec people are not. That is a bigger problem in itself. This is how the government is very much dividing our country instead of trying to pull it together.

● (1840)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, in the budget implementation bill, there is something very near and dear to the hearts of NDP members and to all progressives in this country: access to dental care for the poorest, the disadvantaged and middle-class families.

For the first time, people who have previously been unable to afford it will have access to dental care.

I want to ask the member this: If he votes against Bill C-47, will he commit to refusing his dental care, which is paid for by his parliamentary insurance?

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Madam Speaker, I will go back to inflation.

The lower-income people the New Democrats say they are defending are impacted more than anybody else. They have fewer dollars to move around. Sure, with our MP wages, people look at us. We are going to stand up for the little guy. We should get the reality here.

These lower-income people do not have extra income, so to put another program on them and say we will save their teeth when they cannot even afford groceries, and are standing in food lines to feed themselves, is absolutely ridiculous. We have to focus on getting the cost of living under control.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, today we are debating an omnibus bill. That, of course, is Bill C-47, an act to implement certain provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on March 28, 2023. This bill, which is sponsored by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the member for University—Rosedale, is at report stage.

First, this bill is problematic because of its size. We are talking about 430 pages, the amendment of 59 laws and the Income Tax Regulations, on top of that. Even though this government promised to never again introduce such mammoth bills, that is exactly what Bill C-47 is. That is regrettable because it becomes impossible, or at least very difficult, to discuss certain important measures in detail.

I find that they are trying to muddy the waters. In any case, true to form, the Liberal government is ignoring almost all the demands and suggestions of the Bloc Québécois. Like the 2023 budget, Bill C-47 contains absolutely nothing for seniors, practically nothing for housing and no long-term solutions to the underfunding of health care. There is also nothing about EI reform.

To my detractors, however, I admit that this bill seems to contain some good elements. Let me name two. First, it clarifies the calculation of taxable capital gains on the intergenerational transfer of SMEs, particularly farm businesses, something we in the Bloc fought hard to get. Second, it creates an employment insurance board of appeal. I will stop at just the two positive aspects of the budget.

I just said that this bill muddies the waters. I would like to reiterate that Bill C-47 is indeed clear as mud. Hidden in the piles of measures—the bill is roughly 400 pages long, after all—in division 31 of part 4, on page 325, the government introduces 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.

Yes, that is what it says. This monarchist measure has absolutely no place in a budget implementation act. At the very least, it should be the subject of a separate, full-fledged legislative initiative. We would be delighted to debate it. The Liberal government has tried to pull a fast one on us. It is taking people for fools. I am not mincing words—that is how much this shocks me.

The Liberals have told us that this merely confirms a fact, that Charles III is Canada's new sovereign. I am going to tell the Chair a little something: The Bloc Québécois does not want this new king. What is more, the majority of Quebecers and Canadians do not want him. An Angus Reid poll conducted last April, as members will recall, showed that 71% of Quebecers want the monarchy to disappear and 51% of Canadians feel the same.

The poll shows that there is not a single province in Canada where the percentage of people who support constitutional monarchy exceeds the percentage of those who oppose it. It seems to me that these figures speak for themselves. It also shows that 92% of those opposed to the monarchy would like to see an attempt to change the Constitution in order to sever ties with the monarchy. That is a big deal. Charles III is being disowned by the majority of the people over whom he rules while we, as elected parliamentarians, must agree to a bill that recognizes his authority.

• (1845)

No, I am opposed. All Bloc Québécois members are opposed because we do not want to see Charles III on our coins. We do not want to swear an oath to him. I do not want this hidden in a budget implementation bill.

Furthermore, it is expensive for us to remain British subjects. It costs a little more than \$67 million per year on average for honours and awards, ceremonial events and travel. In March 2022, in support of the magnificent sand castle that upholds the monarchy, the Governor General handed taxpayers a \$100,000 catering bill for herself and 29 invited guests during an eight-day tour of the Middle East while our streets are filling up with homeless people. Between 2019 and 2022, the Governor General's salary increased by \$40,000, or 13%. That is more than the 12% over four years obtained with great difficulty by 120,000 federal public servants a few weeks ago.

Not that long ago, we were dismayed to learn that governor generals Julie Payette and Mary Simon purchased more than \$100,000

of clothing since 2017 at the expense of Quebecers and Canadians. That is sad because it happened and continues to happen. The money keeps flying out the door. We want nothing to do with this system.

I stress this because the Liberal government had the gall to introduce this notion within the budget. In Canada, we do not have many institutions that are as expensive and at the same time as useless. For a government that wanted to make Canada a so-called postnational state, we might find this attachment to the monarchy rather unusual. It is one of the most archaic and moribund institutions in existence. It is utterly absurd. The monarchy does not improve Canada's image, it covers it in dust. Faced with the government's stubbornness in maintaining this absurdity, there remains only one option for the people of Quebec, a well-deserved option, which is sovereignty.

Among those who best grasp the importance and historical weight of Quebec sovereignty, there was Frédéric Bastien. This historian, professor and columnist left us far too soon at the age of 53, on May 16. Not 48 hours ago, I attended Frédéric's funeral with my leader and some of my colleagues. I was very moved to see thousands of people gather to celebrate the life and work of this great separatist. Also, every sovereignist mind from the cultural, political and journalism worlds was there. Everyone of importance in this magnificent nation was there to pay tribute to Frédéric Bastien. In a way, Frédéric Bastien spent his life fighting against the British monarchy and for Quebec's sovereignty. It is a great loss for the people of Quebec.

In short, Bill C-47 has a few good things, but that is all. This monarchist measure that has nothing to do with the budget is hidden in there. Semiology expert Roland Barthes called this type of details that spoil everything “a tear in the smooth envelope of the image”. The image of Bill C-47 has been badly tarnished by the fact that the requests of the Bloc Québécois have been completely ignored and that the needs of Quebecers have been completely ignored.

People can guess how the Bloc Québécois will be voting in good conscience.

• (1850)

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

I gathered that there was not much in the budget that interested him. I would like to hear his opinion. Would he have liked to see more about access to the Internet and improvements to the cellular network in all of Quebec's regions and across Canada? It is 2023 and we are still asking questions. How is it that we are unable to have adequate services? I would like my colleague to comment on that.

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, it is funny that he said that.

Earlier, my colleague from Mirabel gave a wonderful speech. He told us that he wanted the king to appear before a committee, but that the king did not have Internet service or did not know how to use it. That was really great.

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Yes, that is something that should have been in the budget. There are too many other things that are missing. Earlier, I referred quickly to seniors, and then there is housing and EI. There is the underfunding of health care. This budget did not really target the real concerns.

It is a mammoth bill, but the content is not reflective of the container.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind hon. members to respect Canada's constitutional arrangement.

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

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, this budget is far from perfect. There are big gaps we are very worried about, but there are still major gains for ordinary people.

It will come as no surprise to my colleague that this budget expands dental benefits for children aged 12 to 18 and for people 65 and up, as well as for everyone earning less than \$70,000 a year or whose household income is less than \$90,000 a year. This is the NDP's plan to make sure people can go see a dentist, a service they may never have been able to afford in their lives. Hundreds of thousands of Quebecers will have access to this type of health care.

This is not interference; it is reimbursing expenses. Nobody is telling Quebec how to run its hospitals. Nobody is opening federal dental clinics; this is just about reimbursing expenses. It will help people in a tangible way.

What does my colleague think about the fact that people in his riding, seniors in his riding, will be able to go see a dentist?

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, that is obviously a win.

However, at what price will the NDP have gained this victory?

[English]

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Madam Speaker, the hon. member touched on many subjects and topics in his intervention. He talked about Quebec separating. In his opinion, what is stopping Quebec from separating?

• (1855)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, may I remind the member that we came very close to achieving sovereignty in 1995?

It is a movement that has its ups and downs. Just like here, in Parliament, we know we will go from blue to red and from red to blue. These are perfectly normal societal trends.

What I can say is that, right now, as we know, sovereignist sentiment is on the rise. It is currently at 38% among Quebecers, whereas a few months ago it was around 20%. These sorts of movements organize very rapidly.

Members might be surprised at the alliance that exists, not between the Liberal Party and the NDP, but between the Parti Québécois and the Bloc Québécois. I think there is a strong synergy there to watch out for.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, people often call my riding office to ask about services for seniors and children of low-income families.

Right now, my riding is particularly well off. Since dental care is a service for low-income people, what does my colleague have to say to voters in my riding and his riding who need help and who want this budget to be passed?

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, off the top of my head, there is not much in the budget about that.

Perhaps I missed part of my colleague's question. There is not much there when it comes to funding or content. Yes, obviously, there are some good measures.

However, in 2023, we would have hoped that this budget would contain more social democratic measures and something tangible to back them up. We are not seeing that.

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am really pleased to speak tonight to this budget. I do not want to go the usual route, because we have heard a lot tonight about the dynamics around the government saying that we do not care about the people and we do not care about all of the things it has within the budget that it wants to provide Canadians. I think what is missing here is the difference in our perspectives and how polarized they are. Our view is that we want to empower Canadians in every way possible, whereas the government empowers big government. That is a huge difference in the way we process policy and perspectives on how to manage government and serve Canadians.

As a matter of fact, we believe in a balance between fiscal responsibility; compassionate social policy that empowers the less fortunate by promoting self-reliance and equality of opportunity; and the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families and free associations. We believe in a federal system of government as the best expression of the diversity of our country and believe in the desirability of strong provincial and territorial governments. It is not a case of a strong federal government saying it will do what it wants at the provincial level.

We believe that the best guarantors of the prosperity and well-being of the people of Canada are as follows.

One is the freedom of individual Canadians to pursue their enlightenment and legitimate self-interests within a free, competitive economy. Our economy is being very much controlled and managed by our government right now.

Another is the freedom of individual Canadians to enjoy the fruits of their labour to the greatest possible extent. The federal government should be doing only what it must do to empower and encourage Canadians to succeed and, of course, to take care of those who need assistance, a hand-up or help in that process.

We believe in the right to own property. There is a sense that Canadians do not need to have these responsibilities anymore, and that is very contrary to what our perspective is.

We believe that a responsible government must be fiscally prudent. We are not seeing that here. This should be limited to responsibilities that cannot be discharged reasonably by the individual or others. I believe that it is the responsibility of individuals to provide for themselves, their families and their dependants, while recognizing, of course, that the government must respond to those who require assistance and compassion.

We believe that the purpose of Canada as a nation-state and its government, guided by reflective and prudent leadership, is to create a climate where individual initiative is rewarded, excellence is pursued, security and privacy of the individual are provided and prosperity is guaranteed by a free, competitive market economy. Right now, our public service has ballooned exponentially, again under a Liberal government, and I would be really curious to see what portion of the debt-to-GDP ratio the public service represents.

I believe that Canada should continue its strong heritage of national defence, supporting a well-armed military, honouring those who serve and promoting our history and traditions. We believe that the quality of the environment is a vital part of our heritage, to be protected by each generation for the next. These are the truths, the realities, of where the values of this party are, in spite of the rhetoric that comes from the other side of the floor.

We believe that a good and responsible government is attentive to the people it represents and consists of members who at all times conduct themselves in an ethical manner and display integrity, honesty and concern for the best interests of all. I think the government has had a significant issue with meeting that expectation.

We believe that the greatest potential for achieving social and economic objectives is under a global trading regime that is free and fair.

That is not all of them, but that gives members a sense of where our priorities are. They are not in growing government. This is not about saying that government knows best, as our leader has talked about. It is about giving those on assistance the opportunity to earn a living and earn money and not have it taken away before they have reached a point where they are truly self-sufficient. Those are the kinds of values we function on.

● (1900)

When we look at this budget and where we are today under the Liberal government's financial leadership, we simply cannot support this budget. The record continues of higher taxes and inflationary deficits.

Conservatives only asked for three things. As a matter of fact, we are demanding three things that we believe are crucial to giving the economy and the values of this country back to the people who work. Budget 2023 should end the war on work and lower taxes for workers, not raise them; end inflationary deficits, which at this point in time are incredibly out of control and are driving up the cost of everything; and remove gatekeepers to increase the building of homes for Canadians.

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These are the three things that are important to us with these values. I believe that Canada and Canadians are in the dire straits they are in right now because of the Liberal government not functioning within what I see as the true values that a government should have in caring for its people.

We believe that we need to bring home powerful paycheques for Canadians with lower taxes, and we need to scrap the carbon tax, as we have said over and over again, so that hard work pays off again. Right now, in Canada, we know and we hear it constantly, the cost of food is out of control, people are skipping meals and food banks are busier than ever. The government's idea of dealing with that huge issue, which is here because of its high inflation and its inability to control spending so that we do not find ourselves in the circumstances we are in now, is to give a grocery rebate.

The Liberals talk about this as though we are against that. What we are against is ending up in this place in the first place. The unfortunate thing about that rebate is that it is less than half of what Canadian families of four would spend in addition to what they normally spend on groceries. In other words, this grocery rebate does not do anything to help them with their month-to-month costs. It is simply taking away a little less than half of what they are going to spend in larger amounts of money on their groceries because of the high inflation that Canada is experiencing.

That is not enough, but that is where we find ourselves because the Liberal government has allowed our economy to slip so significantly.

A worker making above \$66,600 would be forced to pay an extra \$255 to the Canada pension plan and an extra \$50 to employment insurance. That is a \$305 increase. It does not sound like much, but when people are not making their bills every month, it is huge.

We need to bring home lower prices by ending inflationary debt and deficits that drive up inflation and interest rates. Canada's federal debt for 2023-24 fiscal year is projected to reach \$1.22 trillion. I do not think any Canadian could really fathom that, but when we break it down, that is a debt of \$81,000 per household in Canada. Canadians understand that. It is huge, and adding to that the cost of servicing this enormous debt, which continues to grow. In 2023-24, it is projected to be \$43.9 billion just to service that debt.

What could we be doing with that money if we had not spent the cupboard bare, then borrowed to the nth degree and then printed money on top of that? It is totally irresponsible behaviour on behalf of the taxpayers of Canada. The debt load is huge. The cost of servicing that debt is out of control.

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Finally, we need homes that people can afford to live in. Under the Liberals, down payments have doubled, rents are doubled, mortgages are doubled, and the whole situation is out of control. I would just end by saying that none of our demands have been met and the Conservatives will not support an anti-worker, tax-hiking, inflationary budget.

• (1905)

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member says, “scrap the carbon tax”, but she also talked about the importance of the free market.

It seems to me there are numerous groups that believe in the free market and support the carbon tax and carbon pricing. For example, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Mining Association of Canada, the Business Council of Canada and the Fraser Institute, which is hardly a Liberal institution.

What would the member say in response to the Chamber of Commerce, which said that carbon pricing is generally the best way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to lower costs? Does the member not believe in climate change?

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, once again, that is ridiculous rhetoric. Do not tell me I do not believe in climate change. Of course I do. I come from Saskatchewan, where we understand exactly what that is and we have been managing it very effectively. We do not need a “green the prairies” bill, with all respect to the individual who brought it forward who is no longer with us, because we continue to improve in how we care for our environment. Do members know why? It is because it is very important to us and not only for agriculture and for mining and all of those different things that bring GDP to our country, but because we care about our kids.

Please, on that side of the floor, stop it. Canadians know that is not the truth. They see how we manage our environment and they will be thrilled when we form government.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I believe the member is sincere when she talks about environmental values and protecting the environment. However, I still see a contradiction. I would not wish to praise the current government's policies on climate change, far from it, because they fall short. Protecting the environment means investing substantially to counter the effects of climate change. I believe this value is completely contrary to what her party is advocating, which is to continue to contribute to the growth of the oil and gas sector.

Could the member explain how it is possible to protect the environment while at the same time continuing to build on an energy source that is no longer—

• (1910)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville the chance to answer the question.

The hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I truly appreciate that question. The truth of the matter is that valuing what we need to do for the climate is not something that Canada can take a responsibility for just for Canada. When I hear about the fires that we are experiencing and the floods and the hurricanes, these are all truly taking place, but Canada is not an island unto itself in its own environment. We are part of a global ecosystem. Therefore, the reason I support Canadian oil and gas is because I do not support Venezuelan oil and gas. I do not support these companies that are in countries that do nothing to improve the climate and also do not do what should be done with their products. We have the best products that are needed until they are no longer needed. Right now—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I do not often agree with my colleague. However, she raises an important point, which is the budget's inadequacies when it comes to housing.

The NDP sees that there is a housing crisis. We want social and affordable housing. We want co-operative housing.

The budget is far from perfect, and we would have done things differently. However, there is something in there that the NDP is very proud of, and that is the fact that we forced the Liberals to provide accessible dental care for the most disadvantaged and the middle class. This year, the program is going to be expanded to cover teenagers and people 65 and over who may never have been able to access dental care.

If the member votes against Bill C-47, is she prepared to abandon the idea of dental care that is paid for by Canadian taxpayers with insurance from Parliament?

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Madam Speaker, I think I have made it clear what I am voting against. It is a government that is irresponsible and out of control and has put Canadians in this very dire situation. I am all about bringing supports for those who truly need them and for those who need a hand up to get out of a bad situation. I personally, during the Pierre Elliott Trudeau government, experienced 22% interest rates and the loss of my business, so I know what it is like to have nothing and have to come back. That is something that our government should be doing to help people.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I always like to start off my speeches by talking about the preceding speech. I noticed the exchange between the member for Yorkton—Melville and the member for Thunder Bay—Rainy River, when she said that Conservatives absolutely believe in climate change.

I do not necessarily disagree with that, but what I want to know is whether or not Conservatives believe that humans cause climate change. Less than a week ago, her seatmate, the member for Red Deer—Mountain View, said that there was nothing to see here because the rocks he picks out of his garden were caused by climate change, and the rivers we have in our country are just an effect of climate change. Literally, her seatmate, less than a week ago in this House of Commons, talked about climate change as though it is just a natural cycle of the planet and as there is nothing to see here there is nothing to worry about.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall: Come on, get on with your points.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Therefore, I take exception when a Conservative tries to suggest they believe in climate change. That is fair. However, do they believe that humans cause climate change? That is what I would love to know.

I also found it very—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. This is not a dialogue between members. I am sorry. It is the hon. member's turn for his speech. He did not interrupt the hon. member when it was her turn for her speech, so I would like to allow the same courtesy to the parliamentary secretary.

Resuming debate, the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I also found it very interesting that the member for Yorkton—Melville, in the exact same speech, said that a \$467 grocery rebate was pretty much insignificant and that nobody would care about it because it really did not mean anything, but that later on in the same speech she said that a \$330 CPP increase would mean something significant to people. In the same speech, she tried to downplay the grocery rebate because it was not going to be impactful, but apparently a CPP contribution amount increase that is lower than that will have a devastating impact on Canadians. We can see the hypocrisy coming from the other side. That was not just from day to day, but within the exact speeches they gave in a 10-minute period.

I am really glad she talked about forest fires and what we are seeing outside. If someone walks outside the doors of this place, they are going to smell the smoke, as we all have for the last day or so. These are the impacts of climate change. I am not trying to fear-monger. I am not trying to suggest that the entire city is going to be burnt to the ground in a couple of days, but we have to be realistic about this. The reality is that forest fires in this country have been increasing significantly since the 1980s. Despite the incredible work we have done with respect to prevention and suppression, they still tend to increase. Why is that? Someone may say it cannot just be climate change. They might ask how climate change does that.

The fire season, the season in which we see forest fires, now starts a week earlier and ends a week later than it did historically. We have drier conditions, which allow fires to start in the first place, to burn quicker and to be more impactful. We also know that half of the forest fires started in Canada are caused by lightning. Where does lightning come from? It comes from increased weather events, and we are seeing increased weather events. It is no mys-

tery to anybody that the weather events happening throughout this country are much more dire than they used to be. Conservatives are heckling at that. I do not understand why they would, as it is a serious issue. These are Canadians' lives we are talking about

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We have to make a meaningful impact. We have to realize we cannot do what the member for Yorkton—Melville said, which is that we are just one little country within a globe and this is a global ecosystem, so there is nothing we can really do and we should just throw up our hands. No, we work together with other countries on this planet, like Brian Mulroney did when he saved the world from the depletion of the ozone layer. Brian Mulroney brought together 42 representatives from different countries throughout the world, in Montreal, to sign the Montreal Protocol on dealing with the depletion of the ozone layer. That is how we get things done.

Yes, members should clap for Brian Mulroney, a great progressive Conservative.

The problem is that the Conservatives of today do not look at it like that. They say we are just one little country in the world, and our emissions, comparatively speaking, are so low that we should not even worry about them. That is a very defeatist approach, and if that is the approach one wants to take, I guess it is their prerogative. I much prefer the approach of Brian Mulroney, a true progressive Conservative, who knew how to tackle world issues on the national stage and how to tackle world issues. He comes from a country that is so vast in size and limited in population compared to other countries in the world, but he knew what to do. We had a reputation of being able to do that. I find this defeatist attitude of “there is nothing we can do about it and we should just go on living our lives”, while there is literally smoke outside the doors of this building right now, so alarming.

I am very happy to see that, in this budget, we are continuing to support initiatives to get us away from burning fossil fuels. This is a transition we have to make, and it is a transition that is going to happen whether the Conservatives, or the House for that matter, are interested in being part of it or not. We are transitioning away from fossil fuels; it is happening.

One in 10 cars sold in 2022 in Canada was an electric vehicle. Do I have to explain to Conservatives how, when a new technology comes along, it takes off and the curve is exponential? By 2030, I predict, there will be very few cars sold in this country that are not zero-emission vehicles. That is the reality. This budget would provide for ensuring that we incentivize the production of EVs, the production of the batteries and the proper recycling of those batteries, because that is key as well. We want to be at the forefront of the new industries that are coming.

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• (1915)

We can have the approach of just pretending it is not happening, and we can just keep burning fossil fuels, turn our backs on it and pretend that the world is not changing around us, like the Conservatives want, or we can be at the lead of it. We can be at the forefront of it. We can be bringing the talent and developing the talent right in our country to produce these products, patents and new ideas and concepts so Canada can be an exporter of that technology and not an importer of it. This is what we are poised to do right now with the countless number of EV manufacturers and EV battery plants that have expressed an interest and have decided to set up in Canada. In my opinion, we are genuinely at the forefront, and that is what is so absolutely key in this budget. This is why, every time I have spoken to the budget, I have spoken specifically to that.

Now, of course, what we are going to hear are multiple arguments about why electric vehicles are not sustainable or how our electricity grid will never be able to handle it. However, I have great confidence in Canadians' ability to innovate, to create and to develop new technologies that will help us deal with the challenges we face on any particular day. I have no doubt we will get through it, but we have to stay focused on the goal, and the goal is to transition to cleaner energy and away from fossil fuels.

I realize that the Conservatives will say that we have some of the cleanest standards and some of the cleanest fossil fuels, which I do not necessarily disagree with. However, I do not think it is fair, from the position of a first world country and G7 partner, one of the leaders in the OECD, to point fingers at other countries, developing countries in particular, and say "Well, look at what they are doing." We have a responsibility in this world to be leaders, and Conservatives of the past knew that. As I mentioned, Brian Mulroney did that. He knew that about the ozone layer and when it came dealing with acid rain, and he took action. He did not care where the problem originated. He did not care who was ultimately responsible for the problem, but he believed in finding solutions everybody could agree on, and he believed that Canada could be part of the leadership on that.

Rather than Conservatives sitting on their hands and saying, "Oh well, there is nothing we can do. We are emitting only 7% of the emissions, blah, blah, blah", why do they not start coming into the House with ideas on how we can encourage other nations to follow in our path and encourage them that the way Canada is doing it is right? That is Canada's role in this world, and it has been its role in the past. Conservative governments in the past have known that. It is just unfortunate that the reform party of today, which wears the colour blue, does not know that.

• (1920)

Mr. Ted Falk (Provencher, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am sorry that you had to reprimand me before for interjecting into the member's speech, but he is always so engaging, and I was overcome with a desire to respond. The parliamentary secretary, if nothing else, is always very entertaining.

The Liberals and the NDP would like to give Canadians the impression that the carbon tax they are paying is what they can see on their fuel bills, either at the gas pump or on their energy bills at home. However, that does not completely address the increased

cost and the inflation that Canadians are actually experiencing as a result of the carbon tax, because the carbon tax is being applied to every single process of getting something to the consumer, whether it is the manufacturing, the harvesting or the moving of goods to the market. Everything is incurring the carbon tax, and that increases the price of goods and services, which is making it very difficult for Canadians to live, because that inflation is overwhelming.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am willing to accept and agree that there are inflationary impacts on various policies that come forward. I am not disagreeing with that. It is the impact and the degree to which it does this that we have to consider. We should reflect on the fact that I am at least willing to have that discussion and to accept the fact that it is a possibility. Conservatives will not even accept the possibility that inflation is not limited to Canada; they think it is something uniquely Canadian. They think we can have a trading country like Canada, with one of the most trading relationships and partners in the world, and still not be impacted by inflation in other countries.

Yes, we are experiencing inflation. It is tough on Canadians, but we are also helping them with it through this budget.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fiery speech, as usual. Quebec made a choice to have an emissions trading system. That is its own system, which is why the carbon tax does not apply in Quebec.

My colleague spoke eloquently of the Montreal Protocol on CFCs. Obviously, we eliminated the threats to the ozone layer. The whole reason this came about was that an emissions trading system was implemented, increasing the price of these polluting products.

The higher price was an incentive, as the Conservatives like to think, to develop new technologies, which is why, today, the problem has largely been resolved.

If the western provinces, which do not like the carbon tax, had implemented this strategy that was used by the Mulroney government, they would not be getting the carbon tax in their provinces. Is it not somewhat their own fault that they are getting a carbon tax?

• (1925)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, the member is right. I am sure he has heard me speak about this many times before, but he is right, Quebec does not have a price on pollution, which many other provinces in the country do, exactly because of that cap-and-trade deal. Ontario was a partner in that cap-and-trade deal until Doug Ford was elected as premier and got out of it. That is the reality of the situation.

We can look at how, in those five or six short years, Quebec has advanced in terms of electrifying its grid, setting up EV charging stations and taking the electrification transition seriously, and compare it to Ontario. Ontario is lagging behind, yet only five or six years ago, both provinces had joined the western initiative with a number of states in the U.S. at the same time: California, Montana and a number of other states. Right now, Ontario, to its detriment, is not doing it.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for drawing that direct line between the smoke that is choking the capital, the fires across the country and climate change. Where I live, on the west shore of Vancouver Island, last week, firefighters stopped 10 potential brush fires from taking over our communities, and I want to shout out thanks to all those firefighters, both professional and volunteer.

We seem to have missed an opportunity in this budget implementation act to increase the tax credit for volunteer firefighters, and I wonder whether the member would commit to making sure we consider that for the next round of budget talks.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, one thing I know is that firefighters have a much higher approval rating than politicians, so I would always be very careful about what I say as it relates to firefighters. The reality of the situation is that if there is a missed opportunity, if it is something we did not talk about or is something we did and it needs to be resurfaced, I am certainly always interested in having those discussions. What we do know, and we can see it from the historical trends, is that the number of fires is increasing, and it has been over the last number of decades, as I indicated in my speech. We are going to need to make sure we have the resources and supports there for firefighters, moving forward, if we are going to expect them to do these jobs.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, nostalgia is a strange thing. Sometimes it is quite surprising and remarkable what kinds of longings it can spark. When we start to skim through the contents of the 2023 budget, it is almost enough to make one nostalgic for the days, not so long ago, when the Liberal government failed to table a budget for over two years.

I say that mostly in jest, of course, but the point I am making is that, while this budget is being tabled by a Liberal government, it is certainly not a classically Liberal budget. For that, we have to think back to the 1990s when fiscal policy was something that the then Liberal prime minister at least spent a bit of time thinking about. This was when the then prime minister's finance minister at least viewed deficits as an obstacle along the road to prosperity and not a destination in and of itself.

The incarnation of the Liberal government under the Prime Minister and the finance minister would certainly be unrecognizable to Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin. Members across the way who remember when their leaders held at least some concern for fiscal responsibility ought to reflect on just how far off path their party has wandered. Maybe if they did that, they would feel a little nostalgic themselves.

With contents such as bigger government, higher taxes and more debt, this document reads less like a budget and more like a 270-

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page love letter from the Prime Minister to the spendthrifts who have overtaken the Liberal Party, and to those already well-established among its partners in the New Democratic Party. At a time of massive debt, this budget proposes \$67 billion in new spending, and all of this is being thrown on the heap of huge debt and deficits that has already been racked up by the Prime Minister over the last eight years, which amounts to more than all of the debt accrued by all previous prime ministers combined.

This 2023 federal budget would add significantly to the high debt, deep-deficit turbulence that is shaking our economy. A cost of living crisis is ongoing, and inflation is eroding Canadians' paycheques at the same time it is increasing their bills. Therefore, naturally, the Liberal government somehow sees this as the ideal time to add to their burdens by increasing their taxes and the debt they owe. With this budget, every Canadian household's share of the federal debt is now in the range of about \$81,000.

This debt is unaffordable, as \$43 billion would be syphoned off, away from services for Canadians, to service the interest on that debt. That money would have to be replaced through that much more borrowing. It is unsustainable. Canadians not even born yet, and even their kids, their grandkids and their great-great-grandkids, will be on the hook to pay back the bankers for the Liberals' eight-year spending spree. Hopefully, that is where it stops.

It is unfocused because, if the purpose of a federal budget is to present a path forward to future prosperity for Canadians, this document clearly misses the mark. It sacrifices the dinner table concerns of everyday Canadians on the altar of the costly coalition's big government ideology. The real problems facing this country get eclipsed in deference to the partisan priorities of the Liberal-NDP partners.

This budget has the dubious distinction of being notable not for its contents, but for what it does not contain. Canadians seeking relief from the inflation crisis will not find here a reversal of the inflationary deficits and taxes that would allow workers to bring home more of their own earnings. Lowering taxes and leaving more of their money in Canadians' pockets is the single most effective way the government could have helped citizens in a cost of living crisis. The Liberals do not want to do that because that would mean more cash for Canadians to decide how best to spend it on their own priorities and less for the government to hand out on what it perceives that to be.

Instead of empowering Canadians through more powerful paycheques, the budget proposes yet more new programs for them to fund through Canadians' paying more taxes. This increases taxpayers' obligations too, and therefore their reliance upon, bigger government, and that is exactly the way the Liberals want it.

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• (1930)

The Liberals fancy themselves as gatekeepers. This paternalistic government does not trust Canadians to best deploy their own dollars, so it sets itself up instead as the arbiter of how Canadians' money can best be used. This is a spoiler alert, but in their minds, that best use is not for the priorities of Canadians. Rather, it is to fund the Liberal-NDP agenda.

Canadians will also not find in this budget a blueprint for a freer, more responsive economy, one that removes the government gatekeepers who use restrictions and red tape to complicate problems rather than streamlining processes to provide solutions.

We need more housing in this country, but we have too many gatekeepers running interference. Canadians are looking for a smart, responsive policy that enables the free market to work as it should, respond to demand and provide the affordable housing stock a growing population needs.

Canadians will not find measures along that line in this budget. Rather than creating solutions to the problems that exist, the Liberals create new problems that impact housing, such as the way they have implemented their underused housing tax, for example. Taxing Canadians under the guise of going after foreign speculators, costing Canadians massive amount of accounting and administrative fees and making them fill out all kinds of forms to force them to justify the use of their own properties will not do anything to address the housing crisis that has vastly worsened under the Liberals. These are the kinds of things the government does instead of getting serious about addressing the real problems facing Canadians.

Not only that, but young Canadians looking to save up for their first home would find that task just a bit easier if the budget had simply ended the carbon tax hikes and the deficit spending that continue to drive up inflation and interest rates, and make life more unaffordable. Instead of listening to Canadians, Liberals are continuing with their war on work and increasing taxes, which means workers are punished for working, and taking home even less of their pay.

What they do take home, the Liberal fiscal policy driving the affordability crisis is steadily eroding. Items as essential as food are becoming increasingly harder for Canadians to afford. Good nutritious options are becoming luxury items for far too many pantries as household budgets are stretched to the breaking point. In my riding, for example, food banks in Airdrie, Cochrane, Morley and Bow Valley are struggling with at least a 50% increase in demand over the previous year, yet the government continues to find ways to fuel that inflation with further spending, and more families in communities in my home province of Alberta are struggling, just as families right across the country are.

For example, an oil and gas worker in Alberta, with a family of four to feed, is forecast to spend up to over \$1,000 more on food this year, according to "Canada's Food Price Report 2023", and that is almost \$600 more than the rebate they will receive. That money has to come off of an already smaller paycheque that worker is trying to make do with, so it is that same trend. The government insists on taking more of the hard-earned dollars from Canadians for its big government agenda, while leaving Canadians with less to fend for themselves.

The government is not also forcing Canadians to make do with smaller paycheques, but also penalizing their community to earn them. The carbon tax increased to 14¢ per litre on April 1, making it more expensive for Canadians to get to work. The Parliamentary Budget Officer shows the carbon tax will cost the average family somewhere between \$402 and \$847. That is even after the supposed rebates. That blows a huge hole in the Liberals' claim that their scheme is revenue neutral. By 2030, the government's carbon taxes could add 50¢ per litre to the price of gasoline. That is all in addition to the new payroll taxes the government is putting on workers and employers as well.

These tax-and-spend policies, and others like them, have a human cost, with everyday impacts on people struggling just to get by, and giving back some of the crumbs of the feast the government takes for itself is not going to fix those impacts. Acting on the financial mess they are causing will be the solution, but it is clear that nothing is going to change with the Liberal government.

Canada's federal debt for 2023-24 is projected to reach \$1.22 trillion. The 2023-24 deficit is projected to be \$40.1 billion. Eight years of the same old has become this tired group's stock and trade. There is no path to balance in Canada's future budget projections. It is just another Liberal promise broken. No matter what the challenges are that are facing the nation, the Liberals always default to their instincts for bigger government, higher taxes, more restrictions and fewer freedoms, to the detriment of hard-working Canadians. Their record proves it.

• (1935)

We need a Conservative government in this country that will prioritize the needs of people instead of its own friends, like the Liberal Party has done. It is time for change, and it cannot come soon enough for Canadians.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member was speaking about nostalgia, I was thinking nostalgically of when I used to think the Conservative Party of Canada knew something about the economy and was a business champion. What I heard in the speech were things about tax increases. I was looking for a chapter on tax increases and, unfortunately, I could not find it, but I did find a chapter on growing a clean economy and looking at what we are going to do to capture the \$100-trillion investments between now and 2050 in clean technologies and the global clean economy.

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I saw, “Clear and predictable investment tax credits to provide foundational support for clean technology manufacturing, clean hydrogen, zero-emission technologies, and carbon capture and storage”, all things that will get Canada into a better economic position by participating in the clean economy of the future, including not only predictable increases in our carbon pricing but also increases in money going back to Canadians.

Could the hon. member talk about the opportunities we have in the clean economy and how this budget addresses that?

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, first, I would comment that only a Liberal would stand to say that increasing a tax, the carbon tax, is somehow going to be better for the economy. Only a Liberal would say that this is the way to a better economy, to tax people a bit more. That will solve all the problems that people face. That is the first thing that just astounds me, no matter how many times I hear it from that Liberal Party.

Secondly, to his question, certainly, there are a lot of opportunities. I want to point out very clearly that there is a need for oil and gas in this world for many years to come yet, and we need to make sure that Canadian oil and gas is being used rather than that from some foreign dictatorship.

There is obviously opportunity, as he has pointed out, in some of these new emerging sectors and technologies. The problem is that Liberals talk about putting money into things, but they also set themselves up as the gatekeepers. They make it so impossible for anyone to actually invest and do anything within any of these opportunities that Canada falls behind, as it has done with the opportunities we had in natural gas.

We could have been providing the needs of clean energy in Europe right now, to displace the Russian energy, but no. This government has set up all the roadblocks it could possibly put in the way, and that is what it will do again with everything else.

It continually makes itself the gatekeeper and makes it impossible to anyone to move ahead with these things.

• (1940)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I agree with some aspects of my colleague's speech but disagree with others. That is the beauty of being human. We can agree and disagree while respecting each other.

That said, I would like to know the member's opinion on a surprise tucked away in the deepest recesses of the bill, in clause 510, on page 325, concerning the proclamation of Charles III as Canada's head of state.

If it is in the budget, does the member think that means that huge amounts of money will be spent on it? If there are no exorbitant amounts involved, why is it in the budget, in his opinion? Would it have been better to introduce this proclamation in a separate bill?

Mr. Blake Richards: Mr. Speaker, what my colleague is talking about is not a priority for Quebecers or Canadians. I think that their priority is the economy and the need for life to become more affordable.

[English]

I just really believe that Quebecers and Canadians want to see politicians here in Parliament focused on how to make their lives more affordable and how to ensure that we grow better economies, so people have greater opportunities in the future to get into housing for the first time, as a first-time homebuyer, for example.

That is what people are looking for here. I may agree with her somewhat that a budget is probably not the right place for something like that. I also do not think it is the biggest priority facing Quebecers and Canadians to be worried about that. We should be focused on the economy and making sure that we are making life more affordable for Canadians.

The Deputy Speaker: I have not had to give this reminder in a while. Members should make sure to keep their questions and answers as concise as possible so that everybody can participate in the debate we are having.

Continuing debate, the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the hon. member who just inquired about the inclusion of the Royal Style and Titles Act in the bill will find my speech, which is on that very subject, to be helpful.

I thought I would start my remarks today by explaining, for the benefit of anyone who does not already know this, what an omnibus bill is and where such bills got their name. In the 19th century, the ancestors of today's diesel and electric municipal buses were horse-drawn coaches, typically with benches along both sides of the interior and sometimes with an exterior staircase to a further set of seats on the roof. They were typically crowded, uncomfortable and hot, and people with nothing in common were forced to sit or stand side by side and sometimes on each other's laps.

As a result of the endless comedic possibilities afforded by the numerous random and uncomfortably close encounters across otherwise impenetrable barriers of age, gender and social class that were created every day in the crowded interiors of rush-hour omnibuses, and even more on the overstuffed rooftop seats, omnibuses became a favourite subject for contemporary painters and cartoonists. Anyone who does a Google search for “omnibus” and “painting” will see what I mean.

It should come as no surprise, then, that when Victorians were searching for a word to describe enormous pieces of legislation that crammed many unrelated subjects into a single bill, the jostling and smelly omnibuses of their cities came to their minds. Today, more than a century has passed since the term “omnibus” has been replaced, at least when referring to means of transport, with the contraction “bus”, but the word “omnibus” survives, robust as ever, as a term for describing vast, multiheaded bills.

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To say that Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, is an omnibus bill is to make an understatement. The bill is 681 clauses long, and if printed it runs to hundreds of pages. It is a bill that would make Marcel Proust green with envy. It is to legislation what Wagner's Ring cycle is to opera and what Gormenghast castle is to domestic architecture. It is what the SS *Great Eastern* was to shipping when it was launched in 1858: six times larger than any other vessel then afloat, and propelled forward by a bizarre combination of propeller, sails and two colossal paddle wheels.

Lost in the middle of this vast, ramshackle legislative edifice is clause 510, which would enact the royal style and titles act, 2023. It reads as follows:

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.

This provision really ought to have been enacted on its own as a stand-alone bill, as it involves no expenditure of public funds and therefore truly has no relationship whatsoever to the budget. If it had been enacted in such a manner, the debates in this place would have provided a record of the government's rationale for the royal style and titles act, 2023. The responses of the various opposition parties would have provided some useful feedback as to how the rest of us feel. However, since that is not to be, I thought I would make a few comments outlining my own observations on this matter.

The first thing to note is His Majesty's current title, which would be changed by this enactment. Currently, the king is titled "Charles the Third, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom, Canada and His other Realms and Territories King, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith". The new, shorter title would eliminate the reference to the United Kingdom and would remove the title "Defender of the Faith".

I note that the current title was adopted in 1953 by the Parliament of Canada shortly after the accession to the throne of Her late Majesty, our much-loved Queen Elizabeth II. At the time, the goal was to have a title as close as possible to the one in use in the U.K. With that goal in mind, titles similar to the one that is still in use in Canada were adopted by parliaments throughout the Commonwealth. However, since that time, most Commonwealth realms have chosen to drop the reference to the United Kingdom and to eliminate the title "Defender of the Faith".

In Australia, for example, the King is "King Charles the Third, by Grace of God King of Australia and his other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth". To take another country whose name starts with "A", in Antigua and Barbuda he is "Charles the Third, by the Grace of God, King of Antigua and Barbuda and of His other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth". In Australia, this style dates to 1973. In Antigua and Barbuda, the title dates to 1982. In the Solomon Islands, the title was altered to something similar in 2013, and so on. Similar titles are used in over a dozen other independent Commonwealth countries.

• (1945)

Canada is merely bringing its title into conformity with the ones used in most of the other Commonwealth realms. In doing so, I think we keep with the spirit of the 1952 Commonwealth heads of government conference, at which assembled prime ministers agreed that there should be a non-binding but sincere effort to maintain a relatively uniform style for the monarch's titles in each of the different realms.

In Australia in 1973, the goal of removing the reference to the United Kingdom was to make it clear that the Queen's role as monarch was no longer simply a historical artifact of that country's colonial past and was most certainly not due to Australia retaining a subordinate relationship to Britain. Rather, her constitutional role was a consequence of her direct relationship with the Australian people, a relationship that was confirmed in a referendum 26 years later, when a majority of Australians in every one of the country's six states voted against becoming a republic.

This seems like a reasonable goal for Canada as well. Constitutionally speaking, we would remain a monarchy even if Britain chose to become a republic, and it is odd that our head of state does not have a title that reflects this reality. As a historical side note, it is worth observing that in the 1650s, when England did briefly become a republic under Oliver Cromwell, Newfoundland, which was then the only part of Canada under British rule, refused to abandon the Crown. David Kirke, Newfoundland's proprietary governor, was captured by a force sent from the American colonies and was forcibly repatriated to England, where he died in prison for his monarchist sentiments.

Now let me turn to the subject of the title "Defender of the Faith".

Famously, this title was given to King Henry VIII by Pope Leo X in 1521 in honour of the king's defence of the seven sacraments against the challenge that had been made four years earlier, when Martin Luther had published his 95 theses. A few years later, Henry too broke with the pope when he was unable to obtain a divorce, but he kept the title.

"Defender of the Faith" is a title that might be viewed by some people as being appropriate for the U.K., where the King is the nominal head of the established church, but there is no established church in Canada. Thanks to the efforts of two generations of pre-Confederation reformers, the last traces of an established church in this country were abolished by an act of the Parliament of the Province of Canada in 1854. From 1854 onward, even though our successive kings and queens have retained the title "Defender of the Faith", it is solely because we were using the same titles used in the United Kingdom.

Ninety-nine years after the abolition of the established church, in 1953, the title was then adopted by statute for reasons I have already discussed. However, "Defender of the Faith" was by then an anachronism, and it was already controversial. Its departure from the King's title is welcome.

I note that the King himself is not enamoured of this title. The title "Defender of the Faith" implies a kind of religious uniformity that is out of step with our times. Frankly, state-sponsored religious uniformity was pretty undesirable in King Henry VIII's time too when viewed from our vantage point. In the 1500s, dissenting Christians were persecuted across Europe, the Inquisition was burning heretics at the stake in Spain and Jews were banned from living in England. In today's world, where the U.K., just as much as Canada, is home to robust communities of Muslims, Jews, Sikhs and Buddhists, there is no such thing as "the faith". It is worth noting that the current British Prime Minister is a Hindu.

It is for this reason that when he was still Prince of Wales, His Majesty speculated that a better title would be "Defender of Faith", and I can also see merit in the title "Defender of all Faiths". However, newfangled and novel titles would be inappropriate to include in a statute that is stuffed into a vast omnibus bill, with little opportunity for the kind of public discussion that would be needed to establish their legitimacy. Simply dropping the title seems the best solution of all.

My conclusion, therefore, is this: I will be voting against Bill C-47, but I do support the Royal Style and Titles Act, in clause 510.

• (1950)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for that riveting history around clause 510 in the budget implementation act. I appreciated learning more information about that.

I was reflecting, when the member was sharing his speech, on some of the things he was not talking about. I am wondering if the member could talk about the important work of ensuring that the ultrarich and banks are paying what they owe. Currently, thanks to the work of the NDP, we are seeing in the budget the alternative minimum tax rate increasing from 15% to 20.5%, which would recoup over \$3 billion in five years.

I am wondering if the member supports this work and why we never hear from the Conservatives about the importance of having the ultrarich and large corporations paying what they owe so that money can go where we need it most.

Mr. Scott Reid: I have to confess, Mr. Speaker, that I had come prepared to talk about the Royal Style and Titles Act, not about some of the other aspects of the budget bill.

I will make the general observation that in Canada, we do have a problem with too much taxation, not too little. I recognize the member's point that she feels this is frequently inequitable, and while I might disagree with her on some specifics, it is a good point that in Canada the welfare state increasingly is focused on taxing all of us, but very inequitably frequently, and then transferring that money to those who are politically connected and who are in a position to receive benefits from government funds. Therefore, in fact, it is not a distribution from the wealthy to the less wealthy, as it ought to be. On that point, the NDP, like its CCF predecessor, has a good general point.

On the specific questions she asked, I am less capable of giving an informed answer.

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• (1955)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the scholarly history lesson. I have enjoyed a lot of the speeches tonight. They have been quite wide-ranging. I heard a bootstrap argument about the agency to make more decisions about one's own economic future. I agree with that. However, I would note that it came from a member who would like for women to have fewer choices about their own reproductive futures. I also heard a comparison saying that \$467 in support would never do anything to help a Canadian family but \$330 was an extraordinary burden. There has been some difficulty on math.

I know that the member did not touch on carbon pricing tonight, but he did mention taxation. He said there is too much tax in Canada. I observed that in the last election, he, like all 338 MPs and candidates, ran on a carbon pricing scheme in one form or another. Oftentimes, people point to Brian Mulroney's ability to abate acid rain. I would point out that the Conservatives did that with cap and trade and a ban on burning certain types of coal. These are the types of advancements that come from really good government programs.

I will ask a question directly about the member's previous commitment to run on a carbon price. Where does he stand now on carbon pricing?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I, of course, came intending to talk about the Royal Style and Titles Act, and I was hoping for a question that would relate to that, but let me try answering this question, seeing as it was raised.

Speaking of having promised one thing and then going in a different direction, I cannot help but note that one of the most effective ways of capturing carbon is through reforestation. Of course, trees are composed largely of carbon. Wood is carbon. I cannot remember if it was in the last election or the one before, but the Prime Minister promised to plant two billion trees. He has produced less than one-tenth of 1% of that promise, despite the fact that a number of years have gone by.

If we are looking for concrete action to make this planet a greener place, a less carbon-intensive place, he is not setting a very good example.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am having a hard time getting a clear picture. We are currently looking at Bill C-47 and the member is talking about clause 510. His party seems to want to delete it as an anti-monarchy gesture, but he seems to be in favour of this clause. I am having a hard time wrapping my head around the proposal being made on this monarchy issue.

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Again, I see that there is a divide and a disconnect between the Liberal and Conservative members, who talk about the monarchy, and us, who simply want to abolish it. When we talk about the monarchy it is to say that it is archaic and costs the government money. To us, the issue of seniors calling for an increase in old age security is a priority. Also, we are short on housing and we need EI reform to take care of people who lose their job in a period of economic uncertainty. Again, I am feeling the difference between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I will simply say that the presidencies of republics like the United States and France are not without cost. It is very expensive to have a big building like the Élysée Palace in Paris for the President. He is not a king, but there is a real cost.

The same thing goes for the White House in the U.S. and all the other trappings that go with the presidency.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise to speak to Bill C-47 at report stage.

I want to share some reflections, particularly about the process the bill has undergone in its journey in the House of Commons and some of the debate that has arisen today on the subject of the bill. I apologize that the thoughts are not in any particular order, but there are some things that are nevertheless worth noting about the bill.

If you were to listen to the debate today and you were a Canadian who had not studied the bill, you might be under the impression that the recent increase in the carbon tax is somehow in this bill. It is important to say that it is not. There has been a fair bit of confusion around that, given the focus of the debate.

You might also think that a lot of the major spending items the government committed to in its budget are in this bill, or you might even think that this bill is the budget itself, given the nature of some of the conversation that has been had around the bill.

It is important to distinguish between the budget itself, which was already debated and voted on in this House some time ago, and budget implementation bills, which do not always legislate commitments from the most recent budget. In fact, sometimes they go back to previous budgets, but effectively, when the government is ready to move on some previous budget commitments and there is legislative work that needs doing, this is what we see in the budget implementation bills. There are some items from the most recent budget in this bill. There are some items from previous budgets in this bill.

One of the things that is important to emphasize is that as far as spending authority goes—that is, this bill giving permission to government to spend taxpayer money—there is not anywhere near the level of spending in this bill that some have said there is. For instance, even in respect of the dental program, this bill does not authorize the money for the dental program. It does have some legislative measures to facilitate the program, ultimately, once it is ready to be operationalized, like better sharing of information between government departments so that they can ensure people who are making claims under the program are properly eligible.

In other words, there are some provisions designed to ensure eligibility up front and to move away from the attestation system, which is something Conservatives have said they do not like, and that there should be upfront checks of eligibility so people do not mistakenly receive benefits that then need to be clawed back. That is something this legislation seeks to do.

This legislation would reduce the excise tax increase that was going to be 6.3%, because it was tied to inflation through an automatic escalator, down to 2%. That is not a spending item. It is a reduction of government revenue, because it reduces a tax. It reduces a tax that Conservatives said they wanted to see reduced and takes on a tax increase that they thought was inappropriate in the circumstances. We agreed with that as New Democrats and we are glad to see that small brewers and small vineyards across Canada that are facing difficult times are not going to be hit with an outsized increase in the excise tax. However, that is only true if this legislation passes.

This legislation would also close a lot of loopholes in tax law and other law that is used by money launderers in order to avoid paying taxes and to mask their criminal activity. This bill would crack down on predatory lenders or payday loan places that are charging really inordinate amounts of interest. Canadians do not typically choose a payday loan centre as their first choice for banking. It is usually because they do not have a lot of options, and that is how they get there.

Somebody shared with me a statistic, and it was something like Canadians are 40% more likely to end up declaring bankruptcy if they just walk in the door of a payday loan place. There is clearly a close connection between payday lending and people on the financial margins. This bill seeks to do something about that by lowering the criminal rate of interest.

● (2000)

It also improves the Canada workers benefit, something that a colleague of mine on the finance committee likes to talk a lot about, which is the marginal effective tax rate for working-class Canadians and how it disincentivizes people to leave social assistance for work. That is his claim. He likes to reference the C.D. Howe Institute report to that effect. In fact, the changes to the Canada workers benefit would help reduce that marginal effective tax rate and make the transition from social assistance to employment easier.

The legislation also removes Russia and Belarus from a list of countries that get preferential tariffs for trading in Canada. In other words, it extends and strengthens sanctions that Canada has put in place since Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. These are the things that are being held up. They are not being held up because there is another huge spend that goes along with them.

In fact, the biggest spending items in this bill were the doubling of the GST tax credit and \$2 billion in health transfers to the provinces that was negotiated between the federal government and the provinces. That was by far the biggest direct spend in this legislation. With the consent and participation of the Conservatives, all parties in this House expedited another bill, Bill C-46, that had those spending items in it. There are now some coordinating amendments in this legislation to make sure we do not do the same thing twice.

The fact of the matter is that the biggest spending items, with the full participation and knowledge of the Conservatives, have already passed through the House of Commons. What is left are a number of administrative changes to set up the administrative infrastructure for the growth fund and some legal changes to facilitate the administration of a dental care program. This is not actually where the money is being authorized.

We would think that a former finance critic, which the leader of the Conservative Party is, would know that. We would think that the current finance critic might know that. Perhaps the finance critic for the Conservatives might have known that if he had bothered to show up much at committee during the Bill C-47 process, but apparently he had other things to do. He left it to other members of his caucus to hold down the fort while the finance committee was studying Bill C-47 to the extent that it did.

Of course, we did not do as much extensive study of that bill as I would have liked, because Conservatives chose to talk out the time we had. First they talked out the time we had for hearing witnesses. They did that in the lead-up to the Minister of Finance's appearance.

Was it on a grand principle? I am not sure. Did they have an important point? I think so. It is one that I supported on the record many times. I thought the minister should have committed to come for two hours. As it was, she came for an hour and 40 minutes, but she told us she would only come for an hour. I do not think that was helpful to the process. I think more forewarning by the minister about how long she was actually prepared to appear would have been more helpful.

In the end, it meant that the Conservatives chose to talk over all of the time that we would have had to hear from Canadians who are concerned and from stakeholders who represent various concerns.

Then there was an agreement at the committee to have a process to move to clause-by-clause study. It would have allowed us some time to debate the clauses and various amendments and subamendments. Instead, Conservatives chose to talk through that time as well. Then they said that they wanted to hear from witnesses after talking through all the time we had for witnesses. They say the agreement they signed on to with the Liberals to do clause-by-clause study provided for another 10 hours of witness testimony that they never got.

Did they raise it when we still had three or four days to hear from more witnesses and come to an understanding? No, they raised it afterward. All the time to hear from witnesses had elapsed, so they knew when they raised the issue that there was not going to be a

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positive outcome and that they were not going to get what they wanted, and then they repeated this kind of behaviour in the House.

• (2005)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the speech from my colleague from the New Democratic Party.

For most of the evening, we have been hearing some pretty fanciful stuff with respect to climate change and the efforts by previous prime minister Brian Mulroney to abate acid rain, which was historic and so important. However, the way that this former prime minister worked to deal with the issues of the time have been stretched a little bit. Of course, he and the president of the day, George Bush, used things like cap and trade and changes in products used to produce electricity.

I note that my colleague's home province is Manitoba, which generates almost all of its electricity through renewable resources like hydro and wind. Most of the members who are so against carbon pricing are from provinces that still generate a lot of their electricity from coal and natural gas, like Saskatchewan and Alberta. Currently over 80% of the power from those provinces is from fossil fuels.

Perhaps the member from the NDP could comment on how carbon pricing is an effective measure to move provinces toward using renewable resources to generate electricity.

• (2010)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I certainly think that carbon pricing is one piece of the puzzle. It is meant to be a kind of market tool.

Putting a price on carbon gives companies an incentive to come up with more ways to try to get carbon out of their supply chains so that they can offer a more competitive price. Folks will be more likely to buy those cheaper products, so companies that have a lower carbon supply chain are rewarded. That is the idea. It was not originally a left-wing idea; it was a kind of right-wing idea, designed by folks who are on the political right but who nevertheless accept the reality of climate change.

I would remind my Conservative colleagues that the oil and gas industry in Alberta was built with a lot of public funds and a lot of upfront public investment. In fact, a lot of public investment continues to go to the industry, which is why we know that if we want to shift the economy somewhere else, that too will require a lot of public investment.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I had a lot to say about the previous speech on royal titles, but I will focus on the subject matter of the speech that was just given.

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In terms of this issue of carbon taxes being a market mechanism or whether it is a market thing or not, I think the important point is that of course they involve the possibility of incentives and training and they recognize those realities, but fundamentally they are taxes that require Canadians to pay more. They are intentionally driving up the price of gas and the commodities that have gas as an input, making those things more expensive in an effort to incentivize changes in behaviour. The fact that the carbon tax increases prices for Canadians is not a bug; that is actually the intention of the policy.

I wonder if the member would just acknowledge that in his and the NDP's support of this policy, they are seeking to promote the increase in gas prices, that they want higher gas prices and that this is why they support a carbon tax.

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I would note that New Democrats are quite firm in our belief that as we look at the record profits that oil and gas companies have been enjoying, we do not think that oil and gas companies should be able to walk away with that money and pay it out in dividends to their shareholders or squirrel it away in international tax havens, but that instead there should be an appropriate tax applied to oil and gas companies.

We, of course, have also been open to the idea of having some kind of a public utility board that would regulate the price of oil and gas. We recognize that long before the carbon tax, a long weekend was enough reason for oil and gas companies to jack up the price of oil and gas. We think that Canadians ought to be just as concerned about the advantage that those companies are taking of Canadians in their basic pricing structure; never mind what is added in tax.

There is a larger conversation to be had about how we get fair pricing for oil and gas. I think that the Conservatives' kind of monolithic focus on the carbon tax obscures a lot of ways that Canadians are getting screwed at the pump by oil and gas companies themselves in order to outsize their profits.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to speak to Bill C-47, the budget implementation act, this evening.

Canadians are facing a cost of living crisis; there is no doubt about that. Food, housing and fuel are all costing more these days. The more the Prime Minister spends, the more everything costs. Of course, even his finance minister has pronounced that the spending has driven inflation up. At a time when Canadians are already feeling the pressure of inflation on their personal finances, the Liberals' budget is adding \$67 billion in new inflationary spending. These inflationary deficits are contributing to record-high food, housing and fuel costs, and I will briefly touch on the situation of each of these items.

The cost of food is at record levels. "Canada's Food Price Report 2023" predicts that a family of four will spend up to \$1,065 more on food this year. That puts food-price inflation at a 40-year high, with costs pushing 20% of Canadians to skip meals because they cannot afford to eat. This is why the use of food banks has increased so dramatically. One in five Canadians says that they will likely need to get meals from a food bank this year; in fact, perhaps it will be longer than that in the future.

Some of the federal spending that has contributed to this inflation was the spending that took place during COVID. There was \$500 billion that was spent or budgeted by the government and put into the hands of Canadians and out into the economy. Much of that was needed for things like housing, putting food on the table and keeping warm in our cold climate, but the independent Parliamentary Budget Officer came out and said that 40% of that, or \$200 billion of the \$500 billion, had nothing to do with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Therefore, 1.5 million Canadians are eating at food banks and one in five is skipping breakfast, lunch or dinner, because they cannot afford the cost of food. High home prices have left nine out of 10 young people who do not own a home believing that they will never own a home, and it is not just teens or people in their early twenties but many who are much older than that. The down payment needed to buy a house has doubled from \$22,000 to \$45,000. Mortgage payments for a new house doubled from \$1,400 a month to over \$3,100. If high interest rates and inflation continue, by 2026, Canadians may end up paying an additional \$30,000 to \$40,000 in interest per year on their mortgages.

Then there are the high fuel costs, which are made worse by the Liberal carbon taxes. There is not just one carbon tax; now, there are two. With the Prime Minister bringing in a second, hidden carbon tax, the cost of gas, groceries and home heating will only continue to climb. The first carbon tax did not succeed in reducing emissions. The second one will not either, but it will still make life more expensive. The independent Parliamentary Budget Officer has indicated that the second carbon tax will cost the average Canadian household an extra \$573 a year without any rebate. Families in some provinces will face costs as high as \$1,517. Combined, these two carbon taxes will cost some Canadian families up to \$4,000 each year. This is an extra 61¢ for every litre of gasoline, with 37¢ a litre from the first carbon tax, 17¢ per litre from the second and another 7¢ accounting for the sales tax applied to the carbon tax.

• (2015)

In Manitoba, the second Liberal carbon tax will cost the average household an additional \$611 a year, bringing the full cost of the two carbon taxes to \$2,101 by 2030. That is asking a lot from Manitoba families at a time when costs are already skyrocketing. It should not come as a surprise that the Parliamentary Budget Officer confirmed that this tax will shrink our economy. Families should not be left to struggle under the weight of the reckless Liberal approach, particularly after the pandemic that they have just been faced with.

That is why Conservatives are fighting to make life more affordable for families and pressing for two key things. First, the Prime Minister must give us a plan to end the inflationary deficits and spending and to bring down inflation and interest rates. Second, the Prime Minister must cancel his carbon tax hikes. Canadians are struggling, and acting on these proposals could help bring real relief to those struggling to make ends meet.

I have a parallel that I just want to refer to. When I was in the Manitoba legislature, we went through the years of Mr. Doer from 2000 to 2009, when he left. They were probably the best economic years in Manitoba's history. Mr. Selinger took over as premier from then until 2015, and those were very high-spending years. The province increased the provincial sales tax again. It increased the tax by 1%, but the province was debating whether it should be 2%.

Today, the Prime Minister's spending provides a great parallel to what happened in Manitoba, with the most high-spending NDP premier we ever had. This means that, today, we have the most high-spending Prime Minister we have ever had. Therefore, I would say we have already elected the first New Democratic prime minister in Canadian history, and he is the member for Papineau; it is ironic that he is in a coalition with the NDP to do it.

In order to deliver results for Canadians, Conservatives are bringing forward many amendments to the budget bill, and I hope all parties will recognize the importance of supporting these amendments to support all of our fellow Canadians who are struggling right now. The reality is that Canada's federal debt for the 2023-24 fiscal year is predicted to reach \$1.22 trillion, as some of my colleagues have already said today. That is almost \$81,000 for every household in Canada. The Prime Minister has added more debt than all the other prime ministers combined and has no plan to balance the budget or to control his inflationary deficits, which are driving up the cost of the goods we buy and the interest we pay.

There are consequences to the government's actions, and we are seeing them now, as inflation erodes the spending power of our families, friends and neighbours. Conservatives have advocated for a plan to make Canada work for the people who work. Their paycheques should not be diminished because of their government's inflationary spending. Nobody wants to spend more and get less, but that is what inflation does. Instead, people's hard work should pay off. Every dollar they earn should be able to cover the costs of their everyday needs and, as often as possible, the extra things they enjoy, such as a weekend away, a night with friends or just something special for the kids.

One's ability to buy a home should not be diminished because of the government's inflationary spending. The Liberals' one-size-fits-all plan for mortgage development does not work in every area of Canada. Home ownership should not be only for the wealthy, but the way prices are going under the current government, it is hard for many who want to enter the housing market to make their dream a reality. By removing the government gatekeepers to free up land and speed up building permits, the government could have made a real difference in the lives of those who are looking to own a home.

I want to switch gears for a moment to talk about another important theme, and that is public safety. Again, in the budget, the Lib-

eral government has failed to lay out a meaningful plan to respond to public safety issues in Canada. We are facing a 32% rise in violent crime since 2015. As my colleague, the member for Kildonan—St. Paul, has appropriately noted, 32% is not just a number. It represents 124,000 more very serious violent crime incidents that have impacted innocent Canadians across the country.

We want to bring home a nation that works for the people who do the work, bring home lower prices and powerful paycheques, and bring homes that people can afford. That is what we stand for on this side of the House, and we will keep fighting for that.

● (2020)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to repeat a question that I posed a little bit earlier, which was artfully dodged by the respondent.

Yes, there is a price on pollution, and it has added to the price of gasoline at the pump. However, in spite of all that, the oil companies have racked up an impressive \$38.3 billion in profits, all coming straight out of the pockets of Canadians, straight off their after-tax income.

Would the member not agree that if he is talking about inflation, and if we know that food and big oil are the largest contributors to inflation, their profits are really the issue here, not anything that the government has done?

● (2025)

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, my colleague could not be more wrong. That is the most ridiculous statement I have ever heard in the House, or one of them.

Particularly, he is saying that farmers are the cause of food going up. The government has put the carbon tax on all the inputs for all the industries in Canada.

The profits that he is talking about are coming right out of the pockets of the individuals that he is trying to say are saving the country. They are building the food, trying to keep crime down and providing industries with jobs. These are the companies that are providing jobs in Canada. They are also the ones that have to bear the government's taxation, and they are the ones that provide the government with billions and billions of tax dollars.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I have read the budget implementation act, and I see that there is going to be, in the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act, a Canada health transfer. The Province of Manitoba will get a substantial amount if this bill passes.

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Manitoba was making cuts to health care services earlier this year. Could the member describe to his constituents what is wrong with the Canada health transfer and the substantial increase that the Province of Manitoba will get so that it can deliver health care services?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I commend my colleague for raising that very good question. It is one that I did not get to in my speech.

The costs of health care, of course, have gone up dramatically, as well, over these years. One thing I know from my 14 years in the Manitoba legislature is that the former premier of Manitoba, Mr. Doer, in about 2006, indicated that the Liberal government cuts to health care from the federal government to all provinces in Canada were huge. However, in Manitoba, they amounted to \$252 million in 1995 dollars.

If one extrapolates that to today's money, 28 years later, one can see the damage of the cuts made in those early days by the Liberal government. They decimated health care across the whole country of Canada and left all these provinces with a huge drain on their financial budgets. The government basically off-loaded huge percentages of support for hospitals and nurses and doctors in all our provinces.

I would say that the transfers are more important than ever in health care. However, it is certainly a detriment to the province's abilities to be able to maintain and increase the services we have.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to push back on the hon. member's earlier interaction with the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells. Conservatives like to be oblivious to the fact that, since 2019, oil and gas companies have seen their net profits go up by over 1000%. To suggest that this has absolutely no role in driving inflation for consumers, when everything that families depend on is driven by trains or trucks, which rely on diesel fuel, is being completely oblivious to the elephant in the room.

Surely, my colleague could offer some commentary on the gross profiteering that is happening on the backs of constituents like his and like mine, right across Canada. Why do Conservatives continue to ignore this, to the detriment of all Canadians?

Mr. Larry Maguire: Mr. Speaker, there are several things one could say about my colleague's great question. One is that he knows in British Columbia there were something like 15 LNG projects that could have been built when the Prime Minister came into power, and not one of them has ever been completed. Those dollars could have been used for what natural resources have been used for in this country, and that is to build the coffers of the federal government to make those transfers in education and health care back to the provinces so that we can all have the same level of health care across the whole country.

The other thing is that the profits from those companies are being used to make those transfers, but the member knows full well that the government has stymied the development of those industries with Bill C-69. If we want to talk about percentages of profit increases, we are talking about \$40 barrels of oil a number of years ago that are now \$80 a barrel. There is a doubling right there. It is

very hard to compare percentages when we have a product that has doubled in price over the last five years.

● (2030)

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is another great night for democracy. It is always an honour to rise on behalf of Canada's number one riding, Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, and share a few words in the people's House of Commons.

In this year's budget, Conservatives asked for a couple of things, or three things to be exact: to bring home powerful paycheques, to bring home lower prices on homes and to build more homes that Canadians can afford.

Budget 2023 does none of these things. It fails to create the good-paying jobs Canadians need to keep up with the ever-rising cost of living. It fails to stop the government's reckless spending and punishing tax hikes, which are driving inflation, and it fails to deliver a real plan to address the housing supply crisis and ensure Canadians can find a safe and affordable place to call home. Further, it fails to address the labour shortages that are holding small businesses back. It fails to cut the mountains of red tape that have made Canada an unattractive place to do business, and it cuts away the fiscal anchor the finance minister so proudly touted in budget 2022, a declining debt-to-GDP ratio.

For these reasons, I will be joining my colleagues and voting against the budget.

On bringing home powerful paycheques, paycheques are not keeping up with the cost of living. I hear this from constituents every single day. Canada's inflation rate for April 2023 sat at 4.4%. Groceries are seeing some of the highest increases. In April, food prices rose 8.3% over the same month last year. "Canada's Food Price Report 2023" predicts the average family of four will spend \$1,065 more on food this year. All the government can offer Canadians is a grocery rebate that will not come close to covering the substantial increase to their most important expense every month. The average family of four will still be out \$598.

The Prime Minister's advice to Canadians who cannot keep up with this inflation is to just put big, important purchases on their credit cards. With the cost of a home reaching all-time highs, does the Prime Minister think Canadians should put their down payments on their credit cards too?

Budget 2023 doubles down on the failed \$70-billion national housing strategy. Since its implementation, we have seen a doubling of the cost of an average family home in this country.

Conservatives have a different plan. We are going to get municipal gatekeepers and nimbys out of the way. In fact, we are going to do what the provincial NDP government in British Columbia is doing and work with municipalities to incentivize them to get more homes built. We are going to tie infrastructure dollars to increased housing development, and we are going to sell off 15% of the federal government's buildings to be converted into affordable housing.

Turning to small businesses, the housing supply crisis is also preventing small businesses from attracting new workers, particularly in rural communities. Ashcroft and Lillooet in my riding have raised this repeatedly. On top of this, businesses struggle to bring in workers from abroad thanks to massive backlogs in our broken immigration system. In fact, just last week I had the pleasure of attending the B.C. Chamber of Commerce's 2023 AGM and conference, where it called upon the federal government, as one of its key policy planks, to address the immigration shortfalls.

A recent CFIB report highlighted that small business owners are working 54 hours a week on average, largely to make up for staffing shortages. Labour shortages have had a particular impact on small businesses in the hospitality and agricultural sectors, where 84% and 82% of owners report working more hours respectively.

On top of labour shortages, most businesses are having trouble simply staying afloat. Many took on large amounts of debt to survive the pandemic. However, they have yet to fully recover to 2019 levels and are drowning in debt payments. According to Restaurants Canada, there has been a 116% increase in bankruptcies among restaurants over the last year, and 51% are only breaking even or losing money every day.

● (2035)

Small businesses asked for no more carbon tax hikes, a reduction of the small business tax rate and action to address labour shortages. Instead, they got continued carbon tax hikes, no tax relief and no action to clear the immigration backlogs we face.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the Village of Lytton in my riding. We are coming up on the two-year anniversary on June 30, when Lytton was consumed by wildfire. Nearly two years later, the rebuild has yet to begin. Residents of Lytton have been unable to return home, and businesses have been unable to reopen their doors. Many businesses took out CEBA loans during the pandemic to stay afloat, but without the ability to reopen many are unable to repay them. With the deadline for repayment coming up this December, these businesses are running out of time and are desperate.

Earlier this week, I received a reply to one of my petitions in which the constituents of Lytton had pleaded with the government to give them some reprieve. We are only talking about a dozen businesses here. The government said no. It said no to the village that has been referenced in every conversation on climate change and every conversation on natural disasters. To the very people who want to be able to go back and rebuild the community, the government said no. Shame on it.

I will acknowledge the minister for Pacific economic development, who did follow through on some housing supports, but rental

housing was excluded from that as well. I really hope the government revises its program on housing grants to include rental housing moving forward.

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In British Columbia, we are also facing the opioid crisis. In 2016, an increase in the number of overdose deaths in B.C., particularly those linked to fentanyl, led the medical officer of health to declare a public health emergency in the province. In the seven years leading up to that declaration, 3,002 British Columbians lost their lives to a drug overdose, an average of about 430 a year. Since 2017, there have been 10,396 deaths from opioid overdoses, an average of more than 1,700 per year. At the federal level, more than \$6 billion has been spent since 2017, yet the crisis worsens. Conservatives are committed to turning hurt into hope for those battling addiction.

A few weeks ago, I hosted a number of people who have combatted addiction in their lives and overcome it. They talked about the need in the Fraser health region to put more money into detoxification beds. The Fraser health region, my health region in British Columbia, has the highest number of overdose deaths in this country. We only have eight detox beds. Moving forward we need to be in a position, and the Government of Canada needs to support a policy position, such that, if someone who is suffering from an opioid addiction feels that they can enter treatment, it is available on demand.

The number of people who die from opioids far surpasses the number of people who die from COVID-19. We spent hundreds of billions of dollars on COVID-19, yet not a fraction of that for the people who are suffering from opioid addiction. Canada must do better. British Columbia must do better. Our children and the parents of those who have lost a child are pleading with us to do better. We have not done well enough.

In conclusion, budget 2023 will not address the ever-increasing cost of living we are facing in British Columbia and across Canada. It will not create the good-paying jobs that Canadians need to keep up with the cost of inflation. It fails to address the number one issue in my riding, the rebuilding of Lytton, as well as the overdose crisis that is plaguing my province at an alarming rate.

We have so much work to do in the House and the Conservative Party, His Majesty's loyal opposition, is going to fight every day to make sure that Canadians see a future for themselves and their communities that is drug-free and where people have hope to live their best lives once again.

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• (2040)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I regret having to play fact check. First, on foreign direct investment, the five-year snapshot of the foreign direct investments in the last five years is upward of \$1,141 billion, so over \$1 trillion is an average. In the Harper years, it was almost half of that, \$617 billion over a five-year period per year. On foreign direct investment, there is really no comparing the federal Liberal government to the Conservative government. The Conservatives were just not able to attract the same level of investment.

Second, I am not sure why the member wants to compare COVID-19 to opioid deaths. However, more Canadians did die from COVID-19, tragically, than opioids. Opioids have consumed far too many lives in this country and we need to find solutions for both treatment and more safe supply. It is not a simple solution. It is complex.

Last, the member opposite lives in a province with carbon pricing, which has effectively demonstrated an ability to reduce carbon emissions. He ran on it in the last election. Will he stand up and tell his constituents that he no longer believes in carbon pricing?

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, let me address the first and third questions to begin with.

The reason we have so much foreign direct investment is because of LNG Canada. In fact, much of the manufacturing and investments we are seeing in western Canada are related to pipelines and natural gas development. The natural gas development, which was the largest private sector investment in the history of Canada put forward by the Liberal Prime Minister, was exempt from the carbon tax. That is the only reason Liberals built it. It was because they knew that with carbon tax, it did not make economic sense for that project to go ahead. The Prime Minister and the premier of British Columbia decided not to apply the highest carbon tax in our country when that project went forward.

When that project is completed in the next five years, we are going to have an exorbitant number of skilled workers in northern British Columbia who will not have another project to go to because under the government's Bill C-69 from the 2015 Parliament, barely any single natural resource development project has been approved. We have to get more natural resource projects approved to supply Asia with clean LNG from Canada that is going to reduce global emissions and fight climate change.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague has some complaints about the budget. Members of the official opposition do not like the budget, and neither do we. We think there are many things missing from this budget.

What are we going to do? We are going to respect Parliament and vote against the budget.

The Conservatives have been wrapping themselves in a cloak of virtue for some time, telling us that they have one, two, three or four conditions, that the carbon tax must be abolished, and so on. They are saying that as long as the government refuses to meet their

conditions, not only will they not vote for the budget, they will filibuster it.

Everyone knows that this is all for show, just to waste time, and that they will never vote in favour of the budget. All they are doing is wasting parliamentarians' time.

To prove my point, I wonder if my colleague can give me just one example of a single time in Canadian history when the official opposition ended up supporting a government's budget, in one way or another.

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I will not be making any excuses for the Conservative Party. We are here to stand up to the government in order to help Canadians maintain their ability to enjoy a high standard of living. We must oppose this budget because it is not good for Canada.

• (2045)

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I share the member's concern about the opioid crisis, as does everyone in this Parliament. I was pleased that he did not repeat some of the misguided falsehoods that his leader has been putting out there in the media when it comes to safe supply in the province. I am sure, as a British Columbian, he is familiar with the words of the chief coroner and the provincial health officer who have said there is no evidential basis for linking an increase in opioid deaths to the safe supply that we are seeing.

Where the member and I really strongly agree is the need for treatment programs, that one of the pillars of responding to the opioid and toxic drug crisis is having free treatment on demand. Would he support a federal fund directed to establishing those kinds of treatment centres in our province?

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes. We would support treatment on demand and that is one area where we see some collaboration between two parties in the House of Commons.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals pat themselves on the back for their 2023 budget, but they should not. It is a budget that, at the end of the day, will hurt Canadians, it is short-sighted, irresponsible and ultimately incompetent.

Members do not have to take my word for it. The former finance minister, Bill Morneau, said the Liberals' fiscal policy was about "scoring political points" over good policies, specifically financial ones. He said the Ministry of Finance recommendations were disregarded in "winning a popularity contest". Policies were made "on the fly". Some things do not seem to be changing. That is to be expected from a Prime Minister who told reporters that he did not concern himself with fiscal policy because budgets balance themselves. It is incomprehensible.

Can members imagine what would happen to a small business or a family where there is no concern about how much is spent and how much is made? It would lead to hard times for them. They would go deeper into debt, and possible foreclosure and bankruptcy. The Liberals do not seem to care. They have doubled down on national debt. The Liberals and the Prime Minister have more than doubled the national debt since coming into power.

Canadians might ask what difference it makes. It very much affects the lives of all Canadians. We can look to how much everything costs and how much smaller the packages are. Everything has gone up. A family of four will spend \$1,000 more after tax dollars on food alone. Even for those receiving rebates, they will spend many hundreds more on bread, fruit, vegetables and everything else.

The Liberals, when they saw the inflationary numbers and how they are impacting Canadians, said this was not good for them politically, so they raised interest rates by over 1,000% to cool things down.

What has that accomplished? Let us ask those who have been renewing their mortgages. It is thousands of dollars more per year just on mortgages because the interest rates were increased. I live in the greater Vancouver area. Homes cost \$1 million, \$2 million and up, and mortgages over \$600,000 are just the standard. The fiscal policies of the Liberals are putting a squeeze on taxpayers.

The standard of living for Canadians is deteriorating. Canada has been sliding in the rankings as far as wealth is concerned. In 2019, we were in 10th place. In the past three years, we have gone down to 14th and are sliding. If we compare that to Taiwan, Israel and Ireland that are equal to us or have surpassed us in their per capita incomes, they do not even have the resources we have. We are a wealthy nation, but our fiscal policy is destroying us.

The government is more interested in the redistribution of wealth, making us dependent on government and killing wealth creation through taxation and regulation. There is a word for that and it is socialism. The regulations, red tape and bureaucracy are killing us. It is fiscal foolishness.

I have a couple of examples. One is the TransCanada pipeline. Kinder Morgan projected it to cost \$6.7 billion. The Liberals got involved and the new cost for Canadian taxpayers is approaching \$40 billion. It is like the Liberals have written a blank cheque. There is no fiscal responsibility.

A local example in my riding is the Harris Road underpass. It is an agreement between the CPR, Transport Canada and the port authority. It was projected four years ago, with an agreement, to make this underpass for \$63 million. It has skyrocketed to \$200 million

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and the project is on the verge of collapsing because of cost increases. Less than half of that cost is for actual construction. The rest is for management, enabling and management contingency. The bureaucracy is killing us.

There is one thing where the prices have been driven down, and that is the cost of street drugs with Liberal drug policies by both the Liberals and the NDP. It is killing lives. The price of hard drugs has gone down 70% to 95%. People are getting addicted and they are dying.

• (2050)

We need a change of government to get some fiscal sanity.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 8:52 p.m., pursuant to an order made earlier today it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the report stage of the bill now before the House.

The question is on Motion No. 1. A vote on this motion will also apply to Motion No. 2.

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 invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote please.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 3. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 4 to 14.

[English]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, again, we would request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 15. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 16 to 111.

[English]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we request a recorded vote please.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 112. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion Nos. 113 to 121.

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 invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, again, I would request a recorded vote please.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 112 stands deferred.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 122. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 123 to 125.

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.

• (2055)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, again I request a recorded vote please.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on Motion No. 122 stands deferred.

[English]

The question is on Motion No. 126. A vote on this motion also applies to Motion Nos. 127 to 232.

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. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, no surprise, I request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 233. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 234 to 440.

[English]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

[Translation]

The question is on Motion No. 441. A vote on this motion also applies to Motions Nos. 442 to 455, 684 to 689 and 691 to 729.

[English]

If a member of a recognized party present in the House wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

The question is on Motion No. 730. A vote on the motion also applies to Motions Nos. 731 to 749 and 751 to 904.

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. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, we would request a recorded vote.

The Deputy Speaker: The recorded division on the motion stands deferred.

Normally at this time the House would proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded divisions at report stage of the bill. However, pursuant to order made Thursday, June 23, 2022, the recorded division will stand deferred until Wednesday, June 7, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

* * *

CANADA EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE ACT

The House resumed from May 31 consideration of Bill C-35, An Act respecting early learning and child care in Canada, as reported (with amendments) from the committee, and of the motions in Group No. 1.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is an honour to rise here to represent the great people of Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound and speak to a very important bill.

My first question is this: Why are we debating this today? I remind all MPs that funding agreements are already in place and have been signed by all provinces and territories. The money is already flowing, and I would argue, there is a multitude of other higher priority issues around affordability that we could be debating that have yet to be addressed by the current Liberal government. Further, I would point out that Bill C-35 is not a child care strategy. It is a headline marketing plan.

Again, we see the Liberals promising what they cannot deliver. Ten dollars-a-day day care does not address the labour shortage and the lack of spaces. I will guarantee today that, if and when this strategy fails and has not delivered affordable child care for all those in need across Canada in all jurisdictions, the Liberal government will blame the provinces and territories for that failure.

I point out that back in January, during question period, the government House leader had the audacity to call these current agreements universal, as have other Liberal members of Parliament. How can these Liberal MPs say this program is truly universal when the current child care space shortfall is in the hundreds of thousands. It is not universal if hundreds of thousands of Canadians do not have access to it.

We have seen over the past number of years how increasingly difficult it is for parents to obtain child care at all, let alone affordable child care. Therefore, I can appreciate the efforts behind the bill and the idea of actually forwarding or advancing an affordable child care plan. However, if the spaces are not there, it is still not going to work. I further note that this impacts so many families across my riding, but it disproportionately impacts women. The current reality in Canada, which has been exacerbated by the current government's inflammatory and inflationary spending, is that the cost of living has skyrocketed, making all of life's necessities unattainable by many families, as it appears now. In most cases, two parents are required to work just to scrape by.

I am going to focus on three key areas of the bill, based on feedback that I received from over 20 different day cares and child care centres across my riding. The first one, as was already mentioned, centres around the issue of accessing the programs, especially in rural Canada. Number two is the labour shortages, which is an issue that is prevalent across many sectors. Finally, there is the rising cost.

I know I may get a question from the government members about amendments. I would note that our Conservative colleagues, specifically the shadow minister, put forward many great amendments during debate at committee and at report stage and, unfortunately, every single one of them was defeated.

Let us get back to my first point around the issue of access, especially as it pertains to rural communities like Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound. I am not going to use my words. I am going to use the words of those from the child care centres in my riding when they were talking about this program.

They said that the demand for child care has seen huge increases. Every family wants access to a \$10-per-day child care space. However, they are confident in saying that they have children on their waiting list who will age out of their programs before a space becomes available. They continued that families cannot go to work if they do not have access to child care. Their local communities are suffering, and having no child care has a far-reaching impact on all rural communities.

Therefore, as I noted, the primary issue around this program is that, while the government can artificially lower some of the costs through its funding arrangements with the provinces, the demand is

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so great that many families will not be able to achieve or get access to those subsidized rates.

I will give one example about the limitations around this program. My brother and his wife both work for a living. One works for Bruce Power. My sister-in-law works in the health care system. They have to commute 30, 40 or 50 kilometres one way. They have two young kids, who are now in elementary school, but playing sports and trying to go everywhere. They did not have access to a program. They depended upon family members or local privatized child care opportunities to get the necessary support they needed.

● (2100)

The second point I want to address is labour shortages. For quite some time, all the child care centres in my riding have been raising the alarm over the issue of labour shortages. While the lower cost of child care would definitely help the families who are able to access the program, increasing the program itself is becoming out of reach due to staffing shortages. One centre in my riding offered that expansion is impossible without qualified staff. Early childhood educators are in very short supply. This child care program is very administration heavy. As well as the extra work needed in centres, there are numerous government employees being employed to monitor and manage the plan.

This program is hindered not only by labour shortages of child care educators, but also the bureaucratic burden that is being put on the program itself through the additional administration required to meet the compliance and ensure the standards.

Here is another key issue and one that I can relate to personally. It is the shrinking of the before and after school programs. What I got from my local YMCA is that workforce shortages have reduced the number of school-age programs operators can deliver, resulting in a lack of enrolment fees in school-age child care, i.e. before and after school care, and in addition to workforce shortages for this age group, there have also been program reductions as a result of ongoing school closures, the pivot to online learning and a greater population of parents working from home and managing before and after school care differently.

This is something that, as a single parent, I am concerned about. As this program develops, access to the before and after care for many single parents across my riding is going to be an issue because, again, of the lack of labour.

Another issue is the nature of the jobs themselves, which makes life much more difficult for the current employees when there is already a labour shortage. Another child care centre said that, not to mention, it is a very selfless and exhausting job, often without breaks. The burnout rate is high. It is a woman-dominated field, and the paradox is that is an essential service for parents to be able to re-enter the workforce with a young family.

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My final key point is around the rising operating costs. Many of these child care centres confirmed to me that the funding set out by the current child care program does not cover expenses, with many organizations in my riding stating that the funding afforded for the program does not cover current expenses. Their utilities, food and insurance have increased by double digit percentages, and every other cost has increased. Their compensation to cover these increases was under 3%, but the math does not add up. Funding rural and urban centres equally is not equitable. They are operating with huge deficits every month, and it cannot continue.

As I mentioned earlier, Conservatives have put forward common sense amendments at the committee to ensure program flexibility, so that the families and child care centres are not punished for adhering to an "Ottawa knows best" approach. Families in my riding are increasingly demanding better access to quality child care services that fit their schedules, and it appears as if the Liberals do not understand that they cannot simply lower the price of a service that does not exist.

In conclusion, affordable quality child care is critical, but if people cannot access it, it does not exist. Bill C-35 does nothing to address accessibility. All Canadian families should have access to affordable and quality child care, and should be able to choose child care providers that best suit their family needs. This is especially pertinent in rural Canada. Bill C-35 is good for families that already have a child care space, but it does not help the thousands of families on child care wait lists or the operators who do not have the staff or infrastructure to offer more spaces.

Finally, again, we see the Liberals promising what they cannot deliver. The \$10-a-day day care does not address the labour shortages and the lack of spaces.

• (2105)

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, I would like to thank my colleague for his comments.

As a matter of fact, the premier of Ontario and the Ontario government signed agreements with us, and this is in the member's own province. Since these agreements were signed, 33 licensed spaces have been created in Ontario, and there is a commitment for a build-out of another 53,000 spaces during the next few years.

Prior to these agreements, there were no new spaces. As we know, the former Conservative government ripped up previous agreements. Is the member suggesting that the Conservatives would not support Bill C-35 because they do not believe in building out a system that they had previously prevented from being built?

My question to the hon. member is this: Will the Conservatives be supporting Bill C-35?

• (2110)

Mr. Alex Ruff: Mr. Speaker, to be honest, I am still kind of on the fence. I opened my speech stating that I do not even understand why we are debating this. The agreements are already in place and the money is already flowing to the provinces and territories, and the Liberals have put time allocation on this bill. There is no reason

to use time allocation and limit a bill that we should be getting right.

I will go to the parliamentary secretary's comments. I think she said there were 35 new spaces, although I think she meant to say there are 35,000 new spaces already in existence, with a plan to open up 53,000 more in Ontario alone. I would like to know how many of those spaces exist in Conservative ridings or rural ridings across the province of Ontario.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, of course I am going to extol the merits of a universal early childhood education program, because Quebec has made that choice as part of our social programs. We made that choice 25 years ago as part of our family-centred policy. The objectives were to reduce contributions for parents, provide equal opportunities for children and encourage work-life balance.

Child care costs less than \$10 a day. It costs \$8.85 a day. Quebec is investing \$3 billion in its program.

I have a question. Agreements are already in place. I believe that Bill C-35 seeks to enshrine this program in law. Some say there is a shortage of spaces, but I would say that the provinces are responsible for that. What choices have the provinces made? What was there before?

The provinces will certainly have to make investments if they want to be successful. The federal government is coming in to support the delivery of services. It is a far cry from Quebec's model, which has more than 200,000 spaces. I would like to know what the situation was in each province before the implementation of this program. What has each province chosen? Are they choosing to move forward or are they choosing to maintain the status quo?

[English]

Mr. Alex Ruff: Mr. Speaker, that was a very interesting comment. We have to give credit to la belle province for being a leader in Canada when it comes to day care.

I do not disagree with the member. This is primarily a provincial jurisdiction issue. I would say the challenge with the agreements put in place by the federal government with the provinces and territories really comes down to the idea that it is almost setting different standards across this country, pitting provinces and territories against each other as they try to bid for a limited pot of money from the federal side. That goes to the second or third point I made on the rising costs and the fact that, as many day care centres have already identified, the sheer cost of this program is going to continue to increase.

Ultimately, I still do not think it is going to happen in a timely enough fashion to have these spaces right across the country. Then when the program starts failing, what is the government going to do? It is going to blame the provinces and territories.

● (2115)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is always an honour to rise and speak, and it is a great honour to rise and speak to Bill C-35. I am a mother who has been an advocate for affordable child care since the 1980s, and if I had to be in the House until midnight debating something, there is nothing more than this that I would rather debate.

I have been listening to people speak today, and a lot of the remarks have been read from a script. I would like to pay homage to my colleague, the leader of the Green Party, who often says we should be speaking without notes. As one can see, I am doing that because I could not recall the name of her riding.

What I want to talk about is what this bill is really about and what the opposition is saying about it. It is one thing to say we need to move forward and we need to work together. It is very easy to sit and criticize something that has been brought forward and to point out all the shortcomings, all the faults and all the things that are not being done without recognizing—

An hon. member: It's literally our job.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, it is funny. Someone across the aisle just said that is literally their job, but I actually do not believe that. I believe that as members of Parliament, we are all here to work together for the future of Canada and Canadians.

What we need to do is collaborate, and that is what this government has been doing with every province, territory and group to put in place the child care system we have been advocating for as women for over 50 years. Think about that. It is 50 years that we have been asking for this, and it is now coming to fruition. Rather than celebrating that fact, all we can do is criticize the shortcomings and act as though it was the fault of the legislation that certain things are not happening.

There are two basic things we hear often. I hear it in my communities, and according to what I have heard tonight and over the last few days, it is something we hear in many constituencies. There are two concerns among several. The cost of living and affordability are one and the second is the labour shortage. This bill, for all the perceived shortcomings that have been pointed out, addresses both of those of issues and addresses them well.

Child care costs some families \$50 a day depending on the age of the child. This bill would bring into place child care that will cost \$10 a day by 2026. I can guarantee that the young families in my riding I speak to, the parents, both men and women, are very grateful for the fact that their costs have already been cut in half and are looking forward to \$10-a-day child care.

This bill is addressing the affordability crisis. We hear constantly from members opposite that this is one of the biggest concerns they have. We are putting forward legislation that addresses it, yet all we hear is criticism.

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The other issue is the labour shortage. We have the example of early learning and child care and the good-quality program in the province of Quebec. In Canada, we are lucky because we have an example of what could happen to labour force participation, and in particular the participation of women in the labour force, when we have a reliable, affordable child care program.

Estimates have been provided by many private sector firms, although I will not name them, that show the return on this investment is between \$1.80 to \$2.50 for every dollar we spend. This is a viable economic proposition that is going to increase labour force participation and reduce the cost of living, yet all we hear is that it is not flexible enough and that there are not enough early childhood educators. Is this the fault of the legislation? No. It has been designed and implemented through work with provinces and territories, with bilateral agreements that the provinces have agreed to and wanted.

● (2120)

The shortage of early childhood educators existed before this legislation was introduced. If anything, increasing labour force participation is going to address the labour shortage. It is going to allow for more people to work as child care workers or anything else they want to work as, and it will help address this problem.

In some cases, I think the members opposite confuse causality and correlation. That is a very important concept. Just because something happens over a period of time does not mean it is caused by something during that period of time. We have to do significant regression analysis with multiple variables to figure out what is causing it. We hear accusations time and time again that under this government, something has happened, so it must be the fault of this government. That is not how it works. We have to look at what is actually causing things. We can look at the labour shortage, we can look at what is causing it and we can look at this bill and say the bill would address it.

We have been asked why we have to pass this bill now when the money is flowing. This is about ensuring that this program continues over time. We have had plenty of examples of good legislation being made, with good investments in Canadians, only to be overturned. We have heard several Conservative leaders say they would overturn this legislation, that this legislation is no good. For many young families in my riding, that would be a huge step backward. I believe that for all Canadians, that would be a huge step backward.

Government Orders

Parents today raising their families would have more choices. This bill would not limit flexibility in any way. It is up to the provinces and the child care providers. As we all know, and as the Bloc has repeatedly told us, this is not our territory. We can fund, we can provide leadership and we can provide vision, but it is up to the provinces and territories to implement this as they see fit. That is why we have individual agreements with each of them. The \$30 billion we are investing to help provinces and territories provide adequate child care for families over the next five years would create over 250,000 new spaces and ensure accessibility for all people.

As a member of Parliament, as a woman with two daughters and as a woman who has helped raised six children and has grandchildren, I do not want to leave my children and grandchildren with fewer choices. I want them to have more choices, and I believe that this bill, Bill C-35, would give more choices to people. I ask members to please look at the values behind this bill, look at supporting families, look at trying to bring down the cost of living and look at addressing labour force shortages. Vote with me, vote with the Liberal Party, vote with the young families in Canada that desperately need child care and need someone to take that first step.

It has been 50 years. Let us stop talking about what is not there and let us look at what we are doing for the future of our country.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is important to point out that we do want the same thing. We 100% want the same thing. What is upsetting is saying we should only look at what is great. That is not what we are here to do. We are here to figure out what is not working so that we can fix it. That is the whole point. When the Conservatives are criticizing and when we are elevating the concerns of thousands and thousands of parents, it is because 29% of families have access to spaces and 50% of children are in a child care desert. I think that warrants a legitimate criticism.

Alicia Bishop wrote to me. Alicia is a mother of four, an active member in her community, a former teacher, an owner of a child care facility and a proud female entrepreneur. She said, “I would like this to have very careful consideration. Introducing \$10-a-day fees to parents is an important step forward, but it must be made with very careful consideration, as it is critical that we get this right and not disrupt the private model that has been working so well in Alberta for decades. The bottom line is we need to maintain quality, innovation and incentive to make this work.”

Will the hon. member consider including private and all forms of child care so we can meet the demand the Liberals have created?

• (2125)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear that the member opposite and I want the same thing.

I did not say there was not concern regarding the lack of available child care; what I was trying to say is that we need to move forward, and the fact that we have other issues to deal with should not prevent us from moving forward with what we have in front of us now.

There are spaces being created; there are more than there were before. If the system in Alberta were as perfect as the member opposite says it is, then Alberta could decline to participate in this

program. It does not have to sign the bilateral agreement; it can keep the program it has right now.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. Indeed, having accessible and affordable day care is so important for families, and especially to mothers. We went through it in Quebec, we saw it. Quebec was a pioneer, a trailblazer, with its network of child care centres. That has provided immeasurable services to families.

The NDP is very proud to have worked on this bill to improve it. It was even a requirement of our agreement. We wanted to make sure there would be long-term funding for the provinces. My colleague from Winnipeg Centre even insisted that funding be given in priority to public day cares, as well as to non-profit day cares. I think it is a priority for us, as progressives. I would like my colleague to comment on this aspect of the bill.

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is an important one.

We are working with every province to sign agreements that work for those provinces. My belief is that with public day care, not-for-profit day care, there is no profit margin. It has to be more affordable when it is delivered. I would say that would be the first priority.

I believe that what is most important right now is to get as much day care as possible out there for all families, not just for women and mothers, as there are families that have two fathers, or are single-father households, as we heard across the aisle. This would benefit all Canadians, not just women and mothers.

I am certainly in support of what the member is asking.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government is not shy. It used Quebec's model when introducing this program. Many witnesses came from Quebec.

It bothers me when people just call it child care. In Quebec, we use the term early childhood education services. These services are not just there so that women can go back to work, even though women make an important contribution to the labour market. These services are also there to give children equal opportunities.

Given that Quebec is a leader in this area and the federal government was guided by our model, which is a good thing, why did the government flat out refuse to acknowledge Quebec's leadership in the bill's preamble and consequently give us a lifetime exemption from this bill?

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raised a very good point, which is that this is not just about affordability and workforce participation; it is also about giving our children a great start in life. I think the Quebec model has exemplified that through the early learning component, which is certainly something we are trying to replicate through this bill, so I give full credit for that. I believe we have often referenced what the province of Quebec has done as a great example, but each province has its own unique needs. That is why we are negotiating bilateral agreements with each province and not taking a one-size-fits-all kind of approach.

• (2130)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, I am very pleased to appear this evening from my home riding in Nunavut. I am pleased to submit that the NDP supports passing Bill C-35. The NDP has, for a long time, fought for a national child care program that is enshrined in legislation.

Before I get to the main aspects of my speech, I highlight and thank the MP for Winnipeg Centre for her great work, the MP for London—Fanshawe for the work she did on Bill C-311 in the 43rd Parliament and Olivia Chow for her work, in the 40th Parliament, on Bill C-373.

New Democrats truly believe that every parent across Canada deserves access to affordable, high-quality child care wherever they live in Canada. That is why passing Bill C-35 is so important.

My intervention tonight will focus on three areas at this stage of the bill. First, I will speak to some of the content of the bill. Second, I will highlight the inclusion of international instruments in Bill C-35 and the importance of acknowledging indigenous laws in implementing these important instruments. Finally, I will address some of the disinformation that has been shared by other members in the House.

The content of Bill C-35 is important because it would set out a vision for the creation of a national early learning and child care system. It would ensure that there are principles that guide federal investments. These are important as they will show the willingness of this Parliament to invest in children, as they truly are the future and we must do what we can to keep it secured.

Bill C-35 would establish a national advisory council on early learning and child care. This is such an important measure to ensure that policy-making and advocacy would come from experts in the field. It is truly my hope that the composition of this council would include indigenous peoples in Canada.

It is great to hear at this stage that Bill C-35 has been improved in some areas through the work of the HUMA committee. One such area is the strengthening of reporting requirements, specifically in areas where the minister responsible must report to Parliament. Another is to recognize that working conditions affect the provision of

child care programs, and, as such, improvements were made regarding working conditions in this area.

International instruments and indigenous laws are also important. I turn now to the incredibly great work that my NDP colleague, the MP for Winnipeg Centre, was able to do in ensuring that indigenous rights are protected and that international instruments are included in Bill C-35. Specifically, I outline the important inclusion of recognizing the rights established in both the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These are meant to have Canada acknowledge Canada's international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Finally, I highlight the prominent place for indigenous peoples to have free, prior and informed consent on matters pertaining to children. With June being National Indigenous History Month, I take every opportunity I can to make interventions that include indigenous history. What implementing the international instruments could look like is recognizing the existence of indigenous laws surrounding the raising of children. For example, in Inuit laws, there are three areas of laws that govern Inuit. I thank Jarich Oosten, Frédéric Laugrand and Willem Rasing for editing the book entitled *Inuit Laws*. The content of this book is based on interviews with Inuit elders: Mariano Aupilaarjuk, Marie Tulimaaq, Akisu Joamie, Émile Imaruittuq and Lucassie Nutaraaluk. I honour their great knowledge and their sharing it for us to use. What a privilege it is to share these names in the House.

• (2135)

The laws described in this book are *piquajait*, *maligait* and *tirigusuusiit*. I describe the first two for this speech. As I stated earlier this month, these categories govern our behaviours and our relationships to each other and to wildlife and the environment.

Piquajait, translated into English, means “behaviours that must be done as directed by a person of authority”. An example is *piquajait* from parents to children. In today's society, *piquajait* can also be used by child care workers when they are taking care of children in day care settings.

Maligait is translated into English as “those that must be followed”. These differ from *piquajait* because they focus on the obligation to obey. A *maligait* in this system could be used to establish policies, regulations and instruments that could guide decision-making.

I look forward to learning, in my role as indigenous critic, more about indigenous laws held by first nations and Métis so that I may speak to them. Even better, it would be great to see more first nations, Métis and Inuit across Canada taking up the challenge of representing their peoples in the House. I encourage more indigenous people to consider running in the next federal election so we can continue to make laws that reflect our existence.

Government Orders

Finally, in addressing the disinformation that has been shared by other members in the House, I will talk about what has been shared mainly by Conservative members. I hope to remind Canadians of some of these issues. As I have outlined in my speech, Bill C-35 is not just about existing agreements; it is about much more than that. Conservatives have shared that Bill C-35 would not provide supports to parents to get access to child care. The Conservatives, at HUMA, introduced amendments to remove prioritization of non-profit and public child care. They argued that prioritizing these groups makes it unfair to for-profit child care businesses. This is entirely untrue. Prioritization is not elimination; prioritization is giving equity-seeking groups extra supports they have been excluded from for years. Including prioritization of non-profit and public child care would ensure that children get a more full spectrum of child care in Canada.

In support of these arguments, I highlight two testimonies that were shared at HUMA in studying Bill C-35. The first is from Pierre Fortin, an emeritus professor of economics, who said, "There is no way to escape the conclusion that private markets for child care have, unfortunately, been a quality failure. I'm saying 'unfortunately' because I have defended private market solutions throughout my career, but a fact is a fact." Second, I quote Morna Ballantyne, executive director of Child Care Now, who said, "Federal public funds should be directed to expanding the provision of high-quality early learning and child care, not to expanding opportunities to make private profit or to increasing the equity of privately held real estate and other business assets."

In conclusion, I am very excited to support Bill C-35. It gives me hope that children and parents will be better supported. With the passing of Bill C-35, decision-making would be founded on human rights and indigenous rights. Accountability and transparency would be monitored by a national council composed of experts from the field. This bill would indeed help ensure working conditions for child care workers.

Qujannamiik from Iqaluit. My thoughts are with the many Canadians experiencing the forest fires across Canada.

• (2140)

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear that the member and I share an interest in early childhood learning, but I have a question for her.

Together we visited a number of remote communities in Nunavut, places with only a few hundred people. How do we make early childhood learning work in those kinds of small communities, which abound all across this country?

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, that is a great question. I think that is why this legislation discusses the importance of non-profit organizations in ensuring that public child care is also a priority.

All of the communities in Nunavut have schools. Some of them have spaces for Aboriginal Head Start programs. There are many communities as well with buildings that we need to ensure will provide access. I think that with more investments in ensuring that infrastructure exists, we could make sure that this bill could work for Nunavummiut.

Ultimately, we will also need to make sure that child care centres are being built in Nunavut.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague is always very thoughtful, and I appreciate learning from her.

She did make a comment that I would like to correct on the record. I think it says it best about the difference between prioritizing and eliminating. I am going to read her a comment that Ms. Maggie Moser, director of the board of directors of the Ontario Association of Independent Childcare Centres, made at committee. She said:

Lower-income families were excluded from obtaining access to the CWELCC child care spots. Families who could already afford the fees of their centre were the ones who benefited from the rebates and discounts, while the rest were left behind on a long wait-list.

Does she recognize that the way the bill is currently written is actually hurting lower-income families?

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, I think that is a different type of program that she might be talking about, but it highlights the importance of Bill C-35 and why we need to nationalize child care. We need to ensure, as I have said, that those who have been excluded from accessing child care get the supports that they need.

I heard a Conservative member talking earlier about his family supporting each other in the area of child care. I question whether that member would have had that same level of support if all of their family members had been marginalized for decades, had been oppressed for decades and had been forced to experience genocide for decades. I question whether he would have had the same level of family supports that he needed to ensure child care for his family.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, by establishing an early childhood education system, we are helping women return to work and also to school. We are creating an ecosystem that supports the local economy and community support.

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say about that.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout: Uqagtittiji, I think there are absolutely different views about what women can choose to do or what they do not want to do. I think raising children is such a beautiful privilege and a wonderful honour to have. I was not ever really able to be a stay-at-home mom, so I always have tremendous respect for mothers or fathers, any parent, to choose to stay at home to invest in their children's early learning.

I think that what this bill does is really focus our efforts to ensure that we are investing in children so that we can have a better Canada.

• (2145)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Qu  b  cois supports the principle of Bill C-35 and will support the bill at third reading, even though it finds the bill to be ambiguous.

The bill does not comply with the distribution of powers set out in the Constitution, which clearly states that education and family policies are not under federal jurisdiction. Although the bill states that the provinces will be able to certify child care services and determine the applicable criteria, it also states that every government in Canada will have to comply with the principles set out in the multilateral early learning and child care framework.

This framework is full of good intentions and fine principles, but it is based on the federal government's supposed spending power, which Quebec does not consider legitimate or legal. One thing is clear: This bill was not tabled in the right Parliament.

I will first go into more detail about why we will nevertheless vote in favour of the bill. Then I will explain the Quebec exception and end my speech with an historical overview.

First, the bill excludes Quebec from this federalization of family policy for the next five years. In fact, the Government of Quebec will receive \$6 billion in compensation for opting out of this centralist policy. In that sense, the bill respects the will of Quebec not to have the government interfere in its jurisdictions, especially since Quebec is a pioneer in child care services and a model of success, to boot.

Nevertheless, unlike Bill C-303, the predecessor to this bill, the current version does not contain any wording on exempting Quebec. Indeed, Bill C-303 stated the following:

4. Recognizing the unique nature of the jurisdiction of the Government of Quebec with regard to the education and development of children in Quebec society, and notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Government of Quebec may choose to be exempted from the application of this Act and, notwithstanding any such decision, shall receive the full transfer payment that would otherwise be paid under section 5.

The agreement concluded with the Quebec government spans a period of five years. Enshrining Quebec's full right to opt out of this program would help avoid another dispute between Quebec and Ottawa in case the federal government ever wants to interfere in Quebec's jurisdictions as it does so well.

Passing this bill would also enable Quebec to recover significant amounts that could be used to reinforce its network and improve working conditions for workers in the sector.

By allowing Quebec to withdraw with full compensation, Bill C-35 takes into account these two opposing trends in federal-provincial relations. That sort of consideration is rare at the federal level.

Outside Quebec, Ottawa is seen as the guarantor of social progress, which results in a strong tendency towards centralization.

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Quebec rejects that type of interference. It would be interesting if Bill C-35 were consistent with the previous version in recognizing that the Quebec government's child care expertise is unique in North America. In fact, the international community acknowledged that in 2003.

The OECD, in its study of child care in Canada at the time, mentioned the following:

[It is] important to underline...The extraordinary advance made by Quebec, which has launched one of the most ambitious and interesting early education and care policies in North America...none of these provinces showed the same clarity of vision as Quebec in addressing the needs of young children and families....

In short, to come back to Bill C-35, public officials said that the bill was drafted with respect for the provincial and territorial jurisdictions and indigenous rights.

They also stated that the bill did not impose any conditions on other levels of government. That was the main concern of some provincial governments during the consultation process. Any provision seeking to ensure that the provinces shoulder their share of the agreement would be part of the individual bilateral agreements signed with each province and territory, agreements that must be renegotiated every five years, as I mentioned previously.

Here are some interesting figures to think about. Access to low-cost regulated child care could lead to the addition of 240,000 workers to the Canadian labour market and a 1.2% increase in the GDP over 20 years. In Quebec, the money would also serve to strengthen the existing network of early childhood education services, which is grappling with a shortage of teachers.

After the committee completed its work, it became clear that the demands of the Bloc Qu  b  cois and Quebec were not heard or respected.

• (2150)

Throughout the study, Quebec was cited as a model. It may not be perfect, but the Quebec model was cited on numerous occasions as being a model to emulate. However, at the amendment stage, when the time came to recognize Quebec's expertise in the bill, we saw the three other parties dismiss this reality out of hand. The same thing happened to our amendments giving Quebec the option of completely withdrawing from the federal program with full financial compensation. The only place the other members were even remotely willing to mention Quebec's expertise was the preamble, which is the only place where those words would ultimately have no concrete effect on the bill.

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Although Quebec does not get the option of completely withdrawing from this program with full compensation, an agreement to that effect had already been concluded between Ottawa and Quebec. Senior officials who worked on the bill also repeatedly stated, when questioned on the subject, that while nothing would prevent the federal government from imposing conditions as part of a future agreement, the bill had always been designed with the asymmetry of Quebec's reality compared to Canada's provinces in mind. The members of the Liberal government who spoke to the bill also mentioned several times that the Liberals intended to keep working with Quebec on this file. The current agreement also pleased Quebec since it did not interfere with any jurisdiction and gave the Quebec government total freedom to spend the money in whatever sectors it wanted.

Third, let us rewind to 2022, when Quebec celebrated 25 years of the family policy. On January 23, 1997, Quebec's family policy was unveiled by education minister Pauline Marois on behalf of the Parti Québécois government. It was a visionary policy that reflected the changing face of Quebec, including the increase in the number of single-parent and blended families, the growing presence of women in the workforce and the troubling rise in job insecurity.

This forward-thinking policy has allowed Quebecers to benefit from better work-life or school-life balance and more generous maternity leave and parental leave, and it has extended family assistance programs to self-employed workers or workers with atypical schedules.

This model is an asset. It is a source of pride for the entire Quebec nation, as studies show that every dollar invested in early childhood yields about \$1.75 in tax revenues, and that every dollar invested in health and in early childhood saves up to \$9 in social health and legal services. Early childhood education services have also been a giant step ahead for education in Quebec. They help improve children's chances of success and keep students from dropping out. They have a positive effect on early childhood development, help identify adaptive and learning difficulties early on, and ensure greater equality of opportunities for every young Quebecer, regardless of sex, ethnic origin or social class.

In conclusion, we also believe that a true family policy is the exclusive jurisdiction of the Quebec and provincial governments. Parental leave, income support and child care networks must be integrated into a coherent whole. In our opinion, to be efficient, this network and all these family policies must be the responsibility of the Government of Quebec alone. The Constitution clearly indicates that education and family policies are not under federal jurisdiction.

One last thing: As the Standing Committee on the Status of Women has noted in more than one report, including the report on intimate partner violence I spoke about earlier in connection with another bill, by providing quality day care that is affordable and accessible to all, we are providing women with an opportunity to fulfill their professional ambitions without compromising their family responsibilities.

What is more, this bill seeks to enhance day care services by providing a safe and protective environment for young children and especially for mothers who are seeking to escape intimate partner vio-

lence. What we in the Bloc Québécois are saying is, let us do this with respect for the expertise, but above all, for Quebec's jurisdiction. We will be voting in favour of the principle of Bill C-35.

I will end with an interesting economic fact. According to the work of Pierre Fortin, Luc Godbout and Suzie St-Cerny, between 1998 and 2015, with Quebec's child care services taking care of all these young children, mothers' labour force participation rate increased from 66% to 79%. We implemented this feminist measure. Yes, early childhood education is a feminist policy that made it possible for women to return to the labour market, to become emancipated and to provide equal opportunities for young children.

• (2155)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is not a feminist policy. It would increase taxes on women as well as on men, and it would subsidize particular choices and not others. It would create a fiscal pressure by subsidizing people who use particular kinds of child care arrangements, and it would offer no support to shift workers, those who choose to stay at home for periods of time with their children, those who are relying on grandparents or those who are making other kinds of choices. I think a genuinely feminist policy would not say there is one way to do child care; it would say that we should be giving more money and more resources back to parents and back to families, and supporting them in making their own choices, especially in this time when we are seeing more demand for flexible work, more work from home, more web-based work and more alternatives.

Why does the Bloc not support choice in child care that would give the broadest range of options to all families and that would let women, without the fiscal pressure to make one kind of choice or another, have the resources to make the kinds of choices they want with their own families?

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Madam Speaker, with all due respect to my colleague, this whole issue of early childhood education services is a choice made by Quebec and the provinces. Quebec has chosen this model. Furthermore, this model offers more and more spaces to accommodate non-standard schedules. I am seeing more and more early childhood education centres all around me that are taking women's non-standard schedules into account. It needs to be developed further, but it is happening.

I was talking about a feminist policy. I remember very well that, during the pandemic, when women were suffering at home and I was urgently studying the pandemic's disproportionate effects on women at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, we sometimes heard that women were faring better in Quebec. Why was that? It was because we had set up this service, which is designed not only to enable women to return to the workforce, but also to give very young children equal opportunities. This means greater social justice. I believe in these principles. In that sense, yes, this policy is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary to the leader of the government.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to follow up with the member on that aspect. It is hard to imagine that the Conservative Party does not see the real and tangible benefits of this program, given that the Province of Quebec has had it for many years and we have seen a great deal of benefit, like more women getting engaged into the workforce. There is a wide spectrum of benefits from having this program.

I am wondering if the member could expand on why she believes the Quebec program has been as successful as it has and why it is, in fact, in Canada's best interest to try to duplicate that model nationwide.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, Canada can only gain from drawing inspiration from a model implemented in Quebec.

Earlier, I ended my speech by talking about a study done by economists who found that, in only a few years, this model helped increase women's participation in the workforce from 66% to 79%. I think those numbers are striking.

Furthermore, I would say that sadly, Conservative governments have questioned bills where the federal government was drawing inspiration from what was being done in Quebec. It was Stephen Harper's government, and it is Mr. Poilievre himself who said that, once elected to government, he would dismantle this bill—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that we are not supposed to refer to other members by name.

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I apologize. It is late. I meant the member for Carleton.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for another inspiring and enlightening speech. I think she is absolutely right. As I was saying, the Quebec model of early childhood education centres, the CPEs, has helped people enormously. It is a great social benefit for families in Quebec.

What does my colleague think about the fact that an agreement has been reached between the federal and Quebec governments? It improves funding to perhaps add more child care spaces.

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In terms of long-term federal funding, what does she think about the fact that priority has been given to public and non-profit child care facilities, and that we are trying to ensure that families across the country have access to child care?

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in my speech, I would have preferred that it be written into the bill in black and white, as it was in the previous bill. I wanted the bill to say that it took into consideration the fact that Quebec pioneered this model and that it has every right to make the choice of not running the risk, in the long term, of being subject to interference in its areas of jurisdiction and having another quarrel with the federal government.

• (2200)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is a great honour to speak in support of Bill C-35 at this time. I could not agree more with some of the members who spoke before me, such as the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill and the Bloc Qu  b  cois member for Shefford, who gave a great speech. I always appreciate my colleagues' efforts.

Despite the fact that it is late, I would like to give my opinion on this bill. This bill does more than set up child care services. It is important to highlight the principles of this bill: It aims to provide a system of early learning and child care to promote the development of young children.

[*English*]

It is really important to stress the way that Bill C-35 embraces things that many of us have been working on for years, early learning and child care. This is about improving the life chances of children, because the evidence is very clear that children learn with qualified educators who are doing more than making sure the children are watched through a morning or during the day while their parents are at work.

The principles of Bill C-35 underscore that child care must be accessible, affordable, inclusive and of high quality. These are things that we desperately need to see.

In the debate over the bill, I heard legitimate concerns from colleagues, particularly among the Conservative benches. These are fair points. We cannot find enough early childhood educators for all the spaces that are being created. Child care workers should be paid appropriately, and I am saddened by the reality that the existing agreement between the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario puts in place a payment schedule for child care workers that is embarrassingly insufficient for the work that we are entrusting these workers with.

They should really be paid more than CEOs. They should be paid more, with all due respect to colleagues across the way. I know at least one of our colleagues in the Conservative Party was a very famous hockey coach. We should pay our child care workers more than we pay our hockey players.

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What is more important in our society than ensuring our children have the best start in life? Our teachers, at all levels, are underpaid. Early learning and child care educators are professionals whose work needs to be recognized and properly compensated.

However, it is not an unfair point to say we cannot find enough child care workers for all the \$10-a-day child care spaces that are being opened up. The point is, we will. This has just come in. The agreements with provinces are very fresh. I am very encouraged that we are going to have it in law, in this piece of legislation, that one hopes any future government could not tamper with this. We have agreements with each of the provinces and territories, and that is a huge accomplishment.

Of course, we had accomplished it back in 2005, when, speaking of hockey players, a famous former minister responsible for the file, Ken Dryden managed to accomplish inked, signed deals with every province. Then we had the election of 2005-06, and the whole program, even though funded, with signed agreements, was scrapped by the incoming Conservative government of Stephen Harper. I wish I did not have such a good memory because thinking about that transition, where we lost Kyoto and Kelowna and child care in a relatively short period of time, is painful to recall.

The advantages of ensuring that every Canadian child, whether from families, as the hon. member for Nunavut was explaining so eloquently, that have not had the same advantages and privilege, or from families from equity-seeking groups, would be able to ensure that the child care program that allows the parents to go to work is of high quality.

• (2205)

I want to stress that part because early learning and child care is a different prospect than child care on its own. I have heard horror stories over the years, as a single mother myself, of child care arrangements that just were not adequate. They were actually unsafe. It is critical we elevate the professionalism, recognition and respect we give to the workers who do this work in early learning and child care.

I also want to mention, because it came up when the hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill was speaking, why it is I continue to proselytize the virtues of the rules of Westminster parliamentary democracy that are ignored in this place. In the Palace of Westminster in the U.K. or any of the other Commonwealth countries that use the Westminster parliamentary system, reading a speech is not allowed. It is still a rule here, but it is not only ignored, it is ignored and encouraged with handing out podiums to people so they can put the speeches they are not supposed to be reading on a podium so they can read them.

In any case, I want to spend a moment on the advantage of not allowing a written speech. In the situation we are in right now on Bill C-35, we had a complete failure of House leaders to determine what kind of time was needed to deal with this bill in this place. This happens over and over again. The hon. members across the way will know this is the game that it is played.

In the old days, and I remember the old days because I am old, a minister or a House leader would say to another House leader that a certain legislation was coming up and ask how many speakers they

thought would want to speak on it and ask how much time should be allocated for it. There would be an honest and fair-minded decision made based on knowing that so and so was deeply invested in the issue and would want to speak on it and that so and so would also want to speak on it so that probably there would be x number of speakers.

Of course, if one is not allowed to read a speech, which is the case in the Palace of Westminster in London, one would basically know who was prepared to speak to it because they were among the handful of people who know the legislation and the issue well enough to stand up and speak about it without a note in front of them.

I read a very interesting article some time ago now where Conrad Black reflected on his time in the House of Lords and how he contrasted it with the Canadian Parliament. In that comparison, we do not fare well my friends. He said it was wonderful that no one could speak with notes or a written speech and had to be able to stand up and talk about the legislation at hand because out of their own knowledge they could speak to the bill. He said that was far better; I agree.

One of the other advantages of that is one cannot play the game of “we can't tell you now how many of our members want to speak to that.” A House leader of either side of the big parties can say inscrutably that they are not sure and that it is maybe five, maybe 10 or maybe 80 speakers. That is how we find ourselves here tonight.

The government side, quite wrongly I believe, uses time allocation because it throws up its hands at the impasse it finds itself in with the official opposition. This is not about the politics. One can change the colours and the same problem persists. One just plays a game of silliness and says that maybe everybody wants to speak to it. We know what happens in the lobby. Someone says, “Hey, Joe, here's your speech. You're up next.”

I know some members of Parliament for the bigger parties, individual members, have told me over the years that they have refused to do that and are just not going to do it. One can kind of tell when someone is reading a speech they have not written themselves.

My only point here is to take the time to say we could do better. This bill deserves widespread support, and I hope it has it. It will pass. It will be a law.

Thanks to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for believing in early childhood learning and education and thanks to the Minister of Families. Let us get this passed, but let us stop the nonsense of debating until midnight when no one here is really speaking to the bill but playing a partisan game of delay.

• (2210)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was really paying close attention to what the leader of the Green Party said, especially when she was focusing on what could have been, had Ken Dryden's child care plan been accepted and ultimately passed through. Unfortunately, it was not. It heartens a lot of people to reflect on what impact that would have had today in terms of the number and the quality of child care spaces, the rates of pay for child care providers, and so forth.

I wonder if the member can reaffirm the support and the need for the legislation, given that if we do not have this legislation passed, there is no guarantee that the program will be there into the future. Could the member just emphasize why it is important that this legislation, in essence, be passed to protect the program, going forward?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I wish I could believe that passing the bill means that a future government will not repeal it. I recall spring 2012 and an omnibus budget bill, Bill C-38, which repealed the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act, repealed the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy Act and gutted the Fisheries Act. There were 70 separate pieces of legislation destroyed in that.

I will also say that if we had not lost Kyoto, Kelowna and child care in the 2006 election, we would not be on fire now. Canada would have reached our Kyoto targets. They were on the books and fully funded. Therefore, there are tragedies in losing that government of 2005.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, with all due respect, these are not partisan games. As critic to this file, I have received thousands of messages from parents, who are screaming for help, and from operators, who are ringing alarm bells. All anybody at home has to do is google “child care” right now, and they will get article after article. These are health care workers and shift workers. They do not have access to child care. Erin Cullen is an engineer out of Newfoundland, and she is going to have to leave her province because she cannot access child care.

This is not about partisanship. These agreements are in place. It is our job in this House to ensure that things are done properly and fairly. Twenty-nine per cent of children are accessing child care, so 70% do not have access. Fifty per cent live in a child care desert. Does the member not think this warrants further investigation? Our amendments put forth in committee were turned down by the Liberals and the New Democrats.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, when I referred to partisan games, I was merely referring to the public statements that have been made by the leader of the official opposition on the intent to gum up this place with as many obstructive tactics as possible. If he did not intend for those comments to apply to this debate on Bill C-35, I apologize to the hon. member.

I agree with her. There are many things, as I mentioned in my speech, including legitimate concerns about access and the shortage of qualified early learning and child care educators. I hope we can work together in a non-partisan spirit to ensure that the vision of the

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legislation is actually implemented. I agree with 90% of what the member said. It needs to be worked on, and it needs to be delivered.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for her speech, although, with so much about House goings-on, it shifted away from early childhood education. This is concerning to me as a former early childhood educator who spent many years working hard for wages that were not livable.

We know the facts are on the table. Early childhood organizations are very clear. If we do not have a workforce strategy that pays livable wages, benefits and pension plans, we will not have a national child care strategy; we will continue to have a shortage of spaces. We need to focus on workers. Does my hon. colleague agree with this?

• (2215)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with the member for Winnipeg Centre. I apologize to her for changing to a different topic. However, I think it is critical, and I thought I made it clear in my speech, that we support and respect the child care workers who deliver early learning and child care. Why do we pay CEOs and hockey players more than we pay people doing the most critical job in our society, which is taking care of our children?

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to be joining the debate. I am glad I caught your eye and was able to rise before my colleague from a different part of Quebec who wanted to speak as well.

Just to continue on something the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said, I hope I will not be accused of using notes. I have not used notes in many years in this place. I am sure that if we ever moved to benches, that would probably help with the use of written notes and the prolonged speeches that are perhaps prepared by others. Many members like to prepare their speaking notes way ahead of time.

This is government legislation that some of my constituents have written to me about. As I remember, this usually comes up at election time. I always have a few constituents who are concerned about access to early childhood care, and they usually mix different types of things together.

When I was growing up, my mother was a single mom and used day homes quite a bit. We are talking about quality care for children, but that was the experience for a lot of us immigrants who were newcomers to Canada and did not have many choices. We made do with what we could find. I know the government, through these agreements it signed with the different provinces, is hoping to fill that space in between, but when I look at the summary of the bill, it states:

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This enactment sets out the Government of Canada's vision for a Canada-wide early learning and child care system. It also sets out the Government of Canada's commitment to maintaining long-term funding relating to early learning and child care to be provided to the provinces and Indigenous peoples. Finally, it creates the National Advisory Council on Early Learning and Child Care.

I have never had parents tell me at the door that they were looking for an advisory body to oversee something nationally. What they are looking for is someone they trust to watch their kids, where the kids will learn something new. As a single dad, that is what I always look for when it comes to my kids. They are much older now. My oldest son, Maximilian, just graduated from junior high on Monday, and I have two other kids in the Catholic school board system in Calgary. However, there was a time when that would have been one of the options that I would be looking for, because I was always trying to find something where they could learn something related to not only STEM, math or language skills but also art, getting dirty, doing things with their hands, just some hands-on learning and interacting with other kids. That was always something I looked forward to for my kids to have.

As has been mentioned in the House before by other members, the system the government is implementing here is one-size-fits-all. One of the big sticking points for my home province of Alberta before signing the agreement with the federal government was that it wanted more private care options to be eligible for funding through the Alberta government. In my area, there are a lot of newcomers and immigrants. Because their credentials are not recognized, and they do not necessarily have family support here, they are running day homes.

I know that in one family in particular, and I will not mention their nationality because they would be able to figure out quickly who they are, the mom runs a day home and is an accomplished musician. She helps kids learn different musical instruments. Maybe that does not meet everybody's expectations, but it is quite popular as a choice. It is a private day home. Because of legislation like this, and the agreement the Alberta government signed, this day home is going to have a tough time making ends meet, because it will not be one of the eligible options on the table for consideration for funding.

Some articles have talked about the potential problems and risks of the facilities that are currently running, such as the uncertainty this might create; the operator's experience, including whether they have certification to perform standard first aid practices; years of operation; the number of children the centre can accept; the ratio of children to caregivers; age group; the minimum and maximum numbers of children under care; and protocols for sick children or employees.

We often talk about the quality of care. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands talked about how important early childhood educators are and said that we should pay them better. However, if we are setting up a system where we are only paying them \$10 and there is a cap, somebody has to pay. Then there is the question of who pays. In this case, it will be the federal government. Taxpayers will pay, because there is only one taxpayer at the end of the day.

In my pre-political life, when I was looking for other options that were out there, obviously, I leaned on extended family. That was always the first choice. If that choice was not available, then it was

friends of the family who are so close they are essentially like family.

• (2220)

We all have those types of people in our lives with whom we would be happy to leave our children. Maybe parents want them to play with other children or be watched for a few hours while the parents are trying to get some work done. In many cases, they are trying to get to their shift, they are coming back late from a shift or they have irregular hours and are uncertain about how they will be able to watch their kids. As a dad with three kids, I have said this before, but it is difficult. I try to make sure I am back in Calgary whenever I possibly can be and it is my turn to watch over them.

I do have a Yiddish proverb, despite the fact that it is so late. I have Yiddish proverbs all the time, because there is always a good moment for them. I will say it in Yiddish, so I would ask members to bear with me on the pronunciation.

[Member spoke in Yiddish]

[English]

That means, "With a child in the house, all corners are full." I am sure everybody has had this experience, especially with younger children. They have a knack for filling every single room they are in with stuff that they find, everywhere they go. I salute the people who accept kids in their homes from other families, who make the extra effort to try to teach them the life skills that they need. These things maybe do not earn them an A+ in school, but they include things like picking up after themselves, being kind to other people and teamwork, doing things in teams. They try to teach very simple things, such as basic cooking.

I mentioned this one family where the lady who was the main provider, the main caregiver, is a very accomplished musician. Providing these types of soft skills is quite useful for many people. I wanted to convey that Yiddish proverb, because it is something I think about with my kids, how they fill not just every corner in my house but every corner of my life as well.

Affordable care, which we have been talking about, is mostly a principle in this bill, because there are already agreements with all the provinces. What more could we do but talk about the principles and ideas behind the legislation that the government has put forward and that many of the members on this side of the House have already spoken in favour of? We support the bill, but we have concerns that we want to express on behalf of constituents.

There is going to be an increased demand for child care, but it is not going to solve the frontline problems with staff shortages, burnout and difficulty in accessing spaces. It does not really matter whether it is public, private or something in between, it is from coast to coast. Different provinces have different problems. When I look at those who choose to work in this field, in the next 10, 20 and 30 years, we will be facing a shortage of workers in general. It is going to be hard to convince people to retrain themselves to pursue this as a field.

When the Statistics Canada data is looked at, at the bachelor's level and above, there is essentially a job for every person who is looking for one. There are sectors where that is not the case and where it is hard to retrain someone, but at the high school level and below, there are a lot of vacancies. I do not think we consider early childhood education low skill. That is not a low-skill job. That is difficult. Put eight to 10 four-year-old or five-year-old kids in a room, and that is a full-time job. It is very difficult to get everybody on the same page, working in the same direction on the same tasks. That has to be remunerated a certain way. There has to be a total compensation package that attracts good people who want to work with children, who can be trusted to work with children and who have a skill set that lends itself very well to providing children with some of the early skills that they are going to need to succeed in school. That is important as well.

There is a high burnout rate in this area. Whenever there is a staff shortage, others are asked to do even more. This is just like the troubles we have in our school system with trying to find teachers in the early years; similar types of shortages will exist over here. Where are we going to find the people when we are already facing record shortages in multiple sectors across our economy?

To bring it back to newcomers to Canada, many will choose this as what I will call a temporary survival job, because that is really what a day home becomes. I spent my time growing up in day homes, but I know many other families depend on them, too. Many of these agreements cut those day homes out, and that is what I am concerned about. Although I support this bill, I think we should be debating the principle of the bill and the impact it will have on newcomers and others as well.

To bring it back to the Yiddish proverb, children do fill every corner of our homes and every corner of our lives. We can do better than what we have done before. This legislation, though, has faults in it that we should look at, and we should be debating the principles.

• (2225)

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his comments. As someone who is of Jewish descent, I always find his pondering of Yiddish proverbs interesting, to say the least.

He spoke about his home province of Alberta and the lack of flexibility and lack of understanding of the unique circumstances of families, but the Alberta agreement includes an additional grant for operating flexible and overnight child care. It is an operational grant to address spaces that are necessary for frontline health care

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workers, shift workers and so on, many of whom, as we know, are newcomers to Canada in various fields.

The principles of the agreement are about high-quality child care. Does the member not think that high-quality child care is the key component here and that while we have flexibility, we need to ensure high quality? The member mentioned that he supports the bill. Does that mean the Conservatives will support it?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, to go back, the person who deserves great credit for negotiating the deal was the minister at the time in Alberta, Rebecca Schulz, who was re-elected in this past election. She deserves an incredible amount of credit for holding out until Alberta got a better deal.

The problem with what the member just laid out as the deal for affordable care operators, who basically run a dual system that is part private and part public, is that they are basically being told to keep two different ledgers. Staff cannot go in between the two systems, which is written right in the agreement. It is highly complex, and for those in this space, it is hard to figure out, as a facility owner-operator, what exactly they are supposed to do. The agreement is so complicated that many have already come out in public and said that it is too complicated and that they will have to pick one or the other. Either they will do all shift workers and nothing else or they will just have the standard nine-to-five child care.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are at the report stage of the bill right now, and I noticed, looking at parliamentary publications, that we have one motion at report stage. That has been brought forward by the member's colleague from Peterborough—Kawartha. She is moving that the bill be amended by deleting the short title. Essentially, the Conservatives want to get rid of the opportunity to call the bill the Canada early learning and child care act.

I am curious. Does he understand the rationale behind wanting to delete the short title of the bill?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, procedurally it was necessary in order to have this debate tonight, which is one of the things in Westminster parliaments. We sometimes have to put forward these types of motions in order to have a debate like this. That is my understanding of why it is on the Order Paper.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, following up on that, it is true that at report stage the only amendments that can be brought forward, generally speaking, are deletions. However, certainly the official opposition had a choice of what part of the bill it might want to delete. Is there anything the member can add as to why the choice was made to delete the short title?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, no there is not, but it has given us an opportunity to talk about the principle of the bill and to share thoughts that constituents have shared with us. I think it is an accepted principle that we do what we must on behalf of our constituents, and in this case, it has given us an opportunity to talk about the content of the bill at any level of detail a member chooses.

• (2230)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I know, coming from Alberta, that the member touched on a lot of what we are hearing from operators on the ground. In fact, many of the operators have said they may have to introduce a CWELCC fee, CWELCC being the name of the program, and may have to add food costs. This \$10-a-day child care is actually going to end up being a lot more.

I am wondering if the member has heard of any stories on the administrative burden and costs on the operators in his province.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, that is a good question, because we have seen the cost of living explode in this country, and the cost of groceries is way higher now.

I have not yet had residents in my riding come to me with direct stories about their grocery costs, but the Cardus Institute has done a lot of work looking at the different agreements, the quality of the agreements and the likely outcomes of them. I am sure that over the next six, 12 or 18 months, we will have more aggregated data demonstrating that, indeed, all these ancillary costs are going to be added onto all of these early childhood operators.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard G  n  reux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivi  re-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are here this evening to discuss Bill C-35, or what the Liberals like to call the universal child care plan.

In particular, we are talking about the report presented by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, which studied this bill. One of the reasons the Conservatives are here is to ensure that parents' voices are heard.

As a Quebecker, I must provide some context about what has been happening in Quebec for years. We have our own child care system, as my colleagues know. In January 1997, the provincial government unveiled Quebec's family policy, which included five main elements: child care services and parental leave, the family allowance, the work premium, the solidarity tax credit, and the refundable tax credit for child care expenses.

This program is not perfect, but it has existed since that time, and many parents in Quebec have been able to take advantage of it. We

need to take that into account in this discussion we are having here tonight.

In my riding, there is a small association that was created in recent years, shortly before the pandemic, called *Ma place au travail*. A woman took the initiative to start a Facebook group that ended up bringing together women from all across Quebec who are, unfortunately, still waiting for a child care space in the province. The parents of approximately 70,000 children are in that position. I hope that the \$6 billion that will be transferred from the federal program to Quebec will be used to address the lack of child care spaces in the province. The situation is different in other provinces, which do not have this kind of program in place. We must therefore analyze the bill from that perspective.

I must inform the House of all the efforts that we, the Conservatives, made in committee to improve this bill with a view to implementing it at the national level. Of course, the government wants to apply Quebec's model to the whole country. No one can really be against that, but it must be done properly. The Conservatives moved many amendments calling for choice, inclusivity, access, data and accountability. Unfortunately, the members of the Liberal-NDP coalition rejected all of them.

This coalition says it cares about access and inclusivity. However, its actions speak louder about what it is really interested in, namely promoting an ideology that will decide what is best for children.

We cannot trust this coalition on this or any other matters. We had another example of this with the budget implementation bill we discussed tonight. Nothing in that bill takes into account the labour shortage, the burnout affecting frontline personnel and the exodus of these professionals. That is an important point that I believe my colleagues raised at committee. Sadly, it was not included or considered by the Liberal Party or the NDP. Those amendments were entirely reasonable. They were justified and justifiable. Sadly, once again, they were rejected.

Once again, Conservatives introduced an amendment to solve the problem. The amendment stipulated that the annual reports needed to include a national strategy to recruit and retain skilled workers in early childhood education. Surprise! It was also voted down by the coalition. Why was it voted down? We would have to ask the coalition's members. I hope they will ask me the question. I repeat that it is a very reasonable amendment. I do not think this requirement concerning annual reports would have hurt the bill. Quite the opposite, it would have enriched it. It would have been a good thing if this suggestion had been accepted.

That makes me think of the 2 billion trees that this government, three or four years ago, promised to plant by 2030. It is 2023, so there are 7 years left, and 3 years have already passed. We have not even reached 4% of that objective. There was a big show with a lot of smoke, and it is the same with this bill.

● (2235)

The government is making big promises by announcing its intent to roll out day care services across the country based on Quebec's successful model, but it is unable to put in place all the elements or tools needed to carry out this project. Once again, it is not surprising, coming from this government.

The bill is supposed to include five pillars: quality, availability, affordability, accessibility and inclusivity. However, once again, we have proof that the Liberals want to score political points and are more concerned about marketing a plan they can sell than about the actual supply of what they are selling. As I just said, it is easy to make promises.

Over the past eight years, the government has promised many things. Unfortunately, despite the fact that it was not a Liberal promise, the only thing families have more of are taxes. The cost of living for families never stops rising. I completely agree with my colleague who talked about increasing the wages of all these workers. However, there is a limit because, eventually, families will also have to foot the bill.

The Liberals moved an amendment to the amendment in committee that removed the words “availability” and “accessibility”, which are the biggest issues with child care in this country. They are also the biggest issues in Quebec, where 70,000 families are currently unable to find a child care space. Obviously, the labour shortage is affecting all areas of society and all types of employment. It is not just child care. To attract workers, the right plan needs to be in place, which is clearly not the case at the moment.

I will paraphrase my colleague from Peterborough—Kawartha, who is doing a fantastic job. The reality is that we have about as much chance of solving the child care crisis with Bill C-35 as we have of winning the lottery. That is exactly what child care is like in Canada, because getting a child care space is like winning the lottery.

The reality is that the Liberals want to implement a nationwide program without having the means to actually do so. Some 70% of children still cannot get a space in day care. It is a national problem.

This brings me to the subject of families. Today, compared to eight years ago, the price of homes and the cost of rent have doubled. Everything has gone up. Inflation is at its highest in 40 years, and the interest rate keeps going up. My own daughter is now paying \$700 more a month for the home she built five years ago. Inevitably, the amount of money that families are forced to spend is going to reduce their ability to pay.

When my children were young, there was no program. We worked hard and paid child care workers to come to the house. Then we started sending the children to day care. Obviously these programs are an incredible help. My colleague from the Bloc was saying that it was a feminist policy. I totally agree with her. This has helped thousands of women to go back to work.

However, the reality is that today, unfortunately, 70% of families still do not have a spot. In Quebec, 70,000 children do not have a

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child care spot and women cannot go back to work because of the labour shortage.

I will say it again: Yes, these people have to be paid well. I think that there have been major improvements in this area in Quebec. However, the government is blowing smoke by launching a program of this scale without being able to put all the necessary effort into ensuring that it is carried out properly.

● (2240)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, what is very clear is that the Conservatives do not support the program. Depending on who we listen to, whoever might be giving a speech, one could very easily draw the conclusion that the Conservatives are raising these flags as if they genuinely care about the national government playing a role in child care, when history has shown that it is quite the opposite.

The question I have for the member is this. Even though the past leader of the Conservative Party talked about ripping up the agreements and the Conservatives have cancelled child care programs, is the member prepared, on behalf of the Conservative Party, to say that he clearly supports the agreements the provinces and the federal government have entered into? Does the Conservative Party support the plan being proposed in this legislation? A yes or no would suffice.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I did not say whether I would support the bill or not. What we hope to do here this evening, as we have done since the beginning in committee, is to potentially improve this program and how it is implemented. We want to avoid using smoke and mirrors to fool Canadians without actually delivering what was promised. It is always the same thing.

The best example is the one I gave earlier, the two billion trees. The Liberals put on a big smoke show; it was unbelievable. This was supposed to save the environment. Earlier, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands said that if we had implemented programs 20 years ago, there would not be any forest fires today. I think it is worth saying that that is not quite the truth.

I think that when a government really wants to keep a promise or implement a program, the plan needs to be whole and complete.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, earlier in his speech, the member complained that certain Conservative amendments were defeated at committee and then suggested that this was the result of a coalition. He said that there is a common ideology at work there.

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I was at another committee recently where Liberals and Conservatives voted down NDP amendments to the air passenger bill of rights. When I voted against the new interswitching provisions, which are going to put railroad workers in Canada out of a job, Liberals and Conservatives voted together against me. I am just wondering what the common ideology was between Liberals and Conservatives and the coalition developing there, such that they decided to defeat NDP amendments together at committee.

Alternatively, would he rather say the truth, which is that sometimes parties have a common cause on certain issues and they vote together when they are working in the same direction and they vote against each other when they do not agree on certain things? Which is it?

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I am trying to think about the question I was just asked. As we speak, there is a Canadian political coalition. I did not draw up the deal, nor did I sign it. It is between the Liberals and the NDP. Perhaps my colleague should look in the mirror and figure out which party he belongs to. As far as I know, he is from the NDP.

The question he just asked me has nothing to do with what we are discussing tonight. He has the right to vote for whatever he wants. I am not saying he does not have that right. What I am saying is that the Liberal-NDP coalition voted against the Conservative amendments seeking to improve the bill.

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, my friend and colleague had a thoughtful intervention. I guess my question to him would be this: Does he believe that families and parents in his riding should have access to and should be able to choose what type of child care they send their children to?

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup may give a brief response.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, my response will be brief: absolutely.

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a real pleasure to stand in the House today to give my views on Bill C-35 on behalf of the wonderful constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. Of course, for their benefit, we are talking about the Canada early learning and child care act.

This bill does a few things. I will just briefly go over them. It would set out the vision for a national early learning child care system and establish those principles that are going to guide federal investments in that system. That particular part of the bill is extremely important because I have heard Conservative colleagues asking why this bill is even necessary given that all of the agreements have already been entered into between provincial governments and the federal government.

I think it is really important to enshrine those agreements into legislation so we can avoid a future policy lurch where maybe a different government in the future decides to take us in a different direction. This is an issue that is so fundamentally important that I believe that those funding agreements need to have the force of legislation to back them up so that not only current generations of young families can enjoy those benefits but also future generations.

Another commitment is the long-term federal funding for child care services provided to provinces, as well as indigenous organizations and, of course, the establishment of a national advisory council on early learning and child care, which would allow that organization to be set up and to really deliberate on the progress being made to advise the government on what else is needed in its policy going forward.

I just want to speak personally here for a little bit. I am the father of three wonderful daughters. I have twins, who are almost 11 years old, and a five-year-old. My twins were born in 2012, before I assumed elected office. I can remember during those first three years of their lives when my wife and I were both working. We did depend on child care. We also depended on my parents at times, but it was not easy.

I can remember when I first decided to run for office back in 2015. Child care was a huge election issue in 2015. The NDP ran on a platform of trying to deliver \$15-a-day child care. I remember this, particularly down in the city of Langford in the southern part of my riding, the great big southern metropolis of Langford, as I like to call it, because it has been one of the fastest-growing communities in all of British Columbia. Time and time again, in the 2015 election when I was out knocking on doors, more often than not the person who would answer the door would be a young child who would then scream to their mom or dad to come to the door because a stranger was there. It just really showed that the demographics of the city of Langford, and indeed much of my riding, consisted of young families who were struggling to get by.

A lot of the feedback I received from going to doors in 2015 was that, in many houses, there was a willingness for both parents to go out and work, but what I heard time and time again was that it was simply not worth it for them to do that because the child care costs completely negated any economic advantage that that family would get by working two jobs, let alone the availability. It would usually be the mother telling me that it just was not worth it, saying, "Why would I just put my child in child care when all of the money I would earn from a second job would be going to pay for that? It's better if I just stay at home because at least my child is with her or his parent."

Enshrining this in legislation and following up with those agreements are things that New Democrats have fought long and hard for. It is something I have been proud to run under since I was first elected to this place, and it is nice to see that our House of Commons is coming together to deliver this. This is not just one party that is the author of this. This idea has its beginnings many years ago, and I am really proud to stand in this place on behalf of the constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and show them that we are putting into place legislation that would enshrine something that is incredibly important.

● (2245)

Absolutely, when it comes to Bill C-35, New Democrats are proudly standing here in support.

I also want to recognize former members of Parliament in the NDP caucus, particularly former MP Irene Mathysen, whose daughter is serving right now as the member for London—Fanshawe, and former MP Olivia Chow, who of course is now running to become the next mayor of Toronto. I wish her all the best in that. Both of those exceptional members of Parliament, former MPs of this place, did try, with legislative initiatives, to bring something into this place, similar to what Bill C-35 is trying to do.

I also want to underline the confidence and supply agreement that our party has with the Liberals, because in section 2 of that agreement, one of the main bullet points reads as follows:

Through introducing an Early Learning and Child Care Act by the end of 2022, ensuring that childcare agreements have long-term protected funding that prioritizes non-profit and public spaces, to deliver high quality, affordable child care opportunities for families.

This is a very clear example where the CASA, the confidence and supply agreement, shows how we, as a small party, are working with the government to bring something in that would be for the common good. This is a key provision of that agreement, meaning that, if it had not been met, the agreement would be null and void. It is a great example of us working together to bring something that is obviously going to benefit so many families right across the country. I do want to say that, if it were not for New Democrats, many initiatives such as this would not be seeing their rapid pace of adoption in the House, as we are seeing today.

I also want to talk a little about the history because, of course, we have had strange bedfellows fighting for child care. We have major representatives from both labour and business making the case for child care. If we look at some of comments from Canadian chambers of commerce, all the way from the national organization to their provincial counterparts to chambers of commerce of local districts and municipalities, and they all realize the benefits that child care brings to small businesses. Their most valuable resource is their employees. When they are in danger of losing an employee because of a birth of a child, that could drastically affect small business. That is why we have seen chambers be some of the most vocal proponents of putting in place this system.

At the same time, the labour movement, often at odds with the chamber, could not agree more. In fact, we have a comment here from Beatrice Bruske, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, who said, “Ensuring affordable, high quality, accessible and flexible services means we will have a Canada-wide system of early

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learning and child care that meets the needs of workers and their families.”

In the conclusion of my speech, I want to recognize my fantastic colleague, the NDP member for Winnipeg Centre, for her work. She worked very hard at committee with members of the government to bring forward some constructive amendments. I am very pleased to see how many of those amendments were adopted and incorporated in this bill to make it stronger and to make it into the version that we are debating today.

I also want to recognize, again, that we would not be here today if it were not for the work of many different people over many years. I want to particularly thank all the child care advocates and unions who have fought to make this legislation a reality. I want to give special recognition to parents and families, particularly those in my riding, who have kept up the pressure, kept up the advocacy and kept on pressuring members of Parliament right across Canada to bring in the change that we are seeing through Bill C-35.

I also want to recognize women because we know that a national system of affordable child care helps advance gender equality, and that is an important reason for us, alone, by itself. With that, I welcome any questions and comments my colleagues may have.

● (2250)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague put a lot of emphasis on thanking those people who have helped get our government to this point. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that Paul Martin had proposed a national day care strategy. Unfortunately, that Parliament was dissolved by the opposition, and an election was called, which prevented us from moving ahead with it. However, it was in our platform and it was an important promise we made to Canadians, which has been delivered today.

In his closing, my colleague acknowledged that this is an important step for women's equality. I wonder if he would like to comment on the fact that we are now at 85% of women in their working years who are in the labour force, thanks, in part, to this policy. Is he seeing that change in the demographics of workers in his own riding and in his community?

● (2255)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I have just a quick comment on the opening statement by my colleague. I have heard Liberals mention what happened in 2005-06. What they fail to mention, of course, is that the Liberals did enjoy a majority government in 1993, 1997 and 2000. However, I digress.

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I will agree with my colleague. I am, absolutely, seeing the results in Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, through the hard work, by many different advocates, of pressuring members of Parliament to bring us to this point. I am very glad to live in a province that is governed by an NDP government, which sees value in putting families first and in making sure they have resources to thrive economically. I am also glad to see that the B.C. NDP government has been working with the federal government, and, of course, partnering with us, the federal NDP, to push the Liberals to this point so we can make life better for British Columbians and especially for members in my home community of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate how my colleague is advocating for the people who do have access to these spaces, but what the alarm bells are, and what we are really trying to get across here tonight, are those who do not have access. There are reports coming out that say that child care spots are available for only 29% of those who need them. That is from the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Particular to the member's riding, in British Columbia, 64% of children are in a child care desert. That means three children are competing for one spot. Has the member reached out to these families? Has he listened to these families? What is his solution for increasing access?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I will not disagree with my colleague. There is, absolutely, a lot more to be done. If anyone thinks we are going to suddenly dust our hands off after the passage of Bill C-35 and say that all is done, that is simply beyond any reasonable thought.

I do not see Bill C-35 as being in opposition to that fact on the ground. In fact, the passage of this bill's enshrining in legislation the federal government's commitment to this funding formula is precisely the kind of action this Parliament and the leadership in this Parliament need to demonstrate in addressing the problem my colleague brought up. Therefore, I will agree with the member that there is a lot more work that needs to be done. It is my hope that, through Bill C-35, we are actually going to pressure the federal government to follow through with those agreements with the provinces. It is great that we would have an advisory council that would keep the government honest and transparent on that.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I do know what a dedicated father my hon. friend from Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is. How would he reflect on the availability of early learning and child care on Vancouver Island, particularly in the kinds of areas where we both work and live?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I not only can reflect on my personal experiences before I became an elected member of Parliament, including that I had three years with my twin daughters, but I also have spoken with many members of my community. I referenced knocking on doors in 2015. Those conversations have not stopped since 2015. I have been proud to meet with many constituents in my time as their elected representative here in Ottawa. What those conversations have demonstrated to me is that there is a continued need. People need their members of Parliament to stay focused on this issue to force the government to follow through on

those funding arrangements through legislative initiatives like Bill C-35.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise for my second speech tonight. It is democracy in action.

When I think about child care, I think of many stressful evenings with my wife trying to figure out where our kids are going to go and how we are going to pay for it. Child care has personally cost me a lot of money.

In fact, when my son was born January 4, my eldest son Declyn, I remember joking with my wife at the time that it was going to cost an extra \$15,000 in child care costs, and it did.

I was much happier when my second child Nicholas was born. He was born in November. I said it was great so I could make up some of those savings with my second child. Unfortunately, my third was born in January as well, so I will be at a loss once again.

I live in an area of Canada with one of the highest costs of living. We not only have a housing shortage, but we have a day care shortage as well. I am privileged to stand in this House. I can admit I am in the regulated system in British Columbia.

The day care facility I use, Koala Montessori in Abbotsford where my kids go, is now a regulated centre under the agreement signed with the Government of Canada. My fees went from approximately \$950 for my second child down to \$450.

That said, like all of us in this chamber, I am a high income-earning Canadian and I know there are monumental wait-lists to get into the facility where my second son goes. In fact, I was lucky. It was like winning the lottery, getting a spot in this wonderful day care facility.

There are so many early learning childhood educators who have had a positive impact on my children's lives. In fact, the other day, my son Declyn, who also went to Koala, and I were picking up his younger brother Nicholas. He said, "Dad, can I come in and see Ms. Elsie?" For my son to want to go in, see his old teacher and give her a great big hug is something that warms my heart; how could it not?

I am lucky that my children have access to wonderful early learning educators who have had an amazing impact on their lives. I think of some of the constituents in my riding who work there, like Ms. Jodi, Ms. Krishmali and Ms. Maria. When my son Nicholas was a year old, they took him into their arms and loved him like their own child.

How could someone not love these women who devote their time and energy to these kids? They are away from their own children in many cases to do these jobs and help our young children grow into wonderful children so they are ready to go to school.

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I want to say something about Koala Montessori. Sometimes I feel like my house is chaotic. I have three kids and two of them are boys. My two boys are running around and our place is a mess.

My middle child Nicholas is going to be bigger. He is going to be more than 250 pounds when he is older. He is definitely going to be over six-foot-five. When he goes down the hallway, he is smashing every door he finds. He is hitting all the walls. He is made to play football, rugby or basketball. It is just ingrained in him.

At the same time, he will go to his bedroom, he will take his T-shirt and he will fold it so nicely together. He will want to do the dishes with mom and dad. He works so carefully to clean a cup, or pour his own cup of milk or water when he is at the dinner table. That is the impact of the early learning educators who have had such a positive role in my children's lives.

My riding is a big one. It is 220,000 square kilometres of awesomeness, but not every family has what I have. There are 31 different bands in multiple indigenous nations in British Columbia.

Boston Bar First Nation, that is part of the Nlaka'pamux First Nations. I know for some of the St'át'imc bands in the Lillooet region, the positive impact that early learning educators have had on my children is not available to them.

• (2300)

I think about the community of Ashcroft, in my riding, which has seen a major expansion of the inland port where the CN and CP, now CPKC, rail lines meet. There are great jobs coming into the community. Canadian Tire is investing a lot of money in building a warehouse in this small community. There is a huge demand for housing. There is more need to build homes in this community than ever before. The workers there, though, do not have access to a day care facility or early learning educators, let alone nurses and a functioning hospital.

I see the positive intent in this bill and I have seen the positive impact it has had on a select number of Canadians in British Columbia, I being among them. Although I am one of those people who has benefited from this agreement, I worry about my constituents who have not. I worry about the parents in the Facebook community group Mission B.C. and Neighbours. It is a group for Mission, the second-largest community I represent. There are parents seeking a place for their kids to go. The parents are not able to go to work because they cannot have access to child care or are now kind of put into a horrible situation where they see that perhaps a relative or a neighbour got into a subsidized facility, yet they still have to pay the market rate with a private provider.

• (2305)

The private providers, many of whom are now public providers, were private providers before this deal. I know that many of the private providers not covered under this deal have that same commitment to quality education and nurturing care for our children that I receive at my now publicly funded facility. They do not have access to this program. A provider might be operating out of her home. She might be a new immigrant who is finding a way to support her children by running a day care facility inside her home to provide extra income, with the high cost of living we face in communities like Mission. Therefore, although I respect the intent of this bill, I

am just wondering why some providers were not provided with the same access to participate that others were.

The second point I will raise is that, while the government was quick to make arrangements with existing facilities, none of the hard work in indigenous communities was done. I reference indigenous communities because, disproportionately, there are more children being born into indigenous communities. It is one of the fastest-growing demographics we have in Canada. That is a good thing, but those resources under this framework are not available at the same level that I can access in downtown Abbotsford.

I heard tonight that over 60% of my province is a day care desert; 60% of families do not have access to the quality of care that I have. That needs to change. We have to think in innovative ways to get over that hump. Recently, a group of plumbers and business owners came to Parliament to talk about the skills and labour shortage. These people are hard-working. They are small business owners and they are faced with an incredible labour shortage right now, one like we have never seen before. They cannot keep people and they cannot hire enough, no matter what they do. In fact, there is one company in Pitt Meadows. I think it is called Pitt Meadows Plumbing, and the owner of the business came to me. In fact, his company alone trains more people than the public trade schools in British Columbia combined. He has a massive impact on the number of skilled trade workers in British Columbia. He asked me why we do not incentivize private corporations to build facilities at their offices, and why there is not more effort put into working with the private sector and building those facilities at their headquarters.

Can we imagine a young woman today who wants to be a plumber being able to go on her lunch break at a manufacturing facility in Pitt Meadows or in Mission and being able to have lunch with her children? We can think innovatively about addressing the child care needs we have in British Columbia and, indeed, across Canada, if we think outside the box a little more and maybe work with more small business owners who want to hire those workers and who want to have an environment where those workers can be close to their children and maybe share lunch together once in a while.

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• (2310)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad to hear that my friend, the member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, is among the thousands of British Columbians saving \$550 or \$450 a month on child care fees as a result of these investments. However, I agree that more needs to be done to increase spaces. Certainly the labour shortage across the country is not specific to child care but is in every sector.

I am also thrilled to hear that the member is an advocate for means testing for various programs, especially given the Conservatives' previous version of the Canada child benefit, which was a universal program that sent thousands and thousands of dollars to millionaire families. However, I would say that this is an education program; it is all about education. I question whether or not public schools should be available to wealthier families. I believe they should be, and I think early learning and child care should also be available to wealthier families.

How can we, in a collaborative way, increase the labour force and make sure that there are more spaces in the communities that do not have enough?

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, with respect to means testing, at the end of the day, I chose to put my children in child care and chose to take on the economic and fiscal responsibility of paying for that. However, I believe that early learning and education for children has to be treated a little differently from school-age programs. I am not challenging that the government does or does not have a certain role in that process, but parents need to play an integral role in making those decisions. That is why I believe that more should have been done to address the day care shortages in indigenous communities as a first priority, because my constituents do not have access to the same programs that I do based on where they live.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague spoke a bit about workers. One demographic he spoke about was the many immigrant families that choose to become child care workers. Some 98% of early childhood educators are women, and one-third are immigrants and non-permanent residents. More often, workers within early childhood education are also racialized. We know those systems are exploitive. We know that workers are not earning enough money.

I question the concern about this focus on public and non-profit care, because after the Liberal government came out with the announcement prioritizing that, it funded 22,500 private spaces in Alberta. I do not really understand what the hysteria is about.

I wonder if my hon. colleague—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member has used up over a minute, and I want to get to another question.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, as the member from Winnipeg knows, the agreement signed with British Columbia was different from the agreement signed with Manitoba, where she is from. We have to look at every agreement with the provinces individually.

The Province of British Columbia, which has an NDP government, rightly gave some of the day care workers a raise when this program went through to retain some of those workers, which I think is a positive thing. My family relies on those workers. I put my trust in those women to take care of my children and to do a wonderful job every day. They deserve to be compensated in a fair way.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, my hon. friend from Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon continues to amaze me given how much he is like a Green Party candidate, because it is in our platform that we need workplace child care for all the reasons the member just discussed, which I would love him to expand on.

I think Bill C-35 is consistent with putting child care spaces where people can visit their kids throughout the day. If the member wanted to comment more on the advantages of workplace child care, that would be great.

Mr. Brad Vis: Madam Speaker, why I love hearing from my colleague on the opposite side is that we have a Parliament to *parler*, or to talk and to discuss ideas. If there is agreement between political parties or an idea raised, that is what this chamber is all about. We come here to do exactly that. I do support private corporations that see a need and a way to retain workers by working with their business to provide those extra services to retain workers and train them and to give child care as well. The Government of Canada should incentivize that and encourage it.

• (2315)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to once again be able to rise in the House on behalf of the great people of southwest Saskatchewan.

As I kick off my speech tonight, there is a core principle I really want to get at, and that is about trust. When I speak in this House, I like to ask how much trust the government has built with Canadians and whether Canadians can actually trust what the government is doing.

Before I get into the meat of it, I would really like to talk about the actual cost. We hear a lot from the Liberals about how this is \$10-a-day day care. I recognize there is a benefit to people who are currently in the system, who will be paying less up front because of the program. I am not going to deny that and I am not going to say it is not a benefit to people who are in the program and are already benefiting from it. That is great for those people.

However, a lot of people email my office and routinely ask how much this program is actually going to cost. What we do know is that over five years the Liberals have set aside \$30 billion to implement this program, so that is the cost we are aware of. We heard others, through many speeches tonight in this place, about the additional costs that are starting to already creep into the system. This is the cost of meals on top of the fees people are going to be paying up front. We are already hearing of extra costs that will be burdened onto the system.

That does not even get into the fact this system we are talking about here tonight is not going to build much in the way of new spaces. It is not going to provide new access to people, which, being from Saskatchewan, and particularly being from rural Saskatchewan, to me is the crux of the debate when we talk about day care.

We know day care is a universal need. It does not matter if one is from urban or rural Canada, from Saskatchewan or Ontario, from Toronto, Swift Current, Frontier, Leader or Maple Creek, one needs access to day care. There are many different ways people realize this. There are a lot of different programs out there. Some of them are private, some of them are run through co-operatives and some of them are just in-home systems. There might be a person who has chosen to be a stay-at-home parent, and other people looking for child care might bring their child to that person and have that person provide the service to them.

A lot of what we are finding out is that this bill would not do anything for those people who are in those situations. In fact, in Saskatchewan, only 10% of kids from the age of zero to 12, whether they are full-time or part-time, currently have access to day care. From zero to six, which is what the agreement signed between the Province of Saskatchewan and the federal government covers, right now that access number I believe is a bit under 18%.

Saskatchewan is a bit of a unique case. I would be willing to say we are the most rural province in this country. I think that is a fair thing for me to say. We have so many small towns. We are a very spread out province, so the needs of people are vastly different in rural versus urban. The access to spaces is different as is access to workers. One of the fundamental issues we have is the access to workers to be able to fill these positions. That is one of the key points we have.

I did a town hall probably about a year and a half ago or maybe two years ago in the town of Maple Creek. A lot of the business owners came together and arranged this. They wanted to have me out to talk to them about what is affecting their businesses. Part of it had to do with the pandemic at the time with the programs and different things, but we also talked about things that were outside of the pandemic.

One of those issues was day care. Multiple business owners have told me they cannot hire the workers they need. In fact, there are many people who came to Maple Creek, interviewed for the job and really wanted to move to Maple Creek, but because there was actually no day care available to them, these people passed on that job and passed on moving to Maple Creek.

To me, Maple Creek is one of the greatest towns in this country. It is a phenomenal place. It does economic development really well. On the cost of living, one can get affordable housing there. There is a great school there and it is close to Cypress Hills. It is close to some of the bigger centres both in Alberta and Saskatchewan. It is not terribly far away, so it is a great location and a great place to raise kids, but there are people who have a young family who are choosing to not move to Maple Creek simply because they cannot find day care.

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When I talk about trust, repeatedly we do not see the government working to build trust with rural Canadians. To me, that is a problem and is again where this bill misses the mark.

• (2320)

I talked earlier about the agreement between Saskatchewan and the federal government. Part of the agreement that they signed only provides the subsidy for kids aged zero to six. I have a had a mother reach out, talking about both her and her husband and the hours they work. They need day care before and after school, and the agreement actually does not cover people in that situation. Therefore, those people are being left out of the picture here, yet in a community like Swift Current, that is actually a big chunk of people who are trying to utilize day care spots.

I also want to talk a bit about my own story. My wife and I have three kids, and they are fantastic. They are 12, 10 and eight years old. When my wife and I had our first child, we had a great conversation, talking about what our goals as parents were. One of our goals was something that we even talked about when we were first married; it was that my wife wanted to be a stay-at-home mom. This meant that we had to plan out a few things. We had to figure out how we were going to make that work and what that was going to look like. We had to make some big decisions, such as where we were going to live, where we could afford to live and what kind of vehicle we were going to drive.

We had to make a lot of sacrifices. For example, a lot of our friends would go on these big, elaborate trips, and we never did that. For us, a trip was driving from Swift Current to Saskatoon. That was our summer vacation, but that was because it was all we could afford with the goal of having my wife be a stay-at-home mom raising our kids. That just meant that disposable income was not necessarily there. Those were some of the sacrifices we had to make. However, the bill before us would not have any provisions for people who are choosing to stay at home and raise their own kids.

As we added more kids to the mix, it definitely changed that dynamic. My wife was a stay-at-home mom from 2011 all the way up until about 2019. Then, she was first able to go back to work, because our kids were old enough. All three of them were in school at that point in time, and she was able to find some part-time work where she could work during the school day but be home when school was over, so she could be there for the kids when they got home.

I recognize that this reality is not available for everybody, but there is a lot of sacrifice that is required to do that. Therefore, I think it is really important that we talk about the government respecting families that have made that decision. I have listened to Liberal speeches at report stage here and also at second reading, and to paraphrase them, what I heard repeatedly from that side and from some of the other opposition parties was that women are only of value if they are working; they are not of value if they are staying at home. I think that is completely bonkers. That is absolutely ridiculous.

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Being a mother is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week job. There is no break from it. As husbands, we come in and try to do what we can, but there is no replacing a mom in the house. My wife and many other moms we have talked to talk about the commitment it takes, how much work and effort go into it, and how it is more tiring and more gruelling being a stay-at-home mother and being with the kids compared with going to work. However, it is also more rewarding.

I recognize that some people are dedicated to their profession, and they have chosen that professional life, which is awesome. It is fantastic that they are doing that, and we want them to be able to do that. They should have that choice and the ability to do that, but the signalling we are getting from the government is that a woman who decides to stay at home has no inherent value, because she is not working. That is the vibe we get from the government. That is the message it is signalling, and that is wrong. The value a stay-at-home parent has, even if the father does stay at home with the kids, is extremely valuable. Society, the kids we raise and the system generally, at large, all benefit from that.

• (2325)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the notion that somehow anybody in this House has devalued the importance of women in parenting roles is absurd. This is all about choice. This program has helped so many women and fathers go back to work earlier as a result of this subsidy. For what it is worth, I know lots of men who are the primary caretakers and lots of women who are the primary earners in those relationships, and I think it is wonderful that we live in a country where people can have that choice.

The member, prior to that absurd allegation that our government does not value women who stay home to care for their children, which I find offensive, was talking about—

An hon. member: He's offended.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, yes, I am offended. As the product of a single mother, I am quite offended by that.

The suggestion that it costs too much to provide an early learning and child care program was also false. When women go back to work, they tend to earn money and pay taxes, and that pays for programs like this. I would like the member to appreciate that.

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, I think it is clause 7 of the bill that talks about funding, but it only talks about the not-for-profit care providers. There is no provision for moms who decide to stay at home and raise their kids. That is the problem.

What actions are the Liberals taking? I have listened to their speeches. I have not for a single speech, ever since second reading, seen one of them get up and talk about the value and importance of a parent being at home with their kids. It could be a father. It could be that the mother is the primary earner, and that is fine; no one is begrudging that. The point is that if somebody decides to stay at home with their kids, there is zero commitment from the government to make sure those people can actually afford to do that, even though a huge percentage of the population would like to do that but not because of the predicament the government has put them in.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I found it very shocking that the member, when referring to women who stay home with their children, said they are not working. In fact, that is probably, as a mother, one of the hardest jobs I have had. I just want to remind the member that most unpaid care work is done by women.

Getting back to respecting women, I would also like to remind the member that 98% of early childhood educators are women and they are not earning a livable wage, which is one of the very reasons we have the child care desert that the members keep talking about. When we talk to Conservatives about putting in a plan for workers that pays livable wages and that invests in robust, public not-for-profit care where workers get benefits, wages and retirement, they seem to overlook that question.

Does the member support livable wages and a workforce strategy that pays livable wages, benefits and retirement for early childhood educators, yes or no?

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, obviously I support livable wages. I also support an economy where people can afford to live without having to be massively topped up and subsidized by the government. People should be able to have paycheques that actually reward them for the work they are doing.

I also said in my speech, though, that mothers or stay-at-home fathers, and it does not matter which one, are working 24-7 parenting. Whether it is the mother or the father, it is a 24-7 job. I know that my kids, when they wake up with a fever or something like that, are not calling for dad; they are calling for mom. Moms are on call 24-7. It is the hardest but most rewarding job there can be on this earth, and the government fails to recognize that.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, my question is very brief.

I know the member represents a large rural constituency, as do I, his in Saskatchewan and mine in Alberta. I wonder if the member could reflect a bit further on how rural is left out of the entire conversation when it comes to this bill and the overall approach by the government on a whole host of issues but specifically when it comes to child care.

• (2330)

Mr. Jeremy Patzer: Madam Speaker, the member is absolutely right. If we look at a lot of the day care spaces that are the beneficiaries of this program, they are largely in urban centres. Because the majority of private facilities are in rural communities, quite often it is the small-town co-operative that is left out. People are relying on grandma and relying on their aunts and uncles or friends down the road to take care of their kids for them, and this bill does not recognize that.

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is 11:30 at night, and it has been a long week here so far, but I am proud to join the discussion and debate tonight on child care affordability in our country.

One of the most difficult things we do at times is humanize ourselves and, more importantly, humanize the debates we are having here about improvements, and helping Canadians and families. I do not have any children. Tonight, as we have this conversation about Bill C-35, I am thinking of my nieces and nephews Kane, Johnny, Hailey and little Evy. The best part is the title that I have is “Unkie Dunkie”. I am going to have to tell the Table here how to spell that for Hansard afterward for the record. I have the best job in the world. If we go to a family function or event, I feed the kids candy and Coca-Cola, or whatever they want. I fire them up on sugar and I get to leave at the end of the night, and my sisters, stepsisters and siblings have to put up with getting them to sleep. Therefore, I have to say I am a bit biased. I have a very good role as “Unkie Dunkie”.

I want to contribute to what has been talked a lot about here tonight, and over the course of the past few weeks, when it comes to the Liberal and NDP plan on child care.

One of the things I have said many times, on many pieces of legislation, is that the Liberals are the best in the communications business when it comes to making flashy announcements. I have always said they get an A for announcement and an F for follow-through on the realization of what they are talking about. This conversation on child care is another perfect illustration of that. Here is the problem. If we were to listen to Liberal and NDP speakers, they would make it seem that the framework for this legislation and the money allocated to it is available to every single parent and child in this country when that is not the case.

We can look at a recent headline across the country on CTV News within the last month, entitled, “New report finds child-care spots available for only 29 per cent of those who need it”. The CBC highlighted, through that same report, another important angle, that the province of Newfoundland and Labrador only has enough registered spaces for 14% of children.

We, as Conservatives, have been highlighting that this is not the be-all and end-all solution to child care affordability, because the number of families that are going to be able to tap into this program is very limited. The desert of child care spaces available in this country is very large and is frankly growing. Many advocates are saying that the problem, under the Liberals over the course of the last eight years, is getting worse, not better, when it comes to spaces and affordability for far too many families.

The other thing I want to contribute, which is a regular thing when it comes to Liberal legislation we see in the House, is that I would call this a bit of a *Seinfeld* bill. The issue and title of the bill are perhaps worthwhile, but not its content. The Liberals and NDP would make us think that if it did not pass immediately without debate, if we pass it no further, if we do take the time at committee and in the House to share our stories and perspectives, that the financial deals with the provinces are somehow in jeopardy. That is not the case whatsoever. Those deals were signed separately.

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Bill C-35 is a vague framework, and like many pieces of legislation, it does not get into the details, but rather kicks things over to the minister in charge of the file to make decisions outside the House, and through regulation afterward.

The interesting thing is this. I have to commend my colleague, who is over my shoulder right now, which is perfect, the member for Peterborough—Kawartha, who has been a fantastic voice for our caucus and our party on this. I want to talk about some of the things we tried to do to strengthen the quality, accountability and transparency of the bill to get the true record of what the Liberals and NDP claim they will be doing in the coming years.

We tried to pass amendments on two things, the wait-lists, and the labour rates and number of staffing in child care across the country. If this is going to address spaces, and not create major wait-lists to tap into the program, the government should table a report every year with respect to what the wait-lists are. It refused. The Liberals and the NDP voted that down.

● (2335)

When we said there should be an annual report on the labour force around child care, getting people into those jobs, into those positions, into those new spaces being created to see if the Liberals are following through with what they said they would do, they voted that down as well. That tells us everything we need to know about what this legislation and the plan will do for the overwhelming majority of Canadian families, who are not eligible or able to tap into this.

If there was not going to be a wait-list, if the wait-list was going to be decreasing and solving all the problems, if there was going to be a massive change and surge in labour to address those challenges, one would think the Liberals and NDP would be confident, saying they would absolutely love a report every year. This would show how they are doing better and making improvements. The fact that they voted it down, the fact that they denied that accountability and transparency, tells Canadians everything they need to know about what this plan would do.

I have to say, along the lines of the NDP, what will happen. I was a member of the public accounts committee, a great committee that reads through Auditor General reports. Time and time again, Liberal and NDP members are trying to explain that “A” for announcement, this amazing announcement they have about spending record amounts of money, adding to the deficit, adding more spending. Every time someone criticizes a program, they say not to worry, they have x number of dollars more. The Auditor General is concluding from her independent office that time and time again, the announcement and the follow-through are two completely different things.

As Conservatives, we will continue to fight for Canadians and families to address the root causes, doing more than what is being done here. The principle of affordable child care has been mentioned a few times here tonight. I believe it is a reasonable principle that everybody in this House shares. What Conservatives are fighting for and speaking about is that, in this legislation, in this framework and in the plan that the Liberals and NDP have, there is a lack of flexibility and choice.

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I talked about personalizing this debate. I have talked about my nieces and nephews, and my nephew Kane. My sister Jill and her husband, Cody, were very blessed. As Kane grew up and was going into child care before starting school, there was Cassandra Tibben, a neighbour of Jill and Cody's just north of Iroquois, who did an incredible job in her few years with Kane. She was a home care provider just a couple of hundred feet from their place. Jill is a nurse, and Cody works in construction. Cassandra offered that service close to home with flexible hours, and it was a connection in a small town like Iroquois, like in South Dundas and like in eastern Ontario. Under the framework and program that the Liberals have put the funding envelope in, that type of home care is not eligible.

I am thinking tonight of some communities in northern Ontario. I am thinking of Blind River, Wawa, Kapuskasing and Hearst, where there would be some not-for-profit spaces. However, for a shift worker who is 45 minutes out of those towns and looking for home care, the framework that the Liberals and NDP are proposing is very rigid. It leaves out many providers and the finances of many providers, even getting assistance through this, and it leaves a lot of families with no option and no hope through this existing framework.

I am very proud of the work the Conservative caucus has been doing in talking not only about affordability but also choice for parents. Parents need that flexibility. Shift workers, people in rural areas and parents with children with disabilities need more flexibility than what is being offered. We will continue to fight in this House, in committee and across the country to let families know that every single time, these big, flashy Liberal announcements do not follow through with results. Conservatives are results-oriented, and we will keep holding the government to account for its continued failures. Child care, I am sure, through the Auditor General and through the public accounts process, will be the same; it will be another part where the rhetoric does not match the reality.

• (2340)

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am glad the member opposite was able to personalize a little, and I can too. Last Friday, I was walking through Milton and knocking on doors. In between doors, I talked to Teddy, who was pushing his son in a little stroller. Teddy's son was driving the stroller, actually. I asked how his family was doing. I said I knew there are tough financial times right now and asked if everybody was doing well. He said the big thing is that his family is saving \$500 or \$600 a month on child care. The Conservatives have repeatedly called this program a failure, saying that investing in a child care program for Canadians is a failure.

I can tell the member first-hand that this is not a question for Teddy's family. Canadians are provided with the kind of support that they are demanding from us. It is saving families a lot of money. It might not be reaching every single family in Canada yet, but it is a great start, and Teddy's family is very grateful.

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, Teddy is an example of where somebody is tapping into the program. If they have access to it, if they already have a space, they are able and they are eligible for it, but for every one Teddy, there are probably two or three more, right in Milton, who are not able to go into that program,

who are not realizing those savings, who are not seeing those spaces, who are not seeing that increase.

Again, what the member, the Liberals and NDP fail to realize is that for every Teddy, there are multiple other Teddys who are not able to tap into this program. Their child care fees are not being reduced, and instead their taxes are going up, their financial situation, if it is their house price, their mortgage, their rent or trying to save for a down payment on a home, that has all doubled. There are many families being left behind.

It is nowhere near as universal as the Liberals and NDP claim and want us to believe.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, in Quebec, we have experience with day cares that are public and accessible to families who have less money. Is the system perfect and are there always enough day care spaces for everyone? The answer is, of course not. Is that a reason to do nothing and to leave it all up to private, for-profit day cares that cost a fortune? The answer, again, is no.

The framework must be set up, and then workers and space need to be found to create spaces for our families' children. That is how we can get ahead and make some progress.

The Conservatives talk to us about choice, but, right now, the only choice people have if they cannot access a day care that is not expensive but affordable is to stay at home because it costs more to pay for a private day care than it does to go to work, because work does not bring in enough money. That is not a real choice; it is a lack of choice.

[English]

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, the choice is to do the right thing and provide the flexibility for parents to do what it is best in their family situation.

That would mean expanding the opportunity and the eligibility for assistance beyond not-for-profit and public centres, offering home care as an option that is in people's homes, a couple of blocks away, in their neighbourhood. It means providing the choice and that funding to go towards people who are shift workers in health care and factories, in rural and urban areas alike.

The problem, time and time again, and I agree with the NDP that doing something is one thing, but they are not doing enough. They are not providing the flexibility or the choice for parents to actually make a difference, using those tools and those options that work for best for their choice, not what the Liberals and NDP tell them are the best.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy the member's interventions, and now I do not know that I can ever not call him "Unkie Dunkie" for the rest of his life.

What the member does so well is articulate and elevate the voices of his constituents. Are there other stories that he would like to share with the House that really highlight the gaps that have not been closed by these Liberals and the NDP?

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, I would be happy to. I want to add, in the name of personalization, one of my best friends, Emily Strader, a childhood friend is actually an ECE, working in Ottawa, in child care, and enjoys what she does.

I had many conversations with her and her colleagues at work about the day to day, trying to do what they can to address the massive wait-lists that they have and the frustration they have in this program.

Time and time again, they do not see the announcement, and the flashiness of what is being said, and the actual follow-through. Time and time again, it comes up short. We are seeing way too many women and men working in child care leave, because there is a broken system.

• (2345)

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am glad to have the opportunity to speak to this bill that seeks to create some permanence around the progress that has been made in respect of funding child care in Canada. I want to talk first about the policy, and then I want to talk a little bit about the politics of it.

We have heard a lot of stories here in the chamber tonight. I could add personal anecdotes about the challenges of child care. I will not, because I think we have heard many, and I think we all know that these experiences are common enough that Canadians can appreciate just how stressful it is for families, both in terms of financial stress and just the stress of having child care fall through. We had our kids in home day cares and then we had our kids in centre day cares. Especially when they were in home day cares, if the child care provider at home got sick, that would often mean scrambling the night before, or the morning of, to try to find replacement care. I think that one of the advantages of investing in not-for-profit centre spaces is that they do provide a degree of reliability that one cannot always get when it is one person in their home trying to provide care. It is still a valuable service, and I was grateful to be able to avail myself of that as a parent, and my wife was grateful, but we have also really appreciated the reliability that has come with transitioning to centre-based care.

Why is it that we need public investment in child care? Again, I think we have personalized the issue well enough. The fact of the matter is that, for a lot of parents, what they earn when they go to work is not enough to be able to pay a child care rate that is sufficient to pay people what they need in order to be able to make a living as an early child care educator. It is a classic case of market failure. If it were not, then at some point over the last 40, 50 or 60 years, we would have seen very successful businesses crop up to meet demand, but demand is not being met. It has been chronically unmet because there is a structural problem in the child care market, which is that too many parents cannot make enough money going to work to be able to pay fees that provide enough salary to attract, train and retain qualified early child care educators. That is

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really why it has been so important for so long for government to get involved.

Of course, provincial governments across the country have gotten involved in various ways. Quebec is, I think, the best example of organized publicly funded care. It is still not perfect, but it is certainly the best that is available in Canada. I come from a province, Manitoba, that has had a lot of investment over the years by NDP governments, frankly, in child care, and we enjoy the second-lowest child care rates in the country. We are one of very few provinces to have a pension plan available for early childhood educators. That was true even before this latest round of bilateral deals, which is not, by any stretch, to say that Manitoba is some kind of child care paradise. It is hard to find a space. It is still a big expense for families. It is hard to attract and retain workers in the field. All those problems still persist, despite being in a province that, on the numbers, is functioning relatively better than some other places in the country in terms of affordability and accessibility.

We need public investment in child care because the market is not satisfying persistent, long-standing demand. Not only that, but that demand for child care comes with a number of other problems for the larger economy, and that is why I heard some members earlier tonight reference studies that have been done. I have read similar studies. They show the economic activity generated by allowing those parents who want to go into the workforce to do so, by governments investing in child care, making more spaces available and making them more accessible by making them more affordable. Women, predominantly, without any kind of government subsidy for the rate they pay, cannot make enough at work to justify paying child care costs and still have something left over at the end of the day.

• (2350)

The amount of extra economic activity that generates would more than pay for the program. It is an important part of satisfying the demands we constantly hear from employers who are saying they need access to more workers. This is how we do it.

One of the ways we do it is by ensuring that the parents who do want to work can go ahead, get a job and know they will be able to get a spot at a rate that empowers them to go to work, take home enough of their paycheque after child care fees, and know it is worthwhile for them to do that.

It is not that these recent deals are a panacea. They do not fix all the problems. It is just a good start to something the government should have been doing decades ago.

I remember when I first ran for office in 2015. I was very proud to run on the idea of a national child care strategy. I watched as Conservatives dismissed the idea out of hand. They said it was not the business of government to be supporting child care or funding child care. Liberals, frankly, ran against it too. They said the provinces would never agree. It was just a pipe dream, it was silly NDP thinking. I am glad to see the thinking around that has changed.

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I know we are debating this particular legislation and not just resting on our laurels with the bilateral deals that were signed because of the supply and confidence agreement that the NDP has with the government. It is a CASA item. There is a reason it is there.

It is because we did not want this to be a five-year experiment that would get truncated. We wanted this to be the first five years of an ongoing commitment to building up a child care system that adequately provides for the Canadian workforce so everyone who wants to go out, get a job and provide for their family, but needs child care to be able to do it, will be able to access a space. We are not there yet. We are not even close to there yet.

I know Conservatives would like to say that somehow the New Democrats are pretending that everybody has a spot now. It could not be further from the truth. We are very aware of the problems. Incidentally, I do not know how Conservatives could be blaming this legislation for the current state of affairs. It has not even passed yet. The bilateral deals were only signed about 12 months ago.

The idea that somehow this approach is to blame for the shortage of child care spaces is just a farce for anyone who is paying attention. This approach has not got off the ground yet. I do not want to just see this get off the ground as some kind of five-year trial period, and then the federal government wipes its hands and walks away.

What I want, and why this legislation is so important, is to see this as the first five years of an indefinite program that continues to deliver spaces for Canadian workers on an ongoing basis, not just for the workers' sake, but also for the employers' sake and for the sake of their families.

Yes, there is still a shortage of space. There will continue to be a shortage of spaces for a long time because we cannot just snap our fingers and create a child care system overnight, just as we cannot snap our fingers and create enough housing overnight to meet the demand that is out there.

It is why it is so important that we not waste time debating the value of having a strategy at all and jump full on into talking about what kind of strategy we should have. It is fair game for the Conservatives to disagree with certain elements of the strategy.

For my part, I think it is really important to emphasize non-profit care. Why is that? It is because what I do not want to take hold is the corporate model of child care. There are a few reasons for that.

One is that I think we will get better value for money if we are not already starting out from the point of view that 10% or more of the public dollars that we spend on child care are going to have to go to paying corporate profits. When we look at the corporate track record in long-term care and we compare it to non-profit long-term care, what we see is an appreciable difference in the nature of the care provided. We get better care at non-profit, long-term care centres.

I believe that the same incentive structure that is there for for-profit, long-term care centres to cut corners will also exist for for-profit child care centres to cut corners, and that is why it is important that we put an emphasis on not-for-profit care.

I have more to say, but unfortunately my time is up. Hopefully I will get to more of this in the question and comment portion.

● (2355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to pick up on part of the member's concerns. I am very much concerned that the Conservative Party, given its track record, has no intention of supporting the type of program we have negotiated with our provinces. That is the primary reason we see Bill C-35. It is because I do not believe the Conservatives can be trusted on the issue.

Does the member have any thoughts on the importance of this child care issue? How important is it that the agreements continue on into the years ahead?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I certainly share that concern. As members have referenced already, we saw in 2006 that when the Conservatives had the opportunity to upend child care agreements that had been signed with the provinces, they did not hesitate for a moment; they went ahead and ripped those up. Then they instituted the \$100 a month for parents, which presumably was the model they endorsed to create the kind of choice they are talking about tonight. However, we saw that this was not sufficient, and that was at a time when \$100 a month went a lot further than it does now. That was not conducive to creating the kind of child care system we need in order to meet demand.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to point out for the member's riding that 76% of children are in a child care desert in Manitoba.

I just got an email, and it says, "Dear Michelle, it's 11:45. I'm sitting watching CPAC live, as you are there yourself. Please mention and ask about ECE workers that are still out of work due to vaccine mandates and would like to get back to work."

My question to my hon. colleague is from Bonnie Bon, who is watching at home. Will he help ensure this?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, I would remind the member that the vaccine mandates that put ECE workers out of work in Ontario were done by the Conservative government of Doug Ford. I would encourage her to contact her colleagues in the Conservative government there to talk about what kind of redress might be available for ECE workers who had to leave their job as a result of Conservative-imposed vaccine mandates in Ontario.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, at a basic level, I struggle to understand the fairness of taxing all families and subsidizing some child care choices and not others. People make a variety of choices, and they have a variety of approaches to child care. Some of those reflect their circumstances, the kinds of jobs they have, their choices about the division of labour and these sorts of things. How is it fair that a family that does not use or is not able to access state day care should have to subsidize somebody else who made a different choice? Why do we not simply give support equally to all families and allow them to make their own choices and use those resources to facilitate those choices?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Madam Speaker, there are two things I would say.

One is that the Harper government did do that with \$100 a month, but it did not create the kinds of spaces that are required to meet demand, both for the sake of Canadian working families and for employers who want to see more workers available in the labour market.

I would add that one of the biggest beneficiaries of the child care program is actually employers. The New Democrats have been arguing for some time that Canada should not have a bottom-of-the-barrel corporate tax rate of 15%. We are quite open to the idea of having a higher corporate tax rate and ensuring that it is the employers who will be benefiting from having more workers available in the economy who are helping to pay for these child care investments.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

• (2400)

[English]

DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am speaking tonight about the inconsistencies between the government's claims about the Trudeau Foundation and the actual facts of what has happened in terms of the relationship between the Prime Minister and the Trudeau Foundation.

There are a couple of key points that are, I think, not disputed. The Trudeau Foundation was founded with a \$125-million grant from the Government of Canada. It is not a normal charity. It has a close relationship with government. It is considered a government institution in various statutes, which brings it under the Federal Accountability Act, access to information and privacy laws, etc. It is defined as a public institution.

The Trudeau Foundation also has a close relationship with the Trudeau family. The Prime Minister continues to be listed as a member of the foundation. Inevitably, the member opposite will get up and say that the Prime Minister has not been involved for years. Well, he is still listed in the annual report. Pre-emptively, let me say that the member should read the annual report and he will see that

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the Prime Minister is still listed as a member of the Trudeau Foundation.

The Trudeau Foundation's governance involves a certain number of members, and members of the board of directors as well being appointed by the Trudeau family and a certain number being appointed directly by the Minister of Industry, as well as a number of other members. Therefore, the structure has a privileged role in decision-making for the government as well as for the Trudeau family. That is not in dispute. That is in the governing documents of the Trudeau Foundation.

The Prime Minister has said he built a wall between himself and the foundation when we know, and I raised this in my previous question, that the Trudeau Foundation hosted a meeting in the Prime Minister's own office, which was attended by five deputy ministers. This is quite significant. It suggests that there was not a wall built at all. We have clearly this close relationship between the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister's family, the government and the Trudeau Foundation.

Then there are attempts at foreign interference that are going through the Trudeau Foundation and foreign donations coming into the Trudeau Foundation spiking significantly after the current government took office. The Trudeau Foundation member was saying in one case that they had returned a donation that they had not returned. There were mass resignations of the board, etc. This raises significant questions about foreign interference and about the government's and the Trudeau Foundation's vulnerability to foreign interference, even while the government members continue to say that there is nothing much to see here.

Then we have this situation where all of the people the government has been able to find to investigate foreign interference have been people who have been involved with the Trudeau Foundation. Just today at committee, we had David Johnston appearing. In multiple cases the government members have said that they need someone to investigate foreign interference and the only people they have found to be available have been people at the Trudeau Foundation. I would put to the government that we are not such a small country that the only people available to investigate foreign interference are those connected to the Trudeau Foundation.

It is clearly far too convenient for the government because it has not built a wall between the Prime Minister and the Trudeau Foundation. Trudeau Foundation meetings, at least one that we know of, occur in the Prime Minister's office. Despite whatever bluster we hear, it is in the annual report that the Prime Minister continues to be a member of the Trudeau Foundation. The Minister of Industry as well as the Trudeau family have the power to appoint boards of directors and the Trudeau Foundation was clearly a target for foreign interference.

Will the government put aside the bluster about claiming things that are verifiably not true? Will it acknowledge there is a problem here and recognize the importance of having somebody who is not a member of the Trudeau Foundation providing an independent investigation oversight on the issue of foreign interference as well as what happened at the Trudeau Foundation?

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Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, try as often and as hard as the member opposite does on an ongoing basis, in terms of what I have suggested, on many occasions it is the whole concept of character assassination. They just do not want to let up on that particular issue. As much as the Conservatives want to continue their focus on that, on the personal stuff and the personal attacks, the Government of Canada and in particular the Prime Minister are committed to Canadians in terms of remaining focused on the needs of Canadians. We will continue to do that.

With respect to the Trudeau Foundation, the member knows full well, and he even implied it in his question, that the Prime Minister has had no communication and has not been involved with the Trudeau Foundation for well over a decade now. The member knows that.

The member talks about how the Trudeau Foundation had a meeting in the Prime Minister's office. I would suggest that he is trying to give a false impression. The member opposite is trying to give an impression that we have a little office, the office where the Prime Minister sits at a desk, and maybe there are a couple of other chairs around it and some other office furniture, and that this is where the Trudeau Foundation met. The PMO, the Prime Minister's Office, is an entire building. There are all forms of groups that meet with deputy ministers, and there are other types of meetings inside there. He tries to give the perception that we had the Trudeau Foundation going into this small little office of the Prime Minister, and that this is a conflict of interest because they met with deputy ministers. In fact, we are talking about a building, a building that has all forms of different meetings with all forms of different groups, both for-profit and non-profit. All sorts of stuff takes place in there.

The member then makes reference to David Johnston. David Johnston was a Conservative prime minister appointment, as the former governor general of Canada. David Johnston has the experience in terms of what he has been tasked to do on behalf of the people of Canada in doing an investigation and reporting to the House.

The Conservatives do not like what the former governor general is saying. The former governor general said that if someone wants to understand why there is no need for a public inquiry, they should take a look at the annex. The annex is top secret. It is something for which the hon. member's leader, the Conservative leader, would actually have to get a proper security clearance. He would know that. He was a federal minister at one time. By getting that, he would be able to see why it is that David Johnston ultimately said there was no need for a public inquiry.

The leader of the Conservative Party does not want that. He wants to continue to be ignorant of the facts. This way, he can do and say whatever it is he wants. He does not want to know the truth, nor does the Conservative Party appreciate, in any fashion, the reality of the situation in regard to the Trudeau Foundation, because it does not fit the narrative they are trying to give Canadians, which is nothing but misrepresentation.

• (2405)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I would just again commend to this hon. member the reading of the annual report of the

Trudeau Foundation, which will testify to all the points I have made with respect to the organization's structure and the continuing membership of the Prime Minister on the foundation.

I would put to the member, as well, that, yes, the Prime Minister's Office is a four-storey building. We are not talking about a small cubicle, but we are also not talking about a massive office complex. It does send a clear message when an organization like the Trudeau Foundation is able to meet right inside the Prime Minister's Office. It is not as if any advocacy organization, any charity or even any Crown corporation can be in a meeting at will in that office.

This is the Prime Minister's family foundation. He remains a member of it. It was subject to efforts of foreign interference. The board of directors all resigned, yet the government continually goes to this foundation for people to investigate the foreign interference. That is the problem.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would argue the problem is the Conservative Party not wanting to let go of an issue and its members wanting to grossly exaggerate any form of conflict of interest. They tie together anything they can, so they can point the finger and make allegations in order to generate media attention. In that way, they can be critical of and assassinate the character of the Prime Minister or anyone else if they feel it is to their political advantage. The best thing the Conservative Party can do is recognize that, for some issues that come up in this House, Canadians would be better served if the Conservative Party were a little less political and more wanting to protect our democratic system by being a bit more apolitical. Foreign interference is completely unacceptable—

• (2410)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Next is the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as I rise this evening during the Adjournment Proceedings, most of what I want to say about the climate science is that we are running out of time and the hour is late. Both of those things are literally true, as I rise to speak after midnight.

I am raising a question that I put to the Prime Minister on March 22 of this year in question period in response to the most recent and sobering report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This is a large institution that was created by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. It is not too much to make the proud claim that Canada had a lot to do with setting up the IPCC back in 1988.

Although we talk about the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change a lot, it actually does painstaking work that takes years. This is the sixth assessment report, which came out with its final volume on March 20 of this year. We will not see another major review of the science from this eminent scientific body that has been created by governments, which appoint the scientists, for some time. It is a massive peer-review process. We will not see another report until sometime after 2030.

The receipt of this document, and the warnings in it, could not be more urgent. As many said when the report was tabled, this is really the last report when we have a chance to make a difference. What the IPCC says very clearly is that global greenhouse gas emissions must be arrested and begin to fall rapidly before, and this is important, 2025.

While the government has a target that it describes as ambitious, the target the government chose of net zero by 2050 is out of sync with the science. It is out of time with the reality that, in order to control and avoid runaway global warming, we need to act now.

When I asked the question on March 22, Canada was not on fire. We had lived through a lot of extreme weather events across Canada, whether it was hurricane Fiona, the wildfire seasons that have plagued British Columbia year after year or the heat dome over four days in 2021, late June to July 1, in British Columbia, where 619 people died. We have gone through fires, floods and extreme weather events, yet we are still here talking about when we will get serious about climate action.

The answer I had from the Prime Minister was to talk about the concrete actions the government has taken. As ever, the Prime Minister, or his Minister of Environment, talks about monies committed. Some of that money has been committed to things that will not address the climate crisis and may in fact worsen it. These things are disguised subsidies of fossil fuels, such as carbon capture and storage.

The closing line from the Prime Minister was, “As the Minister of Environment and Climate Change said this week, we will be looking very closely at that report.” One does not even have to look at the report closely. If one makes a cursory review of that report, one knows we have not done enough to avoid exceeding 1.5°C, shooting right past 2°C and putting human civilization at risk within the next half-century.

We need to do more, and we need to do it now; that is why I am back here tonight.

Mr. Adam van Koevorden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, thank you for being here this evening and into the wee hours of the morning. I would like to thank my friend and colleague, the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, for her question this evening, but not just for that. I want to thank her for her decades of service and her leadership. I would also like to thank her for being an incredible steward and spokesperson, a voice of reason in this House, an extraordinarily knowledgeable parliamentarian, and a great friend. I thank the member very much for engaging in the debate this evening.

Moving on to the substantive question, indeed, since 2015, our government has, as the member pointed out, invested a lot of money in climate action. We can be proud of this, collectively. We got elected, three times, on promises to take strong climate action, and since 2015, over \$120 billion has been invested in over 100 various measures to support climate action and to address the climate emergency that we are all experiencing, highlighted today by many members in this House, who had noticeable differences in their voices. I cannot help but wonder if that is as a result of the smoke outside because of the nearby forest fires, which are not even really

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that nearby. They are just so big that the smoke has arrived here in Ottawa.

I saw some social media posts from people who have lived in Ottawa a lot longer than the time I have spent in Ottawa, some for over 50 years, saying they have never seen the sky look like it has today. It is really tragic that we find ourselves here.

We must continue to take bold action and be leaders on this issue for the world and for other countries to take note. We have a lot of common ground in the House. There are quite a few members, I would say the vast majority of the House believes in climate changes, believes it is an emergency and believes that we must take action.

It is still alarming to hear members, and I did today, say things such as, “It is weather. It is normal. There has always been climate change.” It is challenging, to be honest, to be in this place, to be a progressive politician and to care so much about climate action, and recognize that there are some of these very antiquated views that are persistent, primarily in the Conservative Party. I have never heard a member from another party in this House falsely describe climate change as “weather”.

We agree that oil and gas emissions must come down. To do that, we must introduce a cap on those emissions for the industry and for the sector. We have also taken action on the consumer side. It is well known and it is extremely well documented that pricing carbon and pricing pollution does result in lower emissions in the long run. It is shocking that we spend so much time in the House debating whether or not a price on pollution is effective, given that 338 members of the House, every single Conservative, NDP, Bloc Québécois, Liberal and Green member, campaigned on a promise to price carbon, yet we find ourselves, in 2023, debating the veracity and legitimacy of a price on pollution.

On this side of the House, including the Green side of the House, we agree that pricing pollution is one of the many ways that we can fight climate change, but we know that there is more that we must do. We have a bold price on pollution, but we also have to take more environmental action and more climate mitigation, as well as adaptation strategies.

I can see that I am nearing the end of my speech, and I will have time for a follow-up, so I will pass it back to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

• (2415)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, this is a really worthwhile discussion the hon. parliamentary secretary and I are having.

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Here is the problem, for the answers the Prime Minister, or anybody standing up for the Liberal Party, gives, it is not good enough if we are going to put the planet at risk, continuing the trajectory we are on, which threatens the survival, and this is not hyperbole, of human civilization.

We have a window in which to ensure we avoid going past 1.5°C, where we would go way past 2°C to 3°C to unstoppable, self-accelerating, runaway global warming. That is what we are trying to avoid. We cannot avoid the weather we are having now. We will continue to have very unpleasant, extreme weather events. The goal is to hang on to human civilization and arrest the climate crisis so our kids can survive. Liberal policies do not do that.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, in fact, I would go a step farther in saying my goal is not just so that my children, knock on wood, as I do not have any yet but I would like to one day, could survive.

My goal in the House of Commons, and one of the main reasons I put my name on a ballot, and I know I share this with many of my colleagues in the House, regardless of party stripe, is so that my future children thrive in this world. It is not enough to have a planet that is survivable. This planet needs to be one that allows our species of humans to thrive.

To do that, we need an ambitious and achievable plan. I am confident that we are on the right track. I know the member shares an admiration for Jean Chrétien. He says that, if the Conservatives are telling someone they are being too socialist, and the socialists are saying they are being too conservatives, they might be getting it right.

I do not want to suggest that we have to strike a balance on climate action. We need to be an example for the world, an example for economies around the world. When there is investment in green technologies, investment in the future and growth in the economy, climate change can be fought and—

• (2420)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry.

HOUSING

Mr. Eric Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are in a housing crisis in this country, plain and simple, and the key figures demonstrate exactly that. Housing prices in this country have doubled to over \$700,000; mortgages have doubled to over \$3,000 a month; rent has doubled to over \$2,000 a month; and the amount needed for a down payment has doubled to over \$40,000. The problem is that, because rent has gone up so much, people cannot save for a down payment that has doubled. It is an absolute vicious circle, when it comes to the eight-year record of the Liberals in Ottawa.

This is a uniquely Canadian problem. The Liberals would have us believe it is a global challenge, but the perfect example we have in eastern Ontario, when it comes to housing affordability and housing supply, is looking at us across the St. Lawrence River. There was a report recently done that talked about the contrast from one side to the other. The median asking price for a home in Watertown, New York right now is \$217,000 Canadian. Meanwhile, in

Kingston, just a 40-minute drive north here in Canada, the median asking price is \$602,000. It is nearly triple the price of a home, between Canada and the United States, from one side of the river to the other.

That is despite Canada having more land on which to build houses and the United States having 10 times the population and demand to keep up with new homes.

The Liberals have created this housing crisis in this country and, while housing prices have increased around the world, none have to the degree of what we have seen these past few years. It is inflationary spending and it is the printing of new money that has gone in and bloated the prices and bloated the real estate market and that has seen this doubling in the past couple of years.

I am zoning my questions in on the federal agency and the federal minister who is responsible for housing. The CMHC continues to get very negative reviews. Members should not take just Conservatives' word for it; I know members from all parties have major frustrations on the performance and operation of this agency that literally has a mandate to make housing more affordable in this country. I have just outlined how the absolute opposite has happened and continues to happen.

We have a housing minister who shows zero leadership and zero ability to change the performance and quality of work at the CMHC. Every time we ask a Liberal a question about what they are doing for housing, they say they are spending a record amount of money: \$90 billion. They have never spent so much money to make a problem so much worse.

Members should not take my word for it. As well, the Auditor General of Canada has come out and said many negative things about the performance of the CMHC. In their recent report last year, they said that the CMHC was the lead for the national housing strategy, that \$90 billion the government tries to take credit for, in saying houses were often unaffordable for low-income households, when it came to investments in rental housing units, the report said that the CMHC is not directly accountable for any of its actions and it was not working in any coordinated way.

The performance standard of the CMHC is terrible. At a time when we need the private sector to increase building houses and getting more shovels in the ground, according to the CMHC's report, they are actually seeing a decrease.

My follow-up question is this: What performance measures are Liberals using to determine success at the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about something that I care very deeply about, and that is affordable housing in Canada.

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Before I get to the substantive question, I note that in an earlier debate this evening, we were talking about child care. Since we are talking about home finances, I think it prudent to put down that there is a calculator on the federal government's website where we can calculate benefits. It was suggested by members of the Conservative Party that there is no benefit for stay-at-home mothers and that somebody on this side of the House suggested at some point, fallaciously I would add, that single parents or mothers who stay home are less valued by this government. I would challenge that assertion. The Canada child benefit is an example of something that does support parents who choose to stay home if they earn less.

I ran a scenario through the website. I used a scenario where there is a \$70,000 earner and a \$45,000 earner in a household with two children eligible for child care. When the \$45,000 earner stays home, they receive \$250 extra a month. That is \$3,000 a year, which actually meets that family halfway on the child care subsidy they would receive otherwise. Given that child care would be available to the family if they are paying more tax, the program pays for a lot of itself, and I think it is quite prudent.

On the substantive question regarding housing, while the member opposite was speaking, he talked about how housing was so much more expensive on his side of the river than on the other side. I found some classifieds on both sides, from Malone, New York, and Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, and I found that apartments were actually a very similar price. Sometimes Conservatives just throw out prices and say that a one-bedroom apartment is now \$2,500. The veracity of those claims should be analyzed by people listening. I found apartments in Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry anywhere from \$400 for a single room explicitly for a female student to \$1,200, \$1,500 and \$1,600 for a three-bedroom apartment. At the same time, I found two-bedroom apartments for \$1,320, or \$900 U.S., in Malone, New York, just across the way.

The reality is that Canada needs more homes, and any member of this House who is serious about the issue would agree that we need to focus on getting more housing built, including affordable housing and purpose-built rentals. While some in this House, like the member for Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry, say that the federal government has to do less and pull back from investing in housing, we fundamentally disagree. I think most Canadians would disagree as well. Quite frankly, we know we need to do more.

Since 2015, this government has invested more than \$36 billion to support, create and repair half a million homes across this country and help nearly two million individuals and families get the housing they need. I am a co-op housing kid. I grew up in a co-op, and I am proud that this government has also invested \$1.5 billion in a restart to the federal co-op strategy.

We have made housing affordability a central pillar of recent budgets. For example, budget 2022 pledged billions to boost supply and put housing within reach of everyone in this country, and our most recent budget has provisions to build on that momentum, particularly for indigenous housing, with over \$3 billion invested in recent budgets. There is also the housing accelerator fund, a \$4-billion fund that intends to yield over 100,000 net new housing units over five years.

I can talk about the leadership demonstrated by the minister, who was in Milton, Oakville and London meeting with the mayors of those communities. He talked about the importance of the housing accelerator fund and how municipalities across this country can step up, find solutions and cut some of the red tape that the member opposite has referenced this evening. Since the member opposite has served in a municipal capacity, he would know that much of that red tape is, in fact, municipal. I would love to hear some solutions rather than just slogans and criticisms of things that have not worked. He is an expert on municipal affairs, and he could probably provide this House with some recommendations on how to cut municipal red tape in the housing sector.

● (2425)

Mr. Eric Duncan: Madam Speaker, I have a great solution to start: Let us tie performance bonusing to actual performance results. Call me crazy, but at the federal, provincial or municipal level, whatever the level is, far too often we have groups and organizations, like the CMHC, and the federal housing minister making a great big announcement promising more money and more results and the opposite happens. It is like this line: We are here from the government and we are here to help. Canadians do not buy it, and \$90 billion later, the problem has never been worse.

Regarding the referencing back and forth, rent prices have doubled in Cornwall, in eastern Ontario and in this country. One-third of income is what an average family should budget to spend on housing, but it is now over 60%. The more the Liberals spend, the worse it gets. They do not tie the rhetoric and the announcements to actual performance results. It is not unreasonable to ask that performance results be based on performance.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden: Madam Speaker, once again, the member opposite just pulled numbers out of thin air, stating that 60% of somebody's paycheck is going to housing. Those are examples, not statistics. We are driven by evidence on this side of the House to make sure that we are investing where it is needed.

For example, recently the federal government and Ontario's provincial government came together to find an infill solution in Milton. I rushed home from Parliament in order to do a housing announcement with the minister, a former member of Parliament here in this House, who is now in Doug Ford's Conservative government, Parm Gill. I will give a quick little shout-out to my Conservative colleague down there.

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We worked together to find solutions. Thirty-four new units were built for just under \$5 million for residents. They are already occupied. They are already tenanted. We are finding solutions because, regardless of our parties' stripes, we are working together, not just making accusations across the way, or making up numbers and throwing wild figures around about doubling and tripling, and how a supposed cutting of the price on pollution is going to solve everybody's problems. That is not true—

• (2430)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 12:30 a.m.)

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