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# House of Commons Debates

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Tuesday, October 31, 2023

Speaker: The Honourable Greg Fergus



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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, October 31, 2023

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayer*

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[English]

### INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, a report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association respecting its participation at the joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation and the Sub-Committee on Resilience and Civil Security, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Nuuk, Greenland, from September 12 to 16, 2022. I also present a report from the bureau meeting and spring standing committee meeting held in Oslo, Norway, from March 25 to 26, 2023.

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### PETITIONS

#### FISHING LEASES

**Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to present a petition today.

For 200 years, the McCormack family in Prince Edward County has been living in Point Traverse. That was until this year, when Environment and Climate Change Canada unexpectedly terminated the leases of the commercial fishing village, a heritage area located in the Prince Edward Point national wildlife area. They even lived there through 1981 when this national park was named. They have been told that one of the reasons, which is incredible, is that commercial fishing is not viable and that those living there probably can find other ways to make it work. This is unacceptable.

I have a petition from hundreds of people, and quite frankly, Prince Edward County residents, all of them, are irate at this issue of Environment and Climate Change Canada kicking out these people. The petitioners ask that the Canada Wildlife Act set up a precedent in accommodating the commercial fishing leaseholders without incident at the commercial fishing village in the Prince Edward Point national wildlife area.

These commercial fisheries are a vital part of the economy of Prince Edward County, and the undersigned call on the Government of Canada to reinstate the leases for the commercial fishing village heritage area located in the Prince Edward Point national wildlife area.

#### ANIMAL WELFARE

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition that speaks to people's concern over the federal defence department's training exercises and their use of over 1,800 piglets, which have been killed, stabbed, mutilated and exposed to radiation or chemical nerve agents. The undersigned on this petition call upon the Minister of National Defence to end the use of animals in military medical training.

#### HEALTH CARE WORKERS

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Winnipeg North, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to table a petition today signed by many health care workers.

The petition deals with the need for Ottawa to work with provincial jurisdictions to deal with issues such as the credentials of health care workers, particularly nurses and doctors, making sure they get recognized, and to deal with overworked health care providers, ensuring that we give better treatment to our health care professionals, particularly in the areas of retention and pay performance.

#### PUBLIC SAFETY

**Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to present a petition once again on behalf of my constituents.

I rise for the 21st time on behalf of the people of Swan River, Manitoba, to present a petition on the rising rate of crime. The people of Swan River are scared, and not because it is Halloween. The mask-wearing group they fear is not trick-or-treaters but violent repeat offenders who are out on bail thanks to the NDP-Liberal government's soft-on-crime policies.

The petitioners are calling for action with jail, not bail, for violent repeat offenders. The people of Swan River demand that the Liberal government repeal its soft-on-crime policies, which directly threaten their livelihoods and their community. I support the good people of Swan River.

#### SAFE THIRD COUNTRY AGREEMENT

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I have two petitions to present today.

*Routine Proceedings*

In the first petition, the petitioners note that Canada proudly proclaims that we welcome all refugees in need of safety, in keeping with a mostly justified presentation of ourselves as caring, responsible people. The safe third country agreement with the U.S. has made it very dangerous for refugees to enter Canada in order to escape persecution, violence and discrimination. The petitioners note further that the recent expansion of the safe third country agreement to 9,000 kilometres of the U.S.-Canada land border is forcing asylum seekers desperate for safety to look to even more dangerous pathways, and people will die.

Therefore, they are calling on the government to reverse the recent amendment to the safe third country agreement and suspend the agreement altogether so that refugees can enter Canada safely without risking their lives and be safe while their claims are being processed by the Immigration and Refugee Board to determine whether they have a valid refugee claim.

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, in the second petition that I will present, the petitioners note that Canada is founded upon principles that recognize the rule of law and respect for human rights and democracy. They note that the former minister of immigration said, “Family reunification is an essential part of Canada’s immigration system”. The petitioners note that some members of Parliament have acknowledged that reuniting parents and grandparents with their families in Canada provides immense contributions to our communities.

Nonetheless, the family sponsorship program is a lottery system that has many flaws and has essentially been closed since 2020. For 2021, 2022 and 2023, the applications that won were chosen from the 2020 pool of interested sponsors. The lottery system is unfair to permanent residents and citizens who are contributing to Canada’s economy throughout their stay and would love to reunite with their loved ones.

The super visa, which is another option to relocate parents and grandparents to Canada, allows them to have multiple entries to Canada for 10 years. However, they cannot get an open work permit and in general have no rights.

The petitioners are therefore calling for the government to open the submissions for interested sponsorship forms in 2023, lift the arbitrary caps on invitations to apply and accept applications, increase the annual levels plan allocation for this stream, implement processing standards to ensure that families are reunited in a reasonable period of time and develop a better system for the family sponsorship program where eligible applicants can apply to sponsor their family.

• (1010)

## NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

**Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present four more petitions signed by residents of North Okanagan—Shuswap who are concerned with the Liberal-NDP government’s attack on natural health products. The petitioners call on the Minister of Health to work with the natural health products industry, adjust Health Canada’s cost recovery rate to accurately reflect the size and scope of the industry and only implement changes once the self-care framework has been adjusted,

backlogs have been cleared, operations are run efficiently and policies and procedures are in place to ensure that stable operations continue.

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions to present today.

The first petition is from Canadians across the country who say that free and fair trials, judicial independence and the rule of law are cornerstones of Canadian democracy. Since 2019, protests for democracy, freedom, universal suffrage and regional autonomy have been occurring in Hong Kong. On many occasions these peaceful protesters of Hong Kong are charged and convicted of penal offences through a judiciary that is not impartial, free or fair. The people of Hong Kong have been arbitrarily charged and convicted of penal offences related to the pro-democracy movement for political purposes and are at risk of being deemed inadmissible to Canada.

Therefore, the folks who have signed this petition are calling on the Government of Canada to recognize the politicization of the judiciary in Hong Kong and its impacts on the ability of Hong Kongers to come to Canada. They want Canada to affirm its commitment to rendering all national security law charges and convictions irrelevant as they pertain to Hong Kong’s political dissidents. They want Canada to create a mechanism by which Hong Kong people with convictions related to the pro-democracy movement may be provided admission to Canada. They ask Canada to work with the U.K., the United States, France, Australia, New Zealand and other democracies to waive the criminal inadmissibility of Hong Kongers. This has been happening around the world, and they would like Canada to follow suit.

That is the only petition I have for today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would remind all members to try to be succinct when presenting their petitions.

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—IMMIGRATION THRESHOLD AND INTEGRATION CAPACITY

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ)** moved:

That the House call on the government to review its immigration targets starting in 2024, after consultation with Quebec, the provinces and territories, based on their integration capacity, particularly in terms of housing, health care, education, French language training and transportation infrastructure, all with a view to successful immigration.

She said: Mr. Speaker, I will begin by informing you that I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague for Mirabel.

I am pleased to go before him. This way, knowing the quality of his speeches, mine will not be too overshadowed. I know I could say the same of all my colleagues who will be speaking after me today.

Let me throw out words like anti-immigration, intolerant, racist and xenophobe. It is often said that an insult is an argument made by someone with nothing to say. As I am the first to speak today on this Bloc Québécois opposition day, I will express my wish: I hope that everyone who speaks after me, regardless of the political party they represent, submits arguments to the House that elevate the debate and provoke thought.

What the Bloc Québécois is proposing today is to hold a serious, responsible discussion. What we are proposing is to bring to the heart of the debate on immigration what should have always been there but has been overlooked by the government. The thing that should be at the centre, the foundation, the pillar of the entire discussion on immigration, is the actual immigrant. If the immigrant is at the heart of our discussion on immigration, then, by extension, our capacity to provide him or her with all the necessary tools to successfully navigate the immigration process will also be at the heart of our discussion. That is precisely the goal of our motion today.

Let us make something clear from the start. We are not asking the government to review its immigration targets because we are not welcoming. Take, for example, my hometown of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, which I represent. There was a really nice article about it in *La Presse* just last week. It said that many newcomers were choosing to settle in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu instead of Montreal, some of them after having lived in both cities. That is the case for many of the asylum seekers who crossed at Roxham Road and who stayed with us before leaving for the big city.

The article reported that many of them decided to come back because Saint-Jean is quieter and Montreal is too busy. Also, it was a little bit easier to find housing and the cost of housing was a little lower. It was also somewhat easier to find work. We are indeed welcoming, and the word is getting around among newcomers, who are talking to each other about Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu's reputation.

As the article also indicated, nothing is perfect, far from it. It stated, and I quote, "However, the fact that newcomers are settling

### *Business of Supply*

in the regions has an impact on those communities, which have less experience with immigration and, more importantly, do not have the integration facilities and services needed to properly support these newcomers.

Organizations back home, like L'Ancre, ably led by its director, Lyne Laplante, whom I salute, do amazing work, but there are not enough resources available to make sure that increased immigration remains successful.

To properly welcome newcomers, being not as bad as Montreal is simply not good enough. Resources levels and existing infrastructure cannot sustain the increased immigration targets proposed by the government. In Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, when arrivals through Roxham Road were at their peak, families that took Ukrainians under their wing could not find French classes for them, because even asylum seekers were on waiting lists. Without any French training, finding work was extremely difficult for them—assuming that the government bothered to give work permits to asylum seekers in the first place.

As mentioned in the article, services for children are also essential. It reads as follows:

The migratory journey of asylum seekers is an extremely difficult one. These students have seen and experienced things that can have lasting effects. Some of them are very challenged and can have severe educational deficits. We must not only teach them French, but offer them customized support that is adapted to each child's experiences.

● (1015)

On the issue of integration capacity, the Liberals simply tell us that all we have to do is bring in immigrants with construction qualifications and they can build their own homes. I hope I am never invited to dinner at the Liberals' house, because it looks as though I would be cooking my own meal. All joking aside, this proposal is utterly ridiculous, and if we were to follow the logic that newcomers should provide the services they themselves need, it would mean that in addition to construction credentials, they should also be teachers, speech therapists, nurses, doctors, early childhood educators, French as a second language teachers, and the list goes on.

If we look solely at the housing shortage situation, which we know is urgent, CMHC predicts that 1.2 million additional housing units will be needed in Quebec within the next six years. This calculation is based on the assumption that the federal government will reverse its decision to raise immigration thresholds. The Liberals' magical thinking about bringing in more construction workers will not solve the problem.

For one thing, as we have seen so many times in the past, and as my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert has often shown us, the federal government is nowhere to be found, when it should be stepping up with its share of funding for housing. Quebec is constantly fighting to access funds promised by the federal level. The national housing strategy agreement was signed in 2017, but it took years for that \$1.4 billion to get out the door. Again, not long ago, it was like pulling teeth to get another \$900 million released.

*Business of Supply*

For another thing, new housing cannot be built if the infrastructure, particularly water and sewer facilities, is not ready. That is what is happening where I am from. Developers are ready and willing to build, but new development would put too much pressure on existing infrastructure. Here, too, the federal government is a major hindrance when it comes to infrastructure. Members may recall the excellent work done just last spring by my colleague from Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, who had to hound the government to prevent it from deciding of its own accord to withhold \$3 billion that was meant for Quebec in an infrastructure funding agreement.

Throughout the day, my colleagues will be talking about various aspects related to integration capacity and how successful immigration depends on it. Housing, French language training, education, infrastructure and health care are all parameters providing a framework for newcomers that Quebec and the provinces are responsible for. It is therefore essential that the government consult with them to fully assess the amount of support they can provide to immigrants.

Consultation is just the first aspect of our motion today. Some people say that consultation is about seeking the approval of others for a project that has already been decided on. Quebec, however, is taking steps to try and challenge this adage, since it has called on a number of stakeholders to examine its immigration planning for the period from 2024 to 2027. Several briefs have been submitted on various aspects of immigration, including French language training, integration and regionalization. The necessary debate is intended to be healthy and, above all, useful as we move forward.

In the issue now at hand, federal targets, the consultation we are asking for definitely cannot be confined to just continuing to talk; it has to be followed up by an actual review of immigration thresholds that considers observations made by Quebec and the provinces. The Bloc Québécois leader often says that a known consequence constitutes intention. If Quebec and the provinces tell the government that, for 2024, the proposed thresholds do not allow us to adequately welcome newcomers, and the government still stubbornly maintains its targets and even raises them, there is only one possible conclusion: The government's decision to increase immigration is utilitarian and serves only its own purposes, period. We would then be forced to conclude that successful immigration is simply not a priority for this government.

Ultimately, those who will suffer the most are those lured by the promise of a generous welcome.

• (1020)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, during the mid-nineties, Manitoba was in a difficult position in terms of immigration, as the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was seeing immigrants coming to Canada but avoiding the province of Manitoba. The creation of the Manitoba provincial nominee program allowed the province to really grow through immigration. If it were not for immigration, the population of Manitoba would have actually decreased, so immigration has been so critically important to the province. Manitoba has a certain amount of

control, though nowhere near as much control as, let us say, what the Province of Quebec has. I have never heard government officials in Manitoba saying that we have too many immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba.

Does the hon. member feel that there are too many immigrants going to the province of Quebec? It seems to me that the Province of Quebec has more jurisdiction in terms of handling the numbers coming into its province than other provinces do.

• (1025)

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, the debate we are having today is not about setting thresholds. The aim is to ensure that talks with the provinces at least get started, which has not happened, despite Canada's legal obligation to do so.

When Manitoba decided to have programs, there was more latitude on immigration, which was great. I am pleased that Quebec has programs, although more are needed. There is a language issue that arises here. Yesterday, there was a very good piece on Radio-Canada about Jacques Couture, who was responsible for the Cullen-Couture agreement back in the day.

When it comes to the issue of thresholds, consultations are key. Ultimately, interprovincial migration also comes into play, and it may impact Quebec. We must also therefore consider arrivals outside Quebec.

We have to take into account our ability to house people and the fact that the federal government underfunds health care. This has to be part of the discussion. The health transfer escalator is 3%, while current needs tell us it should be 6%. All of this has to figure into the equation, and this is why we ask that there be at least one initial consultation, which is not currently the case.

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, in my riding, we receive dozens of new immigration files every week. I warmly thank Isabelle Turcotte-Genest, who works in my riding office and who manages the immigration files. Not a week-end goes by where I do not receive thanks from my constituents because of her great work. I want to acknowledge her.

I assume that this happens in other ridings as well. According to figures dating from September 30, there is a backlog of more than 2.2 million immigration files here, in Canada. In our view, the Liberal government's mismanagement is what is preventing it from focusing on the right targets. First and foremost, we need to make sure that immigrants coming to Canada are properly integrated. Unfortunately, there is a backlog of more than two million files.

I would like to hear my colleague's comments on this.

*Business of Supply*

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, we do get the impression that the government is building the airplane in mid-flight. It is particularly deplorable when it concerns human beings. Ultimately, this is all about human beings. These are not numbers or files. I will even say that these are not clients or cases, either. These issues are far more human and the government is losing sight of that. It is setting thresholds without really considering the capacity to decently integrate these people we are reaching out to and welcoming.

Can we do this work in an orderly fashion and begin by ensuring that the people who are already here have all the services they need? I am not including only newcomers in that; I am including the entire population, all those who are being affected by both the housing shortage and the underfunding of our health care system. Let us start by resolving that. Then we can properly say to others, “welcome home”.

[English]

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, one of the things people often do is point fingers at newcomers when there are challenges in our communities. We know that there is a housing crisis, but I want to say very clearly that newcomers are not to be blamed for the housing crisis. The people who should be blamed for it are government members. Both Conservative and Liberal governments have failed to ensure that there is a proper housing plan to address the housing crisis.

My question for the member is this: From Quebec's perspective, what does Quebec need the government to do to ensure that the housing needs of Quebecers are met?

[Translation]

**Ms. Christine Normandin:** Mr. Speaker, I want to make one thing very clear. I never said in my speech that immigration was responsible for the housing shortage. However, there actually is a housing shortage, and because of that housing shortage, we cannot properly integrate newcomers. That was my point.

We could spend all day debating the housing issue. It could even be the subject of an opposition day motion someday, who knows? First of all, if the government had made sure to provide the funding that was promised with no strings attached, we would not have been unable to spend \$1.4 billion for three years. During that time, interest rates and the costs of building materials increased. We wasted precious time because of the government's stubborn insistence on sticking a Canadian flag on the cheque.

• (1030)

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, first, let me applaud my colleague for her excellent speech, which set the tone for what is sure to be a most peaceful opposition day.

We are here today to debate federal immigration targets because we are in never-before-seen circumstances in our history—certainly of our recent history. We have to talk about numbers, but we can do it calmly. If the 2024 federal targets are reached, immigration will account for 1.21% of the Canadian population by 2024. If the 2025 targets are reached, the percentage will increase to 1.24%. The last time rates that high were observed was in 1928-29. Back then, Montreal had a population of 819,000. Toronto was a cornfield with

631,000 residents. We can all agree that our arguments about resources and integration capacity do not come out of left field.

In January 2023, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada had nearly 522,000 people waiting for permanent residence. Another 239,500 people were waiting for express entry economic immigration. If we look at historical data and include family members, we arrive at the equivalent of 2.3 million people—yes, I said “people”, and not “cases”—who are waiting. This means that we run the risk of exceeding these historic targets by even more. Quebec was not consulted in all this. No one ever called on Quebec. Quebec stated its wish to be consulted, and today, a consultation process is under way in Quebec City. There can be no denying that immigration has to serve the interests of newcomers and the host society.

I would like to add a personal note. The woman I married was born in Algerian; she is Kabyle. She came here with her family in 2001. They are people who made a good living in their country of origin. They made many sacrifices before arriving here. They left behind family, property, home and friends. They started over at the bottom of the ladder. They managed to find a small place to live. It was not very nice, incidentally, because newcomers rarely have access to the nicest homes. Over the years, they met with success in their immigration and integration journeys. One day, my father-in-law and my mother-in-law decided that they wanted to own their own home, which was impossible in Montreal, even back then. It was expensive. They managed to move to a suburb a little ways away. They had a house built. They got on the property ladder to secure the future of their family and children. I recently asked my father-in-law what would have happened if they had arrived here in 2023. His response was a long silence. Then he told me that their dream would have been shattered. These are the people we are thinking about.

In 2011, a scientific study co-authored by Fuller showed that the health of immigrants had deteriorated since they arrived in Canada. In 2010, Houle and Schellenberg published a study showing that a large proportion of immigrants said that, if they had to do it all again, they would not choose to come to Canada. McKinsey and the Century Initiative will not tell you that. They are more concerned about the number of people needed to fill the short-term labour demand than they are about the actual people. Immigrants are people. They are people we care about, people who become our friends and family. We marry them. We live with them. They are here for the long term. They will be here until they are 80 or 90 years old. They will have children and be part of our society. The answer that we get when we talk about immigration targets is that we need workers in the short term. There is an incredible disconnect here.

Today, if we talk to the government or read what reporters are saying, we see that they are telling us that immigrants will just have to build their own homes and work in the construction industry. They are basically telling us that we are going to give immigrants a kit from Ikea so that they can build their own home. It is difficult to describe. Housing is the elephant in the room. The government is always talking about the housing supply as if it can wave a magic wand and build 50 million housing units a year and offer these people the same quality of life as we have.

*Business of Supply*

● (1035)

When we speak to bankers or to people in finance or housing, we are told that if all the bricklayers, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and roofers in Quebec worked full-time, 40 hours a week, winter and summer, we could build 75,000 homes. We recently reached a record in 2021 by building 68,000. This year, in Quebec, we will build approximately 30,000 to 40,000 homes. Before the thresholds were increased, the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation said we needed a minimum of 100,000 homes. That means people will be left living on the street. That means homelessness.

Before, whenever we said things like that, people would say that we were anti-immigration, that we did not like immigrants and that we were racist. Now, all of a sudden, Toronto says there is a homelessness problem, a housing problem, an affordability problem and a problem with resources, especially in the area of health care. All of a sudden, this has become a national crisis and is no longer seen as xenophobia.

How come the government can increase targets overnight without notifying Quebec, yet Fatima, a newcomer from Morocco, cannot get a spot in day care for her children the way a Ms. Tremblay whose family has been here for generations can? Where is the gender equality in that situation? This is a major problem with the government's perspective.

Now reporters and the government are telling us that the concept of integration capacity is just smoke and mirrors, that it does not exist, that there is no scientific definition for it. Funnily enough, in July, economists from the University of Waterloo wrote a paper on immigration, the conclusions of which I will quote: "Absorptive capacity can be thought of as how quickly the economy can expand private and public capital investments...Quickly expanding the level of immigration may place excessive stress on highly regulated sectors such as healthcare, education, and housing".

I am prepared to table the scientific article by these growth economists from the University of Waterloo. Immigrants are not cases, numbers or figures. When we talk about immigration thresholds and integration capacity, we are talking about success, French language training, the availability of health care and education. We cannot live under the false premise of "us" versus "them". The immigrants who are here are best placed to say what it takes to live here, to realize their dream and to integrate into employment.

People who have been here for many generations have never had to leave their family, friends, home and job behind. They have never had to do this. When I talk to groups in Mirabel that welcome immigrants, and when I talk to friends, family and foreign students at UQAM, where I taught until recently—foreign students who are being stonewalled by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada—these are the people best placed to understand what we want to do, which is to welcome them properly.

We want immigration to succeed. We want every person who arrives here to succeed. We want the best for everyone, regardless of where they were born or how many generations they have been here. We plan immigration for us and for them, because they are also part of "us". This is a collective effort. It is not just a figure or a number. Right now, it is mainly the federal government and the chambers of commerce that are treating them like numbers, because

they want short-term unskilled labour. Personally, I want each of these people to succeed, to become richer and to reach their full potential as a person. Immigrants are not votes. They are human beings, neighbours, people we live side by side with every day, full-fledged members of Quebec society.

It is in this context, where immigration is part of our vision of society, that Quebec society must be heard. Quebec is not being heard, and it wants to be heard more. This is why we are holding this opposition day. I would like to say to each person who has had the courage to come here, to make Quebec their home, that they are welcome, that we love them, that they are our neighbours and that what we want for them is full equality with those who have been here much longer.

● (1040)

*[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Bloc wants to personalize it to the immigrant who is coming to Canada, and that is great. We should all put the immigrant who is coming to Canada first. One of my greatest frustrations is recognizing immigrants who come to Canada as health care professionals. However, primarily through provincial jurisdictions, their credentials are not being recognized. This puts a huge obligation on those immigrants to go through education facilities and so many other barriers that are put in place.

That is one reason that I would love to see a resolution similar to this, but that deals with issues that would have a positive outcome for immigrants. The member talks about targets. Should we not be incorporating the need to recognize the credentials with which individual immigrants are coming to Canada? Does he think that all provinces need to do more in getting rid of some of those barriers so that they are able to use their education and experience from their home countries?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the member for Winnipeg North is talking about his frustrations; he has quite a few. He talks about them a lot here during the day. He mentioned Quebec's jurisdiction. Interestingly enough, we might actually agree for once. We are saying that Ottawa should consult Quebec.

We are in a bubble here. The federal government is not a government; it is a bureaucracy. It is government made up of paperwork. It is a government that gives orders, that sets targets. It is a government that has hardly anything to do with integration, which is why it is important to consult Quebec.

I think it is perfectly possible to recognize the expertise that immigrants and all citizens bring to the table. There is nothing personal about it. The government has 2.3 million files that it cannot handle, yet it is turning to the provinces and meddling with professional associations. It ought to do some soul-searching.



**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Mirabel for his presentation. Unfortunately, it seems to me that the member for Winnipeg North did not listen closely to my colleague's speech. What he said made a lot of sense.

There needs to be consultation. We need to be responsible. Yes, we need to be responsible when we welcome people, but we also need to be responsible as a country and ensure that we are prepared to properly welcome and integrate those we invite here.

I would like my colleague to elaborate on the Liberal hypocrisy. I would like to remind the House that the government across the way managed to reach its immigration targets the year the Official Languages Act was modernized. That is the only time, and I think it was just for show.

How can my colleague trust this Liberal government?

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, I do not trust either the Liberals or the Conservatives.

Economic immigration in Canada, not just in Quebec, has risen from 24% to 50% over time. Quebec controls economic immigration. That proves the importance of having more consultation.

This is not new: sustained increases to the immigration targets, whether the economy was doing well or not, started under Mulroney. It was a new system started by the Mulroney government, and it continued under both the Conservatives and the Liberals.

Lack of consultation is a federal disease that infects the government regardless of its political stripe. I think that my colleague should think about that a bit as well.

[English]

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, on the issue around providing supports to the provinces and territories to support newcomers, it is absolutely critical; there is no question.

Even, during the time with the Liberals, there was much fanfare with the Syrian refugee initiative. I met families who were not able to get language training. We can take, for example, a husband and wife team; they had to choose which of the family members would be able to enrol in language training, because there were not enough spots.

The issue around the lack of resettlement services is not from this moment in time; it has existed for a very long time, and that is wrong. The NDP has called on the government to properly support newcomers when they come to Canada. Therefore, from Quebec's perspective, I would be very interested to know this: What kinds of resources are necessary for Quebec to be successful in supporting newcomers, especially on language training?

• (1045)

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon:** Mr. Speaker, only the Quebec government can answer that question. However, let us consider the facts. Quebec has never invested as much in French language training as it is investing now. It is important to weigh the supply of services against the demand for services. A balance exists between the two. We need to consider both sides of the equation responsibly. Part of

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the equation comes under the responsibility of the federal government, considering the huge flow of interprovincial migration, including people who start out living in other provinces and then move to Quebec. That part is federal. Here, I think we should look at federal issues.

If the other parties are unwilling to live in a federation that respects jurisdictions, the solution is quite simple: national independence for Quebec.

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to share information with members about the Government of Canada's immigration levels and how we are supporting Quebec with respect to immigration specifically. I am sure that all members, including those from the Bloc Québécois, know our immigration levels are tabled in the House on November 1 of each year. That is tomorrow. We will respect the government's deadline.

I can assure the House that we will hold in-depth consultations about 2024-26 immigration levels, as we do every year.

We remain determined to meet the needs of every province and territory, as well as those of employers and communities across the country. The federal government consults its provincial and territorial counterparts to set immigration levels and determine appropriate allocations for the provincial nominee program, for example.

Canada's immigration plan is based on input from employers and communities, as well as feedback from the provinces and territories. It is informed by data in order to better understand the labour shortages that still plague Canada today.

Under the Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, Quebec has rights and responsibilities with respect to the number of immigrants Quebec takes in and how they are selected, welcomed and integrated. We therefore work closely with Quebec on everything related to immigration. As a result, Canada sets the annual number of immigrants for the country by taking into account the number of immigrants Quebec wants to welcome. Under the agreement, Quebec is solely responsible for selecting immigrants in the economic and humanitarian streams. It is also responsible for applying the federal selection criteria for family reunification.

While the motion before the House calls on the government to specifically consult the provinces, territories and Quebec, our government has done much more than that in its consultations. This year, we conducted extensive consultations on immigration thresholds across the country, as we do every year. We gathered feedback from every province and territory on their needs and priorities for programs such as the provincial nominee program.

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These conversations with our provincial and territorial counterparts are not a one-time thing, but rather an ongoing dialogue that takes place year-round. This dialogue takes place between officials at various levels, and particularly between politicians. It takes place through planned consultations, including with ministers, to hear directly from all the parties concerned about their immigration challenges, needs and potential improvements.

I would like to point out that as part of planning this year's immigration thresholds, I reached out to various provincial and territorial partners, including Minister Fréchette in Quebec. I also met with representatives from The Refugee Centre to discuss how to better support refugees and asylum seekers once they arrive in Canada. As well, I met with the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada to ensure that we are strengthening francophone communities outside Quebec through immigration. I know how important that is to you, Mr. Speaker.

We consult with Quebec, as we do with all provinces and territories, when we introduce new programs and policies. In fact, some of the measures we are putting in place stem from Quebec's desire to see certain provisions applied. For example, the public policy allowing certain work permit holders to study without a study permit originated from Quebec's initial desire to enable foreign workers to come here to improve their skills while attending school. Last year, at Quebec's request, we established the international mobility program plus, or IMP+, which allows individuals outside Canada who have been selected by Quebec under a permanent residency program to obtain an open work permit.

Finally, it was because we consult Quebec, and at its express request, that we harmonized the conditions surrounding access to post-graduate work permits in certain programs which already existed in the rest of Canada. The 1991 Canada-Quebec agreement, which has been in place for as long as the Bloc Québécois has existed, provides mechanisms for regular consultations between Quebec and Canada. Our officials meet regularly at the highest levels to discuss the common objectives we share with Quebec.

We also ask partner organizations, including the hundreds of settlement organizations across the country, to tell us about their challenges, both globally and locally.

• (1050)

We receive their reports on the communities they serve and support in rural and urban communities, as well as on newcomers entering the labour market, seeking recognition of their foreign credentials, and learning and seeking services in French and English across the country.

We are kept abreast of how newcomers are integrating, and what programs and services are working best in the various communities. We meet with representatives of many municipalities throughout the year to seek their advice or to respond to their challenges and concerns. In fact, this year in particular, we held even more in-depth consultations, because the levels and the mix of classes we will be welcoming were also taken into account in our strategic review of the future of immigration to Canada.

We also held extensive consultations on the future of immigration in Canada and on the programs and services systems needed to

support all our provinces, territories and municipalities. A major part of these consultations focused on how we can support employers in all sectors, particularly in housing, health care and technology, which have been identified as priorities by the provinces, territories and municipalities.

In addition to soliciting input from across the country, we organized in-depth sessions with experts, including one in Montreal, on key issues such as housing, rural immigration, skill desirability and social cohesion. Many of these sessions were led by ministers, parliamentary secretaries and deputy ministers.

We also gathered input from Canadians of every region, including newcomers who have used our services, through the online consultations entitled "An Immigration System for Canada's Future". We heard from almost 17,500 people, over 2,000 organizations and more than 2,100 former clients about what they expect from immigration for the future of our country. We met with indigenous representatives, business leaders, young Canadians and opinion makers to gather a wide range of comments and understand their perspectives.

We found that, in general, Canadians understand the value of immigration and the way it helps us secure our future. They understand that newcomers make valuable contributions and that diversity makes our communities stronger. We also heard about the challenges that communities and newcomers are facing.

We have heard from the provinces, territories and employers about the ongoing need for skilled workers. They have also reminded us of the urgent need for tradespeople to help build more housing, and the need for health care workers in our hospitals and long-term care facilities, a need that we are all too familiar with, especially since the pandemic.

Without immigrants, Canada's and Quebec's economies would have had a tough time meeting the unique challenges of the past two and a half years. Indeed, many of our temporary and permanent residents work in key sectors such as health care, transportation, agriculture and manufacturing.

Permanent immigration is vital to Canada's long-term economic growth. It accounts for nearly 100% of our labour force growth, and by 2032, it is expected to account for 100% of our population growth.

Fifty years ago, when I was born, there were seven workers for every pensioner in Canada. Today, that number is closer to three, and it is expected to fall to two by 2035. If we do not change course by welcoming more newcomers to Canada, future conversations will not be about labour shortages. Instead, they will be about whether we can afford to keep schools and hospitals open.

The government is working with all of its partners to strike the right balance between providing the necessary support for our employers and our economy, meeting our humanitarian commitments—which all Canadians feel very strongly about—and ensuring that our immigration plans reflect the needs and priorities of each community. The government is also taking into account operational realities such as our service and processing standards, program complexity, evidence on immigrant outcomes and the costs of settlement and integration.

The immigration levels to be presented for 2024 will reflect the needs of Canadians in all regions of the country. They will take into account our humanitarian commitments, particularly with regard to Afghans and Ukrainians. These levels will support Canada's growth while moderating the impact on essential national systems such as housing and infrastructure.

We recognize that it is important to balance our humanitarian commitments with our economic and labour needs in order to provide newcomers with a clear path to success. While there is debate about the size of Canada's infrastructure deficit, everyone agrees that significant investment is needed to address it.

• (1055)

The fact is, immigration is not at the root of our housing problems. The housing crisis has been three decades in the making. All levels of government, along with the private sector, have to work together to solve the housing crisis. We are in the process of consulting and engaging with the provinces and territories because many aspects of these challenges are within their purview. The federal government's immigration policies will focus on measures to address housing and infrastructure challenges, among others.

Newcomers are part of the solution when it comes to increasing housing supply. That is why we are so focused on prioritizing workers who support the housing sector. Through our economic immigration pathways, we are targeting candidates who can help us fill labour shortages in the construction sector and help build more homes.

Without immigrants, it would have been very hard for Canada's economy and Quebec's to meet the challenges of recent years, as I said earlier. Many of the temporary and permanent residents here are working in key sectors such as health care, transportation, agriculture, manufacturing and, of course, housing construction.

One of these programs, the guardian angels program for health care workers, was created specifically with the help of Quebec leaders. It is vital that all governments commit to meeting the needs of the people we serve, whether in Quebec, Nunavut, Nova Scotia or British Columbia.

We are not trying to decide immigration levels in the coming decades, but to understand the direction where the needs of em-

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ployers, industries, communities, provinces and territories are heading to ensure that we have the operational capacity and the modernized immigration system required to support those needs.

We heard from francophone communities outside Quebec and worked with them on the challenges inherent in shrinking populations of francophone minority communities. In the days to come, I will have more to say on this matter.

We worked in co-operation with the ministers of official languages to support implementation of the action plan for official languages, which includes strengthening strategic francophone and bilingual immigration through the francophone immigration strategy. In 2022, we reached the 4.4% target for francophone immigrants entering Canada outside Quebec. As we all know, that is not enough.

Not only did we achieve this target, but it was the first time that we had ever done so. Last year, we welcomed over 16,300 francophone newcomers outside Quebec, which is three times more than in 2018. That is the highest number of francophone immigrants admitted to Canada outside Quebec since we began collecting data in 2006. This increase coincides with the implementation of our immigration strategy at the end of 2018.

Canada has a long tradition of welcoming new immigrants. Canadians are justifiably proud of their immigrant heritage. Immigration is also what has made our country grow stronger and continue to move forward, not to mention forging strong bonds between people, diversifying our communities, and acting as an economic engine.

With the 2024-26 immigration levels plan fundamentally focused on attracting skilled workers who will contribute to Canada's economy, we are more confident than ever that we can preserve our world-class immigration system, which is the envy of virtually every country in the world. We will cut wait times for applicants, promote family reunification, and continue to support the world's most vulnerable populations through one of the world's best refugee resettlement programs.

This year's plan is buttressed by a robust immigration system, and we are making great strides to improve it even further. Our focus remains on economic growth and immigration, as these are essential to short-term economic recovery and long-term prosperity. I will conclude my remarks and announce that we will be delighted to support the Bloc Québécois motion.

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• (1100)

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in my speech, I talked about how Quebec conducted real consultations with many stakeholders before announcing its immigration thresholds. It seems as though the federal government did exactly the opposite.

It started with the Century Initiative, where some people announced a goal of increasing immigration admissions to 500,000, and the government ran with it. When we asked whether those people had taken into account the impact this would have on housing, Dominic Barton said no.

However, the idea of bringing in 500,000 people was already well-established, and, as a result, just a month ago, Minister Fréchette said that she was “inviting the Canadian government to review its admission targets for the coming years based on the new statistics, because its numbers seem excessive and do not in any way take into account integration capacity.”

She would like the government to take that into account when it is setting its targets. That does not sound to me like there was any real consultation; rather, it sounds as though the federal government just informed the minister that we were going to keep the target at 500,000 people.

My question is simple. What is the government going to do if, after it holds real consultations, if it does, the minister still maintains that Canada does not have the integration capacity to welcome 500,000 people?

**Hon. Marc Miller:** Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of speculation in the Bloc Québécois member's question.

She obviously was not paying attention to what I said about the consultation we held as part of the review of our strategic plan, which we will be announcing within the next few hours. I am a little disappointed because she knows full well that Quebec has been making most of the decisions within its jurisdiction since the Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, which, as I said in my speech, has been around as long as the Bloc Québécois has, dating back to the early 1990s. I am sensing a bit of unwillingness to hear what I just said.

Clearly, there is always room for improvement in terms of communication and coordination, but that does not mean we always agree with Quebec. That is how relationships work. We each have a say. If she believes that we have not consulted properly, it is because she did not listen to my speech or because she is acting in bad faith.

[English]

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, we are debating this motion about wraparound services for immigrants and newcomers coming to Canada. The minister was just in Calgary. He would know that the Centre for Newcomers in Calgary and the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society have had their funding cut. They need another \$3 million to provide the key on-the-ground services for newcomers coming to Canada. They have estimated about 8,000 Ukrainians have come to Calgary on a CUAET visa and they are helping to resettle about 6,000 Afghans.

The situation has gotten so bad that the Calgary Police Service is dropping off government-assisted refugees, the responsibility of the federal government, in the lobby of its downtown locations because they have nowhere to go and this is the last place they can find refuge.

Winter is coming. Many of the service providers have had to let go 65 staff members between these two agencies and thousands more are expected to need that type of frontline help.

Why is the minister not providing that critical support? Why is he not there? When he was in Calgary, why did he do nothing about this, knowing there would be a shortfall for this important frontline service to be provided in Calgary?

**Hon. Marc Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member to speak to the organizations that I spoke to, because that was not the tenor of the conversations we had. We certainly had conversations about planning and ensuring we were more coordinated.

There is this false impression that the federal government is responsible for everyone who crosses the border. This is a shared jurisdiction. Immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers all enrich our country and will enrich the tax base of it. To sit there and say that suddenly the federal government is responsible for people who come to our country simply because they cross the border is an operation in bad faith. We transfer monies under the social transfer to provinces to ensure they do their job.

These issues are not limited to Calgary. In fact, I had some very productive conversations in Calgary. What Canadians and organizations are telling us is that we need to be more coordinated, whether it is at the municipal level or at the provincial level.

I need to note in this context that in the last few years, we have seen massive transfers of money from the Canadian government to provincial governments. It is also time that they step up and do their job for future Albertans and Canadians.

• (1105)

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, earlier the former minister of immigration pointed his finger at international students struggling with Canada's housing crisis. I am glad to hear the current Minister of Immigration say that newcomers are not to be blamed for the housing crisis.

Canada needs to ensure that a proper housing plan to address the housing crisis includes international students. Will the minister take it up, ensure that his government provides leadership in this regard and partner with institutions, provinces and territories, with a one-third, one-third, one-third cost-sharing plan, to ensure international students, and students, for that matter, will have access to proper housing?

**Hon. Marc Miller:** Mr. Speaker, what I will not do is commit to the NDP funding formulas on the floor of the House of Commons.

I would note that in the member's home province some very good work has been done to clean up some of the designated learning institutions that have been responsible for creating false hope abroad with respect to international students. They have attracted people here on a false promise of hope, on a false premise. They do not need to spend \$40,000 in fees to end up driving an Uber.

We need to work together with provinces to ensure they are doing their jobs in their jurisdictions and to rein in a lot of designated learning institutions, which they sanction, they back and they get the funds for directly, not the federal government, then ask us at times to rubber stamp applications from folks whose hopes have been entertained, sometimes falsely, about coming to this country.

International students are a huge credit to our country and the vast majority of them will contribute in their own countries when they return by being soft ambassadors for Canada or increase the productivity in Canada when they become permanent residents or, eventually, Canadian citizens. It is not a guaranteed pathway, but clearly there has been some fraud. An ecosystem has been created that has been very lucrative and people are taking advantage of that.

Last Friday, we instituted a model for the federal government to start doing its job a little better, and we expect provinces to do that as well. It depends on the province, but we have open arms with regard to working with them and get it done.

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, francophone immigration is very important to British Columbia. The B.C. francophone federation does great work when it comes to helping francophones coming into British Columbia.

I have a francophone school in my constituency. The minister has mentioned that when it comes to francophone immigration, the government has achieved 4.4% outside of Quebec but that more work has to be done.

Could the minister elaborate on the additional steps he would take to ensure we have more francophone immigrants coming into British Columbia?

**Hon. Marc Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I would love to transfer myself from being a minister to a deputy minister in this context, but the devil is in the details and the logistics with which my department administers the program. We have not done a very good job in the past of increasing francophone immigration in our own sphere of jurisdiction. It has landed us a lot of rightful criticism about ensuring we are doing immigration in a proper way to reflect the bilingual nature of our country.

The 4.4% that we reached represented an increase of 450% in those numbers, but it is not enough. If we need to ensure and re-establish some level of parity with respect to our communities, we need to get up to a permanent number of about 6%, which would require increases of 6% to 8%, or perhaps even more, over the next years.

We need to put in place the mechanisms to ensure that this is permanent, including ensuring that we have funding, that provinces are providing funding and that we are putting in place structures that favour francophone speakers as they come to our country. This might include moving from a situation where francophone students could have a pathway to permanent residence, ensuring we are do-

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ing missions abroad and that we are tackling the challenges to get French teachers. This is a need that exists outside Quebec as much as it exists inside Quebec. It is work that we have not done, structured or well, in the past.

I look forward in the next year being able to show the House of Commons, our colleagues in government and Canadians that we can do this job and that we can put in place a system that favours and encourages francophone migration.

I cannot conclude my comments without talking about the importance of combatting systemic racism. We know that systemic racism has impacted our ability to recruit French talent in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in West Africa, and that needs to be fixed as well.

● (1110)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be joining this debate. I will be sharing my time with the member for Edmonton Mill Woods, my colleague from up north, the deputy leader of the Conservative Party.

I would be remiss if I did not start by addressing an issue that is top of mind for many of my constituents and for Canadians coast to coast. I want to remind everybody about the carbon tax flip-flop of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister has effectively created two classes of Canadians. One class of Canadians gets a carbon tax exemption on their home heating, while another much larger group of Canadians, including constituents of mine, will get nothing. They are not in that class of individuals.

This gimmick the Prime Minister has come up with has resulted in 97% of Canadians being excluded from getting any type of relief on their taxes. Any relief should apply to all regions of Canada, not to one region of Canada only for electoral purposes. There is only one answer to this, which is that home heating should have all carbon taxes removed from it. Common-sense Conservatives will axe the tax entirely on all home heating, gas, groceries and on farmers who grow the food, people who ship the food and people who process the food. Everybody deserves the same tax break.

We are debating a motion from the Bloc today. If the Bloc will indulge me, I am going to go over the different parts of the immigration system. I want to indict the former immigration minister, who is now the housing minister, on his performance. Having now heard the current immigration minister, we are basically repeating the same mistakes of the past.

It has come to a point where many Canadians are emailing me, calling me and direct messaging me. There are more articles being written about people's confidence in the integrity of the immigration system and whether it delivers on the expectations of Canadians. I think that is the substance of the motion the Bloc has put forward. Are we achieving our goals through the immigration system?

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Many members know I am an immigrant; I came to Canada in 1985. All my kids have been born in Calgary. I have lived in different parts of Canada at different times. When I look at our immigration system today, it is not the fulfilling the promise to immigrants who are landing here like it did decades ago. I have had exchanges with the immigration minister about the immigration system as it functions right now.

There was a summer cabinet retreat about housing. It was telling that when the immigration minister was confronted, because we were trying to hold him accountable for those numbers, he could not even answer the basic question of how many construction workers had been brought in this year so far and how many were brought in last year, the year before and the year before that. He made a ridiculous claim like he was not the minister of NOC codes.

The number one way of tracking immigrants who come to Canada is by occupations they are in. An entire database system at Statistics Canada tracks exactly that one important statistic. It tracks their occupation and then, as they get more seniority, it tracks what type of occupation classification. The minister of immigration even alluded to the fact that the Minister of Immigration was also responsible for jobs, because a lot of immigrants who come here want to work. They want to make a contribution to the country that has greeted them and become their new home. Not to have that number is a real indictment. The previous immigration minister, when he became the housing minister, expressed a great deal of regret.

I want to talk about international students first and then I will go to the federal skilled trades program. On international students, an almost record number of international students are going to Canadian institutions. Some of them are going to U15 or to U21 to get post-graduate degrees. We are not so much concerned about their experience in Canada, although it is much more difficult finding a place to live, with the cost of living as it is today. What they are told by their country of origin about how much funds they will need annually to get by when they come to Canada is very different.

Then there are a lot of plaza colleges that are not providing an opportunity. First, many international students who come to Canada have a desire to seek a post-graduate work permit to continue making a contribution in the workplace. Now we hear story upon story of people living under bridges. We hear stories about people struggling and having to go to food banks. Some are Canadians, but they are also international students. I do not think these international students expected they would need to go to a food bank when they came to Canada.

During the summer, the now former immigration minister, now the current housing minister, said that it was not his fault. He said that it was an uncapped program and therefore a limitless amount of applications could be accepted. The minister was not responsible for two and a half years. We have reached this point today because he did not pay attention to his file when he was the immigration minister.

• (1115)

Now we can get to the federal skilled trades program. The primary way to bring in construction workers should be through this program, which even the OECD has criticized for not meeting its ex-

pectations. The correct number, the last time I checked in September, was 80. That is how many construction workers it has brought to Canada.

There are other programs to bring construction workers in. The present housing minister has said that we need construction workers from elsewhere, that we need to train them in Canada and find people who want to retrain. There is a zoning problem. There is a construction problem. We know we have the least amount of construction permits being issued. We need construction workers, people working in residential construction, who want to build homes, and we are not bringing those people in. In fact, when we look at the numbers generated for construction workers by the previous immigration minister over seven years, it is the same as the number of retail supervisors brought in over two years. Where were the priorities of the previous immigration minister? What were his priorities with respect to the immigration system? What was he focused on? Why did he not pay attention to this?

The previous immigration minister saw the numbers coming in and said that it was not his job. That is literally what he told me when I asked him a very specific question about two immigrant service centres in Calgary that provide frontline services to government-assisted refugees. Unlike what the minister said, that is his responsibility. There are resettlement dollars being provided by the federal government expressly for this purpose, and they cannot be downloaded to the provinces.

I think this is a commonality. Hopefully, the Bloc will agree with me that we cannot download that service onto a province and expect it to just make it happen. The minister said it was not his job and not his responsibility. After they met with the then minister of immigration they came to see me because they were shocked by the answer they got, so I did get feedback on how that meeting went.

I find it galling that the current immigration minister would say that it was not his problem, not his fault, and the previous immigration minister is saying, after looking at the numbers, that he now has regrets. He then floated out a bunch of ideas, leaving it up to his replacement to try to figure out what is going on. We know how bad it is.

I have a document. The header is “International Students: Repatriation for sudden deaths”. That is how bad it is. It has been circulated by the World Sikh Organization, whose members I met with many months ago. They provided me with this document from a crematory and funeral home in Brampton. It had to create it specifically for international students because that is how bad it has become. The number of suicides in that community has risen greatly. This is just one such document, which goes on in quite a bit of detail, to help these families have their loved ones returned to their country of origin. That is the immigration system these immigration ministers, or housing ministers, as it is hard to follow which title they prefer now, have left us with to date.

[Translation]

I will come back to the motion moved by the Bloc Québécois.

Today, the backlog in the immigration system has reached 2.2 million applications. In September 2022, we were informed that an online portal would help reduce the number of applications in the backlog. That number has not gone down. We were talking about 2.2 million applications in September of last year. This year we are talking about 2.2 million applications. Just before the pandemic, we were talking about 1.9 million applications. During the pandemic that number reached 2.9 million applications. The backlog has been in the millions for years. For years, people have been waiting for an answer, for a yes or no, from the government.

Many people who are waiting for an answer are already working or studying here, and they are trying to change their temporary status to a permanent status. These people are in a precarious situation. It is hard for someone to see how life in Canada will unfold when they are constantly told they have to wait one more year.

These people are asking their MP for help, and all of our offices are flooded with requests from people who are having problems with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. That department has more than doubled; the number of employees has increased by 144% compared to 2013, and more than 200 people there are in management positions.

• (1120)

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to deliver this speech. I will support the Bloc Québécois motion, and it would be my pleasure to answer my colleagues' questions.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke at length about the housing issue. One aspect he mentioned was people with construction skills who could help build housing. However, I would like to hear him talk about an underlying factor in housing construction, namely infrastructure.

If municipal infrastructure is inadequate, we cannot increase the number of available housing units. In our view, this is also part of the thought process on integration capacity. I would like my colleague to tell us about that aspect. Would it be enough to simply bring in new construction workers? Should we instead address the housing issue as a whole, including the question of municipal infrastructure?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the member's question about residential, commercial and, of course, industrial infras-

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tructure. Do we have enough highways, hospitals and clinics to provide the services people will need?

The province of Alberta has the second-highest rate of inter-provincial migration. Many people who come to Canada settle first in another province and then choose Alberta. Even with all the information the federal government collects, it is hard for me to believe that anyone could ask immigrants which city they think they will live in now and which city they think they will be living in one, two, three, four or five years from now. It would be hard for immigrants to answer such a question, because they do not know. They sometimes receive very little information before coming to Canada.

I will give a personal example. When my father came to Canada, he did not know that there was a francophone province where people spoke only French. Before he began working at the Sorel-Tracy shipyard, he did not know that he would be working in French.

[English]

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing a lot of comments in the public realm, even from the former minister of immigration, who is throwing newcomers under the bus and blaming them for the housing crisis, particularly as it relates to international students.

Is it not the case that Canada has a housing crisis because successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed Canadians? Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have cancelled programs: the co-op housing program, in the case of Conservatives, and the national affordable housing program, in the case of the Liberals. This has contributed to the housing crisis we face today.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, the simple answer is no, that is not it.

Pre-2019, I did not have constituents coming to tell me that they were worried about being able to purchase a home or being able to pay rent. It was not a problem until the Liberal government, with its NDP allies, decided that it was a good idea to overspend \$600 billion during the pandemic, \$205 billion of which had nothing to do with addressing the pandemic losses to our economy, jobs, housing issues, and our health care systems across the provinces.

That overspending then led to a massive increase in the money supply. Does the House know who warned those two political parties not to do that? It was the member for Carleton. For two years, he kept warning that, if the government drastically increased the money supply without having new housing supply come on market, it would double the price of homes and rent. This was perfectly foreseeable, and they voted for it.

• (1125)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have always cautioned some members not to throw stones in glass houses.

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The member talks about processing times. When I was in opposition, and I am sure the member does not have the paper for this, the processing times for people getting married was three or four years, easy. Those were the types of calls I was getting. We could talk about sponsoring parents and grandparents. The Conservatives actually killed that program. They ended it. We can look at the numbers when it was going, and processing times before they ended it were eight or nine years.

My question to the member is not related to processing times but to the provincial government's role in identifying people who are coming to the provinces. Manitoba alone, through the provincial nominee program, which was a Jean Chrétien creation, provides more economic immigrants coming to the province than any other program.

Does the member not recognize that provinces also have a role to play when it comes to the type of immigrants coming to Canada?

**Mr. Tom Kmiec:** Mr. Speaker, my response will be about processing times. I actually do have a paper on that, and it is funny. The Auditor General's report found that, on average, privately sponsored refugees waited 30 months for a decision. Some of them waited two years before their file was even touched.

I have the 2015 numbers, so I would like to refresh the member's memory. In 2015, study permits took 31 days to process. They now take 88 days, as of just a few months ago. These are IRCC numbers. Work permits took 42 days in 2015. They now take 62 days to process. Temporary resident visas took 13 days to process back in 2015. Today, I have the number for April 2022, and it took 72 days. They have nothing to teach us on immigration processing times.

**Hon. Tim Uppal (Edmonton Mill Woods, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I will just take a minute to address something I have received a number of calls about in the last day or so, and it is this Prime Minister's carbon tax flip-flop. The Prime Minister has effectively created two classes of Canadians, one that—

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. We witnessed this yesterday and, once again, we are starting to see it today, where members of the Conservative Party will stand up and start off their speeches with dialogue on the price on pollution, the thing they actually supported back in the last election, and being critical of the government.

It is not relevant to the debate at hand. I get the feeling that we are going to see more and more of that throughout the day. Members should be cautioned regarding staying relevant to the debate at hand.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will run a couple of cautions.

During questions and comments, members are to try to keep them as concise as possible because we have been running over time.

As well, we normally give a little allowance for that first minute of debate to make sure that members can talk about the things that are important to them in their constituencies.

The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, I know that they do not want to discuss their flip-flop and how they are hurting Canadians right across the country.

The fact of the matter is that, with the Prime Minister's carbon tax flip-flop, he has effectively created two classes of Canadians, one that gets the carbon tax exemption on home heating they announced and the other massive group of Canadians who do not, such as my constituents in Alberta, where it is also cold. They will also need to heat their homes—

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hon. member for Jonquière is rising on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard:** Mr. Speaker, unless my colleague can explain the connection between immigration and the carbon tax, I think he is totally off topic. If he is able to make that connection, I am ready to listen.

However, what I understand from his intervention is that he is trying to pollute an opposition day, which is being held in good faith, by giving a speech that suits his agenda. That is not how things work here. I would ask him to show a modicum of respect for his colleagues and talk about the issue we are discussing today.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I think it is important that all members have an opportunity to present their ideas at the beginning of their speech.

[English]

I will give a little caution that it may be time to get to the crux of the discussion we are having today.

The hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods.

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to address the fact that the government's incompetence is not in only one area and that the Prime Minister's carbon tax gimmick will not help 97% of Canadians, such as Canadians in Alberta. It will help only one region of the country. There is only one answer on home heating: We need to remove the carbon tax from all forms of heating.

I will also address another incompetence of the government. I want to talk about the countless families, students and skilled workers affected by the Liberal government's poor management of the immigration system. As a member of Parliament, I regularly meet with constituents in desperate situations that are due to the current state of our immigration system. I hear about the endless backlogs, years of separation from loved ones and businesses in urgent need of skilled workers.



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Immigrants contribute to our economy, not only by filling gaps in our labour force and paying taxes but also by spending money on goods, housing and transportation. In fact, among newcomers coming to Canada between 2011 and 2016 who were working in the health care sector, more than 40% were employed in the important areas of nursing and residential care facilities, as well as home health care services.

According to the international education strategy, international students contribute more than \$21 billion to the economy every year through student spending and tuition. Their spending amounts to more than Canada's exports of auto parts, lumber or aircraft. Many international students will stay and build their careers in Canada, enhancing our capacity for innovation and helping us build a stronger economy for the future.

We are a nation of immigrants. I am the son of immigrants. My father would always say that, in Canada, there is value in hard work. Someone could buy a home and provide for their family, but not after eight years of the government and its mismanagement of the system. Many new Canadians, international students and Canadian businesses are struggling. Everything is broken, including the immigration system.

The failures of the former immigration minister have hurt our immigration system. It is completely unfortunate that the same person has now been promoted to be the housing minister to address our housing crisis. The staggering backlogs and delays in the immigration system that he oversaw have created a profound human crisis, where families are left in limbo and the skilled professionals who came to Canada to work here and contribute to our country are forced to wait around without so much as an answer.

The toll of these delays is immeasurable. Families endure emotional turmoil, financial strain and the crushing weight of uncertainty, all while awaiting a decision that holds their future in the balance. Those who want to come to Canada deserve a plan that provides clarity and certainty. Every person deserves a process that treats them with dignity, compassion and respect. However, the Liberals' record when it comes to immigration is one of failure, mismanagement and backlogs that last for years.

Conservatives believe in a common-sense immigration system that is employer-driven. That is why the number of immigrants coming to Canada to contribute their skills will naturally fluctuate and should not be driven by arbitrary government targets. Instead, it should be driven by labour shortages and workforce needs. Immigration numbers should depend on demand from businesses to hire new Canadians for unfilled jobs, from charities to sponsor refugees and from families to bring loved ones to Canada.

Because of the government's failure to process applications and provide work permits for skilled workers to address urgent labour shortages, provinces are having to step up and ask for more power to deal with the problems the Liberals have not solved, the problems that they created. Canada needs skilled workers today, but skilled workers are forced to leave because their work permits expire and they do not get a new one in time.

• (1130)

The current IRCC application backlog is 2.2 million as of September 30. In September 2022, the department introduced an all-digital application system, promising that the application backlog would be reduced. It has not been reduced. This is just another failure by the current Minister of Housing and the former immigration minister. Processing times at IRCC are not even close to meeting service standards.

According to a recent report by the Auditor General, privately sponsored refugees waited an average of 30 months for a decision on their file. Overseas spouses or common-law partners waited 15 months to be reunited with their partners in Canada. Members may think that things would be better for the trained professionals and skilled workers Canada needs, but this is not the case. Only 3% of applications for the federal skilled worker program were processed within service standards. According to *The Globe and Mail*, thousands of highly skilled immigrants who, in previous years, would easily have qualified for permanent residence in Canada are being forced to return to their home countries as their work permits expire because of a Liberal-made backlog.

In 2015, the Liberals took over a Conservative-led immigration system, and processing times were as follows: Study permits were at 31 days, work permits were at 42 days and temporary resident visas were at 13 days. In April of this year, processing times were as follows: study permits, 88 days; work permits, 62 days; and temporary resident visas, 72 days. These numbers are even more shocking when considering the 144% increase in IRCC personnel since 2013. Executive management went from 135 people to 227 people in the same time span.

Because of the government's failures, and under the watch of the current housing minister and the former immigration minister, dishonest immigration consultants and plaza colleges are allowed to flourish in Canada. Plaza colleges are colleges that pop up in strip malls. This is due to the breakdown in operations and system integrity across IRCC. Plaza colleges take advantage of international students, charging them tens of thousands of dollars to enrol, and some of them enrol 10 times more students than their buildings have capacity for. International students in Canada are being taken advantage of and subjected to poor living standards. This has led to international students living under bridges or sharing a floor mattress in a basement for \$500 a month.

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Community organizations have also raised concerns about students' mental health and suicide rates among the international student population in Canada. Sadly, one crematorium in Brampton has a pamphlet for families of international students, outlining the process and cost of repatriating a body after a sudden death. Shamefully, after completely mishandling the international students file, the government is blaming the students for the current housing crisis. The same minister who was in charge of and broke the immigration system is now responsible for addressing the housing crisis.

The government's failure to put forward a real plan to ensure a fair, orderly and compassionate immigration process has real consequences for those hoping to call Canada home. These people are not just file numbers; they are real human beings. Behind every statistic lies a deeply personal story of someone yearning for a better life in Canada.

• (1135)

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Edmonton Mill Woods did not mention one category of immigrants that is key to bringing in the brightest immigrants to Canada. This is the parents category. The reason he did not mention it is that, under the previous Conservative government, it took seven years for parents to come and join their families; for spouses, it took four years. However, under the Liberals, it is down to two years for parents and four months for spouses.

I will focus on the parents and grandparents, because the Conservatives gutted that system. In their last year in power, they brought in only 5,000 applications and decreased the age of a dependent child from 21 to 18. When the Liberals took power, over the last so many years, we brought in a minimum of 20,000 applications every year, so more parents and grandparents can come.

Is the parents category that I talked about also important to the member's constituents?

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, that is an important category. I actually talked about that in my speech, and it is an important part of our plan for Canadians to be able to reconnect with their loved ones. However, one of the biggest problems here is that, instead of having some certainty for families as to when their parents or grandparents would be able to come and get through the whole immigration process, the Liberals introduced what they call a lottery system.

If members talk to Canadians who are part of this lottery system, they say they have no idea when they are going to reconnect with their parents or grandparents. They have been waiting for years. This ridiculous lottery system is failing families; families are waiting and waiting, and they just do not get the lottery. Reconnecting with loved ones should not be left to a lottery.

• (1140)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, earlier in their speeches, my colleagues from Saint-Jean and from Mirabel each indicated how important it is to put immigrants at the centre of this process. Unfortunately, given the wait times and difficulties we are currently facing with the housing crisis, it is getting harder to focus on immigrants.

I wonder whether my colleague agrees that, if we want to welcome immigrants in a more substantive way in the coming years, we need to really think things through.

[English]

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely important that, when new Canadians come to Canada, they have an opportunity to succeed. This includes the availability of jobs for them to be able to provide for their families and the opportunity to purchase a home and for their children to go to school, as well as access to the health care system. It is absolutely imperative that this is all in place when we allow immigrants to come to Canada. Unfortunately, what has been happening under the current Liberal government is that the infrastructure is just not there. The Liberals have not done the hard work to ensure that, when new Canadians come to Canada, they have the basic necessities of life. That needs to be in place, but the Liberals have not put it in place. They announce a lot of numbers, but they do not put in the really hard work to get it done and to help new Canadians.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is truly remarkable to watch Liberals and Conservatives argue over housing. It is like watching two arsonists argue about who burned the house down. The Conservatives want us to magically think that these problems all started in 2015; in fact, what we are seeing today is the natural conclusion of decades of Liberal- and Conservative-backed policies that have gotten us to where we are.

I have a simple question: Do my Conservative colleagues support the call by housing advocates to stop the financialization of housing by implementing a moratorium on the acquisition of affordable housing units by financial landlords, as well as the creation of a non-profit acquisition fund? It has taken a long time for Liberals and Conservatives to dig this hole, and it is going to take a sustained effort to get us out of it. Does the member support that?

**Hon. Tim Uppal:** Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely imperative that we build more homes in Canada. What we support is actually a private member's bill that we have by the Conservative leader right now: the building homes not bureaucracy act. This bill would help to build more homes so new Canadians and Canadians who are already here can move into homes. We need more homes in Canada. We need to work with municipalities to ensure that they remove the gatekeepers, remove the red tape and build more homes for Canadians to move into.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to enter into this debate. First, let me thank my Bloc colleagues for bringing this motion forward. They are absolutely correct in saying that the federal government needs to consult with provinces and territories with respect to Canada's immigration plan. There is no question about that. I do believe that the Canadian government is doing that. That said, what needs to be done, of course, is for the federal government to show the necessary leadership to support provinces and territories so they have the necessary resources to support newcomers, and not just to support newcomers but also to support all communities so they are healthy communities.

I am an immigrant. I am one of those people who came to Canada. Back in the day, my family struggled to survive, but we did survive. We also had a housing crisis at that time. Our family of eight people lived in a 700-square-foot basement suite. That is all we could afford.

Fast-forward to today. Where are we with respect to the housing crisis? We now have a situation where, in Toronto, newcomers are sleeping on the street. The weather is getting colder all the time, and where are they? They do not and cannot even access a shelter. The City of Toronto is left holding the bag on its own. The Liberal government promised to transfer money to it, but that money has yet to materialize. It is all talk and no action, continuously. What does it do? It disappoints. It does not actually deliver on what it says. It is not just newcomers who are struggling with the housing crisis; all Canadians are struggling with it. What does the government want to do? The former minister of immigration has pointed to newcomers and international students as though somehow they are responsible for Canada's housing crisis.

Let me be clear about who is responsible for Canada's housing crisis. Successive Liberal and Conservative governments have failed Canada and Canadians. Whether someone wanted to rent or to buy a home, what has happened over the last 30 years with Liberal and Conservative governments is that Canada has lost more than a million units of housing. That housing was being rented at \$750 or below a month under both the Liberals and the Conservatives. What else happened? The Conservatives cancelled the co-op housing program, and the Liberals cancelled the national affordable housing program. They gutted funding for housing. They downloaded it to the provinces, territories and cities, saying, "Good luck to you." Now, we have a housing crisis after they walked away from their responsibilities.

Now, whom do they point their guns at? The leader of the Conservatives and the Conservatives are pointing their guns at municipalities as though it were all their fault that there is a housing crisis. The municipalities are not to be blamed. The federal Liberals and the Conservatives are to be blamed. They are responsible for the housing crisis. If blaming people when they walked away from their own responsibility were not enough, they actually emboldened wealthy investors to get into the market to buy up affordable rental apartments and then displace people, to renovate people, to demolish people, to throw them onto the streets and then jack up the rent. Rent has gone up from \$750 a month to now, in Vancouver, \$3,000 a month. When asked whether they will take responsibility for this, take action and say "no more" to the wealthy in-

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vestors getting in there to displace people, neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives will take up that fight. They will not even speak about it. My goodness, who is to blame? Let us be clear that it is not newcomers. Conservatives and Liberals should look at themselves in the mirror and realize they are the ones who are responsible.

Before I go on, let me just say that I will be dividing my time with my colleague from Elmwood—Transcona.

● (1145)

This is a serious question. We are seeing the rise of hate and division in our community. I am experiencing it directly, as someone who is an immigrant, who came to Canada many decades ago as a young child. It has never been worse.

I understand that when people are faced with tough times, and they are faced with tough times with high inflationary costs, with food insecurity and being actually thrown out of their homes, they are unable to move forward. People who grew up in communities are being displaced because they cannot afford to live in the neighbourhood they grew up in. Professionals in a family, who are making a decent income, still cannot make enough to afford rent, let alone to hope to buy. Families are having to move back home with their parents in order to survive. They are people. I was just at a community event for Thanksgiving, where I was serving Thanksgiving meals to people, and I met construction workers who are working but cannot afford rent. They are living in shelters and in cars. That is the reality, so when we see the situation and its seriousness, the government needs to understand that it is its job and it is parliamentarians' job to stop trying to divide communities, stop trying to prey on people's fears, come up with real solutions and take responsibility for their own actions. Their words matter. Equally importantly, their actions matter.

What is the NDP calling for to address the housing crisis? We absolutely want to say "no more" to the wealthy investors who are coming in to buy up affordable housing and affordable rental apartments and then displacing people. We are saying "no more". It has to stop. We need to put a ban on that. In addition, we need to ensure that the government puts forward investments to support the non-profit sector so it can go in, buy up the units that come onto the market and create a non-profit acquisition fund. This is something the NDP has been calling for for a very long time. It is time for the government to act.

We also want the government to take action and speak to those who want to access government supports, such as CMHC's insurance guarantee or low-interest mortgage supports. If the private sector wants to access government programs, there has to be a return to the community. It has to reduce the rent for the community in perpetuity for those units, not just for a year or two, or for five years, but for the life of that project. Those are taxpayers' resources, and we need to ensure that taxpayers' resources benefit the community and not line the pockets of wealthy investors.

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We need to make sure that the government takes real action and builds social housing and co-op housing like we used to. Contrary to what the leader of the Conservatives says, which is that building social housing and co-op housing is some sort of weird “Soviet-style” model of housing, the NDP believes in supporting people. I invite the leader of the Conservative opposition to visit a co-op, to visit a social housing project and to talk to the people there who are accessing that housing about how it has made a difference in their lives. I invite the leader of the Conservatives to not just do videos and selfies in the back lane to make fun of people and to call people's house a shack, saying a proper house that people live in is some sort of shack, but rather to look deeply into people's lives and the struggles they have and to understand, when stable housing is provided to them, the difference it makes in their lives.

It is time for action, not this nonsense that the Conservatives are talking about. The NDP supports the Bloc's motion absolutely. The federal government should provide leadership and should support provinces and territories, including Quebec, with the necessary resources to support newcomers.

• (1150)

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a lot of the member's speech focused on housing. The speech largely ignored the \$82 billion that we provided through the national housing strategy, which, I would remind members of the House, is a 10-year plan. We are halfway through that plan. Much of the resources go to non-profits and municipalities, which the member raised in terms of providing support. I am well aware of that as a long-time city councillor in Hamilton.

The member had lots of criticism towards the private sector. As much as we have issues related to the financialization of housing, the private sector is key as it relates to getting us out of this housing crisis. It is going to be a partner in this space in terms of providing all the homes we need, in terms of building supply. Why does the member see fit to demonize the private sector when it is an important part of getting us out of the housing crisis?

• (1155)

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Speaker, first, I would invite the member to actually look into his own government's national housing strategy. The vast majority of the money is actually not real money for people. The government actually counts money from the provinces, territories and other partners towards that amount of money.

The other thing is that the government slow-walks the money, so projects do not get built. We have been talking about this since 2017. What is there to show for it? There is not that much.

There is another thing I actually want to point out. I invite the member to read the Auditor General's report, which says that the government itself, CMHC itself, does not even know what it is doing and whether or not the housing program is meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

Let me get into the other question the member asked on the issue around supports for people. The government needs to understand that the private sector is in it to make a greater profit. We do have to partner with the private sector, but we have to make sure we put measures in place so there is a return to the people. We have to say,

“no more displacement of people and sending them out onto the streets”. That is contributing to the housing crisis, and the government, with its policies, is aiding and abetting the private sector in that regard.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I serve with the member on the immigration committee, and I want to bring it back to that particular issue, which is the substance of the Bloc motion.

There is an Auditor General's report that just came out about the immigration backlog and the eight immigration PR systems. The report mentions that there are two programs for permanent residency for privately sponsored refugees and government-assisted refugees that do not have service standards set for them. This is in violation of Treasury Board guidelines and directives to the department. Every single stream and service provided needs to have service standards.

I would like to hear the member's opinion on why the IRCC continues to violate Treasury Board guidelines.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Speaker, that is a question I asked the minister in question period last week. I would ask the member to check the NDP website, and my website especially, for all the comments I have made with respect to the processing backlogs and the government's violation of its own policies. It is shameful, and it is time for the government to take the necessary action to respect newcomers, to process the applications in the way in which they deserve, to establish processing standards and to abide by the standard of no more than 12 months for processing.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I feel that my colleague has clearly grasped the spirit of today's motion, which is that, in Quebec, we want to look after each and every fellow Quebecer.

She spoke about housing. I do not find that she is demonizing the private sector. My colleague is talking about building housing that the private sector does not want to build and about building co-op housing. This is housing that people live in, manage and own as co-operatives. In Quebec, we have programs. Quebec is the only province with permanent programs to build co-op social housing. Because Ottawa is refusing to understand this model, it is taking time for the money to flow in. In the end, that is keeping us from housing people.

I believe that other provinces should learn from the Quebec model. To this end, Ottawa should make a special effort to understand Quebec's specificities so that we can move forward with housing construction more quickly, rather than stalling, insisting that there be a maple leaf in the corner of every cheque and preventing Quebec from building more housing right away. Does my colleague agree?

[English]

**Ms. Jenny Kwan:** Mr. Speaker, Quebec and British Columbia are the two provinces that are doing a lot of the heavy lifting, even without the federal government at the table. He is absolutely correct. What we need the federal government to do is to invest and to partner in a true partnership with provinces and territories in the development of housing.

The way the government is doing it is shameful. It will often go to a project that is already under development, all for a couple of million dollars, so it can be part of the announcement. That is wrong.

Provinces are leading the way. It needs to actually ensure that it provides the necessary resources to match the resources of provinces and territories, so the provinces and territories can address the housing crisis and can get housing built expeditiously.

● (1200)

[Translation]

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to contribute to today's debate. I want to thank the member for Mirabel for his leadership on this motion today. I also thank my colleague from Vancouver East for all the work she does in the House on housing and immigration issues.

As New Democrats, we understand that immigration is an integral part of our economic system and, even more importantly, that immigrants play an important role in our communities. We recognize that the cultural influences and diverse skills that immigrants bring to Canada are part of our strength and our success.

If we are to welcome more immigrants to Canada, we must offer them the best chance of success. Because successive governments, both Liberal and Conservative, have failed again and again, we are no longer able to provide provinces with the necessary resources and ensure that immigrants can succeed. When we hear about newcomers who cannot find housing, we have to take responsibility for that.

Today's motion, which seeks greater co-operation between the various levels of government, is the right way to go. If provincial governments are not consulted and do not know in advance what the federal government's immigration targets will be, they cannot possibly prepare all the services they must provide to ensure successful immigration.

Of course, we could talk about the health care system, but I think that, right now, the bigger, more serious problem is housing. In 1992, the Conservative government at the time cancelled a co-op housing program. In 1993, the Liberal government, which promised throughout the election campaign to bring back the program, decided to cancel the whole national housing strategy.

As a result, Canada lost housing for many years in a row. Had the government kept that strategy in place, we could have built 500,000 more affordable housing units. Instead, all that potential was lost. In 2010 or thereabouts, when mortgages were reaching their renewal date, the government created a fund to provide more affordable housing. However, the Harper government then decided not to renew those resources, so we started losing not just afford-

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able housing potential, but also existing affordable housing. The non-profit organizations no longer had the resources to continue to provide affordable housing.

During the 2015 election campaign, the Liberals once again promised to repair the damage done by the Conservatives. However, like in the 1990s, once they took office, the Liberals decided to keep that policy in place and we lost even more affordable housing.

● (1205)

We talk about the need for more immigration to meet the needs of our economy, but we do not have any more room for these immigrants. Of course, provincial governments have a very big role to play in building affordable housing, but they need significant funding from Ottawa to be able to build it. However, we can see that there is a lack of co-operation to ensure that this housing gets built. There certainly needs to be closer co-operation between the provincial and territorial governments and the federal government to resolve the crisis, which was caused by Liberal and Conservative governments agreeing on one important point about housing—that it should be primarily, if not solely, up to the market.

That is why I think that hearing from New Democrats on this issue is really important. We are the ones talking about renewing the commitment to build social and affordable housing, and we recognize that the solution to this crisis will not come from the private market alone.

We are not here to demonize the private sector, but when big companies evict people, shrink the affordable housing stock, and jack up rents, we have to be able to say that as well. We have to be able to talk about that because, even if that is not the only problem, it is one of several. We have to tackle this problem if we want to resolve the housing crisis. We do acknowledge, however, that the private sector has an important role to play here. If all we talk about are market-based solutions, then we are never going to address all aspects of the housing crisis, and we are not going to resolve it.

That is why it is really important to focus on social, affordable and co-op housing, because the two major parties in the House never really talk about these things. Even if the Liberals talk about them a bit, they do not take any action. That is why we are here, to focus on that.

I am now ready to take questions from my colleagues.

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the Liberal government recently removed the goods and services tax to encourage housing construction. The Liberals told us that this measure would help build housing, some of which will be started in 2030 and delivered in 2035. They recognize that it takes time to plan for housing, even in their policies.

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At the same time, tomorrow morning, they will announce their immigration targets for 2026. They will stand up and tell the provinces how many people they are going to get, while acknowledging in their own bill that it can take three, five, seven, eight or 10 years to plan housing.

Is it just me here who finds this deeply inconsistent and deeply disrespectful of the newcomers who come here? Is it everyone in the House who sees the Liberal government's inconsistency when it comes to planning housing construction and understanding the role of the provinces and Quebec in this matter?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, this seems to be a classic case of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. I think this motion is very important because it encourages the federal government to consult the provinces. However, to have a consultation that will really make a difference, it is important that the government act early enough so that the provinces have enough time to prepare. Announcing immigration targets for 2026 now, in 2023, when there is a housing crisis and we should be setting these targets taking into account the limited number of housing units available, seems to me to be a bit like the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing.

• (1210)

[*English*]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, as I am sure the member is aware, the Manitoba provincial nominee program has been absolute gold for the province. One of the biggest concerns I have in Manitoba today is with respect to international students.

Provinces, through the nominee program, have an opportunity to ensure they can maximize the ability of international students who study, for example, in Manitoba, to obtain a provincial nominee certificate, which would ultimately allow them to become permanent residents. I am a big advocate for that.

Can the member provide his thoughts on that aspect of the provincial nominee program and on how international students could benefit from it?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I am also a great fan of the provincial nominee program. It has been serving Manitoba very well in a number of ways for a long time.

To the point of today's motion about collaboration between the federal and provincial governments, I remember a time when the Harper government unilaterally capped the number of people Manitoba could bring in under that program. That was not a helpful action, and it was certainly not something the Government of Manitoba of the day was on board with. Had it been consulted, it would have been an opportunity for it to make the case for how well the provincial nominee program, and the immigration that occurred under it, served Manitoba. I think that all goes to reinforce the importance of today's motion.

I also think it is important, when we talk about international students, to be clear that the blame is not on them for coming in good faith to study in Canada. Canada needs to do a better job of ensuring that when they get here to study, there is an acceptable place for

them to live that they can reasonably afford. I think that international students, as many provincial governments defunded post-secondary education, were seen too often as cash cows, and if governments were treating them with the respect they deserved, they would not have seen them way. The government would have been asking what resources it had to invest in order to support those students when they came to Canada, both for their education and, as the member said, beyond that, so they could become citizens and productive members of Canadian society.

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Madam Speaker, just to build on the issue around international students, one thing the federal government has not done is to show leadership in partnering with provinces, territories and institutions to create a housing plan for students. A viable option would be to ensure there is a cost-sharing plan between those three entities to ensure that housing is in place, not only for international students but also for domestic students.

Can the member comment on the concept of the federal government showing leadership?

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I think that is an excellent idea. We need to stop defunding all kinds of important things, like post-secondary education, housing and health care, in the name of lowering the corporate tax rate, which has really been the story of the 21st century in Canada. We have a corporate tax rate that went from 28% to 15%, in the last 20 years alone, and a lot of those cuts in funding have been paying for those corporate tax rates. Corporate Canada should be paying its fair share—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I want to inform the House that I will be splitting my time with my terrific colleague from Thérèse-De Blainville.

Today's subject is a delicate one. We are talking about human beings who were courageous enough to leave everything behind, either voluntarily or because circumstances forced them to. These human beings crossed the globe in search of a new life. Many of them will never again see the people they grew up with or the land where they were born. Many of them experienced traumatic events.

We are also talking about human beings who want to give newcomers the best possible welcome. These human beings want to give newcomers a great new life that meets their highest expectations. These human beings wish for a society where all are equal in law and in fact. When we are talking about immigration, we are talking about all of that and more, so much more.

Today, we will be talking about immigration, but more specifically about successful immigration. There is one very important question we must answer: What is successful immigration? I could give a simplistic answer by saying that it means making every effort to ensure that people who settle in a given place contribute to the economic prosperity and the linguistic, cultural and social vitality of that place, especially if that place is a francophone environment, a minority in North America.

This brief definition raises two other questions. What do we need so that the human beings coming to settle in Quebec and Canada can contribute to our economic prosperity and linguistic, cultural and social vitality? Do the current immigration conditions enable the human beings settling here to contribute to our economic prosperity and linguistic, cultural and social vitality? Before answering these questions, I should bring my colleagues up to date on the situation.

According to Statistics Canada, Canada welcomes almost 500,000 new permanent residents every year. The goal is to reach or exceed 500,000 permanent residents a year. However, taking in 500,000 new permanent residents is equivalent to building a new city every year, somewhere between Halifax and Quebec City in size. Have we built such a city in the last year? No. Will we build one each year going forward? No.

Add to that students, asylum seekers and temporary workers, and we reach the shocking number of 2.2 million people between July 2022 and July 2023. I am not making this up. I am citing numbers from Statistics Canada. With 2.2 million residents, temporary workers and asylum seekers coming in, we would need to build a city almost as big as Toronto every year to accommodate them properly. Do we have a city the size of Toronto available, particularly in terms of housing? The answer is no.

All these people need jobs, as well as housing and various other services. We have not built a new Toronto or a new Quebec City, and the number of people without housing is alarming. Reception centres are overflowing. Sometimes multiple families have to squeeze into a home scarcely big enough for a single family. This leads to disappointment, stress, anger and bewilderment.

For months now, the business community has been saying it needs more workers. However, we know that many immigrants end up in jobs where their skills and knowledge are underused. These are minimum-wage jobs. Many have to hold down several jobs to make ends meet. Furthermore, like any other segment of the population, immigrants need public services like education, health care, day care, transportation, integration services, employment supports, and French language training, or English language training as the case may be, depending on the province. None of these things are Ottawa's responsibility, except for day care centres outside Quebec, since the federal government set those up. In Quebec, all these things are managed by the Quebec government. Everyone deserves quality services, whether they are newcomers, permanent residents or citizens.

• (1215)

It is easy for someone to say that we will take in 500,000 new permanent residents each year when they are not responsible for the services that the population needs. All of the services that I just

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mentioned are services that the population needs. These are services that allow people to integrate and feel included in society. These are services that they need to feel good, good enough to contribute to our economic prosperity and linguistic, cultural and social vitality.

We know what it takes. These are the conditions for successfully welcoming, integrating and including newcomers. These are the conditions for successful immigration: being able to deliver the same services to everyone, with the same degree of access and the same quality.

Are these conditions currently in place? All of the services that I mentioned do exist. However, demand far outstrips supply. Not a week goes by without me getting a call from a parent who needs subsidized day care. Not a week goes by without someone calling to ask if I know any doctors. I do not even have one myself. Every week, I get calls from isolated mothers who have no family here and need support. Every week, I refer them to different agencies in my riding so that these mothers can build a social life here and have someone to talk to.

That is not caused by immigrants. It is caused by immigration targets that are not aligned with existing capacity to provide these services. The people who call me come from all over the world, including Quebec. Everyone is aware of these problems. Everyone has these problems, no matter where they were born, how old they are, the colour of their skin or their religion. None of that matters when people have needs that cannot be met.

It takes to years to train a carpenter, a plumber, a plasterer or a painter. It takes three years of post-secondary education to train a nurse or an early childhood educator. It takes six to train a teacher or an engineer. In medicine, it takes seven years to train a general practitioner and 11 to train a specialist. Those are just a few examples of the workers we need now and the time it takes to train them. Even skilled immigrants have to adapt what they have learned to their new geographic and social situation, as well as to the laws and regulations governing their trade or profession here. That does not happen overnight.

We need these trades and professions in order to create the conditions that a society requires and to allow each person in society to contribute to its economic, social, cultural and linguistic development. These conditions are not being met.

For that, we have the government to thank. It is almost slavishly following the recommendations of the Century Initiative and its consortium, including senior McKinsey and BlackRock executives. In Dominic Barton's own words, it never occurred to the Century Initiative people to consider the social impact of a massive increase in Canada's population. Their focus was just on economics.

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What, therefore, are the possible consequences of failing to meet the conditions necessary for integration, inclusion and immigration to succeed?

The shortage of teachers will lead to a decrease in the quality of education, which will lead to learning delays. Children with special needs will be hardest hit. Instead of making progress and overcoming their challenges, they will stagnate. If they stagnate, they will not reach their full potential. The shortage of hospital staff could lead to missed diagnoses or even preventable deaths. The shortage of carpenters will prevent us from building the housing we need.

The lack of housing, the difficulties in education and the dangers of deteriorating health care are the ingredients of a problem that everyone will have to live with at the expense of Quebec and the Canadian provinces, because the federal government refuses to listen to basic logic. To illustrate my point, welcoming people does not mean cramming 10 people into a studio apartment with a single bed and a box of Kraft Dinner.

When someone wants to achieve a dream, they have to put all the conditions in place to make it come true. Immigrants are answering Canada's invitation to come and fulfill their dream of a better life here. Canada is pocketing the application fees while putting all the pressure on Quebec and the Canadian provinces when it comes to the distribution of services. Thinking about and planning immigration so that everyone can have access to decent housing and quality services is essential.

That is exactly what the Government of Quebec is currently doing with consultations on immigration. A mature society is capable of discussing sensitive issues.

• (1220)

Quebec is mature and capable of having such discussions. Wanting equality for all is mature and responsible. It is also mature and responsible to want to ensure that human beings get to achieve their dreams and reach their full potential.

[English]

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, in the speeches today, there have been a lot of comments about students and the lack of housing for students. We have not talked a lot about support for colleges and universities.

I know that in Hamilton, McMaster University just completed the construction of a 1,400-bed student residence in downtown Hamilton, but it has done that largely without financial assistance from any level of government. It is important that we recognize there is space in the sector for us to contribute to student housing issues across the country.

Does the member see any opportunity for our government and others to contribute to easing the student housing pressures that almost all university and college towns are facing across the country today?

• (1225)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Madam Speaker, we know how many students a year submit an application. We also know how many stu-

dents' applications will be accepted. Most of them are anglophones. We also know that 79% of applications from students who want to study at a French-language institution are rejected. As we know, the French-language programs at Canadian universities have suffered cuts. All this is a planning issue.

McMaster University has managed to build 400 housing units, 400 rooms, but it is just one university out of so many. What I can say is that the underfunding of universities in Quebec is no help when it comes to building housing. It is not the students' fault; it is the result of poor planning.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member to comment on the issue of online applications submitted to the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship. Since September, the system has had a processing backlog of 2.2 million applications.

A year ago, we were told that the new system that was created forces all people, whether in Canada or outside, to apply to change their immigration status or to come to Canada as a visitor, worker or student. There are 2.2 million applications that have not been processed on time, and this figure has not changed in the last year. There are people waiting to be reunited with their spouses, children or parents.

I would like my colleague's comments on this.

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Madam Speaker, my office is currently working on over 1,000 immigration files. I do not have enough fingers to count the number of people who are waiting for a loved one, who are not getting any information from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and who are calling my riding office to get information. These people are from Brazil, the Ivory Coast and Afghanistan. They have not even arrived here yet, but they cannot get the information they need. In my humble opinion, that is another planning problem. We need to properly plan when implementing changes, even electronic ones, to ensure that the changes are successful.

[English]

**Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank the Bloc for raising this important question in the House today.

I wonder if the member sees the same phenomenon I see in my riding. Through the pandemic, we know that in long-term care and home care, lots of jobs are filled by newcomers to Canada. They make an important contribution to our health care system, yet they are the ones having a very hard time finding affordable housing so they can fill those jobs.

I wonder if the situation in the member's riding is the same as in mine. These people, who are newcomers, are not causing the housing problem; they are victimized by the housing problem, and we need them to provide those services in the health care field.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Julie Vignola:** Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague. Immigrants did not cause the housing crisis. The housing crisis already existed before immigrants arrived. This crisis was brought about by a lack of funding to renovate and build decent housing.



I am seeing the same situation. What is more, there are mothers who came here by themselves with their children. They need child care, but they do not have access to the system. They have to choose between what food they put on the table and where they get child care. It does not make any sense.

**Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to summarize our motion as follows: We want the federal government to review its immigration targets starting in 2024. I realize the government may have a new plan tomorrow. The main thing we are asking for in this motion is consultations with Quebec, the provinces and the territories. Our motion's goal, its objective, is successful immigration, immigration that takes into account our integration capacity and promotes a welcoming and humanistic approach to immigration.

Quebec is a welcoming nation. We recognize that immigration makes an essential contribution to Quebec's economic vitality and its social and cultural fabric. While we acknowledge the value of immigration, we also have a duty and a responsibility to do everything we can to make it successful. That is the purpose of our motion. Quebec society demands a debate on the immigration targets Canada wants to impose on us and the sometimes ideological reasons why.

Quebec is demanding to be consulted and urging the Canadian government to reassess its immigration targets based on its integration capacity. Quebec's minister of immigration, francization and integration, Ms. Fréchette, has been very clear about this.

This debate needs to occur; it is a good thing. Failing to consider accommodation and integration services available to those who welcome new immigrants—meaning the territories, provinces, Quebec, cities and regions—and failing to consider the services they are able to provide shows a total lack of respect. It also demonstrates a lack of compassion and recognition for the immigrants we receive.

Immigration is a deeply human issue that must be handled with sensitivity. This discussion with Quebec is essential for us, because Quebec has its own specific reality. Quebec has a duty to preserve its language, French, and its culture. Within the English geographic space of North America, we have developed resiliency and expertise in preserving the French fact. The federal government must recognize and respect this ability.

However, we know the federal government has not done any studies on the effects of immigration thresholds on the demographic reality and vitality of the French language. Even though Quebec controls portions of its immigration, the rapid decline in the weight of French in Canada means federal immigration thresholds will have a significant impact in Quebec.

Quebec just held public consultations within its borders on strategic immigration planning from 2024 to 2027. Many civil society stakeholders participated. This consultation was not the first. There was also one in 2019, and others were held before that. I participated myself as a civil society member.

That deserves to be commended, because consultations like this fuel public debate on our vision for our collective future as it relates to immigration and the conditions needed for its success. It is a

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democratic exercise with nothing but positive benefits for living together in harmony. Quebec is proud of the language, culture and deep-rooted values that have characterized and defined Quebecers as a people throughout our history. We have a duty to preserve and promote them. French language training, newcomer and integration services are vital to a compassionate immigration system.

● (1230)

That is also the case for the capacity to provide infrastructure such as housing and strong public services in education and health. This also applies to social services, child care, justice services, services related to human rights and a multitude of other areas. That is both the challenge and cornerstone of integration capacity, and not taking that into account would be irresponsible.

These legitimate concerns seem totally abstract to the federal government. The immigration targets it is proposing are seen and weighed from one single economic perspective, that of the labour shortage. The government goes so far as to claim that there will be no problem, since the immigrants will fill the shortage in the construction sector with their tools and their two-by-fours to build their own housing. It really is nonsense, as the leader of the Bloc Québécois would rightly say.

On a more serious note, various statistics demonstrate the positive effect of immigration in certain sectors of the economy, but this needs to be qualified. The labour shortage is being blamed for everything. To think that immigration is the only way to fix it is to take a narrow view of things. If we look at education or health care, for example, the labour shortage does not always mean a lack of personnel. Sometimes, it is more a question of working conditions and work organization. This is true in many sectors.

That is why Quebec needs to rely on more than just immigration. It must also rely on robust training and accreditation programs. Immigration does play a role, as the numbers show. However, it is not a cure-all. Economists like Pierre Fortin in Quebec believe that increasing immigration has virtually no long-term impact on labour shortages. Indeed, when the labour force is increased, the demand for goods and services also goes up. One increase leads to another. It is therefore a mistake to base an immigration policy entirely on economic considerations.

In conclusion, I firmly believe that immigrants are often the primary victims of the federal government's excessive thresholds. There is a lack of infrastructure to integrate these people, and the scant housing available is unaffordable. Ultimately, many newcomers are overcome with anguish and a feeling of betrayal.

It is high time that Ottawa woke up and realized that this kind of immigration harms everyone. Before setting its thresholds, the federal government has an absolute responsibility and duty to consult with Quebec and the provinces, which receive these immigrants, and to ensure that there is sufficient integration capacity to be compassionate and to provide everyone with decent services.

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● (1235)

*[English]*

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, one of the areas under the targeted list is the provincial nominee programs. Through provincial nominee programs, the provinces lead the way by recognizing the individuals they will be bringing into the country. In Manitoba, for example, the majority of immigrants in the last 10 years have come under that particular program.

Would the hon. member acknowledge that even the province of Quebec has far more control over immigration and the types of people coming into the province? Could the member provide her thoughts in regard to the provincial responsibility to support the settlement of immigrants and the types of occupations they are filling?

● (1240)

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Madam Speaker, I would say to the hon. member that if Quebec had all the immigration powers that it has called for, particularly regarding temporary foreign workers, this would be the best solution. All that would be needed is to take over the powers.

Yes, Quebec does have partial control over immigration, but the federal government does not factor in this capacity to integrate immigrants at all in its immigration targets and thresholds. It is like issuing an order and imposing it on the provinces before they are even consulted to determine whether they have the capacity to integrate immigrants. It is almost like an order.

As my colleague from Mirabel said, there is only one solution: We need to become independent and control this capacity to integrate within our borders people whom we deal with every day and for whom we want integration to be meaningful and significant.

*[English]*

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague from the Bloc for bringing forward this motion today. We certainly agree with the questions they have raised.

New Democrats have been talking a lot in the House, and today as well, about the housing crisis. We believe housing is a fundamental human right. The member spoke about welcoming immigrants and the humanitarian side of what we do to create a home for newcomers to this country out of respect. We want to focus on housing as a human right and respect all human rights as we define them in the charter, no matter what that means, whether it is the right to religion, the right to freedom of speech or other things.

Would she agree that what we need to do, as New Democrats have been proposing, is focus on the profiteering of housing and on housing as a human right, ensuring that people can afford housing and that governments build the social housing, co-operative housing and all levels of housing needed to ensure we have a human rights-based approach to housing?

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Louise Chabot:** Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague. As I said yesterday, housing is a right. Having a roof above one's head is a basic right just like feeding oneself.

As long as housing is viewed through a market lens, the needs of the most vulnerable and low-income people who need housing that costs less than 30% of their income will never be addressed. That is the bare minimum, and it is just not attainable at this time. We are in a crisis.

What we want the government to take away from our motion is that it is completely irresponsible to continue to deny this reality, to have blinders on and to set immigration levels without taking into account integration capacities across Canada.

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Vaughan—Woodbridge.

I am pleased to rise here this morning to speak to the Bloc Québécois motion. I would like to talk about how our government is supporting newcomers, as well as the economic needs of our provinces, territories and municipalities, including Quebec.

Canada benefits from good immigration policies and, as we have seen during and after the pandemic, newcomers are essential to sustaining our economy and our communities. With the challenges and hardships experienced over the past three years, Canadians and newcomers have shown a great deal of resilience.

As the latest census showed, our population is aging. Families are smaller and our high quality of life enables people to retire earlier. However, that also means that our ratio of workers to retirees went from seven to one about 50 years ago to close to three to one today. If we do not welcome more newcomers, that ratio could reach two to one in the coming decades, which would jeopardize our country's fundamental programs and infrastructure, such as health care and education. Canada needs young families, students and workers from around the world to strengthen our communities and grow our economy.

During our consultations with the provinces and territories, including Quebec of course, as well as with the municipalities, we saw that there is still a huge demand for newcomers, particularly those who work in key areas, such as health care, home construction and the high-tech industry to support our innovation economy.

We need an immigration plan that supports our economy and gives priority to the workers that communities need to grow. In order to do that, Canada must continue to be a welcoming country for newcomers so that they can thrive.

Our government has actively engaged and listened to numerous stakeholders, as well as the provinces and territories, to understand what we need for our annual plan on immigration levels. We have worked hard to bring in programs that respond to the priorities and needs of all the provinces and territories, including Quebec.

It is important to note that, under the Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, Quebec has all the rights and responsibilities in terms of the number of immigrants going into the province, as well as the selection and integration of these immigrants. As such, we are already working with Quebec on everything to do with immigration.

We consult Quebec, and the other provinces and territories, when we bring in new programs and policies. When establishing the annual number of immigrants for the country, we also take into consideration the number of immigrants that Quebec wants to welcome. It is because we consult Quebec, at its request, that we harmonized the eligibility conditions for post-graduation work permits for certain programs with what already exists in the rest of Canada.

We are consulting and working with all levels of government, including the provinces and territories, on immigration. We are listening to how newcomers can help meet the needs of Canadians. We are working hard to support them, whether a small francophone community in British Columbia, a rural community in Ontario or a hospital in Nova Scotia.

Newcomers need housing. Canadians need housing. We also need more skilled workers to build new housing. That is why we continue to prioritize the trades and skilled workers in the construction sector.

In June, we invited 1,500 skilled workers to Canada through changes made to our express entry system to give priority to the most in-demand skills. Over the past five years, nearly 38,000 skilled tradespeople have become permanent residents in Canada through the Canadian experience class, the provincial nominee program and the skilled trades program. Many of them have work experience in key construction trades, such as carpenters, millwrights and crane operators.

Newcomers have the skills we need to build new housing across the country. We have tried to harmonize our programs to better meet the needs of employers and support provincial and territorial priorities.

• (1245)

We have been listening to the current challenges facing Canadians, newcomers and communities. We have been talking to the provinces about their needs for next year and beyond, to fill the jobs for which there are no Canadians available. We have also been looking at future requirements, so we can start planning how to meet those needs right away.

These consultations are already producing results. We have refined our express entry system to make it more targeted, inviting candidates with skills in areas where there are shortages through category-based selection.

As well, the minister recently announced major reforms to the international student program. International students contribute a

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great deal to Canada, promoting campus life and Canada's multicultural spirit in communities across the country. Furthermore, international students are talented and bright, helping to fill jobs and grow our economy.

We are also working to align international student admissions with current and future economic needs in order to better support employers and our economy. That is why officials at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada have been asked to review this program in order to ensure that it meets the needs and the objective.

There is no question that newcomers play an essential role in helping Canadians and contributing to our economy. Newcomers bring highly sought-after skills, those that are needed to build housing and deliver critical care. They have been able to make these contributions thanks to the programs that the government has developed and implemented in recent years. We will continue to improve our programs so that they better meet the needs of employers and are more closely aligned with provincial and territorial priorities.

• (1250)

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I enjoyed my colleague's speech.

Earlier, several members of my party mentioned that perhaps the best solution to our immigration woes would be gaining independence or the possibility of having more power, but here we are, still part of the Canadian federation.

I would like to pick up on an observation made by my colleague, the member for Lac-Saint-Jean, who recently said that there is no continuity at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Ministers are replaced faster than the Conservatives can work the carbon tax into a debate, which makes it difficult to implement the necessary reforms. I am certain that my colleague, like me, is grappling with a steady stream of files from people who come to her because they are not getting answers from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

Does she think her government should make more of an effort on this front?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Madam Speaker, I handle a number of immigration-related issues and files in my riding too.

I am also in constant contact with organizations in my riding that welcome immigrants and help them integrate. Just yesterday evening, I joined a virtual round table with 20 or so entrepreneurs who were originally from all over the world. They shared with me how Quebec and Canada have created opportunities for them to settle here so we can benefit from their skills and talents.

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That said, this is a very important file, and I am glad consultations have taken and are taking place so we can continuously improve our system.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, to hear the parliamentary secretary tell it, Canada's immigration system has been working well for the past eight years. It is perfect and working exactly as the government intended. However, we know the application backlog is 2.2 million and growing. It seems to get a little bigger every month. Foreign students are turning to food banks every day, every month and every year. That was a rare phenomenon eight years ago, but it is very common now.

Is that the immigration system her government envisioned in 2015?

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by correcting some facts. I did not say that everything was hunky-dory. Immigration is a major issue that has implications in different sectors. It is an issue that we are addressing on a priority basis.

The context has changed since 2015, because of the wars, of the Afghans and Ukrainians wanting to settle here, and of all the people who need to flee violence in their country. We have to adapt and come up with new measures and new programs, and that is what we are doing. After all the consultations that have been held, we continue to listen to the needs and challenges facing our entrepreneurs and settlement agencies. We strive to meet their needs and adapt to this new context.

• (1255)

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for speaking so eloquently and concretely about the importance of immigration in Canada, including Quebec.

I would invite her to give us some examples of cases where she feels that, for economic or even social reasons—when we talk about child care, nurses, hospitals, seniors' residences, schools, and teachers—people who come from elsewhere in Canada or from around the world make a big difference in their community.

**Mrs. Élisabeth Brière:** Madam Speaker, I really appreciate my esteemed colleague's question because my riding of Sherbrooke is indeed a welcoming place. Every year, many immigrants settle there. Thanks to organizations that work hard to help them integrate and feel welcome, we have managed to achieve that objective.

I see it when I visit hospitals, the Maison Aube-Lumière palliative care facility, schools and day care centres. A woman from Colombia works in the new bakery that just opened and she sells baked goods from her culture. It gives us an opportunity to discover wonderful things.

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House to speak to the opposition motion.

I think it is important to point out a few things. First, the government held in-depth consultations on the immigration levels, as it does every year. In particular, we spoke with partner organizations, such as settlement groups; the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for immigration, including the Quebec minister; municipalities from across the country; economic stakeholders, including

businesses that use our programs to fill job vacancies; and other federal departments with related policies or issues to examine.

That is not an exhaustive list, but it shows that our plans are supported by consultations on immigration levels that are held throughout the year.

Furthermore, this year, we held even more consultations across the country. In recent months our government organized in-person and online consultations countrywide to talk about the future of immigration in Canada. Many factors must be considered when planning immigration levels. For example, the population is aging. The 2021 census revealed that, without immigration, our population could decline. There is also worldwide competition for talent. A number of western countries are facing similar challenges to ours along with a growing demand for qualified workers in technology, the trades and health care. Regional and labour market needs are also changing. The priority of the provinces, territories and municipalities can change month to month and year to year. Our social infrastructure is also under pressure. Nearly all provinces and territories need more nurses and health professionals to meet the needs of Canadians. Lastly, there is a growing demand for refugee programs. There are nearly 100 million displaced people worldwide. Canada has a moral obligation to act and to respect its humanitarian commitments. That is why, in recent years, we have welcomed newcomers from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

These are some of the priorities that guide our planning of immigration levels. Many of these concerns were raised during our in-depth consultations with our provincial and territorial partners.

Over the past year, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada held extensive consultations. Besides discussions in major centres like Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Halifax, we also organized regional dialogue sessions in Dieppe and Saskatoon. Furthermore, we organized a virtual session with the territories to better understand the challenges faced by Canadians in the north. Senior public servants, many of whom are ministers with various portfolios, discussed what our future immigration might look like and how we could adapt to better meet the needs of employers, communities and migrants who would like to settle in these areas.

Concerning immigration, I would also like to point out that Canada works in close collaboration with Quebec and ensures that newcomers have the tools they need to succeed on their arrival.

Under the Canada-Quebec accord relating to immigration, Quebec has rights and responsibilities with respect to the number of immigrants arriving in Quebec and their selection and integration. We work closely with Quebec and key stakeholders to ensure that the province's immigration levels meet labour market demands, and that the province has the tools it needs to welcome newcomers.

● (1300)

Under the Canada-Quebec accord on immigration, Canada sets the annual number of immigrants for the country, taking into account the number of immigrants that Quebec wishes to welcome. In preparation for the immigration levels plan, which must be tabled by the Minister of Immigration by November 1 at the latest, the minister met with Quebec's minister of immigration, as well as key organizations in the province, such as The Refugee Centre.

The government works extensively with the provinces and territories on immigration. We have also had talks with important social and cultural groups to examine how immigration responds to their needs. For example, francophone immigration increased to reach 16,300 French-speaking newcomers outside Quebec in 2022, three times more than in 2018. However, the demographic weight of official language minority communities continued to decrease in the latest census.

We reached the target of 4.4% francophone immigration outside Quebec in 2022, ahead of schedule. Immigration will help us strengthen and support francophone communities across the country. Our government has committed to presenting another five-year plan to support francophone immigration in the years ahead.

We have also increased investments and settlement agency services. This capacity building helps support newcomers and communities. For example, thanks to improved accessibility and expanded coverage of settlement services offered by francophone service providers, the percentage of francophone newcomers served by francophone agencies rose from 44% in 2018 to more than 60% in 2022-23.

Rural and northern communities also shared with us their economic and social needs in terms of workers and newcomers. During our consultations, we also contacted indigenous representatives to seek their opinions on the future of immigration. Young people also shared their unique point of view. We also heard from current and former clients of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. In total, 17,500 contributions were received from more than 2,000 organizations as well as from Canadians, newcomers and clients across the country.

In general terms, what Canadians told us is that they appreciate what newcomers bring to Canada, their entrepreneurial spirit, and their commitment to Canada and our communities. They know that immigration contributes to supporting our economy, filling jobs and supporting our social programs. That is why Canadians support immigration. They see the face of immigration every day, whether in a neighbour, a friend, a family member or a co-worker.

The minister recently acknowledged before the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration that there is an urgent need to review communities' capacity to welcome newcomers and ensure that they have adequate housing and access to social services. It is

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our duty to make sure that newcomers get what they need to succeed when they arrive in Canada.

As the minister said, we know that the housing problems we face today are rooted in broader issues. The minister indicated that he was aware of the need to align immigration with other plans, while also meeting our humanitarian commitments.

It is also important to note that immigration is part of the solution, not the problem, when it comes to housing in this country. We need talented, hard-working newcomers from around the world to address labour shortages in the construction sector.

● (1305)

I am pleased to report that, thanks to programs like category-based selection under express entry, we are now welcoming newcomers with the sought-after skills we need—

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** Unfortunately, I must interrupt the hon. member, as it is now time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

**Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, in case a consultation is requested with Quebec, I would point out to my colleague that the fiscal imbalance is a fundamental problem in the Canadian federation. Ottawa has the means to fund big expenditures such as health and education, while the provinces have the jurisdiction.

Welcoming more migrants requires a more robust health care system, education system and access to housing. The federal government has the capacity to pay, but it tends to be cheap. Based on the latest negotiation on health care, we can see that the federal government is often cheap. This is the same federal government that just set immigration targets, putting unsustainable pressure on the provinces.

Is my colleague aware of that?

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, my colleague and I work together at the Standing Committee on Natural Resources.

Our government supported all the provinces and territories on health. It supports them on immigration to Canada. We work together with the Province of Quebec. We are there every year to support immigration to the member's province.

*Business of Supply**[English]*

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I am really glad the member got up to speak about this. What I have really noticed in my riding of Elgin—Middlesex—London, which is in the midst of southwestern Ontario, is extraordinary caseloads. I recognize that the government tries to go from one place to another, but I am wondering about that. I have a really weird file. In less than eight months, I had a citizenship approved, but unfortunately the files were separated and the rest of the family could not find the files anymore.

I am wondering what the member has to say about his government when it comes to the fact that over the last eight years, we have seen reunification more than double in some cases. I did immigration for 11 years. I can say that immigration from inside and outside of Canada has expanded and grown significantly. What does he have to say about the fact that, when people are being processed, some are not being processed together and we are having real issues there? What are the Liberals doing to fix that?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, when we came to power in 2015, we invested in the immigration system.

● (1310)

*[English]*

However, before that, the Conservatives had cut, cut, cut, and the waiting lines in the immigration system were very long. We invested and reduced those waiting lines.

It is good to see that millions of people around the world want to come to Canada. It is an attractive place to live. It is, I would say, the best country in the world. We know that, and all MPs here have unique cases that we have to deal with day in and day out. There are means of getting assistance, and I encourage the member opposite to do so. I would be happy to help if I can.

**Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I think it is very appropriate that my friend and colleague referenced our support for Ukraine. We are almost up to 200,000 refugees coming from Ukraine who fled the war and Russia's illegal invasion, but we are starting to see some cracks in the support for Ukraine. We are seeing this with right-wing Conservative governments across the world. There is the possible return of Trump, with his obvious support for Putin and his open declaration that he and the Republican Party will not support Ukraine. The Leader of the Opposition, of course, has been very quiet on this subject.

I wonder if my friend and colleague could speak to the importance of our government's continued support for Ukraine and its people.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Francesco Sorbara:** Madam Speaker, I would simply like to say that we must support the people of Ukraine.

*[English]*

We need to support the country of Ukraine and its people for their freedom, their territorial integrity and their sovereignty. I know that all Canadians stand behind the brave Ukrainian people.

They are not just fighting for their freedom and democracy. They are fighting for ours and that of all democratic countries around the world. Those are values we share as a country and a people.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by reading out the motion again. Its simplicity conveys the essence of the message we want to send to Quebec, but also to the entire territory represented by members of the House.

That the House call on the government to review its immigration targets starting in 2024, after consultation with Quebec, the provinces and territories, based on their integration capacity, particularly in terms of housing, health care, education, French language training and transportation infrastructure, all with a view to successful immigration.

Over the next few minutes, the relevance of the year 2024 will become clear. The motion's key words are “successful immigration”. I like to think that, in these matters, our position is akin to that of Quebecers, and maybe even to that of Canadians, judging by recent polls and numbers.

I personally believe that Quebecers do not identify with any extreme. I will not go into too much detail because I want everyone to remain in good spirits. Suffice it to say that some extremes have very few supporters. Between both extremes, there are people who are not loud or spectacular enough to attract much attention from the media. We identify with those people a lot more. We hope that these people also identify with the Bloc Québécois a lot more, which explains the consensual wording of the motion. We will see how consensual it is come voting time.

I think the matter of immigration must be approached dispassionately. Seeing that the Bloc Québécois was raising the issue of immigration, the media expected fireworks. That was definitely not our intent when drafting and tabling the motion.

Voters are calling on us to do something. A growing number of voters and people across Canada are getting more and more concerned. They are not anti-immigration, they are not vindictive and they do not have a negative attitude. They are expressing concern about the fact that the process Canada is using to accept immigrants greatly exceeds the actual capacity of Canada, Quebec, the provinces and territories to welcome them—I will come back to that—and their ability to adapt to this new reality.

More and more people are being born into this world and, to them, it feels like the world is getting smaller and smaller. However, each year, in the span of just a few months, the world's population consumes all the renewable resources and lives for the rest of the year on ecological credit with climate change and many violent clashes. My esteemed colleague referred to Ukraine and Ukrainian refugees only a few minutes ago. People will migrate. People will move away, hoping for a better life. I submit to the House that the well-being of those who come to a new place in search of a better life for themselves and their families must be the primary objective of any decent immigration policy.

This is not to be confused with the anti-immigration stance some say Quebec is displaying. That kind of talk has died down somewhat because, now that Toronto and Vancouver are worried, Quebec has a right to be. In reality, people want a better understanding or need to feel that they will adapt to all of this and that public finances will as well.

Ottawa is backing itself into a corner by diving headfirst into this kind of postnational, multiculturalist philosophy where identities are blurred, undefined, sometimes non-existent or deliberately non-existent. Canada has every right to do that, but Quebec does not have to make that same mistake.

How can Canada claim to be the welcoming land it aspires to be when its capacity to provide basic services is crumbling? Looking at it from here, from the federal Parliament, it looks easy. However, it is the provinces and Quebec that are getting stuck with the bill for the vulnerable workforce that, at times, the Liberals and Conservatives used to share. That may be about to change.

• (1315)

We must have the courage to try something different and acknowledge the failure. We must have the courage to acknowledge that Quebecers and Canadians are worried. This demands that we propose a different approach, based on a different set of measurements and a different vision. It also demands ways to measure success.

Immigration is not measured by the number of people who enter a territory. Success itself is the measure of immigration success, hence the Bloc Québécois's new propensity to talk about "successful immigration". That has to be measurable. At the moment, the tools needed to take such measurements do not seem to exist.

How many people hold a decent job that will match their qualifications and life plans after one, two or five years? How many people who have chosen to live in Quebec, or who are living in Quebec after arriving through immigration channels, are adequately or even minimally proficient in French after one, three or five years? How many people who arrive here as asylum seekers will be sleeping on the streets of Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver this winter with no fixed address? These kinds of measurements are not available to us, but we believe they are necessary if we want to determine whether immigration, as it is practised in Canada, is or is not a success.

Canada will have no moral authority to discuss immigration or the success of immigration in numbers rather than as a welcoming country until its own first nations live in conditions of safety, prosperity, opportunity, security or cultural continuity that Canada does

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not currently offer them. There is a kind of problem with moral authority that is lacking.

Do we focus too much on numbers? I think so. Is that the definition of successful immigration? I do not think so. We will therefore continue to push this concept.

Not so long ago, as I mentioned, doubts about immigration were associated with xenophobia or racism. I am confident that this is now a thing of the past. It was harmful, unhealthy and, at times, decidedly malicious. Now that public opinion throughout Canada is evolving, reflecting and asking questions, we have moved on.

Of course, in Quebec, there will still be a single variable. Quebec is the only society on this continent, apart from the United States and Canada, that defines itself as a nation. It is a territory, a history, a set of values, an economic model and, in support, of course, a language.

However, a major paradigm shift is taking place. It has to do with looking at immigration through the prism of economics, as well as roles and responsibilities. It was presented to us as a need, an ambition. The goal is 100 million Canadians by the year 2100. It has been said and could be said again, and we will see after the vote, that Canada wants to welcome immigrants for its own sake, somewhat selfishly, to keep its economy going. Of course, immigration brings people here, people who will be workers and will be happy to work. However, should we look at immigration primarily through the prism of a labour supply that, if only because of sheer numbers, will be more vulnerable?

I think we need to look at immigration from the perspective of what we are offering as a nation to those who choose to come to Canada or Quebec, on this planet that I described as too small. We need to look at immigration in terms of those who migrate, those who flee, those who dream of something better, those who are migrants before they are immigrants. Migrants do not tend to join the workforce right off the bat. They are people who hope for something better.

• (1320)

We have the duty to provide them with that. We need to make this type of immigration successful in both Quebec and Canada. If Quebec's model is different, then so be it. The Canadian and Quebec models still have some commonalities. They are subject to the same risks. The planet seems to be getting smaller. People are going to move. Quebec and Canada will welcome some of those people. We must not be blind in our approach. No one, neither Canadians nor Quebecers, intends for national cultures to disappear.

What we need is to grasp the concepts of successful integration, contribution and the emergence of national cultures that are not made up entirely of the cultures of the immigrant communities nor of those of the host community. That creates a different substrate that evolves and improves while maintaining some fundamental things in common. In Quebec at least, those things are the French language, certain values, secular government institutions, and a much more environmentally friendly approach than is found in most other places, particularly Canada. The parties trying to deny Quebec those things are out of touch with reality.

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There is also another factor to consider. There are real economic issues. Let us go over a few figures that, thanks to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, are rough estimates. We understand that Canada's goal is to accept 500,000 immigrants through the so-called regular process by 2025. There was a bit of speculation as to whether there would be slightly fewer in 2026. The minister was rather vague on this point.

Lowering this number by 30,000 immigrants would not change much. It would not change much because it is still the smallest segment of the total number of people who either will immigrate this year to Canada, including Quebec, or who do not have regularized or permanent status. These include 800,000 international students. Unfortunately, when it comes to international students, francophone African students are still experiencing vicious discrimination that hurts them and francophone universities alike.

There are tens of thousands of temporary foreign workers here, roughly 80,000 to 90,000, who are more than welcome. There may be as many as one million people that the government has completely lost track of. Nobody knows for sure where they are. There may be over 300,000 in Quebec alone. Adding it all up, even using conservative estimates, means that there are over two million people in Canada who are either immigrants this year or who have no established, fixed or permanent status. Even if this number were reduced by 30,000, the impact would be relatively moderate.

What do we have to offer that is better than going into hiding for so many of them, better than homelessness for still too many of them, better than a tenuous livelihood and falling prey to businesses that will not hesitate to exploit these people's vulnerability?

There is also an impact on government services. In the area of health, which is a provincial jurisdiction, the necessary transfers are still being withheld because Ottawa wants to impose centralizing conditions. There is the impact of the additional pressure on an education system that is already experiencing quite a few problems that people will try to address with long overdue investments that should have been dealt with sooner. Child care will, of course, be under pressure. The social safety net is one more issue. I mentioned homelessness earlier. Of course, public transit is also under pressure. To add to all this, there is the simple fact that the Department of Immigration has well over a million files waiting to be processed. Let us give these poor people a break.

Then there is the housing crisis. Some things are beyond our control, but others are not. We must, of course, refrain from blaming anyone, and I think that everyone is refraining from that. The more people we have, the more it will contribute to a housing crisis that has been created or exacerbated by other causes. Some things are beyond our control, but others are not. The number of people we take in is something that is appropriate for us to control. The type of housing that will be offered to reduce the pressure on the housing stock is something that can reasonably be controlled.

• (1325)

It is a question of labour, but it is also a question of prices. I only want to mention this quickly, because I imagine he has realized it, but, not that long ago, the Minister of Immigration was telling us that these people are going to immigrate to Canada, get to work and build their own homes. The week after that, I hope they are going

to build their own hospitals, their own schools, their own public transit and their own sewage systems. They are going to have work to do when they get to Canada. That is not the way to run a common-sense immigration policy.

There is also an economic impact on inflation. It has to be said. Again, it would be a stretch to blame immigration for inflation. However, it would be inappropriate not to go through the steps of a purely mathematical calculation to determine the pace, number and impact that this may have. There is something to consider there, too.

On the economic front, one of the issues I raise most often is recognizing credentials. Highly qualified people arrive from abroad, wanting to make a life for themselves in Quebec and Canada, but their credentials are not recognized. They end up taking jobs that, as I said, are more fragile and vulnerable. That is not what we want.

When I talk about economic integration in Quebec, I always mention language. Our first duty and responsibility in Quebec when we welcome someone is to give them the fundamental tool they need to happily and harmoniously integrate into Quebec society. That tool is, of course, knowledge of the French language.

When people from the Century Initiative or McKinsey or other advisers around the Prime Minister's Office created projections or fantasized about having a population of 100 million Canadians by the end of the century, they did not consider French as a variable. I asked Mr. Barton, and he answered candidly that they just did not look at this issue and it did not exist for them. I have the impression that they are stuck in that mindset. We will have to make it clear that the long-term survival of French matters.

Finally, as far as foreign students are concerned, I think that we should listen to the point of view of the countries they come from. These countries are happy that their students are looking for training here. They are happy when the students who receive training here return home and contribute to the development of their society. They generally accept that a certain number of them decide to integrate into society in the place where they received training. It is not up to us to unilaterally decide that issue. We must listen to the countries these students come from.

We need to rethink the paradigms, stop with the accusations and epithets, recognize the role of the provinces and Quebec, and renounce the terrible impact of the fiscal imbalance, which is preventing the provinces from adequately funding services. We cannot deny the singular effect of all this in Quebec, but this does give us an opportunity to restore people's confidence. Successful immigration would replace purely quantitative immigration, which weighs on the state, the economy and the well-being of applicants. So-called postnationalism means the end of identities and of the diversity that communities care about more than the unique traits often asserted under a disembodied charter.



Canada may not want to be a responsible society in how it welcomes immigrants, but Quebec can be and wants to be that society. Despite everything, and regardless of the outcome of the vote on this motion, I must point out that it would be so much healthier and simpler if we each had our own policies on immigration and everything else.

• (1330)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am not aware of any provincial jurisdiction in Canada that says Canada needs to allow fewer immigrants into the country, not officially at least. I have not heard that. I am curious as to whether the leader of the Bloc Party is aware of any provinces in Canada that have taken the line that we are allowing too many immigrants into the country.

What I often hear is that we have a huge shortage of labour, particularly in the health care field. The member talked about credentials. One of my greatest frustrations is that barriers are put in place, usually through provinces and organizations within the provinces, to prevent credentials from being recognized. I am thinking specifically of health care workers, who seem to be in demand in every province in Canada.

Could he expand on what he believes is necessary in order to get credentials recognized? At the same time, could he indicate to me any province that says fewer immigrants should be coming to Canada?

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, I am sure you would not give me all of the time I would need to treat my esteemed colleague to the full answer to that question.

That being said, I, too, am frustrated about something. After what I just said, it seems to me that this would have been a good time to make an effort to ask me a question in French. It is rather unbelievable.

Are there other Canadian provinces that think we should be welcoming fewer immigrants? I will simply express a legitimate concern that Quebecers' have that has nothing to do with the number of immigrants. I have said on multiple occasions that I think it is rather ridiculous to bicker over numbers. Our concern has to do with the successful integration of immigrants in both Quebec and Canada and the doubts we have about that happening. In Quebec, there is also the language variable and the fact that we are a distinct nation. Everyone shares that valid concern and the government should take note of it.

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I would like to respond to the comments made by the leader of the Bloc Québécois. Behind all the numbers there are families, people who came to Canada or are waiting for permission to come to be reunited with their family, as was the case for members of my family.

However, the numbers also count for something. Since 2015, the number of departmental employees working on backlogged applications, which were already in the millions, has doubled. Just be-

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fore the pandemic, there were 1.9 million backlogged applications from people who wanted to come to Canada or who were already in Canada but wanted to change their precarious temporary foreign worker status to permanent resident status and, of course, to one day become Canadian citizens.

The number of people working in the department has doubled. Today, it has 12,721 employees to do the work. The number of backlogged applications keeps going up. The number of directors at the department has risen from 135 to 237 and the applications are still backlogged. I think a basic principle needs to be followed here: If a person submits an application to a department, they should receive a service. People should not be left to wait for years with a precarious status.

I would like to hear the Bloc member's views on that.

• (1335)

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure whether the member wants to hear my views. He had his own case to make.

That said, the observation about the Department of Citizenship and Immigration is very real and very relevant. All of these people come to Quebec and to Canada in search of a better life but are forced to endure unreasonable waiting times because of an overloaded machine. The size of this machine has ballooned a lot faster than the people brought on board could be trained to run it. These people are also expected to follow directives that will place the Department of Citizenship and Immigration under even more pressure.

That in itself is reason for the government to take a big step back and get control of the rate of integration, intake and granting of permanent resident status for people who choose to settle in Canada or Quebec.

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I commend the work and speech of my colleague, the leader of the Bloc Québécois.

We often simplify things, and the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship did so by saying that immigrants arrive here and build their own homes. I have a problem with that, because the issue of integration capacity goes further than that. It is not simply a matter of labour.

There is a town in my riding that has no more water. There is a moratorium in place, and not a single new home can be built there. Yes, there is a need to build more housing, but there is also infrastructure that cannot be neglected either. That is part of integration capacity.

Another town in my riding is a farming community. This town has protected farmland where housing cannot be built. This is called green zoning. The town has no more lots where housing can be built, which we call white zoning. What can we do if we want to build housing to accommodate more people?

My question is simple. When talking about integration capacity, are we also talking about infrastructure or land that is managed, in the case of Quebec, by the Quebec government?

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**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, we have to talk about everything. We absolutely have to talk about the consequences of having roughly two million immigrants with no specific status in a population of 40 million.

I will bring up housing as an example. Recently, we saw a debate about a legislative slap on the wrist for municipalities that engage in odd zoning practices or that did not subject themselves to federal government rules that have nothing to do with municipalities. It is as though the government is putting pressure on municipalities—which have the problems my esteemed colleague described—although they are the most ill-equipped to manage it because their tax base is tightly controlled and they have very little leeway.

Immigration is a fundamental policy, and the immigration policy of a country of Canada's demographic or economic stature requires a global vision. From our perspective, there also needs to be a vision for Quebec's policy, for the country it should be.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech and today's motion.

I am very proud of the integration efforts we have been seeing in my riding, Châteauguay—Lacolle, for some time now. We have a labour shortage, and everyone is very grateful.

Quebec has imposed a limit for family reunification. I would like my colleague to comment on that problem. People in my riding—francophone Quebecers—are waiting for their husbands and wives. Obviously they will have homes. Many of them already have jobs. If these people could come here, that would be wonderful, but apparently the quota for 2023 has been met.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet:** Madam Speaker, the member's question should have been addressed to her federal colleague, because family reunification is a federal matter.

However, what I would say is that family reunification is one of the priority criteria for immigration to Canada and Quebec. That is obvious for humanitarian and basic reasons.

As to the specific issues in my colleague's riding, there are indeed labour problems. Those problems exist in her riding and elsewhere because it is a highly agricultural riding. It is important to have an all-encompassing vision for immigration policy that is not focused solely on as many as possible, as fast as possible, with no consideration for the rest.

• (1340)

[English]

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I would love to wish all the kids and families in Surrey—Newton, and from coast to coast to coast, a happy Halloween. Enjoy the tricks and treats.

As an immigrant, I support the motion brought forward by the Bloc Québécois.

I am pleased today to rise in the House and share my time with an honourable member, who I believed in before he was elected in the by-election. I remember that snowy day in Manitoba when I was there helping my dear friend. He is one of the hardest working

members of Parliament. Particularly when it comes to immigrant communities, the work he does is unparalleled. That member is the hon. member for Winnipeg North, with whom I will be sharing my time.

Let me share some of the key facts with regard to Canada's immigration levels, as well as consultations with Quebec.

Tomorrow, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is set to share with the House the immigration levels for the upcoming years. When it comes to welcoming newcomers to Canada, we know that they support our economy and contribute meaningfully to our communities.

Our population is aging as is our workforce. To ensure that we can maintain the social services Canadians rely on, we need more people working to address current labour shortages across the country. As such, permanent immigration is vital to Canada's long-term economic growth. It accounts for almost 100% of our labour force growth and, by 2032, it is projected to account for 100% of our population growth. With countless newcomers currently working in the health care field, construction or filling important roles for small and medium-sized businesses across the country, we cannot minimize the importance of immigration and newcomers to Canada's economy and future growth.

With regard to the opposition motion at hand, we undergo consultations every year with provincial and territorial partners, including Quebec, employers and relevant stakeholders, to ensure our immigration levels plan is aligned with the current realities of the labour market, while also ensuring that newcomers have the resources and tools they need to thrive and contribute meaningfully to their new communities. Of course, this includes working with our colleagues in the Quebec government.

Under the Canada–Québec accord on immigration, Quebec has the responsibility of setting the number of immigrants destined to Quebec and the selection, reception and integration of those immigrants. To be very clear, we work in close partnership with Quebec on all things related to immigration.

In addition to conversations the Minister of Immigration had with his Quebec counterpart, the Minister of Immigration has also had conversations with his colleagues in provinces and territories throughout Canada. Ultimately, the successful arrival and integration of newcomers to our country requires a team Canada approach. The dialogue on immigration happens with officials from different levels of governments through events and conferences and through official consultations.

• (1345)

Every year, after these broad consultations, and considering the data at hand, the government tables a levels plan. It used to be that the levels plan was just for one year, but the current three-year levels plan allows the federal government and provincial partners, as well as those in our settlement sectors, a better planning horizon. This allows us to respond to the current needs of the country, while adapting for the future.

In addition to our annual levels consultation, we have recently been receiving input from provinces and stakeholders under our strategic immigration review, which is looking at what changes we might need to make to ensure we have an immigration system that meets the current and future needs of our country. Those consultations have stressed the need to work in close collaboration with many partners on immigration to ensure we are meeting the needs of our economy and our communities.

The federal government, provinces and territories all agree that bright and talented newcomers are essential to Canada's current and future economic growth. That means we must align our immigration priorities with critical services, such as housing and infrastructure.

I would like to share with the members opposite that we have made historic housing investments in Quebec. Since 2015, we have invested to help more than 445,000 Quebecers obtain affordable housing. Thanks to a bilateral agreement between Canada and Quebec, we will see a combined investment of an additional \$3.7 billion over the next 10 years to improve housing in Quebec.

These are the critical investments we are making to not only ensure that Quebecers have a safe and affordable place to live, but it also helps ensure that when newcomers arrive, they have the resources they need to build their new lives in Canada.

However, make no mistake that newcomers are not the cause of our current housing situation in Canada. They are part of the solution. In order for these investments to manifest into real, safe and affordable housing, we need bright, talented and skilled newcomers to come to Canada and build homes throughout the country. That is exactly what we are doing.

Thanks to changes made to our express entry system, we invited 1,500 trades workers to Canada just this past June. Thanks to the Canadian experience class, the provincial nominee program and the federal skilled trades program, nearly 38,000 tradespersons have obtained permanent residency in Canada. These are individuals with valued experience in construction, who can help address the current labour shortages in the construction industry, so that we can build the homes we need.

We are listening to the current challenges of Canadians, newcomers and communities. We are also working alongside provinces, territories and municipalities to strengthen our immigration system so that we can all benefit from immigration. We continue to align our immigration levels to be more responsive to the needs of the labour market, while working closely with provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure newcomers can succeed when they arrive.

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As my remarks have highlighted today, Canada needs newcomers in order to build a strong, reliable economy that we can all count on.

• (1350)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his presentation.

The purpose of all federal language policy includes providing support for English in Quebec and ensuring that at least a third of newcomers have access to services in English. Quebec is expected to integrate and provide French language training to 90% of newcomers to maintain its demographic weight.

I would like to know whether the government considers it important to take Quebec's and Canada's integration capacity into account. Does my colleague think that Quebec's integration, reception and French language training capacity needs to be taken into account?

[English]

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Madam Speaker, each year, when the targets are revised, the government consults with the provinces and territories, including Quebec. We put resources in so immigrants can settle. There are many organizations that help. When it comes to francophone immigration, particularly outside of Quebec, the B.C. francophone association has always advocated to have more francophones settle in British Columbia.

Our government has achieved 4.4% and we are willing to go up to 6%. We are ensuring they have the resources, not only for the English-speaking people who are coming to Quebec but also for the French-speaking people who are settling outside of Quebec.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I recall the 2010 by-election and the member wearing his shoes in the snow. He recognized how important it was to visit homes, and I appreciated that. I have learned a great deal about immigration from the member. He is a very strong, powerful advocate in regard to immigration policies.

Under Jean Chrétien, we developed the provincial nominee program, which enabled provinces to have more say in regard to immigration. Could the member provide his thoughts on why it is important for the federal government to work with provincial jurisdictions to ensure we further advance the interests of immigrants?

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Madam Speaker, it is very important to have the say of the provinces and territories, and municipalities of course. The needs vary from one province to another province and from one part of the country to other parts of the country.

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For example, British Columbia, particularly in the cities, has a housing market that needs construction workers. We have hospitals and a health care system that need health workers. It is up to provinces to decide what trades need workers. That is why it is very important that the provinces and territories, including Quebec, have a full say, with the Minister of Immigration on a national level, to bring in new immigrants and to ensure we have the resources to settle them in a very efficient and good way.

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu:** Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned organizations that advocate for French outside Quebec. In Quebec, however, there are no organizations or groups dedicated to protecting or promoting French that receive funding under the action plan for official languages. Could he tell me what he thinks about that?

[English]

**Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal:** Madam Speaker, when it comes to Quebec, it has exclusive powers to select the majority of its immigrants. Under the Canada–Québec accord, financial compensation is given to Quebec annually to ensure that the right correlation of newcomers is there. The total funding included in the 2023-24 estimates for grants to Quebec is \$726.7 million. Quebec's immigration jurisdictions are always respected—

• (1355)

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès):** We have to resume debate.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader has the floor.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to speak to an opposition motion that has a great deal of substance. I think it is relevant to what is happening today.

Immigration is a very important and critical file. It is something I am very comfortable talking about because it has meant so much to me throughout my 30-plus years of being a parliamentarian. I understand and appreciate the many contributions, in every aspect of life, immigrants play in our communities, large and small. Every region of the country has benefited from immigration.

The government is committed, and it has demonstrated this in the past, to working with provinces, municipalities and different stakeholders to try to deliver the best possible suite of services for immigration. Let us look at some of the things we have been able to accomplish in a relatively short time span. We can talk about the Syrian refugees, the Afghanistan refugees and the displaced people from Ukraine.

I can also mention members across the way talking about processing times. They like to be critical of processing times, but this government straightened out the Conservative disaster that was in place going into 2015-16. I was the immigration critic when the Stephen Harper government literally cancelled the sponsorship of parents and grandparents, not recognizing the many contributions to our economy and society that the parents, not to mention the grandparents, who have come to our communities as immigrants have made. That can be assisting in the business world, continuing

to work or providing support in homes, enabling others to participate.

I was there when the Conservatives completely deleted over a million files of individuals who were in the system. I can recall waiting lists for marriages that were as long as three to four years. I can imagine someone sponsoring a parent before it was closed down and waiting eight years to have it processed. We have accomplished a great deal, even with the crises we have witnessed around the world, even going through a pandemic.

We have seen substantial increases, in the hundreds of thousands, of international students for a wide spectrum of reasons. It is not to say there are not problems within immigration that need to be resolved. We have a current minister who has said we are going to continue to work with provinces in dealing with the issue of international students. I am very concerned about the plight of international students, as I know my colleagues are. We have a minister who is committed to working with the different stakeholders and our provinces to try and straighten out the issues taking place today with international students.

We have temporary working visas and visitor visas, which are always issues that not only I, but also my colleagues, give a great deal of attention to because we see the value of those temporary visas, whether it is for employment in Canada or to have visitors and family come over for celebrations, such as weddings or graduations, or sadly, at times, funerals. There is a wide spectrum of immigration services. Part of that is ensuring we get the targets right. This government is focused on ensuring that, and part of that focus means working with provinces.

I posed a question to the leader of the Bloc Party and asked if he was aware of any province that is saying it does not want anymore immigrants. It is actually the opposite when it comes to health care workers, where we want to see more.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

• (1400)

[English]

### BITCOIN

**Mr. Joël Lightbound (Louis-Hébert, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, today marks the 15th anniversary of Satoshi Nakamoto's white paper, which gave birth to the Bitcoin network, a fully decentralized peer-to-peer and permissionless way to exchange value.

In the words of Twitter founder Jack Dorsey, “the Bitcoin whitepaper is one of the most seminal works of computer science in the last...30 years. It's poetry.” In the words of SEC chairman Gary Gensler, “Satoshi's innovative potential to spur change...is worth pursuing...to lower economic rents...and promote economic inclusion.”

I could not agree more. In fact, over the last decade, we have seen Bitcoin empower the underbanked, as well as those living in oppressive regimes. Women, for instance, use Bitcoin all over the world to evade unjust restrictions on their financial freedoms. It has also helped thousands of families avoid the tragedy of currency debasement.

In full disclosure, while I do own Bitcoin, I am not advocating for anyone to buy it, but I do advocate for everyone to study it, progressives in particular, because, after all, Bitcoin was born in the midst of the great financial crisis as an alternative to big banks, greed and the system that never failed to bail them out. It stands for a truly progressive ideal. Today, let me thank Satoshi Nakamoto, whomever that may be, and wish a happy 15th anniversary to Bitcoin's white paper.

\* \* \*

#### CARBON TAX

**Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC):** Madam Speaker, Sarah, a mother of four from Whitehorse, told me yesterday how expensive life has gotten because of the carbon tax.

Sarah spent \$240 to fill up her truck last Friday. That tank of gas will only last her one week of going back and forth to work, along with some kids' activities. That is \$1,000 a month. Sarah also said that her food bill is up 30%, and she is now being forced to spend \$1,300 to \$1,400 per month, as carbon tax has doubled transportation costs.

Yesterday, local Yukon MLA Stacey Hassard said that Yukon has the highest cost of living in Canada. He wants the premier to tell the federal government about the impact of the federal carbon tax on the cost of living here in Yukon, as the north has been more affected by the carbon tax than any other region in the country. Meanwhile, today, the Minister of Northern Affairs denied that he had heard any concerns from northerners about the unfair carbon tax stunt.

I have question for the Liberal member of Parliament for Yukon. Will he stand up to the out-of-touch northern affairs minister to demand that the carbon tax be permanently removed for all Yukoners?

\* \* \*

#### ISLAMIC HISTORY MONTH

**Ms. Valerie Bradford (Kitchener South—Hespeler, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, I had the honour of attending the Kindred Radiant Ladies Night Gala, organized by the Coalition of Muslim Women.

October is Islamic History Month, and this event was a platform for raising funds in support of the coalition's vital advocacy work and their services dedicated to assisting victims of gender-based vi-

olence, discrimination, hate and Islamophobia in our community. As we bid farewell to Islamic History Month, which this year celebrates the theme of celebrating Muslim women in the arts and sciences, we are reminded to appreciate the significant contributions of Muslim women throughout history and in Canada. They have left a lasting impact on the fields of art, science and society.

As we move beyond Canadian Islamic History Month, let us continue to actively engage with and celebrate the rich history and culture within our diverse Muslim communities.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### JESSICA BONNEVILLE

**Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as a former school principal, I have a great deal of respect for the workers who invest directly or indirectly in education. Guiding our young people, encouraging them to excel, to believe in their strengths and abilities is of the utmost importance.

Today, I would like to pay tribute to Constable Jessica Bonnevill of the Service de police de la Ville de Saint-Eustache, who was awarded the National Youth Justice Policing Award. This is an exceptional distinction that deserves our utmost respect. Her exemplary dedication to our community, particularly her involvement as an educator in the “Toucher le sommet” project, has encouraged many struggling teens to persevere and reach new heights.

Jessica Bonnevill is an inspiration not only to her students, but also to all of us here in the House. I want to thank her and congratulate her.

\* \* \*

● (1405)

#### YAN PROULX AND DANNY MONETTE

**Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is vital to recognize and celebrate the cultural wealth that flourishes in our rural regions. It is an essential driver of social cohesion and economic development.

That is why today I want to commend the exceptional work of Yan Proulx and Danny Monette, from Productions Les 2 vallées, which is starting its third season. These passionate and dedicated men work tirelessly to make Quebec and Canadian culture shine in Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

*Statements by Members*

Whether in Lachute or in Papineauville, they offer our constituents high-quality shows, worthy of big city productions, all in the heart of our local community. I want to thank them for their invaluable contribution to our region's cultural reach and vitality.

Many thanks to them. I hope they keep up the good work.

\* \* \*

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT IN TIMES OF FOOD INSECURITY**

**Mr. Jacques Gourde (Lévis—Lotbinière, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, food insecurity is accelerating across Canada. In Quebec, one in 10 Quebecers uses food banks on a regular basis because of financial constraints. The problem is now affecting low-income workers, single mothers and people with high mortgage costs. Thousands of volunteers are supporting our food banks across the country. We owe them a debt of gratitude and many thanks.

Now our society needs to do more and be more generous. We all need to do some soul-searching if we are lucky enough to be able to support a friend, neighbour or family member. We will rise to this challenge together to share with others and show empathy, civic-mindedness and love for one another. Today and tomorrow, what could be better than sharing a good meal with those close to us?

Let us all be generous to those who reach out to us.

\* \* \*

[English]

**SAM RUSSO**

**Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, my family and I, along with all those in my riding of Humber River—Black Creek, lost a close friend in Sam Russo, the husband of Louise Russo. Sam is survived by Louise and their children.

Sam was always a vital member of our community and played an integral role in supporting Louise's advocacy against violence and gun control after being shot in a random shooting. Last Saturday, friends and family of Sam held a memorial in his honour, presenting a bench plaque and planting a tree in Louise Russo Park.

Sam was a wonderful person and friend. I will always remember him for his kind heart, dedicated spirit and infectious smile. He will truly be missed by all. On behalf of my husband, Sam, as well as my family and staff, I send my sincerest condolences to my friend Louise, their children, their family and all who had the pleasure of knowing him.

\* \* \*

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I had a meeting with over 60 Ottawa-based Afghan-Canadian community leaders to listen to and discuss the issues affecting their community.

Everyone expressed their condolences for those who lost their lives due to the earthquake in Herat province. They recognized the significant impact it has had on the affected communities, and they requested more Canadian humanitarian aid for them. They ex-

pressed grave concern regarding the degradation of the fundamental human rights of women and girls to education and work.

All speakers conveyed their concern for the Afghan nationals currently in Pakistan, who have no legal status. Today is the deadline for them to leave the country to go back to Afghanistan. They also expressed concern that Afghanistan would again become a safe haven for the global jihadi groups.

\* \* \*

**CARBON TAX**

**Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Liberals continue to double down on what Canadians already know, which is that their agenda is not about helping all Canadians, but holding onto power and keeping their seats.

The Prime Minister came out admitting that his carbon tax is punishing Canadians and making life unaffordable. His solution is to temporarily remove a small portion of the carbon tax just in Atlantic Canada. The Liberal minister from Newfoundland and Labrador said, on national news, that the decision was based solely on votes. That is political science, not real science. She said that only people who vote Liberal matter.

Another Liberal minister said that he is “sick and tired of people talking about the cold winter”. Heating one's home during a Canadian winter is not a luxury.

The common-sense Conservative promise is simple: Fair and equal treatment for all Canadians. We will end all of the inflation-causing carbon tax.

\* \* \*

● (1410)

**POPPY CAMPAIGN IN ST. JOHN'S EAST**

**Ms. Joanne Thompson (St. John's East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the 2023 poppy campaign is in full swing. It is a way to remember and honour Canadian veterans.

No one better embodies the heart of the poppy campaign than the Deon family in St. John's. Rod Deon was a veteran of the Second World War and was part of the Normandy D-Day invasion. He passed away in the summer at the age of 102 and was involved in the poppy campaign for 50 years, right up until he was 101. Now his daughter Jenn is carrying that legacy and tradition forward in his and other veterans' honour.

A poppy is a way of saying thanks to those who served, like Mr. Deon. I know it is a sentiment that everyone in the House shares.

Lest we forget.

[Translation]

### CARBON TAX

**Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years with this government in office, the cost of living has skyrocketed. People simply can no longer make ends meet.

This government, with the strong support of its Bloc Québécois allies, are imposing a second carbon tax that adds up to 20¢ per litre of gas. Voting for the Bloc Québécois is costly. Unlike what the Bloc members would have people believe, this second carbon tax does apply to Quebec.

Last week, the Prime Minister finally admitted that his carbon tax is harmful and makes life unaffordable. He gave the Atlantic provinces some respite from the tax. The Liberal minister even said that the Atlantic provinces were entitled to that respite because they voted for the government. That is appalling. It is an affront to Quebecers who are also suffering as a result of the carbon tax.

The Prime Minister must be fair, show some common sense and abandon his costly carbon tax completely, and not just temporarily, for everyone.

\* \* \*

[English]

### CARBON TAX

**Mr. Branden Leslie (Portage—Lisgar, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight miserable years, it is clear that the Prime Minister and the Liberal-NDP coalition are not worth the cost. A desperate Prime Minister in total free fall finally admitted that his carbon tax is punishing Canadians and making life unaffordable. This weekend, the Minister of Rural Economic Development admitted that this exemption was not granted to Canadians across the country because they do not vote Liberal.

Meanwhile, today, the Minister of Northern Affairs denied that he had heard any concerns from his constituents about the unfair carbon tax stunt, which I do not believe for a second. Perhaps I can help the member for Saint Boniface—Saint Vital, because I have spoken to Manitobans. I have talked to seniors, families and small business owners who despise the carbon tax and want it axed. The minister had a chance to stand up for Manitobans and remove the carbon tax from our home heating; instead, his government is creating two classes of citizens: those who pay the carbon tax on home heating and those who do not.

Will the Manitoban Liberal Minister of Northern Affairs stand up for his constituents and all Manitobans and finally axe the tax?

\* \* \*

### STEM CELL REGISTRY

**Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in Canada today, nearly 1,000 patients are in need of life-saving stem cell transplants.

[Translation]

Less than a quarter of those who are sick find a suitable donor in their family. The others count on unrelated volunteer donors to save

### Statements by Members

their lives. Patients are more likely to find a suitable donor within their own ethnic group.

That is why it is so important that our stem cell registry become as diverse as our country.

[English]

Tomorrow, Wednesday, November 1, Canadian Blood Services will host the Hope on the Hill event from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., where parliamentarians, staff and the health community will have the opportunity to join the Stem Cell Registry in person. For who cannot make it, I encourage them to visit blood.ca to discover how they can join the Stem Cell Registry and save lives.

\* \* \*

● (1415)

### FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, New Democrats condemn the Hamas terrorist attack on innocent children, women and the elderly. Now, people who have nothing to do with Hamas are getting killed.

Right at the outset, New Democrats called for a ceasefire, the release of all hostages, the protection of all civilians, an end to the siege and bombardment of Gaza, and for humanitarian aid to reach civilians urgently and without restriction. We condemn all acts of anti-Semitism, anti-Palestinian racism and Islamophobia, including any glorification or calls for the killing of innocent people, Israeli or Palestinian.

As the siege and bombardment continue, a whole population could be wiped out. Humanity must be at the forefront of this war and any war. We must support ICC investigations into all war crimes. Canada must end arms sales to Israel and condemn settler attacks in the West Bank. We must invest in building a just peace for Palestinians and Israelis and put an end to the occupation.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### JEAN-LUC BARTHE

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today I wish to acknowledge Jean-Luc Barthe, mayor of the municipality of Saint-Ignace-de-Loyola, for his many years of dedication and loyal service.

Municipal government is local government. To have staying power, municipal politicians must be close to the people. While pursuing his career at Bombardier and Marine Industries, Mr. Barthe first got involved as a city councillor for 21 years and has now served as mayor for 14 years, for a total of 35 years of public service. His outstanding community involvement deserves recognition in the House.

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I am very proud to commend Mr. Barthe for his diligence, perseverance and keen sense of responsibility. He is always on the job for his constituents, and that is a very noble thing. His devotion to his beloved municipality commands respect.

I want to congratulate him.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### PUBLIC SERVICES AND PROCUREMENT

**Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, rampant corruption and gross mismanagement of taxpayer dollars are being exposed in the Prime Minister's billion-dollar green slush fund at Sustainable Development Technologies Canada. A friend of the Prime Minister who is chair of the board has funnelled millions of dollars to her company, and she even had executives pressure and mislead staff into approving millions more.

Recent reports reveal that of a small sample of companies that received funding, three of them were ineligible, but they still received a staggering \$53 million. The companies did not need the funding, and the external reviewers recommended against funding them, but they got tens of millions of taxpayer dollars anyway because under the NDP-Liberal government, insiders get paid and Canadians pay the price.

Conservatives have alerted Canada's Auditor General to the corruption in the Liberal green slush fund and have called for a full forensic audit. Canadians deserve answers, because the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost.

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#### CONSERVATIVE PARTY OF CANADA

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, last week in members' statements and question period, Conservatives made 179 statements they knew were not accurate or factual. We can put this down to political hyperbole, but link it to other things Conservatives have been doing, and a dark picture emerges. Since they named their latest leader, Conservatives have consistently worked to tear down Canada's democratic institutions, government agencies, the CBC—

**The Speaker:** I am going to interrupt the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells. To indicate that any hon. member in the House deliberately made false statements is against the rules of the House. If the member is able to, I will encourage him to start his statement again. Understanding what I have just said, he would conduct himself accordingly.

The hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells has the floor, from the top in an amended fashion.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Mr. Speaker, last week in members' statements and question period, there were 179 statements that were not accurate or factual. We could put this down to political hyperbole on the part of the Conservatives, but link it to other things the Conservatives have been doing, and we get a very dark picture. Since they named their latest leader, Conservatives have consistently worked to tear down Canada's democratic institutions, government agencies

and the CBC; to dis our economy; to attack our courts; and to disrespect the Speaker as well.

The phrase "everything is broken" promotes distrust. The Conservatives feed the public a steady diet of anger and doubt. Is this a set-up to create citizens' willingness to elect a strongman who would take away some of their freedoms in exchange for an illusory sense of protection? Is this the Conservative leader's agenda? If so, it is risky and reckless. If not, then he should follow the advice from Cicero: "When [some] speak ill of thee, live so that [none] would believe them."

● (1420)

**The Speaker:** Colleagues, once again, I will encourage you to please reread the statement that I made from the chair almost two weeks ago regarding trying to bring more decorum to the House. It is really important, not only for ourselves but also for all Canadians, that we understand that each member of Parliament who comes here comes with the best of intentions to serve her or his country, to do so with honour and to do so with integrity.

There are statements we can make that can certainly reflect a point of view people have, but let us make sure we do not cross over the line into calling into question the dignity and honour of all members.

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## ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

#### CARBON PRICING

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's flip-flop on his carbon tax creates two classes of Canadians: some who are temporarily exempt from taxes on their heating, and others who will have to pay the second carbon tax, which applies in Quebec and will continue to drive up the cost of gas, diesel and food for Quebecers.

[English]

The Prime Minister's Minister of Rural Economic Development said that Prairie Canadians are going to have to continue to pay the carbon tax because they did not vote Liberal.

Will the Prime Minister denounce her divisive comments or admit that he is hitting Canadians with higher taxes as punishment for not voting for him?

[Translation]

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, people across the country are facing very high prices because they heat their homes with oil. That is why they are not always able to switch to more affordable options, like heat pumps. Last week's announcement focuses on replacing oil heating with heat pumps, and that goes for the whole country.



We are here to work with all the provinces that want to make sure low-income households get heat pumps for free so they can get rid of the type of heating that pollutes more, is more expensive and does not help families.

[English]

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's panicked flip-flop on the carbon tax for oil heating proved that everything he said for eight years about the tax is wrong. It is not worth the cost. He said that the tax would make people better off. He has now admitted that it is not true. He said it is about the environment, but he leaves the tax on lower-emitting and more environmentally friendly natural gas. Now, the Prime Minister is dividing Canadians based on where they live.

Will he stop creating two classes of Canadians? Will he take the tax off all so Canadians can keep the heat on?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the goal from the very beginning of our fight against climate change and the price on pollution was to put more money in people's pockets and encourage protecting the planet. That is exactly what we have seen over the past number of years.

As a step, one of the things we are targeting right now is home heating oil, which is used right across the country, primarily by lower-income residents. They pay more for home heating oil than they would for natural gas, and it is dirtier and more emitting than natural gas.

We are going to provide free heat pumps for low-income families in provinces that are willing to participate with us and drive down emissions.

• (1425)

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister admits that he is keeping the tax on cleaner and lower-emitting natural gas. This is clearly not about environmental science; it is about political science. That political science with him is always to divide and conquer. It tears the country apart to serve his own narrow, personal interest.

Does the Prime Minister not realize that what he is doing is not just bankrupting Canadian households, 14% of which are living with unsafe temperatures because of higher energy costs, but also actually tearing our national unity apart?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what we see from the Conservatives, yet again, is misinformation.

The price on pollution applied to natural gas does put more money back in the pockets of eight out of 10 Canadians across the country. That is what the Leader of the Opposition refuses to recognize. When Canadians receive a climate action incentive cheque, it more than compensates, for eight out of 10 households across the country, for what they spend on the carbon price with natural gas.

The math does not apply to home heating, which is why we are phasing out home heating oil by replacing it with free heat pumps for low-income Canadians.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is not surprising that the Prime Minister continues to

### Oral Questions

contradict the Parliamentary Budget Officer, who said that 60% of Canadians pay more in his carbon tax than they get back in rebates. Now he is contradicting what he said on Thursday, wherein he admitted that Canadians are made worse off on a net basis by his tax. That is why he is having to put in a pause until after the election.

Already 14% of Canadians are living with unsafe temperatures in their homes. One in 10 has missed paying a heating bill in the last 12 months. Will the Prime Minister, before people go cold and hungry, axe the tax so that people can keep the heat on?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, home heating oil is more expensive, more emitting and more polluting and is in households that in general are lower income and do not have the means to support it. That is why we are putting forward a program that is going to get free heat pumps installed right across the country, as long as the provinces step up and partner with us the way three provinces already have.

We know the best way to support families is to have them save thousands of dollars a year on heating. That is what they are going to be able to do with heat pumps. That is why we are delivering them right across the country as provinces step up.

**The Speaker:** Before I move on, I would like to thank the whips for signalling to their members to keep the noise down. I would ask all members to please look at their whips and follow their example.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition.

**Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Leader of the Opposition, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister admits that natural gas is cleaner and lower-emitting, and that is exactly why he is going to penalize Canadians for using it.

He says he wants to bring in a pause for some people in some places. I want to get rid of the tax for all people in all places and forever, but why do we not let Canadians decide? Why does the Prime Minister not pause the tax across the country until Canadians go to the polls, so we can have a carbon tax election and Canadians can choose his plan to quadruple the tax or my plan to axe the tax?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is amazing to me that after three failed elections in a row by the Conservatives, they still want to fight another election on denying climate change and denying the costs of climate change. After the summer we have had, they continue to say no plan against climate change is what is good for Canadians, good for our economy and good for businesses. They are wrong, and Canadians are going to show them that once again.

*Oral Questions*

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

• (1430)

**The Speaker:** Again, I thank the whips for encouraging members to please exercise self-control, especially when we are listening to someone providing an answer.

I will let the right hon. Prime Minister continue.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, in homes across the country that heat with natural gas, the carbon rebate delivers more than the carbon price costs in eight out of 10 homes across the country. That is how we are fighting climate change and putting more money back in people's pockets. Home heating oil is dirty and more expensive, and we are phasing it out and replacing it with free heat pumps if the provinces sign up.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment announced a pathway, but he has not announced new immigration targets. The plan is for him to announce them tomorrow, but he candidly admitted that he does not know them. Today, he does not know the numbers he will be announcing tomorrow.

That worries me a little. This is not a high school project one puts together the night before it is due.

Why would he not wait until he knows the targets and has done consultations before announcing the announcement date?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we know immigration enriches our country. It enriches us in terms of the economy and diversity, and it enriches communities from coast to coast to coast.

We will continue to welcome people from all over the world, and we will always do so responsibly, taking into account what our businesses, our families and our communities need, as well as what is needed internationally. We will continue to do so responsibly, and I am very much looking forward to making that announcement tomorrow in due course.

**Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid I will not get to hear any more details.

We are debating a motion on successful immigration that would require the Minister of Immigration to consult Quebec, the provinces and territories, which is perfectly appropriate by the way, to establish targets starting in 2024.

Dare we hope that, if the House votes in favour of the motion, the minister will not announce targets given that he cannot know the targets until he has consulted Quebec and the provinces? That would be a responsible act of good faith.

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we fully agree that we need to consult the provinces and that we must work with the municipalities and various groups of Canadians to set the right targets. That is what we have been doing for months, even years.

We are working hand in hand with the provinces, organizations and municipalities to set the appropriate targets for the country, and we will continue to do so. This is a very reasonable proposal, and we will be supporting the Bloc Québécois motion.

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[English]

### TAXATION

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's own cabinet minister already admitted that the Liberal government only wants to help people who vote for them. We already have a climate denier Conservative leader who pretends to help people. Now we have an out-of-touch Prime Minister who only acts when it is in his own interests.

New Democrats have proposed taking the GST off of all home heating, a measure that would help all Canadians. When will the Prime Minister stop dividing the country and put in place a measure that gives relief to all Canadians?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a number of years ago, we made the decision to phase out coal because it was dirty and inefficient in how it powered our country. We are now making the decision to phase out home heating oil because it is more expensive, because it is more polluting and because it is disproportionately relied upon by lower-income Canadians who need extra support.

That is why we have created a program, which three provinces have already bought into and agreed to, to give free home heat pumps to low-income Canadians across the country. We look forward to having more provinces sign up and deliver heat pumps to Canadians who need them.

• (1435)

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is delivering a program that divides the country.

[Translation]

The announcement regarding home heating is cynical and divisive. We have an out-of-touch Prime Minister who only wants to help the regions where his popularity is declining. We have a Conservative leader who denies the existence of climate change. The NDP has long been calling for the GST to be removed from home heating to help all Canadians.

Will the Prime Minister do that?

**Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that there are Canadians across the country who depend on home heating oil. Our program, which will apply across the country, is there to help them make the switch to a heat pump, which is cheaper, more efficient and better for the environment. We are here to work with the provinces. We are here to deliver free heat pumps to low-income Canadians. We are here to help fight climate change, support families and build a better future for everyone.

[English]

### CARBON PRICING

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. He is desperate and in total free fall, so he announced a gimmicky plan to give a temporary pause to just some families in mostly Liberal-held ridings. The senior Liberal minister from Newfoundland is proud that this exemption only applies in her region. She even called out Liberals from other parts of the country for not protecting their communities.

The minister for Prairie development is a Liberal member of Parliament from Manitoba. It gets cold in Manitoba, so why was he so useless in protecting Canadian families in his area?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as we discussed in the House yesterday, the focus of this program is enabling affordability and getting people off heating oil, which is more than double, on average, the cost of natural gas in this country. It is about reducing carbon emissions at the same time. It is an important step forward for climate, it is an important step forward for addressing a key affordability issue and certainly it is good public policy.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the carbon tax is a complete failure. It drives costs up and has not allowed the government to hit its own emissions targets. Now the Bank of Canada confirms that the carbon tax alone is responsible for 16% of the extra inflation plaguing Canadians. With this announcement, families that heat their homes with clean Canadian natural gas will be punished just for living in areas where the Prime Minister is massively unpopular.

He once said, “A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian”, so will he stop his divisive tactics and take the carbon tax off home heating for all Canadians?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I said before, the focus going forward is on ensuring affordability and addressing climate change. The hon. member is entitled to his opinions, but he is not entitled to make up his own facts. At the end of the day, 80% of people in this country get more money back in a rebate than they pay in the carbon price.

This program is focused very much on addressing both climate change and affordability. It is something my hon. colleague across the way would not understand, because they simply do not have a plan to address climate change at all.

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government's recent announcement is a comedy in the making. The Liberals said they could not deviate from the carbon tax plan. They said that extreme weather, hurricanes, floods and fires demanded that they quadruple the carbon tax. They said anybody who challenged it was a Luddite. They said people get more in rebates than they pay, except last week they said that pausing the tax will make life more affordable.

Canadians are realizing the Prime Minister is not worth the cost, so why will he not just cut the tax on all forms of home heating for everybody this winter?

### Oral Questions

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to remind this House that before we came to power in 2015, emissions projections by 2030 were going to be 80 million tonnes above our 2005 levels. We have now brought this down to 50 million tonnes below our 2005 levels. That is the equivalent of removing from our roads 20 million gas-powered vehicles.

We have had the best record in the G7 for reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the last few years, and we will continue to work for Canadians to fight climate change and help with affordability.

● (1440)

**Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, as inflation continues to remain, Canadians are realizing the Prime Minister is not worth the cost. The Bank of Canada is concerned that the soft landing it once projected is now much narrower. That is because economic uncertainty is increasing while inflation still has not been tamed.

Two things the government could do to help the Bank of Canada tame inflation are cancel the carbon tax and reduce its spending, so why is the government not taking up these two very simple ways to make the Bank of Canada's job easier to bring inflation down for Canadians?

**Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is wonderful to hear the Conservatives quoting the Governor of the Bank of Canada, someone they wanted to fire a few months ago. It is surprising and wonderful, because if we listen to what the Governor of the Bank of Canada said, he said that carbon pricing was contributing 0.15% to inflation and that cutting the carbon tax would have no long-term effect on inflation and no effect past that one year. If the Conservatives are serious about helping Canadians, let us get supportive of what this government is doing to increase affordability and stop peddling whatever it is they are trying to peddle.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week, the Liberal Prime Minister looked at the polls and panicked. After eight years, he has finally realized that the common-sense Conservatives were right in saying that the carbon tax created inflation and drove up the cost of everything.

Once again, however, the Prime Minister completely forgot Quebecers, who are also overwhelmed with the stress of being unable to feed their families. We know that the Bloc Québécois wants to drastically increase the carbon tax, but that is certainly not what Quebecers want. We know that it is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

*Oral Questions*

Does the Prime Minister realize that he is not worth the cost?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what surprises many members of the House and many people watching at home is that a party aspiring to form government has no climate change plan, no adaptation plan. Just yesterday, *La Presse* reported that this summer's torrential rains in Quebec are going to cost our farmers \$150 million as a result of climate change.

What are the Conservatives proposing? They want to make pollution free. That would result in even more climate change and more impacts on the agricultural industry.

**Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, even more shocking is that after eight years, one in 10 Quebecers has used food banks every month in 2023. That is after eight years of this Liberal government.

The Bloc Québécois wants to keep punishing the middle class by radically increasing the carbon tax. As for the Liberals, they are choosing who gets relief on their bills based on which party they voted for. That is unacceptable, divisive and unfair to Quebec families.

Does the Prime Minister realize that he is not worth the cost? Will he announce today that he is fully and permanently scrapping the second carbon tax that unfairly punishes Quebecers?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is shocking is that at least four Quebec MPs from the Conservative Party once voted for carbon pricing and spoke in favour of carbon pricing. Today they are flip-flopping because they have a leader who is ideologically opposed to fighting climate change and to doing anything at all to help Canadians deal with the impact of climate change and reduce our pollution.

\* \* \*

#### IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the *Toronto Star* reported that, from now on, Ottawa will set its immigration thresholds according to provincial integration capacity in terms of housing, health care and infrastructure. This means that the federal government will have to consult Quebec about its integration capacity before announcing its new immigration thresholds. However, on October 4, Quebec's immigration minister, Christine Fréchette, said that the federal government has not listened to her concerns about Quebec's integration capacity. As of October 4, Quebec had not been consulted.

Can the minister release documents showing that Quebec has since been consulted?

• (1445)

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, once again, the Bloc Québécois refuses to understand that the Canada-Quebec accord on immigration has been in place since 1991, which is just as long as the Bloc Québécois has been around. For some mysterious reason, it refuses to understand how this works.

Quebec has a voice. Canada has a voice. We are in constant talks with Quebec and, for that matter, with all the provinces. We are setting our thresholds. We have to respect jurisdictions, but it is clear that, on the Bloc Québécois side, there is a foolish refusal to understand what is at stake.

**Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, consultation is a two-way street, and it means listening, not making nonsensical accusations against the other party.

The government is going to table its new immigration thresholds tomorrow. As it promised in the press, it will take into account integration capacity with respect to health care, housing and infrastructure, and it will engage in planning with the provinces. The government also said it would vote in favour of the Bloc Québécois's motion, which also includes integration capacity in terms of education and French language training. At this point, there is every indication it does not know what Quebec's integration capacity is and has not done any consultation.

Will it postpone the immigration thresholds announcement and consult Quebec and the provinces at long last?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, obviously our review of the thresholds and our measures will include consideration of Quebec's integration capacity and that of the rest of Canada. Consultation is not a two-way street; it involves 13 of us. We are a country. This is a debate for our whole society. We have to talk to all Canadians to ensure we all have a good understanding of immigration and of what our country's future looks like.

I invite the Bloc Québécois to look at what we are going to propose. Quebec already knows, actually. It has been consulted all year.

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister has announced that tomorrow he intends to do one thing and then do the exact opposite. He announced that he would vote in favour of our motion asking him to consult Quebec before adjusting immigration thresholds, based on integration capacity, and then he is going to do the opposite.

He is going to announce the immigration thresholds for 2026 without having consulted Quebec and without having the slightest idea of its integration capacity in terms of health, education, French language training and infrastructure. He is going to vote and then he is immediately going to betray that vote.

Why not consult Quebec before announcing immigration thresholds instead?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will say it again because it does not seem to be getting through to the Bloc Québécois. First, we have already held consultations. Second, these people are frustrated because we are going to vote for their motion.

[English]

### CARBON PRICING

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the desperate Prime Minister is in total free fall, and he has admitted that his carbon tax is punishing Canadians. The Prime Minister has announced his re-election platform: Vote Liberal to increase the carbon tax on home heating, gas and groceries. Even the minister, the member for Long Range Mountains, admitted that the exemption was not given to all Canadians because they did not vote Liberal.

What about the Liberal MPs from London? Why are Liberals so incompetent and so ineffective at getting an exemption on home heating for folks who are struggling in Ontario?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the government has always taken a regional approach, whether it is for economic development or our climate plan. Let us be very clear: In St. Thomas, Ontario, billions of dollars have been put in for Volkswagen to set up, have batteries and be able to support the supply chain for Canada.

A price on pollution is the best market mechanism we have. It is producing results unlike anything the Conservatives could actually put on the table. It is putting more money into the pockets of the middle class, and it is reducing emissions.

**Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the government is living in a fantasyland. The Liberals have finally said the quiet part out loud and admitted that not all Canadians are equal to them. After eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are struggling to pay their bills. The gimmicks the government is offering are not going to help families who are stressing over how they are going to afford to heat their homes this winter. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

Will the Liberals listen to the Leader of the Opposition and introduce legislation today to axe the tax on all forms of home heating for all Canadians?

• (1450)

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have heard words such as “gimmicky” and various things coming from the other side of the House. I would tell members that the person who actually has heating oil in their home will save upwards of \$2,500 per year. It is an enormously important affordability measure. We are going to ensure that we address affordability, while we concurrently fight climate change.

It is a shame in the House that we still have a political party in this country that does not believe in the reality of climate change. It does not exist in any other G7 country around the world. It is appalling, and Canadians should be shocked at that.

[Translation]

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last week, the Liberal Prime Minister gave the Atlantic provinces a gift by temporarily reducing the carbon tax. However, Quebecers and the rest of Canada must continue to pay.

### Oral Questions

I was reading that families have had to cut back on their spending to make ends meet. Worse still, they are having to change their habits to get by. Today, on Halloween, members of the Bloc Québécois are dressed up as Liberals and dipping into Quebecers' wallets.

Will this worn-out government stop dividing our country and scrap the carbon tax for all Canadians?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, how ironic it is to hear the member speak out against carbon pricing, because he was part of a government.

He worked for Sam Hamad, a member of the government of Jean Charest, who is seen as a North American champion in the fight against climate change. Arnold Schwarzenegger once called Mr. Charest the greatest head of a state or province in North America in terms of fighting climate change.

He was part of that government. He supported those measures.

Now he is flip-flopping and changing his mind, all because he has a leader who is against fighting climate change. I find that unacceptable.

**The Speaker:** Order. I imagine all hon. members would like to hear the question, as well as the responses to the questions asked.

The hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier.

**Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what Greenpeace thinks of this environment minister.

Voting for the Bloc Québécois is costing Quebecers dearly. Bloc members voted in favour of adding the Liberal government's second carbon tax, and now Quebecers are paying more. They said, right here in the House, that the government should raise the carbon tax even more radically.

Will the government show more compassion than the Bloc Québécois and relieve Quebecers and all Canadians of the carbon tax once and for all?

**Hon. Jean-Yves Duclos (Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is radical is the fact that my colleague from Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier went to Baie-Saint-Paul with me in July to witness the damage that climate change wrought on the people there. What is radical is that, even now, in 2023, the Conservative elite still adheres to the official policy that climate change does not exist. What is radical is that their proposal to remove the price on pollution is a pro-pollution, anti-middle class policy.

*Oral Questions**[English]***IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, last week, I asked the Minister of Immigration if he would expedite existing immigration applications to help get families out of Gaza. He said he had instructed his officials to be as flexible as possible, yet Global Affairs is telling people outright that only immediate family members are eligible and that parents and siblings are excluded. Clearly, the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. Will the Minister of Immigration officially commit to expediting existing immigration applications and including extended family members?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is happening in Gaza is absolutely catastrophic; it is one of the worst places on earth to live right now. We have been clear: The 400 Canadians stuck in Gaza need to leave. Time is running out. We will be putting pressure on all parties in terms of Israel, making sure that we do so, working with Egypt and working with Qatar, which is speaking to Hamas, and making sure that our Canadians are coming back home and brought to safety.

\* \* \*

● (1455)

**LABOUR**

**Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the current Liberal government is all talk and no action when it comes to protecting the rights of workers. In the past, the Liberals have used back-to-work legislation to force workers off the picket line; now they are dragging their feet on introducing our NDP anti-scab legislation. Meanwhile, the Canadian Olympic Committee has just hired a company that has locked out its employees, and Canada Post has just produced a non-union commercial with a union-busting company. Is it trick or treat? Will the minister finally do the right thing for workers and commit to bringing in our NDP anti-scab legislation today?

**Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that the collective bargaining process is as free and fair as it can be. We have wrapped up consultations, and we are going to take the feedback that we received from unions, employers and indigenous groups to inform legislation, to be tabled by the end of this year. This is the latest evolution in policy to protect the collective bargaining process. We need to strike a balance between doing it quickly and getting it right.

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**IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP**

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, international students have experienced some serious challenges in our international student program. In Brampton, many of them have come to my constituency office and asked for help because unscrupulous consultants have taken advantage of them. They are victims of fraud.

This is not right. We have to protect the integrity of our program. What are we doing to combat fraud and protect the victims?

**Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Brampton South for her advocacy. Our goal in the announcement that we made on Friday is really to punish bad actors, without punishing the good actors. International students are welcome to have a home in this country. These people are a real credit to our country, and we want to make sure that we are properly accommodating them.

We announced on Friday that, to nip fraud in the bud, we would make sure that we properly verify the letters that are issued by designated institutes. We are also moving toward a recognized institution model to make sure that those institutions are actually doing their jobs and that the student experience is comprehensive.

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**CARBON PRICING**

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal Prime Minister finds himself rapidly falling out of favour with Atlantic Canadians. They are not stunned. They know he is not worth the cost.

With a short three-year reprieve from carbon tax 1, carbon tax 2 is still cleverly buried in oil bills. Why is the government misleading Atlantic Canadians about removing carbon tax, when carbon tax 2 remains? How much will they pay if they vote Liberal again?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said a number of times in the House, the focus is on addressing affordability challenges, particularly as they relate to heating oil. Heating oil is by far the most expensive way to heat a home. The investment in heat pumps will actually save people significant amounts of money, but it will do so in a manner that will continue the battle against climate change, a battle that is an existential threat to the future of the human race and to the future of our children.

It is a shame that the political party over there has no plan, nor any belief in the reality of climate change.

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am looking across at the member for Avalon and I can tell by the look on his face that this answer is just not good enough.

Those who heat their homes with oil think that they received a treat, but if they vote Liberal again, they will find out that it is a trick.

As an Atlantic Canadian, I ask this. Will the Prime Minister stop dividing the country and remove all carbon tax from all forms of heating fuel for all Canadians and give them a goody this Halloween?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this government adopts thoughtful approaches to public policy. We are addressing affordability concerns in a manner that is consistent with fighting climate change.

However, the hon. member, I am amazed, is somebody who is actually opposing one of the greatest economic opportunities of our time in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is supported by the province, developed by the province and developed by companies in Newfoundland and Labrador to ensure that they develop an off-shore wind industry and a hydrogen industry that is going to create jobs and economic opportunity in his riding and in ridings throughout the province.

● (1500)

**Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, the Prime Minister admitted two things: one, that his carbon tax is making life unaffordable for Atlantic Canadians; and two, that if re-elected, he will impose the full quadrupled carbon tax on Atlantic Canadians regardless if they can afford it or not. After eight years, Atlantic Canadians cannot trust or afford those Liberals. The Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

When will the Prime Minister quite playing games and axe the carbon tax permanently so that every Canadian can keep the heat on?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in the House, one thing is clear. The Conservative Party has no belief in the reality of climate change and no plan to fight it.

This government is focused on ensuring that we are addressing affordability challenges in a thoughtful way, while concurrently addressing the climate issue. It is a shame in the House, it is a shame in the country that we have a political party that denies the reality of climate change and is willing to give up the future of our children.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, our desperate Prime Minister, while in total free fall, is now trying to fool Atlantic Canadians by pushing the quadrupling of the carbon tax until just after the next election. It is clear now, more than ever, that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. After eight years, everything is more expensive.

The government should listen to Premier Higgs of New Brunswick, when he told it that it should “Just cancel their unaffordable carbon tax altogether.”

Will the NDP-Liberal government finally listen, get off the backs of Canadians and axe the tax for all Canadians, from sea to sea?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would certainly suggest for my hon. colleague that perhaps he talk to his constituents about the \$2,500 a year that they will save through the installation of a heat pump. They will be able to do that in a manner that will enhance the affordability for their family, but also do so in a manner where they can assist in the fight against climate change.

As I said before, Conservatives in other G7 countries around the world marvel at the fact that in Canada we still have a political par-

ty that questions the reality of climate change and has no plan to fight it.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, SMEs are not asking the federal government for the moon. They are asking it to be flexible by deferring repayment of loans from the Canada emergency business account without loss of subsidies.

These businesses are not multinationals. It is the local restaurant where someone's daughter works. These are local entrepreneurs who are working hard to create jobs in their region. It could be a future Bombardier in its infancy.

The government is quite generous with American multinational oil companies. Why does it refuse to be flexible with our SMEs?

**Hon. Rechie Valdez (Minister of Small Business, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, our government listens to small businesses.

The first deadline for the exemption qualification was the end of 2022. Small businesses asked for our help. That is why our government extended the exemption qualification deadline to January 18, 2024. We also announced a full one-year extension of the term loan repayment deadline to the end of 2026.

**Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is all about double standards here in Ottawa: the needs of the oil companies and those of the SMEs.

No one here in the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party even questioned the \$83 billion in subsidies for the oil companies in the last two budgets. That, according to them, is responsible, but giving small businesses an extra year to pay back their pandemic loans, without losing their subsidy, is too expensive according to them.

When will the government get its priorities straight and defer the emergency account repayment?

● (1505)

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the information we just heard in the House.

Canada is the first G20 country to have eliminated fossil fuel subsidies two years ahead of the 2025 schedule. We did that this year and we will go even further since we are also eliminating public support for fossil fuels. No other G20 country has done that. We are the first.

*Oral Questions**[English]***CARBON PRICING**

**Mrs. Shelby Kramp-Neuman (Hastings—Lennox and Addington, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has finally admitted that the carbon tax has made life unaffordable for Canadians, proving what we already knew. After eight years, Canadians know that the desperate NDP-Liberal government is not worth the cost.

On top of this, a member of the Liberal cabinet let the veil slip and admitted that people living in eastern Ontario were denied an exemption on heating oil because they voted the wrong way.

I wonder if my neighbour, the member for Kingston and the Islands, shares this sentiment and can explain why the Liberals are refusing to cut the tax on all forms of home heating for all Canadians?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, according to a recent study by the Public Policy Forum, “Offshore wind could be for Atlantic Canada what oil was to Texas or hydro power to Quebec.” It has said that this is “monumental”.

The region could supply 6.5 million average homes twice the electricity currently consumed in Atlantic Canada.

I guess many Canadians are wondering why the Conservatives are standing in the way of clean energy power that would benefit all Atlantic Canadians and Canadians across the country.

**Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight long years, a desperate Prime Minister in free fall has finally admitted that his NDP-Liberal carbon tax punishes some Canadians more than others.

The Prime Minister announced his election platform recently. He said that if one voted Liberal, one would increase taxes on gas, groceries and home heating after the next election. Canadians know that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost.

In Saskatchewan, it gets pretty cold outside. We use 90% natural gas to heat our homes. It is greener and cleaner, but we do not get the exemption.

Will the NDP-Liberal government finally listen to our leader and axe the tax for all Canadians?

**Hon. Jonathan Wilkinson (Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage my hon. colleague to do a little more reading. Home heating oil is two to three times as expensive as natural gas. It is imperative that we enable people to implement heat pumps, to be more affordable, to ensure that they can actually save the \$2,500 a year and do so in a manner that is consistent with fighting climate change.

We also have programs to encourage the displacement of natural gas-fired furnaces through the greener homes program, through the greener homes loan program and to see the implementation of heat pumps. Certainly folks in Saskatchewan, where I grew up, are very much able to access those programs.

**Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, with his government in free fall, the Prime Minister dropped his tax on home heating, but only for certain voters.

After eight years, all Canadians are feeling the pain and know that the Prime Minister is just not worth the cost. His minister then admitted that this exemption was not granted to all Canadians because they did not vote Liberal.

What about the Liberal member for Calgary Skyview or the minister from Edmonton Centre? Just one year ago, these Alberta MPs voted to keep the tax on home heating.

Is the Prime Minister ignoring his Alberta colleagues or do they agree that Albertans should be taxed more for heating their homes than other Canadians?

● (1510)

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we have always worked to respond to regional needs as a government.

Let me be clear: We put billions of dollars in the last budget for carbon capture use and storage that would predominantly go to Alberta and Saskatchewan. We have put flexibility in our clean electricity regulations, an exemption that would take us out to 2035, burning natural gas.

If the Premier of Alberta and the Premier of Saskatchewan want to scope this in, they can join us and help low-income Canadians to get heat pumps and get off of heating oil.

\* \* \*

*[Translation]*

**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my riding of Laval—Les Îles has the largest Armenian community in Canada. Many of my constituents are very concerned about the humanitarian crisis caused by Azerbaijan's most recent military operations.

How can the new Canadian embassy in Yerevan, opened by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, help to strengthen and enhance ties between Canada and Armenia and resolve the conflict in the long term?

**Hon. Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his important question.

I actually just got back from Armenia, where we opened a Canadian embassy for the first time. I think that was worth doing. It is good news for everyone, even the opposition.



I also want to say that I joined the EU mission that monitors the border to ensure greater stability and security in the South Caucasus region. That is an example of Canada's leadership in the world. I will have an opportunity to talk more about that tomorrow when I am in Montreal.

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[English]

### CARBON PRICING

**Mrs. Rachael Thomas (Lethbridge, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of the NDP-Liberal government, Canadians are hurting more than ever before. The government's solution is actually to divide our country by picking winners and losers.

For some Canadians, they will save one dollar on the carbon tax with regard to their home heating, because, of course, it will be temporarily paused, but for those in Alberta, they are not given the same benefit. They will continue to pay the carbon tax.

The Minister of Labour and Seniors had this to say. He said that this is purely an affordability issue. Conservatives believe that this is true. It is an affordability issue for all Canadians, not just some.

Could the Minister of Labour and Seniors tell me why the seniors in my community do not deserve the same break as the seniors in his community?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let us look at the facts. Child poverty in our country has been cut in half, thanks to the Canada child benefit. How did the Conservatives vote? They voted against an affordable child care system that is saving Alberta families up to \$10,000 a year and creating 65,000 new spaces. How did the Conservatives campaign? Against. On a pipeline to tidewater, what did the Conservatives do as we were getting TMX ready to be built? They argued against.

We are here for Canadians. We are here for Albertans. We are going to make sure that our climate plan works. They can argue against. We are here for Canadians every step of the way.

**Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years, the desperate NDP-Liberal Prime Minister, in total free fall, finally admitted that his carbon tax is punishing Canadians and making life unaffordable, but today we heard from the minister for prairies and northern development that he has never heard push-back against his party's carbon tax. I have news for the minister: Canadians from every corner of the country have been desperate for someone to listen to their plight.

Will the minister admit that the Prime Minister is not worth the cost and join Conservatives in supporting our call to axe the carbon tax on all home heating?

**Hon. Randy Boissonnault (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives like to talk about axes, and it is clear that they have been working with the Premier of Alberta, because she wants to axe renewables. She wants to axe low electricity rates in Alberta by doing a six-month moratorium that has already cost us \$12 billion in investment, with \$30 billion more probably leaving our province. They want to slash supports for students, seniors and

### Oral Questions

working-class Canadians. The icing on top of the cake is that they want to pull Albertans out of the CPP. Shame on them.

We are going to move forward on climate change and protect Albertan pensioners.

● (1515)

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, after eight years of this government, Quebecers simply cannot take it anymore. The use of food banks is at an all-time high: Every month, one in 10 people in Quebec is forced to go to food banks.

The government, with the Bloc Québécois's radical support, wants to make things worse with its carbon tax. It is costly to vote for the Bloc Québécois.

The Prime Minister gave a break to the Atlantic provinces, but not to Quebecers. Will the Prime Minister announce the complete, not just temporary, withdrawal of the second carbon tax for all Quebecers?

**Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, given the enthusiasm generated by the questions from our colleagues on the other side of the House earlier, several of us wanted to answer.

I was unable to respond to the member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier who asked me what Greenpeace thought of my work as Minister of the Environment. In an interview with Patrick Lagacé on 98.5, the Greenpeace representative said that I was the best environment minister in Canadian history.

\* \* \*

[English]

### SPORT

**Mr. Michael Coteau (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the late Nelson Mandela once said, "Sport has the power to...unite people in a way that little else does." Great examples of this are the Pan Am Games and the Parapan Am Games. Earlier this month, Team Canada began its 2023 Pan Am journey, and in a few weeks from now, it will begin its Parapan Am journey. I think I can say with confidence that all members of the House are proud of our Canadian athletes.

Can the minister please update the House on our athletes at the Pan Am Games and the Parapan Am Games?

*Points of Order*

**Hon. Carla Qualtrough (Minister of Sport and Physical Activity, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I was recently in Chile to support Team Canada. There are 470 Canadian athletes participating in the Pan Am Games, with another 127 slated to compete at the Parapan Am Games in a couple of weeks. These include three athletes from my home riding of Delta. So far, Canada has won 105 medals and is on course to exceed its all-time medal count at these games.

I thank all the athletes, coaches, parents, trainers and everyone who makes it possible for the athletes to compete and succeed. On behalf of all Canadians, I would like to wish our athletes well and say, “Go, Canada, go.”

\* \* \*

**NORTHERN AFFAIRS**

**Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP):** *Uqaqtittiji*, the cost of living is creating a crisis in northern communities, and the Liberals are making it worse. Federal employees rely on a subsidy to help them with their housing expenses, and the Liberals are trying to cut that subsidy, a move that would cost workers between \$6,000 and \$8,500 a year. This would force people out of their homes and cut services that northerners rely on.

Will the Liberals reverse this decision and stop punishing workers?

**Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, that is an important question and one that we are fully engaged in. I am working with the Treasury Board and the members of Parliament for Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Yukon on the question. As soon as we get clarification, I will get back to the MP for Nunavut with the answer.

\* \* \*

**HOUSING**

**Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that Canada is in a housing crisis. We have heard from builders, bankers, economists and policy experts that significant public investment in housing is required in order to get out of the crisis. What does the finance minister say? She asks what the Bank of Canada and the rating agencies will do. There is good news. At the finance committee yesterday, the Governor of the Bank of Canada said that investments to increase housing supply in Canada would not be regarded as inflationary spending and might actually help bring down inflation. Therefore, the path is clear to replenish the co-investment fund and the rapid housing initiative, and to start a non-profit acquisition fund.

Is the government going to do it in the fall economic statement or will it be missing in action?

• (1520)

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the point on the acquisition fund is one that the member and I have discussed in the past, and it does merit further consideration, but I also point to the various other programs that are part of the national housing strategy that he mentioned: the rapid housing

initiative and the national co-investment fund. These programs combined, added to others, have lifted 70,000 people off the streets. They now have wraparound supports that help them make a transition toward something better. There are 122,000 people who were near homelessness who are now housed because of the strategy.

We have more work to do, and we will do that work in co-operation with partners.

**Hon. Andrew Scheer:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I want to correct the record. I misspoke during question period and want to make sure my comments are accurate. I said that the Governor of the Bank of Canada testified that the carbon tax added 16% of extra inflation. It is actually 16% of total inflation and 33% of extra inflation above target.

**The Speaker:** I appreciate the precision, but that is bordering on if not crossing the line into debate.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**POINTS OF ORDER****ORAL QUESTIONS**

**Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, you often mention the need to improve the tone in the House, and it is with that in mind that I rise on a point of order.

In answer to the second question of my hon. colleague from Saint-Jean, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship said that “on the Bloc Québécois side, there is a foolish refusal to understand”.

I think you will agree that these remarks are unparliamentary. I therefore demand that the minister withdraw those comments and apologize.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for La Prairie for his intervention, which concerns decorum in the House.

I note that the minister is not here. I will take that into consideration and return to the House with a ruling, if necessary.

**Mr. Joël Godin:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Earlier, during oral question period, I must admit that I made a mistake. I asked the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to put the question to his former organization, which is Equiterre, not Greenpeace. I would like the minister to ask Equiterre what they think of him.

**The Speaker:** I thank the hon. member for Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, but I think that his point is more a matter of debate.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1525)

[Translation]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

#### HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The House resumed from October 30 consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**The Speaker:** It being 3:24 p.m., the House will now proceed to the taking of the deferred recorded division on the amendment of the hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country to the motion for concurrence in the 11th report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

Call in the members.

● (1540)

(The House divided on the amendment, which was negated on the following division:)

*(Division No. 436)*

### YEAS

#### Members

Aboultiaf	Aitchison
Albas	Allison
Arnold	Baldinelli
Barlow	Barrett
Berthold	Bezan
Block	Bragdon
Brassard	Brock
Calkins	Caputo
Carrie	Chambers
Chong	Cooper
Dalton	Dancho
Davidson	Deltell
d'Entremont	Doherty
Dowdall	Dreeshen
Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)	Ellis
Epp	Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)
Falk (Provencher)	Fast
Ferreri	Findlay
Gallant	Généreux
Genuis	Gladu
Godin	Goodridge
Gourde	Gray
Hallan	Hoback
Jeneroux	Kelly
Khanna	Kitchen
Kmiec	Kram
Kramp-Neuman	Kurek
Kusie	Lake
Lantsman	Lawrence
Lehoux	Leslie
Lewis (Essex)	Liepert
Lloyd	Lobb
Maguire	Majumdar
Martel	Mazier
McCauley (Edmonton West)	McLean
Melillo	Moore
Morantz	Morrison
Motz	Muys
Nater	Patzer
Paul-Hus	Perkins
Poilievre	Redekopp

Reid  
Richards  
Rood  
Scheer  
Seeback  
Shipley  
Soroka  
Stewart  
Stubbs  
Tochor  
Uppal  
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Van Popta  
Vidal  
Viersen  
Vuong  
Warkentin  
Webber  
Williamson

### NAYS

#### Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Barron
Barsalou-Duval	Battiste
Beaulieu	Beech
Bendayan	Bennett
Bergeron	Bérubé
Bibeau	Bittle
Blaikie	Blair
Blanchet	Blanchette-Joncas
Blaney	Blois
Boissonnault	Bradford
Brière	Cannings
Carr	Casey
Chabot	Chagger
Chahal	Champoux
Chatel	Chen
Chiang	Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)
Cormier	Coteau
Dabrusin	Damoff
Davies	DeBellefeuille
Desbiens	Desilets
Desjarlais	Dhaliwal
Dhillon	Diab
Dong	Drouin
Dubourg	Duclos
Duguid	Dzerowicz
Ehsassi	El-Khoury
Erskine-Smith	Fillmore
Fisher	Fonseca
Fortier	Fortin
Fragiskatos	Fraser
Freeland	Fry
Gaheer	Gainey
Garon	Garrison
Gaudreau	Gazan
Gerretsen	Gill
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hussen	Hutchings
Iacono	Idlout
Ien	Jaczek
Johns	Joly
Jowhari	Julian

*Routine Proceedings*

Kayabaga	Kelloway
Khalid	Khera
Koutrakis	Kusmierczyk
Kwan	Lalonde
Lambropoulos	Lametti
Lamoureux	Lapointe
Larouche	Lattanzio
Lauzon	LeBlanc
Lebouthillier	Lightbound
Long	Longfield
Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)	MacDonald (Malpeque)
MacGregor	MacKinnon (Gatineau)
Maloney	Martinez Ferrada
Masse	Mathysen
May (Cambridge)	May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)
McDonald (Avalon)	McGuinty
McKay	McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)
McLeod	McPherson
Mendès	Mendicino
Miao	Michaud
Miller	Morrice
Morrissey	Naqvi
Noormohamed	Normandin
O'Connell	Oliphant
O'Regan	Pauzé
Perron	Petitpas Taylor
Plamondon	Powlowski
Qualtrough	Rayes
Robillard	Rodriguez
Rogers	Romanado
Rota	Sahota
Sajjan	Saks
Samson	Sarai
Savard-Tremblay	Scarpaleggia
Schiefke	Serré
Sgro	Shanahan
Sheehan	Sidhu (Brampton East)
Sidhu (Brampton South)	Simard
Sinclair-Desgagné	Singh
Sorbara	Sousa
Ste-Marie	St-Onge
Sudds	Tassi
Taylor Roy	Therrien
Thompson	Trudeau
Trudel	Turnbull
Valdez	Van Bynen
van Koeverden	Vandal
Vandenbeld	Vignola
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Weiler	Wilkinson
Yip	Zahid
Zarrillo	Zuberi— 206

**PAIRED**

## Members

Brunelle-Duceppe	Champagne
Lemire	Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)
MacAulay (Cardigan)	Ng— 6

**The Speaker:** I declare the amendment lost.

The next question is on the main motion.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote.

● (1555)

[Translation]

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

(Division No. 437)

**YEAS**

## Members

Aldag	Alghabra
Ali	Anand
Anandasangaree	Angus
Arseneault	Arya
Ashton	Atwin
Bachrach	Badawey
Bains	Baker
Barron	Barsalou-Duval
Battiste	Beaulieu
Beech	Bendayan
Bennett	Bergeron
Bérubé	Bibeau
Bittle	Blaikie
Blair	Blanchet
Blanchette-Joncas	Blaney
Blois	Boissonnault
Bradford	Brière
Cannings	Carr
Casey	Chabot
Chagger	Chahal
Champoux	Chatel
Chen	Chiang
Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)	Cormier
Coteau	Dabrusin
Damoff	Davies
DeBellefeuille	Desbiens
Desilets	Desjarlais
Dhaliwal	Dhillon
Diab	Dong
Drouin	Dubourg
Duclos	Duguid
Dzerowicz	Ehsassi
El-Khoury	Erskine-Smith
Fillmore	Fisher
Fonseca	Fortier
Fortin	Fragiskatos
Fraser	Freeland
Fry	Gaheer
Gainey	Garon
Garrison	Gaudreau
Gazan	Gerretsen
Gould	Green
Guilbeault	Hajdu
Hanley	Hardie
Hepfner	Holland
Housefather	Hughes
Hutchings	Iacono
Idlout	Ien
Jaczek	Johns
Joly	Jowhari
Julian	Kayabaga
Kelloway	Khalid
Khera	Koutrakis
Kusmierczyk	Kwan
Lalonde	Lambropoulos
Lametti	Lamoureux
Lapointe	Larouche
Lattanzio	Lauzon
LeBlanc	Lebouthillier
Lightbound	Long
Longfield	Louis (Kitchener—Conestoga)
MacDonald (Malpeque)	MacGregor

MacKinnon (Gatineau)  
 Martinez Ferrada  
 Mathysen  
 May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)  
 McGuinty  
 McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam)  
 McPherson  
 Mendicino  
 Michaud  
 Morrice  
 Naqvi  
 Normandin  
 Oliphant  
 Pausé  
 Petitpas Taylor  
 Powlowski  
 Rayes  
 Rodriguez  
 Romanado  
 Sahota  
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 McLeod  
 Mendès  
 Miao  
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 O'Connell  
 O'Regan  
 Perron  
 Plamondon  
 Qualtrough  
 Robillard  
 Rogers  
 Rota  
 Sajjan  
 Samson  
 Savard-Tremblay  
 Schiefke  
 Sgro  
 Sheehan  
 Sidhu (Brampton South)  
 Sinclair-Desgagné  
 Sorbara  
 Ste-Marie  
 Sudds  
 Taylor Roy  
 Thompson  
 Trudel  
 Valdez  
 van Koeverden  
 Vandenbeld  
 Villemure  
 Weiler  
 Yip  
 Zarrillo

## NAYS

### Members

Aboultatif  
 Albas  
 Arnold  
 Barlow  
 Berthold  
 Block  
 Brassard  
 Calkins  
 Carrie  
 Chong  
 Dalton  
 Davidson  
 d'Entremont  
 Dowdall  
 Duncan (Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry)  
 Epp  
 Falk (Provencher)  
 Ferreri  
 Gallant  
 Genuis  
 Godin  
 Gourde  
 Hallan  
 Jeneroux  
 Khanna  
 Kmiec  
 Kramp-Neuman  
 Kusie  
 Aitchison  
 Allison  
 Baldinelli  
 Barrett  
 Bezan  
 Bragdon  
 Brock  
 Caputo  
 Chambers  
 Cooper  
 Dancho  
 Deltell  
 Doherty  
 Dreeshen  
 Ellis  
 Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster)  
 Fast  
 Findlay  
 Gagnéux  
 Gladu  
 Goodridge  
 Gray  
 Hoback  
 Kelly  
 Kitchen  
 Kram  
 Kurek  
 Lake

## Routine Proceedings

Lantsman  
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 Lewis (Essex)  
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 McCauley (Edmonton West)  
 Melillo  
 Morantz  
 Motz  
 Nater  
 Paul-Hus  
 Poilievre  
 Reid  
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 Rood  
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 Rempel Garner  
 Roberts  
 Ruff  
 Schmale  
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 Small  
 Steinley  
 Strahl  
 Thomas  
 Tolmie  
 Van Popta  
 Vidal  
 Viersen  
 Vuong  
 Warkentin  
 Webber  
 Williamson

## PAIRED

### Members

Brunelle-Duceppe  
 Lemire  
 MacAulay (Cardigan)  
 Champagne  
 Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk)  
 Ng— 6

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

[English]

I wish to inform the House that because of the deferred recorded divisions, Government Orders will be extended by 29 minutes.

\* \* \*

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I think you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any standing order or usual practice of the House, during the debate pursuant to Standing Order 66 on the amendment standing in the name of the member for Brantford—Brant, relating to Motion No. 38 to concur in the sixth report of the Standing Committee on International Trade, no quorum calls, dilatory motions or requests for unanimous consent shall be received by the Chair and at the conclusion of the time provided for debate or when no member rises to speak, whichever is earlier, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[Translation]

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

It is agreed.

*Business of Supply*

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

#### OPPOSITION MOTION—IMMIGRATION THRESHOLDS AND INTEGRATION CAPACITY

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the crux of the opposition day motion deals with the important issue of the targets established by the Department of Immigration and the impact those targets have on the country as a whole. What members are hoping to see is consultation with the provinces, and ultimately with the territories and others, to ensure that we get the numbers right. Much as the minister explained earlier today in question period or in responding to the motion earlier this morning, there is a great deal of effort that involves consultation and work with not only provinces but all sorts of stakeholders and individuals. Whether it is labour, business or the many others, a lot of work goes into establishing the immigration targets for Canada.

I always find it interesting to look at the province of Manitoba. I have been following the immigration file since the early 1990s and the impact it has had on not only my city of Winnipeg but Manitoba as a whole. Suffice it to say, in this one part of the country, I have recognized the true value of immigration. In many different ways, our communities big and small have benefited from immigration. In the province of Manitoba, for example, all one needs to do is take a look at the city of Winnipeg's growth and prosperity and compare it to communities like Neepawa, Steinbach, Brandon, Winkler, Morden, Selkirk and many other communities to see how a solid immigration policy has helped those communities in many different ways.

The biggest and most important immigration program, from my perspective, that has contributed to Manitoba's success is the provincial nominee program. It is now accessed by all provinces and territories. It sets an example for the degree to which provinces can work with Ottawa to deal with immigration issues. Quebec has an even more detailed program that allows for more independence within Quebec when making a determination of target numbers and the people who are going to Quebec.

If we look at the early 1990s and the average number of immigrants coming to the province of Manitoba, we would find it is probably somewhere in and around the 3,000 mark or a little less than 3,000 in some years. After the signing of the nominee program brought in by Jean Chrétien, which enabled provinces to have agreements with Ottawa, we saw a rapid increase in the number of immigrants.

During the 1990s, in the Manitoba legislature and in particular in committees, I talked about achieving a higher number of immigrants. While I was an MLA, I often talked about the 1% factor and

said that Manitoba would be able to sustain 1%. In fact, it has been proven now that we can do better than 1%, because it is all about the mixture. It is the types of immigrants, whether economic, family or other streams, they bring into Manitoba that enable it to receive the numbers we have witnessed.

When we compare the 1990s to what took place at the turn of the century in the years from 2003 to 2014, we see that the numbers shot up significantly. They more than doubled, and in many years they quadrupled or more. It is because the province was able to work with Ottawa and get immigrants to Manitoba, where there is a strong connection to family. I can say that the impact on Manitoba has been profoundly positive.

• (1600)

[Translation]

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate your patience. I arrived in the House and in this seat at just the right time.

I listened carefully to the comments from my colleague from Winnipeg North.

[English]

We can all agree that immigration is a strength for our country. I am the son of immigrants, and I am very proud of that. I have to preserve it. The point is that, in today's reality, after eight years of the government, what we see is a backlog for 2.2 million people. As my colleague from the Bloc said, they are not cases; they are people. People are waiting to have clearance from the government.

After eight years, 2.2 million people are waiting. Does my colleague think that is a good situation for Canada?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my colleague across the way. Having said that, the member needs to recognize that, when I was the critic for immigration under Stephen Harper, the backlog was actually greater.

It got so bad and reached a degree that the former Conservative government actually deleted hundreds of thousands of files in order to get rid of the backlogs. People were waiting for years; the delete button was hit, and they were gone. The former Conservative government actually closed the parent and grandparent program. People could not sponsor a parent or grandparent. Back then, we had to wait years in order for a spouse to be able to come to Canada.

We have seen significant changes in immigration. That does not mean all our immigration issues are resolved. We still need to do more work. In particular, my issues are with respect to international students. I will continue to advocate for them and look for ways we could improve that particular aspect of the program.

• (1605)

[Translation]

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to know what my colleague thinks.

*Business of Supply*

First, does he consider it legitimate that Quebec, the only franco-phone state in North America, wants to ensure the future of French? The federal government seems unwilling to take account of our capacity to integrate and provide French instruction to newcomers. To sustain the demographic weight of French in Quebec, we have to provide French language training to 90% of newcomers.

Through its legislation, its funding of official languages and its institutions, the government seeks to provide services in English and simply support English in Quebec.

Does my colleague believe that integration capacity needs to be accounted for, and that the federal government should stop trying to anglicize Quebec?

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, the Province of Quebec is actually in a great position to deal with the issue the member raises.

In the province of Manitoba, under the provincial nominee program, they get additional points if they can in fact speak French. We have a wonderful French community, and it is more than one community, in Manitoba. Additional points are assigned, through the nominee program, because we too would like to be able to attract French-speaking people.

The Province of Quebec has the ability to do that as well. I would encourage the member to get a better, more wholesome understanding, in terms of the potential impact that immigrants, in general, have on all communities in Canada, no matter where those communities are, in all regions of our country. We develop programs to ensure that we protect culture, heritage, language and so forth.

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, over the last 15 years, through our work in Vancouver Kingsway, my staff and I have seen that the family class is one of the most successful streams of immigration in this country. This is no surprise, because families provide support for newcomers to come here.

We have always noticed that the definition of family in our immigration system is very narrow. People can sponsor only their parents, their spouse or their children. We have often and long thought this should be expanded to include siblings and perhaps even aunts and uncles, because that is how the entire world views their family.

If we expand the definition of family, Canadians could sponsor their sisters or brothers, or perhaps even aunts and uncles as part of their family class, if they so wish, to unite their families. Does my hon. colleague agree that it is time to do this?

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, in fact, there are limitations in each of the different categories. One of the nice things about the provincial nominee program, and I advocated for this between 2003 and 2010, is that we should be expanding and assigning more points for brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and more extended family. What we saw in Manitoba is that this is exactly what happened. Through that, we were able to retain more immigrants in the province of Manitoba once they arrived. Family unification through economic development is hugely successful; Manitoba demonstrated that very clearly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my good friend and colleague from Laurentides—Labelle.

During question period, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship said his Bloc Québécois colleagues were foolish and frustrated. I would hope that the minister would not want to get carried away in a debate as important as this one and that he would be able to raise the level of debate a little.

Last June, I had the opportunity to take part in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, where there was a joint debate on the integration of migrants and refugees; social inclusion of migrants, refugees and displaced persons; and the health and social protection for undocumented and irregular workers. I was on the list of speakers and, although I was able to have my speech recorded in the minutes of the debate, I unfortunately was unable to deliver it to the assembly.

Since I thought that this speech was particularly relevant to the debate on the Bloc Québécois motion, I would like to share its content.

Successful integration requires that the host society be able to allow newcomers to thrive. Quebec has the ability to select its so-called economic migrants. However, the federal government retains control over family reunification and refugees. For years, Quebec received more than 90% of all irregular entries into Canada through the infamous Roxham Road, which shows that the federal government can still impose much of the immigration coming into Quebec.

The various Quebec political parties seem to have their own conception of Quebec's capacity for integration, ranging from 35,000 to 50,000 or even 80,000 immigrants per year. The federal government, on the other hand, seems to like the idea promoted by an interest group, the Century Initiative, who believes that the Canadian population should be increased from 40 million to 100 million by the year 2100. This would result in immigration rates in Quebec of more than 200,000 per year. That is far more than the envisioned capacity.

The federal government claims it does not endorse that delusional vision, which is based solely on economic considerations, without taking into account its predictably disastrous effect on the situation of French in Quebec and Canada. The federal government recognizes that French is in sharp decline, both in Quebec and in Canada, but nevertheless set immigration targets of up to 500,000 newcomers in 2025. This means that more than 100,000 immigrants would come to Quebec each year, which is still a substantial number.

This puts Quebec in an impossible situation. Either it agrees to comply with these unreasonable targets at the risk of losing its linguistic and cultural specificity, or it sticks to its capacity for integration, which would accelerate the decline of its demographic and political weight within the Canadian federation.

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Quebec and Canada have always been lands of immigration, and this will continue to be the case, particularly in this era of labour shortages. While employment is the most important factor in integration, it is important to give newcomers the tools they need to successfully integrate, which includes learning the common language and cultural codes. They must also have access to decent housing, and social and medical services, which brings us back to the central question of the host society's capacity for integration.

In my speech to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I referred to Roxham Road, and I remember the countless speeches we made in the House calling for the closure of Roxham Road. Some members on the other side of the House tried to imply that the Bloc Québécois wanted to close Quebec off and stop accepting newcomers. Some, even more insidiously, suggested xenophobic intentions on the part of the Bloc, but that was not the case.

• (1610)

What the Bloc Québécois was and still is concerned about is integration capacity. As soon as the federal government closed Roxham Road, the provinces, who had no concerns at all when it was open and Quebec was taking in over 90% of all the irregular migrants to Canada, suddenly realized that there was a cost to bringing in all of these people. At that point, the provinces started to be less pleased about it, because, obviously, they had to provide these people with health and social services. They had to ensure that they had decent housing. All of that is not easy.

It is all well and good for the federal government to be open to welcoming the entire world, but Quebec and the provinces are the ones that actually have to welcome those people, provide them with the minimum necessary services and help them to integrate into our society appropriately. As we were saying earlier, employment is key to successful integration, and to get a job, these people need to learn the language and the cultural codes. Do we have the capacity to bring in as many people as the federal government would like? I think the government needs to consult Quebec and the provinces. That is what the motion that is before us today is proposing.

As I was saying, after Roxham Road was closed, the other provinces suddenly realized it was not much fun having to make room for and integrate all those people who entered Canada irregularly, with all that implies financially.

Our Liberal Party friends, who tend to portray the Bloc Québécois, and Quebec in general, as xenophobic, should consider the results of an Environics survey. According to the survey, 37% of Quebecers feel Canada has too much immigration. People might say that 37% is a lot, but that number might be informed by this kind of trauma, if I can put it that way, of having spent many years taking in over 90% of those entering Canada irregularly. Let me just point out that 50% of Ontarians feel Canada has too much immigration. In the rest of Canada, it is 46%.

I do not want to hear anybody tell me that Quebecers are not welcoming. Even though we had to put up with the considerable impact of Roxham Road for many, many years, the percentage of Quebecers who feel that there is too much immigration in Canada is only 37%, while in Ontario, where they have been experiencing this phenomenon just very recently, the percentage is 50%. In the rest of Canada, it is 46%.

I almost feel like asking my hon. colleagues from the Liberal Party to apologize for suggesting that the Bloc Québécois, and Quebecers in general, may have somewhat xenophobic tendencies. The proof is in the pudding, and it is quite the opposite: Quebecers are very welcoming. When the Bloc Québécois raised this issue, it had to do with our capacity to take in newcomers. It also had to do with the fact that there were criminal smugglers illegally making money off the backs of the poor seeking refuge in Canada. The federal government accepted this as something good, even wonderful, when in fact it was simply inhumane.

I therefore ask my colleagues from all political parties to vote in favour of the Bloc Québécois's motion. Its purpose is simply to ensure that we can generously take in people from around the world. These people are an asset to our society. For them to live up to that expectation, however, their integration must be smooth and successful. This is what we are asking.

• (1615)

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I, too, am a Quebecer and very proud of my language.

In my hon. colleague's opinion, what is preventing Quebec from choosing francophone immigrants?

As for integration capacity, I can reassure him right away. I personally participated in the family reunification program. My husband is from Michigan. I made him feel very welcome, and he even speaks very good French. Our two children were educated at a French school in Gatineau. The member spoke about the capacity to integrate newcomers, but I would remind him that Quebec has that capacity.

• (1620)

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Madam Speaker, I think my colleague did not listen at all to the speech I just gave. Quebec can indeed contribute and participate in selecting its so-called economic immigrants. However, I did present figures showing that the federal government still has the ability to control some of the immigration going to Quebec.

This means that part of the immigration to Quebec is outside the control of the Government of Quebec. The federal government can impose a higher number of immigrants than Quebec is able to integrate. We are talking about integration. Our Liberal colleagues seem very generous when they say that Canada welcomes the whole world. They are not the ones paying for any of this. Quebec and the provinces pay to welcome immigrants and pay for schools, social services and health care.



The Liberals need to stop lecturing us and saying that we have the ability to integrate immigrants properly. We have to have the means to integrate all these people. Quebec says it is ready to welcome 35,000 to 80,000 people. The federal government wants to require it to take in more than 100,000 a year. It is more than the number Quebec can possibly integrate into society.

[English]

**Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Madam Speaker, many people may be surprised to know that my riding includes the French Quarter in Edmonton. It has a huge francophone community.

I know that this member will not be surprised because he has helped me practise my French many times, and I have told him all about my community. For me, the biggest strength we have is that there are communities across the country that are francophone, and they can incorporate the francophone immigration numbers we want to have. My concern, of course, is that we do not have the housing, and the cost of living is very extraordinary.

Does he not agree that, if we stopped the profiteering of big corporations and fixed some of those other problems, we would be able to take in more of these francophone immigrants, who I think make our community so much richer across the country, not just in Quebec?

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron:** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. As my mother used to say, if wishes were horses, beggars would ride. They may very well want to change this or that, but unfortunately that generally never goes anywhere.

The federal government has been dragging its feet for years when it comes to paying its fair share of health care funding to Quebec and the other provinces. It continues to be very stingy, but if it paid a bit more then maybe we could indeed integrate more people.

I was listening to our Liberal colleagues during the entire debate tell us that it was important to have immigrants to fill the labour needs in Canada. Sure, but essentially what employers are looking for is cheap labour. According to a report by the UN special rapporteur in charge of investigating this situation in Canada, too much immigration is “a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery”.

I will read an excerpt from the study entitled, “The Economics of Canadian Immigration Levels” from the University of Waterloo. According to the study, the purpose of the federal government's recent trends to accept more low-skill workers is to allow businesses to reduce payroll and have profits that exceed the simple difference between the immigrant employee's salary and the native employee's salary considering the increase in overall production.

We are welcoming cheap labour. That is not what I would call successful integration.

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Madam Speaker, on October 11, in Val-Morin and Mont-Laurier, I welcomed my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert as part of his tour across Quebec on housing and homelessness. The situation

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is the same in both the northern and southern parts of Laurentides—Labelle. The current housing crisis is a national emergency.

In Val-Morin this evening, after the first snow hit our region on Monday, one person will still be sleeping in the forest. In Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts, the drop-in shelter, which has had to change location many times, is resuming service for the winter. In Rivière-Rouge, people will be sleeping on the streets tonight. In Mont-Laurier, resources are unable to keep up with the demand, and we all know the repercussions of that. The current situation is critical. Today, October 31, 2023, we are unable to house our people properly. We need to show some humanity.

The situation in Laurentides—Labelle is no better than elsewhere. Along with the RCMs of La Rivière-du-Nord and Pays-d'en-Haut, the Laurentides RCM ranks near the bottom when it comes to the state of the rental market in Quebec. It is 91st out of 98. That is not insignificant.

The vacancy rate in the Laurentides RCM is close to 0%. I am not talking 5%; I am talking almost 0%. Rents there have gone up more than in most of Quebec. The problem is made worse by the shortage of social housing, affordable housing, community housing, co-ops and not-for-profits. Greater housing supply could help ease pressure on the rental market, which is exacerbating the crisis. There is simply not enough housing, and everyone knows it.

The region's entire rental ecosystem is broken. The mayor of Val-David, which is also in Laurentides—Labelle, told me that she hired a new engineer for the municipality. The new employee spent weeks looking and ultimately had to turn the job offer down because he could not find a place to live. Despite making good money, he could not leave his home and find a new home in Val-David. If an engineer has a hard time finding a place to stay, even just a temporary base from which to keep looking, what about the rest of the population?

I will give another example. Last week in Mont-Laurier, I met the rector of the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Vincent Rousson. He told me that the university is working on a plan with the Laurentides health and social services agency, the Upper Laurentians school services centre, the Cégep de Mont-Laurier and the Zone Emploi organization in the Antoine-Labelle RCM. Just imagine the consortium. Their goal is to build housing in Mont-Laurier to house students, new workers and immigrants. They want to provide a roof to those who choose to contribute to the development of the Upper Laurentians.

In light of everything I just said, I have a question for the House and I hope to get an answer in the five minutes of questions and comments that I am given.

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● (1625)

How can we have successful, human-centred immigration if the only numbers taken into consideration are the ones in the column tallying people who choose to come and settle in Quebec? We also need to consider the services column, where there are already acute issues. How can we have an immigration policy that takes into account the current reality of Quebec and Canada as well as immigrants' needs?

Behind those numbers are real people. Are we providing a dignified welcome and respecting human life by bringing people here, only to have many of them sleeping on the streets? Is it a compassionate policy to dangle the prospect of a better future when the reality is that, as my colleague said earlier, support services are unable to keep up with demand? Is it responsible for us to craft an image of openness on the backs of citizens who have made the difficult and sometimes heartbreaking choice to leave everything behind in their country to make a life elsewhere and who, once off the plane, realize that it is really not what they thought it would be?

The answer is no. It is not responsible. It is not altruistic. It is not dignified. It is certainly not a compassionate policy.

The reason I am speaking today is that I truly believe in a successful immigration policy. To me, a successful immigration policy is one that can take care of the people we welcome with open arms. One thing we tend to forget in all these debates about immigration is the immigrants themselves. They are the ones who choose to come and live their best, most fulfilling lives here. They are the ones who choose to contribute to Quebec's development. They are the ones who choose to leave the land of their birth in search of a better future, yet, more often than not, they wind up being used, and I find that utterly appalling.

I would like to quote from Immanuel Kant. We all know this one, but I urge everyone to listen closely: "So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." That quote is central to this debate. We must never stray from absolute respect. We owe people human dignity, which means never using portrayals of them as a means to our own ends.

The government must reinvest in social and community housing. All surplus federal properties must be reused for the development of social, community and very affordable housing. To help stem the housing crisis, we need to reform the home ownership system and take into account the different realities of Quebec households and the most diverse family situations. It is essential that the federal government financially realign the various programs and colours of the national housing strategy to create an acquisition fund.

Since I am running out of time, I simply want to say that it is urgent that Quebec receive its fair share of funding from the federal homelessness programs, with no strings attached. Above all, it is important that the government and the parties in this House understand Quebec's distinctiveness and that the Government of Canada respect the integration capacity of Quebec, its regions, its cities and its organizations.

● (1630)

[English]

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, when we think in terms of the targets and the numbers, we all recognize just how important it is overall, in all regions of the country. That is why we see such a very strong effort toward putting together something on which the provinces, territories and different stakeholders, whether they be from labour, business or others, can all come together at some point so we will be in a position to present the targets that will be coming out tomorrow.

The motion seems to suggest that we should be doing consulting. The consulting has been done. I am wondering whether the member could provide her thoughts about how programs such as the provincial nominee program have been a real benefit in terms of their direct provincial input, much like what the Province of Quebec has.

● (1635)

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, if consultations were held, then where are the results? Why is it that all the provinces and Quebec are unanimously asking to be consulted so that they can tell the government how many people they are able to welcome appropriately? From what I understand, the government is going to have to hold a second round of consultations to get new numbers since the reality may have changed. I do not know when the consultations were held. Perhaps it was five or 10 years ago. However, we are talking about what is happening now, and we want answers.

[English]

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I really do appreciate all the commentary on this, specifically from the member when she was talking about homelessness. When we have people coming to Canada, sometimes from countries that are worn-torn or coming here to find a better life, there is the fact that there are no homes. There is no housing for them. When it comes to ensuring that people coming to Canada are actually better off, I do not believe that the government has been responsive.

Could the member comment on what she thinks the government should be doing when it comes to housing policy and immigration policy, and how they should coincide?

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, the answer is quite simple. Can we be humble enough to look at what is being done in other countries, where having a roof over one's head is a basic right and where social housing is everywhere? How many years has it been since the government abandoned the community organizations here? The government cannot make up for that with the snap of its fingers. Today, we need to work together to make a clear decision by looking at what other countries have done and what has worked.

[English]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I especially enjoyed my colleague's speech when she talked about the crushing need for affordable housing in Canada. I come from Vancouver, which may be the epicentre of the housing crisis in this country, and we have experienced a shocking lack of affordable housing of all types for several decades now. It is quite clear to me and to the people I represent that the market alone is not capable of solving the problem and providing the kinds of diverse housing options that people need.

I am wondering whether my hon. colleague agrees with the NDP when we call for a strong multi-governmental approach to providing non-profit, non-market housing options for Canadians. Does she agree with us that this is critical if we are going to make meaningful progress to ensure that everybody in Canada has an affordable home?

[Translation]

**Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau:** Madam Speaker, I just want to say that before becoming an MP, I used to help people who had all sorts of problems. They were vulnerable. The most fundamental thing is to know that they are safe and have a roof over their head. Then, it is time to set about ensuring that they are ready and able to become a member of the workforce.

Until it becomes a priority to say that every individual has the right to a roof over their head, we will continue to have a problem. The government is trying to offer a lot of policies to help the economy and support prosperity, but what about helping human beings? That is fundamental. Unfortunately, it took a crisis in 2023 for there to be any action.

**The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes):** Order. It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Dufferin—Caledon, Housing; the hon. member for Spadina—Fort York, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; the hon. member for Kitchener Centre, Climate Change.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Pontiac.

I think immigrants are poems in Quebec. I will come back to that a little later. Quebec is a welcoming society, much more welcoming than its government's words and actions might sometimes imply.

According to a Leger poll conducted in May 2023, which is consistent with the figures quoted by my hon. colleague earlier, roughly 20% of Quebecers think we should welcome more or far more immigrants, as opposed to 17% elsewhere in Canada. This highlights a rather interesting fact about public opinion in Quebec. I would go so far as to say that Quebec could serve as an example to a number of countries that are facing far less significant demographic challenges, but that have strong reactions to immigrants. The U.S. of the last few years obviously comes to mind.

For quite some time, Quebec has extended a generous, and sometimes very charitable, welcome towards those who have come from abroad and who are very often in a desperate state. In particular, I

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am thinking of the Irish people who arrived in Montreal in the 19th century, suffering from disease, most notably typhus.

By the way, I would like to draw attention to my friend Scott Phelan, who, along with Fergus Keyes and many others too numerous to name, is working hard at the Montreal Irish Monument Park Foundation to redevelop the area around the famous Black Rock, which sits on a median in between the four lanes of Bridge Street, at the foot of the Victoria Bridge. This rock marks the burial place of 6,000 Irish people who fled the Great Famine of 1847 and had typhus, as I mentioned. Their graves were discovered in 1859 by workers building the Victoria Bridge, who were themselves Irish.

An interesting fact is that about 70,000 Irish immigrants arrived on the shores of the St. Lawrence in Montreal at a time when the population of the entire island was only 50,000.

Let me now speak about my own riding, located on the island of Montreal, the riding of Lac-Saint-Louis, in a region that is sometimes mocked here as the “West Island”, for example during the debates on Bill C-13. Singling out any region of Quebec for mockery is not worthy of Quebecers and Quebec values.

I would like to take a moment to describe my riding of Lac-Saint-Louis. In terms of demographics, 71% of the population is bilingual, and about 42% of people have English as their mother tongue, while French is the mother tongue of about 22%. By the way, it is Premier Legault's home riding.

The riding is home to two CEGEPs, including the Gérard Godin CEGEP, which is an important hub of francophone Quebec culture. The CEGEP regularly hosts French-language music, theatre and film performances of the greatest variety and quality in its concert hall, named after Pauline Julien. As most Quebecers know, Gérard Godin and Pauline Julien had a great love story that took place during an exciting time in the history of Quebec and Canada.

I would like to mention outstanding leadership of Annie Dorion, the director of the Salle Pauline-Julien. She has made this concert hall a true cultural jewel on the West Island. I would invite all hon. members to consult its events calendar and come for a visit.

Lac-Saint-Louis also has an English CEGEP, John Abbott College, where several House of Commons pages studied. This CEGEP is located in the heart of the Macdonald campus of McGill University, an internationally renowned academic institution. McGill University is unfortunately affected by the recent announcement about higher tuition fees for out-of-province students.

• (1640)

This announcement is part of an improvised and populist policy that is not justified. Why is the Quebec government afraid of the roughly 35,000 students who come to Quebec for post-secondary education, some of whom will choose to stay there for the long term because of their love for the French language and Quebec culture and who will use their brainpower to help advance the Quebec nation? What next? Will the Quebec government limit tourism?

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The Bloc Québécois motion talks about the provinces' capacity to integrate immigrants, a very valid concern. However, the motion suggests that this capacity remains static, whereas we need to see things in real time. We must call on the provinces to work actively, hand in hand, particularly with professional bodies, to ensure greater capacity for newcomer integration in social services, health, education and the building trades, for example. This is needed in order to ensure Quebec has the workforce it needs to address the housing crisis, so that when we unfortunately have to go to the hospital, quality health care can be provided to us, or when parents have to send their child to school, there is a teacher at the front of the classroom.

I would like to come back to the very first sentence of my speech: "immigrants are poems in Quebec". Who said that? It was Gérald Godin. According to an article published in *Le Devoir* on October 21, 2023, by Jonathan Livernois, a professor at Laval University, Gérald Godin had a "particular interest in economic immigrants". I will again quote Professor Livernois, in reference to an interview with Minister Gérald Godin in January 1984 on the TV show *Impacts*, which some members will recall:

Robert Guy Scully spoke with his guest about undocumented immigrants, who at the time numbered between 50,000 and 200,000 in Canada. The host asked, "Do you think that rich countries, like Canada, will have to tighten their borders, perhaps even brutally, against poor countries?" Godin rejected the idea, believing on the contrary that mobility must not be curtailed and that we must take advantage of the extraordinary vitality of all those who move around the world, with or without documentation.

Mr. Livernois's article goes on to say:

These days, it is not uncommon to hear a premier on the campaign trail, when asked about integrating immigrants, blurt out that Quebecers do not like violence and that we have to "make sure we keep things as they are". During the same election campaign, an immigration minister can say that "80% of immigrants go to Montreal, do not work, do not speak French and do not subscribe to the values of Quebec society".

That is quite the contrast.

• (1645)

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, it is funny to hear Gérald Godin being quoted. Did the member know that Godin also said, "The federal policy on French in Canada can generally be summarized as follows: strengthen French where it is on its last legs; remain passive where there are real chances for it to assert itself and weaken it where it is strong"?

It can be fun to quote Gérald Godin, just like the parish priests would quote the gospel to justify burning certain people. I also heard that Pauline Julien was locked up in October 1970 by the Canadian army. When we moved a motion for an apology for October 1970, how did the member vote? I do not remember.

In fact, what was the purpose of this intervention other than to blame the Government of Quebec?

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, it is not about blaming the Government of Quebec, even though I think that the Quebec government could well adopt an attitude that is more in line with Gérald Godin's remarks. That is basically what I was trying to say.

The article that I quoted was published in *Le Devoir*, not the *Gazette*. It was written by a Quebec academic, obviously. Incidentally, I attended a really nice show at Place des Arts called *La Renarde, sur les traces de Pauline Julien*, featuring the songs of Pauline Julien. I highly recommend it.

What I wanted to do in my speech was point out that Gérald Godin was a great humanitarian and that his words still have value today, although perhaps not all of them, since the member mentioned quite a few other quotes.

• (1650)

**Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC):** Madam Speaker, after more than eight years, we have an immigration system with a backlog of over 2.2 million applications. It is shameful to make people wait to reunify their families. It is also shameful to make those with precarious status wait to find out whether they will be entitled to permanent resident status. Sometimes, they have to wait many years to find out if the answer is a yes or a no. The Auditor General found that approximately 99,000 people are waiting to be considered for refugee status and that they will have to wait an average of three years.

Does the member think that a good immigration system makes people wait three years to find out whether they have the right to stay in Canada?

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, we must always try to do better, that is for sure. However, that shows how attractive Canada is around the world. It is one of the best countries in the world. It comes out in all the polls. It is clear that many people around the world would like to come to Canada and live in this country that offers so many good things to everyone, including its citizens and people who come to join Canadians to build an even better country.

[English]

**Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague touching on the importance of immigration. Interestingly, looking around this chamber, I would dare say every single one of the people in this chamber, but for indigenous members, benefited from immigration. It was our parents or our grandparents, our ancestors, who were allowed to come to this country and build this country to what it is today.

My hon. colleague did touch on the resources that are needed to help make that successful. I am wondering if he could identify what resources he thinks the federal government needs to provide so, when we do bring in another 450,000 or 500,000 Canadians this year and in the ensuing years, we can make sure that they have the resources they need to successfully integrate and thrive in Canada.

**Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia:** Madam Speaker, the member for Laurentides—Labelle put her finger on one aspect of the problem, one resource that is fundamental, and that is to have a roof over our head. The federal government just signed an agreement with Quebec, for example, for monies for housing.

Housing is fundamental, and that is why we have put in place a national housing strategy, which I think now totals almost \$80 billion. It is also why we have taken other steps to encourage higher density housing, especially around public transit hubs. There is a lot to do by both the provinces and the federal government.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel (Pontiac, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today.

Tomorrow, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship is going to present the immigration targets for the coming years. When it comes to welcoming newcomers to Canada, we need to make sure we have growth, and newcomers support our economy, they make a significant contribution.

I would like to talk about an extraordinary example. In my riding, which extends far north, the communities are remote. Maniwaki Hospital was having a hard time keeping its operating room open. However, thanks to two workers from France and the Maghreb, we were able to keep it open with two excellent doctors. So I would like to warmly thank, among others, Dr. Amahzoune for all his good work. He brought his wife with him. She now works at the RCM. It was very difficult in the regions to find qualified employees to fill badly needed positions.

Earlier, my colleague talked about our unlimited capacity to welcome people and about how we need health care services, schools and teachers. I completely agree with him. That is why we need immigration: because we need services. For example, my aging parents are going to need health care. If we do not get immigrants like Dr. Amahzoune, we will not have health care services. Quebec has a teacher shortage right now. Some schools will settle for having an adult in the classroom. What matters is getting a teacher via immigration. Even if that teacher brings two kids along, they can teach 30 elementary kids and even more in high school. It is important to have skilled workers. We were talking about housing. That takes construction workers, plumbers, electricians. All that takes workers, so, yes, I agree, we need services, but our ability to get those services depends on immigration.

My colleague spoke earlier about data. There is one statistic he did not mention. I would like to take us back 50 years. There were seven workers for every retiree in Canada. With the baby boomers retiring, there have been a lot of retirees. The figures are now three workers for every one retiree. The projections are that it will soon be two workers for every retiree. If we want services, we need immigration.

I agree with the French fact, but once again, Quebec has every ability to choose its francophone immigrants, to reunite families like mine and to ensure that French is strong and solid in Canada and Quebec.

Permanent immigration is therefore absolutely essential to our growth and to provide services for Canadians like us, particularly in health care and housing construction. These are absolutely vital functions, and yes, we are consulting the provinces. They are extraordinary partners in the growth of our economy. We are consulting the provinces, and certainly Quebec. In a moment, I will give some examples of the results of this wonderful collaboration.

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I think we agree that discussions on immigration reflect the realities we are seeing in the labour market. We also need to make sure that when we welcome immigrants, they have all the resources and tools they need to contribute fully to their new community.

• (1655)

Under the Canada–Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, Quebec has the responsibility to set the number of immigrants to be sent to Quebec, as well as to select, welcome and integrate these immigrants. To be very clear, we are working in close collaboration with Quebec on all matters of immigration.

The very origin of some measures we are bringing in comes from the willingness of the Government of Quebec to see certain provisions applied. The public interest policy that allows certain work permit holders to study without a student visa is an example of an initial willingness by Quebec to allow foreign workers on its soil to improve their skills. That is a good example of Quebec's influence on Canadian immigration policies.

Last year, it was at Quebec's request that we brought in the international mobility program plus, which allows people who are outside Canada, but who have been selected by Quebec in the context of a permanent residence program, to obtain an open work permit.

Ultimately, it is because we are consulting Quebec, and it was at Quebec's request that we harmonized the conditions for accessing post-graduate work permits for certain programs with what already existed in the rest of Canada. Every year, after extensive consultations and taking into account available data, the government presents an immigration plan. Previously, this plan covered only one year, but the current three-year plan gives the federal government and its provincial partners, as well as those working in the sector, a better planning horizon. This plan is practical and allows us to meet the country's current needs while adapting to the future.

In addition to our annual consultation on immigration thresholds, we recently consulted the provinces and stakeholders as part of our strategic immigration review, which aims to determine what changes need to be made to ensure that our immigration system meets our country's current and future needs. These consultations highlighted the need to work closely with many immigration partners to ensure that we meet the needs of our economy and our communities.

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The federal government, the provinces and the territories all agree that brilliant and talented newcomers are essential to Canada's present and future growth, but we need to be successful. That means we have to align our immigration priorities with essential services such as housing and infrastructure. I spoke about that earlier. That is very important.

To date, we have made historic investments in housing in Quebec. Since 2015, we have invested over \$6.5 billion to help more than 445,000 Quebecers find affordable housing. Thanks to a bilateral agreement between Canada and Quebec, a joint investment of another \$3.7 billion will be coming over the next 10 years to improve housing in Quebec. We recently finalized an agreement in principle with Quebec for \$900 million through the housing accelerator fund. These are crucial investments, but the goal is to guarantee that Quebec will bring in new immigrants. We will also ensure that newcomers have all the resources they need to build new lives for themselves in Canada.

As I like to say, newcomers are not the cause of the current housing situation; they are part of the solution.

• (1700)

They have the incredible skills to come help us build our economy, the skills we need to build homes.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, earlier, during the question and comment period following the speech by my colleague from Montarville, the member for Pontiac said that Quebec is a society with a good integration capacity, and she gave the example of a family that she and her family welcomed and who integrated very well. That example is a bit like saying there is no racism in Quebec because I have a Black friend and things are going very well for him. That is a flimsy argument, especially since our colleague from Pontiac comes from a region where francization of new arrivals is the most difficult and where results are among the worst in Quebec. I think we need to take a step back and look at the big picture. It is about the infrastructure that is needed to properly welcome newcomers, including the health and education systems.

I would like my colleague to slightly adjust the example she gave earlier by simply telling us if she thinks we already have all the necessary resources in health and education infrastructures to welcome as many newcomers as the government is proposing.

• (1705)

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel:** Madam Speaker, I would say to my hon. colleague that we need immigration.

Earlier, I mentioned the example of Dr. Amahzoune in Maniwaki. Without him, there would be no operating room in Maniwaki. Hospitals in the regions are struggling. We need skilled immigration. I do not understand why the hon. member would not want us to have skilled immigration to provide assistance to Quebecers, especially in the Outaouais, where there is a desperate need for health care. We need doctors and nurses. We need immigration.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Madam Speaker, I agree that we need immigration; we know that it helps our economy go round. However, if we do not have the rest

of the resources, as the member from the Bloc was saying, such as housing and health care, how can we do it so that it is working best for the people who are coming here to become Canadians? I think we have had a lot of lack of planning. Yes, we need immigration. We opened up the borders, but there needs to be housing at the same time.

We can talk about doctors getting their qualifications, but I just sat down with a person two weeks ago who has been here for almost six years and still does not have his qualifications. Maybe the member can address how we can do better, so doctors are actually in operating rooms and not driving taxicabs.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel:** Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague.

We need skilled immigrants like doctors and nurses. It is in our best interest to do our best to help all decision-makers speed up credential recognition. I know that in Quebec, for example, individuals need to be recognized by the Collège des médecins du Québec. Obviously, we need to speed up the process.

In my riding, this has resulted in a number of doctors and nurses being welcomed, but I agree with my colleague that we can all do more.

[*English*]

**Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Pontiac for her remarks. I have enjoyed my time working with her on the environment committee.

The member mentioned the need for affordable housing to support newcomers, yet one factor that we see driving the unaffordability of housing is the financialization of the housing stock, in particular, the special tax treatment for real estate investment trusts, or REITs. Could she provide her thoughts on these tax vehicles and whether she supports her government removing the special tax status that REITs receive?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sophie Chatel:** Madam Speaker, when it comes to housing, I would invite my colleague to take a look at the substantial investments we are making to speed up construction and increase housing supply. I think this is the first solution. For example, we are removing the GST from the construction of new rental housing. In my riding, I am told that this will create more housing for people.

**Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I will be happy to share my time with my friend the member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

I will read the motion again to refocus the debate, but also the intention behind this Bloc Québécois opposition day.

The motion reads as follows:

That the House call on the government to review its immigration targets starting in 2024, after consultation with Quebec, the provinces and territories, based on their integration capacity, particularly in terms of housing, health care, education, French language training and transportation infrastructure, all with a view to successful immigration.

I insist on the last point, because I hear a lot of speeches, debates and questions that are somewhat aimed at some very specific aspects of immigration in general. However, the Bloc Québécois wants to debate and make the House of Commons understand that a piecemeal approach is not appropriate and it is not a matter of having, for example, more doctors to treat people. This is not so much what we need as new hospitals altogether.

Back home in Drummondville, the hospital is outdated and crumbling in many ways. It is not just about a staff shortage. There is also a lack of infrastructure. It is not a problem that can be identified, addressed or resolved by saying that things went well in one area, we managed to bring in a doctor from Algeria and just like that we have services in one specialty or another.

We have to think about Quebec as a whole, Canada as a whole when we talk about immigration. We have to be serious in this debate, which is extremely serious. We are talking about human beings, people who are going to settle in our country, in our communities. They are going to integrate. They will enrich our communities whether in Quebec or in one of Canada's provinces or in the territories.

Successful immigration, since that is what we are talking about today, means turning “them” into “us”, welcoming strangers and making them members of the family. Successful immigration does not mean strictly bringing in additional labour, but bringing more citizens to Quebec and Canada with all the characteristics that define citizenship.

We are talking, for example, about sharing a common language, common values. Newcomers participate in our society and in its growth. They enhance our culture. Newcomers are changed by their membership in their host society, just like the host society itself is changed and improved by their arrival.

We cannot think of immigration from a strictly economic perspective. It goes beyond money. Think about children playing in the park in the summertime and families of all origins who come to sing at the Quebec City summer festival, stuff their faces at the poutine festival in Drummondville, and participate in traditional and square dances at the Village Québécois d'Antan at Christmas time. Think about the artists from other countries who settled in Quebec and who combine their culture of origin with ours to create something new and beautiful. All of those things go beyond money.

However, the federal government sees things differently. Its immigration targets are based solely on economic considerations. By way of evidence, just look at the infamous Century Initiative, whose targets the government copied.

Dominic Barton from McKenzie was clear when he presented his initiative. It was designed based on economic growth only. Integra-

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tion capacity, French language training, the integration of newcomers, none of that was important. It was ignored, set aside.

I would think that a plan to increase the Canadian population to 100 million people by 2100 deserves to be thought out, deserves a public debate. It seems to me that this should not be decided behind closed doors by consulting engineering firms and a few advisors with ties to the Prime Minister's Office, but instead debated openly with absolute transparency and an attentive ear. However, the government, who gave billions of dollars to this firm, took the McKenzie targets and made them its own.

Do we have housing for newcomers? That is not important, the newcomers will build their own housing. The government said so. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship clearly said that the newcomers would build their homes themselves. Picture them at customs being offered a small load of two-by-fours, some insulation and a few shingles. If they need a hammer, one will be provided to them. Honestly.

● (1710)

We may want to demonstrate the fact that immigrants will help solve the labour shortage, but with arguments like this, I would be a little embarrassed. The Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship took the liberty of answering a question from the member for Saint-Jean by saying that the Bloc Québécois's thinking is foolish, or something like that.

Are we able to provide newcomers with the services they will need? They will provide those services to themselves, because we will be welcoming care workers, nurses and carpenters. They will work in day care and they will build their own houses, as if by magic. Regardless of what they want to do, we will decide that they will do all that. They will come here and be straight-out independent, as my son would say. That is a bad joke.

There are immigrants coming to this country. They are not temporary foreign workers, but immigrants with dreams and aspirations. They want to be teachers or have some land to farm, or even teach philosophy—although we could debate that as well. They want to sell cars, be members of the National Assembly or the House of Commons and participate in the democratic life of their new country. They have their own aspirations. No one should develop a century-long immigration policy based on the lack of staff in a hospital at a specific time. We must think long term.

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The Bloc Québécois believes that immigration targets must reflect our integration capacity. The Bloc believes that Quebec and the provinces are the ones who know best what this capacity is. How many newcomers can be accommodated, given the current housing stock? How many additional classrooms will be needed to accommodate new students in our schools? How many French teachers will Quebec need to integrate those who do not speak French? I will point out, and I will do so as often as necessary, that French is the only official and common language of Quebec.

These are legitimate and necessary questions, which unfortunately were not taken into consideration at McKinsey's Toronto offices. Over there, they think in terms of numbers rather than people.

Quebec is a welcoming society. No one doubts that. No one questions that, or at least I hope not. We welcome those who want to join us with open arms. It is a privilege to welcome people who want to make their lives here, who want to build a common future. We see this as more than a numbers game. We are going to take in 500,000, said the Liberals. When we asked them how they will manage to do that, they told us that we are anti-immigration.

We want immigration to work, and we want those who come here to be happy, or at least happy enough to want to make their home here. Taking into account French training, access to housing, health care, schools and child care is not being anti-immigration. It is being considerate. It is wanting immigration to succeed, both for those who join us, and for us. I believe that ignoring these factors is very careless.

• (1715)

[English]

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I was very interested in the member's expanding definition of immigration and the benefits of immigration across Canada, not just for Quebec.

I was thinking of the timeline of immigration. When my grandfather came in 1920, he had zero dollars and zero prospects that showed on his immigration card. Within a generation, there were teachers and engineers in our family, people working in different sectors. Sometimes it takes a few generations to get the benefits of the investments we are making today. Could the hon. member comment on how immigration is a long-term strategy for the country and is not just to address the current issues?

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's question. He raises a good point.

There was a time when our cities were not overcrowded and we did not have major housing problems. The current crisis is extremely worrisome. There was a time when taking care of people was not nearly as difficult. Our health care systems in Quebec and the rest of Canada were robust enough to take people in, but that is no longer the case.

When people immigrated here 30, 40, 50 or 60 years ago, the situation was not the same as it is today. Above all, we did not take in as many newcomers at the time as we plan to going forward. We

had the necessary infrastructure to welcome those many people. That is no longer the case.

The responsible thing to do would be to resolve this issue first. Let us ensure that we have the infrastructure, that we have the means to fulfill our ambitions, and that what we have here is enough to properly welcome the people who choose to come and settle here.

[English]

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned housing, because that is one of the core issues we are facing today with immigration. I know he knows of my riding in the South Okanagan, how beautiful and attractive it is and how people want to move there. People go there for tourism, but it is almost impossible for people to find housing there. That is because, even though we are building more housing units every day in, for example, my hometown of Penticton than we have ever built before, every day we have fewer housing units that are affordable, because all those housing units being built are being bought by investors. People like immigrants cannot afford them, so there are hotels buying motels to house their workers. There are wineries buying big houses to house their workers.

I am wondering whether the member can comment on what we can do as a government to discourage housing as an investment and make sure that housing is built for people who can afford to live in that housing, such as immigrants.

• (1720)

[Translation]

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, my answer to my Liberal colleague's question was somewhat along the same lines.

We have problems to solve here before we open the floodgates. We have young people starting out in life who have brilliant careers ahead of them, but who cannot afford to buy their first home, no matter how modest it may be. Home ownership has become an extraordinary challenge and a privilege truly reserved for the luckiest members of society, and not just the hardest working, unfortunately.

Injustices are being created because of real estate investments by people who had the means to buy homes in the most beautiful places and drive up property values in certain areas. We have some work to do before we start being too ambitious about immigration targets. I think I completely agree with my colleague about the situation he described.

**Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I just want to ask my colleague why the debate on numbers is so taboo. The ministries are responsible for determining integration capacity. I think the operative word here is "capacity".

A Quebec government minister in a previous legislature talked about taking in fewer immigrants but taking better care of them. This idea would be a reasonable topic for debate. Why is everyone so quick to hurl epithets at us?



**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Madam Speaker, it is true that this is a sensitive subject. I think it is irresponsible to immediately stop the debate by hurling epithets.

Today, my parliamentary assistant and I simply tried to bring it down to a level that is a little more accessible to the public. For example, we thought that, for the people of Drummond, it would be like welcoming three more people per household without changing the number of bathrooms, the number of bedrooms or the grocery budget.

Let us imagine that we took in three more people per family. That is what the immigration targets currently being proposed by the government correspond to on a national scale.

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I thank my learned colleague from Drummond for his very clear presentation. I would also like to thank him for repeating the motion, because I was just about to do so. It is easy to see that we share some ideas and that we belong to the same party.

We are also serious about wanting to bring the debate back to the forefront at the end of the day. A lot of things have been said throughout the day and, at some point, things have gotten off track. It is important to remember what we are working on. I will not reread the entire motion because the member for Drummond has already done so. However, we are basically saying that immigration thresholds need to be reviewed in consultation with Quebec and the provinces to ensure successful immigration.

What we are talking about today is successful immigration. We are not saying that we do not want immigration. On the contrary, all the members of our party who have spoken today have said that. They spoke about ensuring success for these people.

We need to put ourselves in the shoes of people leaving their homeland. Even if someone leaves with their immediate family, they are leaving behind their extended family, their friends, and their birthplace. Just think of the emotion that wells up when you see the house where you grew up.

I am from Senneterre, in Abitibi. It is a long way from where I live now. I do not go back often, but every time that I pass through Senneterre, in Abitibi, I stop in front of the house. The last time I was there, I even went to chat with the new owner. I did not dare ask if I could come in, but I certainly would have liked to see the place again, which seemed so huge at the time; looking at it now, it is actually quite small. Perspective changes with time.

I digress a bit, but I am talking about the sense of belonging and the emotional connection that people can have with physical places. When people give that up, they have good reasons. Most of the time, they are not doing it for themselves, because they know it will not be easy. They are leaving behind a legacy, wealth they have accumulated and physical places that may mean a lot to them. They often do it for the next generation, telling themselves that however difficult it may be, their child will have a better future in Quebec or Canada.

We therefore have a responsibility to welcome them properly. That is what we are saying today. We are talking about human beings, respect and richness. We are talking about people. We all hope

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that immigrants arriving in Quebec and Canada will be workers, of course. However, that is not all they are. They are citizens. We want them to integrate into society, to participate alongside us and to enrich our collective experience.

Quebec is one of the most diverse societies in the world. This not said often enough in the House. It has incredible richness, built on the contributions of people who have arrived over generations. We also have to think about the people who were there before the first Europeans arrived, and I am talking here about first nations. Fortunately, we have begun to catch up on this, although when it comes to reconciliation, we have a lot of work to do.

We must tap into and preserve Quebec's richness by working with immigrants. We can think of the waves of Irish immigration, of the British and others, all those people who came here. Over the generations, we have mixed, blended and shared our cultural heritage.

This is what we want in Quebec. That is basically the big difference between Canadian multiculturalism and Quebec interculturalism. We want to accept individuals with their own rich heritage, but we want to live with them, not next to them, each in their own ghetto. It is amazing how different our perception can be.

I would like to tell you about something I felt today. I was hurt a few times today when I heard some government members remind Bloc Québécois members that Canada needs immigration. Of course we need immigration. We never said we did not need immigration. We have been saying all day that we need immigration. We want to take care of immigrants and we want to treat them as equals.

• (1725)

It is there throughout today's entire debate. We want to do things properly, in fact. That is something that the Liberal government has a very hard time doing. We have a government that makes fine announcements, for good optics, but does not meet expectations two times out of three.

They will say that Canada is a great welcoming country and then invite everyone to come. When people arrive, they will have nowhere to stay and they will end up in the street. However, there will be no talk of that in the next announcement. What they say is that we are wonderfully welcoming and generous.

We truly want to be wonderfully welcoming and generous, but for that we need to do things properly. First, we need to work as a team, which is hard for the Liberal government. They need to consult the provinces and Quebec and think about the different levels of government who will have to take care of these people.

We talked about all sorts of things today, such as housing and infrastructure. There are even some political parties here who like blaming the municipalities, who are in no way accountable to this Parliament. Most of the time, they do not have money because the entire tax system should be reviewed. That is not our Parliament's jurisdiction.

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Quebec is asking that this be reviewed and is asking to be consulted. Quebec is not saying that it no longer wants immigration. Quebec does want it, but it wants a better system. We want these individuals to be productive. In order for them to be productive, we have to start by recognizing their skills and giving them the opportunity to integrate into the society in which they arrive. What do we do if an immigrant arrives in Quebec and does not have access to French language training?

In my riding, Berthier—Maskinongé, which is 99% francophone, if I were to welcome an immigrant to Louiseville and did not teach him French, I would be a hypocrite. I would only be pretending to welcome him, likely only to make him work in a low-wage job in my company and exploit him. That is not what we want. Of course, we want him to work, but we want him to have a decent standard of living.

How many immigrants should we take in? Earlier, my colleague from Montarville talked about different thresholds that different political parties in Quebec came up with. I thought it was interesting that he did so, because perhaps it should be the Quebec National Assembly that decides on the number of immigrants.

That would require the federal government to take note. I have a hard time accepting a federal government that talks a big game about the number of immigrants to be taken in, and then turns around and tells the provinces that it is going to withhold money for social housing because it wants to impose such and such a condition, only to end up giving a tenth of what was requested.

The same can be said for health care. The government says that it is doing a lot for health care, and it makes speeches about health care, but it does not make the darn transfers to fund health care. Failing to address the requests of the provincial and Quebec governments is what I call contempt. It is contempt, pure and simple. These people know nothing about health care, but they are going to tell the provinces that they will not make the transfers. The provinces had unanimous demands, which we have reiterated here for months, but the government has not responded properly. This is unacceptable.

Today, the Bloc Québécois is calling for responsible action and foresight. We have to ask ourselves whether we have the housing. If we do not, or if we think that we will need more, then can we try to start building housing before taking in 100,000 people?

I am not saying to turn refugees away. That is not what we are talking about. What we are talking about is quantified targets. Can we roll out housing? Doing so will require showing a bit more respect for the various levels of government and funding them properly. They need to stop being know-it-alls who do nothing. That is basically what I have been seeing here for the past four years: The government thinks that it knows everything, sees everything and has a hold on the truth, but it is not responsible for anything. That is what is happening here.

• (1730)

What we are asking the federal government to do is to talk with Quebec and the provinces, be reasonable, figure this out together and put the necessary resources into this integration.

**Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech with great interest. I would like to ask him a question about the other provinces.

I was very pleased to see that we reached our target for francophone immigration to the other provinces, notably New Brunswick, Manitoba and Ontario. I remember that this work was really done in partnership, which was not at all the case eight years ago.

I would like my colleague to comment. Does he think we should continue in the same direction of encouraging francophone immigration throughout Canada?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, of course it is not a bad thing that there is francophone immigration. However, that is not what we are talking about today. Whether immigration is francophone or anglophone, here is what we are putting on the table: Is the government prepared to consider reviewing its thresholds after consulting with Quebec and the provinces, to support integration?

Of course we always support francophone immigration. We will not engage in segregation. We welcome everyone. I think that if we welcome people to Quebec who do not speak French, then we have an obligation to provide them with the resources to learn the common and official language.

• (1735)

[English]

**Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member, in the last question, talked about language training. I have some contact with that through my daughter, who once taught language lessons to immigrants. This was during the big increase in refugees from Syria.

It seemed that, the more immigrants who came in, the less funding her organization got to do that work. She went from full time to three-quarters time, to half time, to one-third time. Eventually, she had to leave that job because the federal government funding got to be less and less, even as it was increasing immigration.

I think I have a great understanding of that period of time, and I am wondering if the member can comment on that and on if we are seeing things going in the wrong direction many times.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my seatmate very much for the assist. That is exactly what I was trying to say. We are not saying that we should not take in immigrants, but rather that we should take them in properly, with the necessary resources.

How can someone from British Columbia give the same example as I did about Quebec? That is because the resources are not there.

We must ensure that the resources are there. What we are saying today is that things need to be done properly. Earlier, a Liberal member quoted figures about the labour shortage, saying there used to be seven workers for every pensioner, but now there are three and soon there will be two. I know these figures well. I was teaching them to my high school students in the 1990s.

Since then, governments have done nothing. Here we are in 2023 saying that there is a labour shortage, and that is exactly what we are trying to avoid. Can we look at what structures are in place to welcome people?

Afterward we will welcome them with open arms. We need them. Immigration is a great asset.

**Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent speech. There seems to be a rather cavalier attitude here when we talk about being responsible.

The government does not talk about the decline of French in Quebec. A number of Liberals gave speeches, but we did not hear a word from them about that, even though it is a reality. The federal government's official languages program is essentially funding English. Federal institutions in Quebec basically operate in English and do not respect French.

What are my colleague's thoughts on that?

**Mr. Yves Perron:** Mr. Speaker, I will try to make this quick.

In my speech earlier, I spoke about contempt, and I think that is what this is. The member can call it a cavalier attitude if he wants to be nice, but I think that we can call it contempt. The government does whatever it wants and acts however it wants. It launches programs and makes promises to people and then, a month later, it tells them that there is no money for the program and that their request will not be considered. It is always the same story. That is what I wanted to point out in my speech.

Can we sit down with the provinces and Quebec, look at the situation, evaluate the available resources and do things right so that we have successful immigration?

**Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate on immigration.

At the outset, I want to make one thing clear. It makes me very emotional and happy to say that I am in a conflict of interest, because I am the son of immigrants. That just goes to show that when immigration is successful, this is what comes of it. I am joking around, but I would say that my parents were successful immigrants. They arrived here at 4 a.m. on August 22, 1958. They disembarked from the *Arosa Star*, which had crossed the Atlantic, and met the first Canadians who allowed them to settle here and live in harmony for more than 60 years in this beautiful country, which welcomed them and which they chose. Let us never forget that immigration is a choice. We choose a country and the country chooses us. Three children, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren later, we can say that the family has had a successful immigration and we are very happy.

This is what we are talking about today: successful immigration. Immigration is one of Canada's great strengths and assets, but it must be successful. My parents succeeded, but not everyone does, unfortunately. That is why the government must be flexible and wise, not dogmatic, when it comes to immigration, to ensure that it is successful.

There are currently more than 2.2 million cases sitting at immigration, not being properly processed. That is a lot of people living with major worries and concerns, always wondering whether they

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will be able to stay or will have to leave. That is the reality of unsuccessful immigration. These people have to wait for years. It is a three-year wait for a refugee to find out whether they can stay here. That is not a good situation. That is not what we want for people who want to live in our country and make it grow, as all immigrants do.

That is why we need to get tough and, above all, act wisely when it comes to welcoming these people. Integration capacities must be appropriate and consistent with our commitment. That is why it goes without saying that Canada must consult the provinces and assess integration capacity in terms of housing, health care, education, French language learning and the infrastructure needed to welcome these people. It is 100% the federal government's responsibility to work hand in hand with the provinces to assess integration capacity. Otherwise, the result is these unfortunate situations. The first victims of poorly planned, dogmatic immigration policies are the immigrants themselves.

This morning, when I asked a colleague a question, I said that I am very proud to be able to count on Isabelle Turcotte-Genest, who manages the immigration files in my riding office. I sincerely thank her. I am sure that all of the other 337 members know people who manage immigration files in their riding offices. We get new immigration files by the dozens in our riding offices. Not a weekend goes by without someone thanking me because of the work that my colleague Isabelle Turcotte-Genest does in carefully managing the immigration files.

Honestly, if we want an immigration system that is good for immigrants and for the country, then we need to set dogmatism aside and find a responsible solution, a responsible approach. We have heard many different opinions in this debate, of course. The member for Calgary Shepard, who is our shadow minister for immigration, said that he agreed with the motion. During question period, we also heard the Prime Minister say that he and his team will vote in favour of this motion, and that is good. Despite all that, the Bloc Québécois continues to forcefully question the Prime Minister. That makes sense. After eight years of this government, unfortunately, we are not seeing results in terms of immigration and an integration capacity that works for everyone. I would not call an immigration system with 2.2 million people waiting on overdue files a system that works.

Mr. Speaker, I believe my allotted time is up, so I will stop there.

● (1740)

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 5:44 p.m., it is my duty to interrupt the proceedings and put forthwith every question necessary to dispose of the business of supply.

The question is on the motion.

If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried on division or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

*Private Members' Business*

**Mr. Martin Champoux:** Mr. Speaker, I will accept your generous offer and request a recorded division.

• (1745)

**The Deputy Speaker:** Pursuant to Standing Order 45, the recorded division stands deferred until Wednesday, November 1, at the expiry of the time provided for Oral Questions.

[English]

We have a point of order from the hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if you were to canvass the House, you would find unanimous consent to call it 5:59 p.m. so we can begin private members' hour.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

### HEALTH OF ANIMALS ACT

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-275, An Act to amend the Health of Animals Act (biosecurity on farms), as reported (with amendments) from the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** There being no motions at report stage, the House will now proceed, without debate, to the putting of the question on the motion to concur in the bill at report stage.

**Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC)** moved that the bill be concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** If a member participating in person wishes that the motion be carried or carried on division, or if a member of a recognized party participating in person wishes to request a recorded division, I would invite them to rise and indicate it to the Chair.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I would like it to be carried on division.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. John Barlow** moved that the bill be read the third time and passed.

He said: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to rise in the House today and speak again to my private member's bill, Bill C-275, an act to amend the Health of Animals Act. I would like to thank all the members of the agriculture and agri-food committee who participated in the study of this bill and worked with our witnesses and stakeholders to try to bring this forward.

I do want to take a moment to thank all of the stakeholders who have supported this bill from the beginning: the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the Canadian Cattle Association, the Canadian Meat Council, the Canadian Pork Council, Dairy Farmers of Canada, Egg Farmers of Canada, Turkey Farmers of Canada, the National Cattle Feeders' Association, Alberta Farm Animal Care and Canada's Accredited Zoos and Aquariums.

During the committee discussion, we did have one amendment to this legislation, which included removing the words "knowing that or being reckless as to". This is some clarification for my colleagues in the Liberal Party and NDP and I do appreciate their participation.

The second amendment was to lower some of the penalties as part of this for unlawful trespassers, but one amendment to remove penalties for groups and organizations that encourage this unlawful behaviour was not successful. It is not surprising that animal activist groups wanted these penalties removed from this legislation. These groups encourage this unlawful behaviour, which is a fundraising mechanism for them. For example, in the United States alone last year, these groups raised more than \$800 million and organized more than 500 attacks on farms across the United States. We do not have specific statistics in terms of fundraising and numbers in Canada, but we do know that Canada ranks seventh in the world in the number of attacks on farms by animal activist groups.

These producers and farm families are subjected to vandalism, cyber-attacks, tampering on farm and arson, but, most important, relentless intimidation and harassment. This takes its toll on farm families across Canada. It jeopardizes the biosecurity on farms and certainly the health and welfare of our livestock. Most important, we heard at committee that these illegal intrusions have a long-lasting impact on the mental health of our farm families.

We had a hog farmer from B.C., Mr. Binnendyk. His family went through having 200 protesters on his family farm. I want to quote Mr. Binnendyk's comments at committee. He said:

[I]t affected us as a family,...for a number of years it was basically like you were...being watched. We used to be proud to be hog producers. Now we don't tell anyone. The perception that people have about us has all been spread by lies and stuff that are not true. It takes the fun out of what you do.

There aren't many farmers left, especially in B.C. There used to be 300 [hog] producers in the nineties. I do believe there are now [only] four or five producers left. It's a dwindling...industry, [to be] sure.

We also had Megz Reynolds, who is the executive director of The Do More Agriculture Foundation, which is an important advocacy group for mental health on farms. I want to quote some comments from Ms. Reynolds as well, from committee. She said:

[These] people showing up and trespassing [and protesting] are not whistle-blowers. They don't necessarily understand what that farmer needs [or what they] do to take care of that animal and what that animal means to that farmer.

I've talked to farmers, men, across Canada, and they tear up when they talk about having to cull a full barn in response to [a] disease....

I talked to a producer in Saskatchewan, and she does not feel safe to send her children out to fix fences by themselves because of the perceived risk from protesters. These are actual things happening on farms today, where in rural Canada our farm families do not feel safe on the land that they have nurtured and cared for, in many cases for generations.

I cannot be more crystal clear about this point in this legislation: This bill would not hinder in any way an individual's right to protest on public property. This bill would not prevent whistle-blowers from coming forward when they see standards of care not being met. In fact, whistle-blowers would be protected under this proposed legislation because they would be lawfully allowed to be on the premise with the animals.

● (1750)

Canadian farmers and ranchers have a moral and legal obligation to look after their animals. Farmers operate in a highly regulated system, and the environment and strict codes of conduct must be followed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of farm animals.

It was also highlighted at committee in testimony that people are showing up on farms who are not whistle-blowers. Activists are not whistle-blowers. True whistle-blowers are family members, employees, veterinarians and professionals like CFIA inspectors who understand the nuances of animal husbandry. They understand the livestock industry. They know what they are looking for if standards are not being met.

Members from all parties recounted situations in their ridings where they saw these activities happening and the impact that it had on our farmers and constituents. What worried me, from some of the testimony at committee, is how brazen some of these activists have become. They are putting not only farmers and farm animals at risk, but also the public. We saw an animal rights group in Montreal hang three dead hog carcasses from an overpass. The consequences of that could have been devastating.

We heard from a farmer in Ontario who was attacked by ransomware. His farm and his operation were held hostage unless he admitted publicly that he was mistreating his animals, which we know was utterly false. Mr. Binnendyk said there used to be 300 hog farmers in B.C., and now there is only a handful. The activist campaigns will work to end animal agriculture if there is not a strong deterrent in place.

Opponents of this bill will say there is no proof of animal activism spreading disease. There are two problems with that argument. First, they are missing the whole point of our current situation. It is short-sighted to have an argument that justifies unlawful behaviour that could lead to unimaginable consequences on a farm. Second, it is completely false. We had one incident in Quebec with an outbreak of rotavirus, a disease not seen in almost 40 years, after trespassers were on a hog farm there. Trespassers also went on a mink farm in Ontario, which spread distemper throughout the community, again as a result of trespassing.

Another argument is that some provinces have trespassing and biosecurity laws in place. That is true, but only Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Manitoba and P.E.I. That means the vast majority of provinces and territories do not have this type of legislation in place. I think it is very important that we show leadership from a national perspective, a federal government perspective, that says we understand the importance of biosecurity on farms, the importance of food security and the fact that public protests have a place but that place is not private property.

### *Private Members' Business*

Most importantly, what this bill talks about is ensuring that biosecurity protocols on farm are adhered to and protect our food security from diseases like the avian flu, African swine fever, and foot and mouth disease, which pose very real threats to Canadian agriculture. In 2014, the Fraser Valley had 10 farms with avian flu outbreaks, and almost 200,000 animals had to be euthanized. The worst outbreak was in 2004, when 17 million birds had to be euthanized. That outbreak eventually cost the industry about \$300 million in losses. In the aftermath, a number of changes occurred to ensure that biosecurity protocols were more strict and were adhered to.

In the most recent outbreak of avian flu, which we had this past year, 7.6 million birds had to be euthanized. The provinces of B.C., Alberta, Quebec, Ontario and Saskatchewan were the hardest hit. Farmers are still trying to recover from this outbreak, replacing flocks, cleaning out barns and getting their operations back up.

Cammy Lockwood, the owner-operator of Lockwood Farms on Vancouver Island, who, ironically, has free-range chickens and sells eco eggs, talked about the importance of this legislation for protecting their farms from trespassers who very well could be bringing the avian flu virus onto their farms. They have very strict protocols.

Many of us as parliamentarians have visited farms in our ridings or neighbouring ridings and understand that many times we have to wear booties, hairnets and haz-mat suits and have to clean our shoes before and after leaving farms. When we travel, we are asked if we have visited a farm in the last two weeks. That is important for not spreading viruses, but that is how easy it is to spread them and it cannot be overlooked.

● (1755)

One example is African swine fever, which thankfully we have not had in Canada. Unfortunately, it is not a matter of if, but likely a matter of when it will come to Canada. When the first case of African swine fever occurred in China in 2018, it spread to every single province in that country in less than a year. It has since spread to the Asia-Pacific, central Asia and eastern Europe and has now been detected in the Dominican Republic.

Although it is not a food risk, 100% of animals that come down with African swine fever have to be put down. If an outbreak were to happen in Canada, it would be absolutely devastating. Our Canadian pork industry has a \$24-billion economic footprint in Canada. It employs more than 45,000 people, and almost 70% of our production, which is worth \$4.25 billion, is exported to markets around the world.

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Unfortunately, many of us in Canada understand and still feel the ramifications of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, which happened more than 20 years ago. It cost our cattle industry and was very impactful in my riding of Foothills. I know it was much the same for my Alberta colleagues.

It cost us almost \$10 billion. In western Canada we lost 3,000 ranches. The vast majority of those ranches have never come back. Our animal herd in Canada is significantly lower 25 years later. It shows us the very real consequences of an animal-borne disease and what it can do to our industries across Canada. This is very real. It can happen. We do not want it to happen again.

If there are any lessons we can take, I look back to what happened over only the last couple of years with COVID. I think if any of us had a chance to go back in time, we would have done things differently. We would have been much better prepared to ensure we had the resources in place to protect Canada. We cannot make that same mistake.

Members can imagine the consequences if we had an animal-borne virus pandemic in Canada with any of these types of diseases. That is why strengthening the biosecurity of our farms is so critical, which is what this legislation is focused on doing. Certainly, these groups are raising money off of these endeavours and threatening the mental health of our farmers.

Most importantly, I hope my colleagues in the House will support protecting the biosecurity of farms and our food security here in Canada and around the world. I look forward to their questions.

• (1800)

**Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remember being on the agriculture committee with the hon. member across the way for Foothills when we looked at the safe handling and transportation of animals, which was another issue where protections had to be put in place.

Could the hon. member comment on how this is not much different than protections in the manufacturing industry, where people cannot just wander into manufacturing plants? There are safety protocols that apply to other industries, and this is another example of protecting not only the industry, but also the animals within that industry.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I certainly have a lot of respect for the hon. member. I enjoyed our time on the agriculture committee together.

He is exactly right. This would put the agriculture industry in line with most other industries in Canada. People cannot simply walk onto a dangerous auto assembly line or into a manufacturing plant. People cannot just walk into a dangerous situation without the proper training, supervision and attire. This is exactly what we are trying to do with this.

Unfortunately, there seems to be this mentality out there that people should be able to walk onto farms, protest on farms or sit on farms and take videos and pictures. They really do not understand, because of the misinformation and misappropriation of what agriculture is, which makes this so frustrating, is that it is doing much more harm than they had intended.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Foothills for his bill and his speech.

One of the primary objections to this bill in committee was that it acts as a sort of gag by preventing whistle-blowing when there is mistreatment and that there are not necessarily other ways to blow the whistle. In fact, there are. For example, the Quebec Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food deals with complaints. Complaints can be filed with the department, which will send an inspector. If anything problematic comes up, the department will know it.

I have a question for the member. Could he tell us what is being done in his province and speak to this objection to reassure people?

[English]

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, certainly it is a frustrating argument that this is an ag-gag law. The wording of the amendment would protect whistle-blowers or anyone who is there lawfully and with supervision, so to say this is an ag-gag law is completely wrong.

Let us back up a little on what the goals are of these so-called whistle-blowers. I have a quote from PETA, which says, "Ending speciesism is our ultimate goal. One strategy to end speciesism would be to end the use of animals as food." PETA also says, "I consider all [animal]-eating cannibalism." The Humane Society said, "I can assure you that when we go to Mars, it will be a vegan planet." To say that these protesters are coming on farm just to highlight the mistreatment of animals is completely misleading. Their one and only goal is to end animal agriculture and raise a lot of money in the process. This is not about whistle-blowing; this is about ending a critical industry in Canada.

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I do believe that the intent of this bill is a noble one, but I believe that it falters in its execution. During the committee stage of the bill, we had a chance to ask questions of the CFIA senior legal counsel, Mr. Joseph Melaschenko. On two occasions, he identified that the phrase "with lawful authority or excuse" makes this a trespass bill. At the committee, I tried to make this about biosecurity so it would be applicable to everyone equally, given that we have a litany of evidence that many outbreaks on farms have been caused by people who were there with lawful authority or excuse.

Why does my hon. colleague not feel that having biosecurity measures apply to everyone equally is the right way to go? If we are serious about clamping down on disease outbreaks on farms, everyone needs to be responsible, including the people who are employees on farms.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I do have a lot of respect for my colleague, whom I work with quite closely on the agriculture committee, and we will have to agree to disagree on the implications and the wording of the bill. I would argue that why we wanted to maintain that language is that we had support from just about every other stakeholder group other than the animal activists, who wanted that language taken out.

The reason we have that language in the amendment is to protect those very people he is talking about: employees, farm family members, veterinarians and CFIA inspectors, people who are there with lawful authority. If they see something that is not up to standard, then they have the obligation to report it and make sure those things are addressed. Allowing protesters who have very different goals in mind to come on farms to protest puts our animal health and the biosecurity of our farms at risk, and we cannot do that.

• (1805)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Foothills for bringing forward this piece of legislation. He touched on virtually everything that has happened in my life growing up on a farm in Alberta. We lost the cattle component of our farm because of BSE, which resulted in my family's having to change what we did. We moved to a different type of agriculture, which actually, in some strange way, invited the same activists. I remember my father calling me and playing a recording for me on the phone, in which an animal activist actually said, "If the public knew what kind of farming you were doing, do you think your son would get re-elected as a member of Parliament?", thereby actually trying to intimidate me into intimidating my father into stopping farming.

Can my colleague from Foothills speak to how drastic, how dramatic and how intimidating these folks are? I know they stop by the farms, stay on the highway and take pictures. They intimidate, they block, they cut gates and they let animals out. They do all kinds of atrocious things that are actually very detrimental and unsafe not only for the public but also for the farm and the farm animals.

**Mr. John Barlow:** Mr. Speaker, I doubt any of us can intimidate our fathers into do anything they do not want to do. I am still thankful that the father voice still kind of works a little.

The member is exactly right. We heard those stories from farmers, which were heartbreaking. In my speech, I spoke of Mr. Binnendyk, who does not tell anybody he is a farmer anymore, whereas my generation and generations before us were very proud of what we did. Now that the next generation is ashamed of what they do because of that relentless intimidation and harassment, it is imperative for us as parliamentarians to show Canadian agriculture, our farm families, that we will be there for them and will stand up for them to ensure that this lifestyle is something we want to see for generations to come.

**Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak to bill C-275 today, but I would first like to congratulate the member for Foothills for his work in advancing the bill.

Bill C-275 would amend the Health of Animals Act to add a new offence to protect farmers and the biosecurity of animals on their farms from those who enter their property unlawfully. The objec-

tive of the bill is laudable, as it is meant to deter individuals or groups who choose to illegally enter a farm and potentially cause detrimental impacts to Canadian farmers and their animals.

### *Private Members' Business*

The Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food had an opportunity to study Bill C-275; during this time, we heard from several witnesses who brought various perspectives forward. What was abundantly clear from witnesses' testimony is that protecting the health and safety of animals is of the utmost importance to farmers and producers. As we noted during the study of the bill, on-farm animal biosecurity protocols are a key element supporting this objective, which is why the majority of committee members voted in support of Bill C-275 passing with amendments.

In simple terms, animal biosecurity consists of the practices and principles that protect animals from the introduction and spread of infectious diseases. In Canada, animal biosecurity is an area of shared responsibility. It involves federal, provincial and territorial governments, industry associations and farmers. All these partners work together to strengthen animal biosecurity.

Over the years, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has collaborated with industry, academic institutions and provinces and territories to develop voluntary national biosecurity standards for various sectors, including poultry, cattle and dairy. These standards are available on the CFIA's website. Farmers can tailor them to meet their specific operational needs and help protect the animals on their farms.

During the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food's study of Bill C-275, we learned that a number of industry-led programs incorporate some elements of these national biosecurity standards in their on-farm programs. We have been informed that farmers implement these standards and can tailor biosecurity protocols to meet the unique circumstances of their farm operation. Witnesses spoke to the specific protocols their industry members require on their farms, including showering in and out of barns, washing their hands and signing logbooks, to name a few. Protocols are often unique to the farm and tailored to the specific needs of the farmers and circumstances. It was broadly recognized that these protocols are essential. The risk of an animal disease outbreak is real and can be devastating, as was explained by the member for Foothills. That is why the government has continued to fund efforts to strengthen animal biosecurity in Canada.

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For example, in 2022, the government allocated \$1.5 million to the poultry biosecurity preparedness initiative in Ontario. This funding is directed toward non-supply-managed poultry operations with 300 birds or more. It provides money for these farmers to strengthen their on-farm biosecurity protocols used to reduce the spread of avian flu, such as adding security gates and signage to control entry, purchasing cleaning and disinfecting equipment for their premises and enhancing practices to mitigate interactions between wild and farm birds. In sum, animal biosecurity is crucial for the agricultural sector. Biosecurity protocols help minimize disease risk to Canadian farms and their livestock, reduce the threat of disease to both animals and Canadians, and maintain market access and international trade.

I have heard multiple testimonies on Bill C-275, and the difference between a regular business and a farm business is that families live on farms. When protesters or unwanted visitors show up on farms, it is completely different. None of us here in the House are saying that people should not protest, but if a person has an issue with animal abuse, there are resources they can use. For instance, they can call the SPCA in Ontario or OMAFRA to make a complaint. These organizations have the proper resources to show up on a farm, as well as the proper knowledge. Not everybody knows how to raise livestock in Canada. Videos from certain groups that I have seen online clearly show that they have no clue or understanding of how to raise animals on farms.

• (1810)

I can assure everyone that it is in the farmers' interests to raise their animals in a proper way. Why? Because if animals are mistreated they will not produce. It is the same thing with dairy farmers; it is the same thing with poultry farmers. All of us in this House want to ensure that animals are properly raised, but we must ensure that we use the resources that we have available at our disposal, that is, to call the SPCA and OMAFRA. I will not comment on the other provinces. I am familiar with Ontario.

There are proper resources that can be called. I would encourage anyone who is worried about animal security or animal welfare to call the proper local authorities to ensure they can do the proper inspections on those farms.

[Translation]

Because of the complex nature of agriculture in Canada, biosecurity is a collaborative effort. Multiple stakeholders are involved in implementing biosecurity. It requires commitments from all levels of government, industry and individuals. It is very clear that this government and every player in biosecurity share the same objective, which is to protect the health and safety of animals in Canada.

At the federal level, the Health of Animals Act establishes a legislative framework to prevent and control diseases that can affect animals. The federal government has also worked with the provinces, territories and industry associations to help fund and support the development of biosecurity standards for various products.

In the industry, many associations promote biosecurity through farm programs specific to their products.

When it comes to farm operations, owners and farmers can take steps to ensure the welfare of their animals. Implementing preventive measures, including biosecurity protocols, is a long-standing and effective practice on Canadian farms to keep animals healthy.

Implementing these biosecurity protocols, such as creating biosecurity zones on farms and establishing biosecurity protocols for entry into such zones, allows us to protect animals from the spread of animal diseases. Canadian and Quebec farmers work tirelessly to ensure the safety of their farms and animals.

Private individuals are illegally trespassing on farms, and this worries farmers. In addition, it raises concerns for the safety and health of their animals. Bill C-275 offers farmers an extra layer of protection to deter individuals from illegally trespassing in barns and pastures and potentially endangering animals.

Once again, I would like to thank the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food and all the parliamentarians who participated in the study of the bill. In my riding, I would like to thank the farmers who ensure that biosecurity measures are respected every day. For example, in the poultry sector, a biosecurity issue such as an outbreak of avian flu at one farm could result in depopulation, where all the animals would be killed. We know that farmers want to protect their animals.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the member for Foothills for moving forward and introducing Bill C-275, which our government is proud to support.

• (1815)

[English]

**Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to give some thoughts on Bill C-275, which was introduced by my colleague on the agricultural committee, the member for Foothills.



I was happy to support this bill at second reading, but that support was always conditional on certain amendments being made at committee, just as we did in the previous Parliament, the 43rd Parliament, on the previous version of this bill, which was Bill C-205. Unfortunately, the majority of committee members did not support the amendments that were conditional for my support, and I find myself speaking in the House today saying that I can no longer support Bill C-275.

I want to talk about the importance of biosecurity measures because they are incredibly important to Canadian farms and farms all around the world. At the federal level, Canada's legislative framework for dealing with issues with respect to animal disease and biosecurity rests primarily under the Health of Animals Act and its regulations.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is responsible for investigating and responding to reported incidents of a reportable animal disease. We know that many diseases pose a serious risk to farm animals, including things such as African swine fever, foot and mouth disease, and avian influenza. Biosecurity is about preventing the movement of disease-causing agents on to and off of agricultural operations. The three key principles of effective biosecurity are isolation, traffic control and sanitation.

At committee, we had a variety of witnesses, and many of those witnesses provided our committee with briefs. One of the organizations was Animal Justice. It provided a report from 2021 that looked at the disease outbreaks and biosecurity failures on Canadian farms. It was around the same time Bill C-205 was being debated in the previous Parliament.

I know a lot of people have differing opinions on animal justice, but the report was based on factual data, and that data listed hundreds of incidents of failures of biosecurity, which were all caused by authorized personnel associated with the afflicted farms. That means people who were authorized to be on the farm were the ones responsible for the disease outbreak.

Biosecurity is a serious thing. It can happen to any farm, and it can happen to anyone, either through no fault of their own or through being at fault. If they are not following proper biosecurity measures, the results can be quite devastating.

I also want to take some time to talk about the differences between federal and provincial jurisdiction when it comes to enacting laws because this is a key point behind my opposition to Bill C-275. We know the federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over the criminal law power. That is why acts, such as the Health of Animals Act, exist.

We know that, to be considered a valid exercise of criminal law power, federal legislation has to have a valid criminal law purpose, which can include measures such as health; be connected to a prohibition; and be backed by a penalty for violations. This bill, however, gets out of the federal lane and enters into provincial jurisdiction over trespass law. We know that the provinces of Canada have exclusive jurisdiction over property and civil rights, and that is definitely considered to be the domain under which they enact their anti-trespass laws. I think Bill C-275 is unfortunately taking us into

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provincial jurisdiction, and that is a serious point that we have to pay attention to.

This is backed up by evidence that we heard from none other than the senior legal counsel for the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Mr. Joseph Melaschenko. On two occasions, both in questioning from the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill and from myself, he confirmed that the phrase “without lawful authority or excuse” in Bill C-275 made this primarily a piece of legislation about trespass. He confirmed that on the record on two separate occasions.

● (1820)

What are we to take from that? If the senior legal counsel of the federal agency responsible for the Health of Animals Act is telling our committee that Bill C-275 is veering into trespass territory, why should we as a committee be ignoring it and instead returning a bill to the House with that problematic phrase in it?

That is the crux of the problem. That phrase is making the bill veer into that territory. I tried my best at committee to amend the bill. My amendment sought to remove the phrase “without lawful authority or excuse” so that the purported biosecurity measures of Bill C-275 would apply to everyone equally. After all, if we are in fact serious about dealing with biosecurity breaches, knowing we have a litany of evidence detailing just how many on-farm failures there have been from people who are authorized to be there, we should make a biosecurity piece of legislation apply to everyone equally, including on-farm employees. Unfortunately, that amendment failed.

I want to commend another member of the committee, the new member for Winnipeg South Centre, who tried with his own amendment to instead insert the phrase “applicable biosecurity measures” so that basically the bill would have applied to everyone who had taken the applicable biosecurity measures. I think that was a reasonable amendment. Again, we have measures in place that the industry has developed. They are voluntary measures, but they are developed with the CFIA, and I think it is quite reasonable that if we are going to make a substantive amendment to the Health of Animals Act, we should make reference to applicable biosecurity measures. Unfortunately, a majority of committee members did not see eye to eye with me or the member for Winnipeg South Centre, and we have the version of the bill we are dealing with today in the House.

I also believe that clause 2 of the bill is redundant and completely unnecessary given that the Health of Animals Act already has offences and punishment. I have been in this place a long time, and unfortunately our federal statutes are littered with examples of redundant and unnecessary language in the law. One only needs to look at the Criminal Code of Canada to see that in action. I believe that with offences and punishment already listed in the parent act, having clause 2 in Bill C-275 is unnecessary, and it is yet another reason I can no longer support it.

*Private Members' Business*

I want to make one thing very clear to all who are listening to this debate: I will never condone unauthorized trespass on private property that puts farmers and their families at risk. I say that not only as the NDP's critic for agriculture and agri-food, but as the member of Parliament for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, an area that has a long and storied history in farming.

Unfortunately, I have arrived at this place with Bill C-275 because I believe it is veering out of its federal laneway and into provincial jurisdiction. I believe, in other words, that it is a trespass bill masquerading as a biosecurity bill. Proper biosecurity measures need to apply to everyone equally. If a farm does not follow measures and is responsible for a disease outbreak that spreads to other farms, then it is that farmer who has done a real disservice to his or her neighbours. We need to work to make sure those measures are applicable to everyone.

If people are concerned with the inadequacy of current trespass law in Canada, then I invite them to pressure their provincial representatives, because that is where this debate belongs. If members of this House feel that trespass laws are not adequate, then it is the provincial legislatures of Canada that need to take that issue up on behalf of their constituents.

It is very difficult to find the correct balance between all of these issues, and I really wish I could have come to a place where I was supporting Bill C-275. Unfortunately and with regret, I do not feel that Bill C-275 would achieve that balance, and I will find myself voting against it.

• (1825)

[Translation]

**Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to speak to this bill.

I have to say I was a little surprised to hear my friend, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford and a fellow member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, say that he protects provincial areas of jurisdiction. What an odd thing to say at this juncture. We could talk about that at length.

I would like to go have a beer with him to hear more about all the obstacles he sees to health care with respect to these systems. I would like him to tell me his definition of areas under provincial jurisdiction when he talks to us here in Parliament about imposing conditions on seniors' care homes in the provinces before sending transfers. I actually object quite strenuously to being told that this evening. I hope the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford is listening to what I am saying.

I will not hold it against him, though. I will let it slide, but I want to set the record straight. This is not about encroaching on areas under Quebec's and the provinces' jurisdiction. I am an elected member of the Bloc Québécois, as I believe everyone here knows. We are always talking about that. I noticed a member across the way with a charming smile that I will take as a sign that he knows what I am talking about. I doubt anyone here is as keen to protect Quebec's jurisdiction as I am.

We have had that discussion. At the same time, I must admit that my colleague is not coming out of nowhere on that because tres-

passing does in fact fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces and Quebec. There are already laws in that regard. The problem is that often those laws are inadequate. They force people into extremely complicated complaints processes that require showing evidence of a direct link between the disease outbreak and the trespassing. I will give the example of the Porgreg hog farm in Saint-Hyacinthe, where there was a rotavirus outbreak after people illegally trespassed there. The owners must scientifically prove that the outbreak happened because of the trespassing. That is very difficult to do.

What we can do at the federal level is amend the Health of Animals Act, which falls under federal jurisdiction. Members can rest assured that I would not interfere in the jurisdictions of the provinces and Quebec. That is clear. I am still trying not to laugh after being told that by my NDP colleague. We witness all sorts of things in the House. I cannot help laughing.

What we are doing is legislating on animal welfare. This law will reinforce the message. It says that, if a person enters a livestock facility without authorization and jeopardizes its biosecurity, then they will have to pay a hefty fine.

My NDP colleague is criticizing us for not saying that everyone would be subject to this fine. We are talking about a \$25,000 fine. Do we seriously want to tell people who work on a farm, feed the pigs or milk the cows that if, three weeks or a month from now, they make a mistake and an accident happens, not only will they lose their job and lose a lot of money for their employer, or themselves if they are farmers, but they will also be fined \$25,000? That is ridiculous. Employees cannot be targeted by this bill.

The purpose of the law is to prevent trespassing, which, I might add, is criminal assault. Nobody is talking about passing a law for the sake of it. The issue here is people entering someone's property and settling in. I already gave an example in the previous Parliament, because, unfortunately, in the House, we often have to restart what has already been done. This bill is in its second iteration. I have already suggested imagining coming home and finding eight people sitting in the living room. Nobody is allowed to shove them out, because physically touching them is considered physical assault. Assault charges could be laid, even if these people are in the living room. The police must be called to ask them to leave.

• (1830)

It may take several hours. It is not known what the individual did while there. Maybe the individual went to sabotage the bathroom. I am talking about sabotage because, at the Porgreg pig farm, someone put water in the diesel tank. Without video surveillance, it is difficult to prove that it was the intruder who put water in the diesel tank.

I referenced the laws of Quebec. The laws of Quebec exist, for private property, but we are acting here on another level, that of biosecurity. The committee did not take its work lightly. The committee very diligently made sure that we addressed biosecurity, which we want to protect.

The member for Foothills is the sponsor of this important bill and I thank him again for introducing it. I believe it was he who mentioned, among other things, African swine fever, which is circulating in the world today.

I am not trying to scare people even though it is Halloween today, but let us call things by their rightful name. If anyone can go onto a farm at any time without following protocols, that will certainly cause problems. Studies done by organizations show that most biosecurity incidents are caused by someone who works on site. Accidents do happen, but does the fact that accidents happen justify letting people assault others with impunity? Honestly, I do not see this as a valid argument. The goal is to minimize risk and protect farmers.

Can we start to respect the people who feed us in this country? Yesterday, produce growers spoke out, asking for emergency support programs so their businesses will not go under, but governments are not responding.

In this case, at least, the issue is being addressed. I applaud that.

I want to talk about safety measures. Farmers must first wash and change their boots. Poultry farmers have different boots for each hen house. Most of the time, they take a shower afterwards. Farmers have specific clothing for the barn. There are a lot of rules to follow, and with good reason. Avian flu can be transmitted by wild bird droppings in the field that the farmer has stepped in without noticing. It could come from the tire of another vehicle that has driven through. It only takes one particle that is nearly invisible to the naked eye to transmit these dreadful viruses. This is a serious subject.

We are talking about respecting the people who feed us, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them. They work hard every day, with little income, but they are under a lot of stress trying to stay in business for the long term. There is also the lack of respect and support they get from their government. What we are talking about today is important.

This bill does not conflict Quebec's laws. Animal health is a separate area. This reinforces the message. Of course, it is already prohibited by certain laws in some provinces that are stricter than others. Here, however, it is prohibited everywhere.

I understand that my time is almost up. I was shocked to hear someone from the NDP tell me to respect provincial jurisdictions. I will remember what he said, and the NDP can rest assured that I will remember it, keep the video and bring it up again in the coming months when he does the same thing again. When that happens, I will ask him what he is doing.

For now, let us vote in favour of Bill C-275. Let us show some respect for farmers and, above all, let us protect them. Can we, as a government, tell people that we are going to do everything we can to ensure that they will not be assaulted on their property or when they are working to feed us all?

• (1835)

**Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to rise today in support of Bill C-275, an act to amend the Health of Animals Act regarding biosecurity on farms, which

### *Private Members' Business*

was introduced by my colleague, the member for Foothills, under Private Members' Business.

Like my friend and colleague from Foothills, I love and deeply respect the agriculture and agri-food industry. As a dairy farmer and purebred breeder for over 40 years, I have always been a strong supporter of the agricultural industry, and I recognize the importance of this bill.

This bill proposes essential amendments to the current Health of Animals Act, which in my opinion does not go far enough in protecting biosecurity on our farms or in protecting our family farms from unwelcome intruders on private property.

It is important to note that the purpose of the bill is not to limit a person's ability to protest peacefully, but to add guidelines and rules that individuals must follow when it comes to animal welfare and cross-contamination, which can have disastrous consequences for the health of an animal or even a herd.

As hon. members know, animal rights activists have organized many protests on private property, on farms and at processing plants. Of course, these protests are not limited to certain segments of the animal agriculture sector or certain parts of the country. It is a broader issue.

Bill C-275 simply proposes to double the fines for trespassing on a farm. This will protect biosecurity on the farm, as well as the safety and mental health of farm families. When activists break into farm properties and facilities, they do not fully grasp the consequences of their actions. First and foremost, they endanger the safety of farm animals, as well as of farmers and workers.

I know that my colleagues in the House will agree with me when I say that agricultural producers, livestock farmers and processors care deeply about food safety and animal health. They will also agree that mental health and anxiety among farmers are reaching crisis levels, especially since the pandemic.

Protecting Canada's food supply is vital. Viruses such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy or BSE, foot-and-mouth disease, avian influenza and African swine fever pose a very real threat to Canadian agriculture. These biosecurity threats can decimate livestock herds and devastate our industry and economy.

An epidemic in Canada would devastate our farms, and export markets would disappear overnight, crippling the pork industry as well as many other industries in the chain. A single case of BSE in the early 2000s automatically shut down all Canadian export markets.

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

I would like to share with my colleagues my personal experience as a purebred breeder exporting to some 30 countries in the 2000s. All Canadian exports came to a halt overnight, only resuming several years later, very gradually. When it comes to the costs of non-compliance with biosecurity measures, I can confirm that they are very high.

The vast majority of people who go to farms respect these biosecurity measures. Enhancing biosecurity measures as they relate to trespassers is a move that is supported by farmers and ranchers, as well as food processors and the many associations that my colleague from Foothills named earlier. Even the former agriculture minister spoke about the unacceptable actions of extremist groups who protest against dairy farms and the fact that this was a major concern of his department.

Recently, a growing number of individuals have been breaking into farms and food processing centres. This could lead to major biosecurity problems for the animals and the people who work with them.

• (1840)

I would like to tell the House of Commons about some testimony we heard at the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food from a British Columbia hog farmer, Ray Binnendyk, who had to deal with a massive demonstration on and off his property.

He and his family woke up one morning to find several protesters in and around his hog barn. These were not isolated individuals; they were brought onto his private property by bus for the sole purpose of disrupting his family's farming activities. Cameras have also been installed inside his hog barn on several occasions.

The case I just mentioned was truly catastrophic. This was his and his family's livelihood. The fact that he was the victim of such an intrusion, that his private property was invaded, is appalling. We can no longer allow Canadian farmers to be intimidated. We also cannot afford to suffer from food insecurity in the current climate because of mental health concerns.

Clearly, the agricultural industry fully supports these important changes to the legislation. We, the Conservative Party of Canada, hope to have the support of all parties to pass Bill C-275 as soon as possible.

In conclusion, Bill C-275 will defend biosecurity on farms and in food processing centres. Protecting animals and workers must always be top of mind when it comes to farms and food processing centres.

I hope that all members of the House understand the importance of this bill and will support it when the time comes to vote on it here. This bill is in no way partisan. It is common sense. We must do everything we can to protect Canada's agri-food sector. As members have heard in previous speeches and in my intervention, protecting the national food supply is extremely important.

It is imperative that the federal government step in to ensure compliance with and regulation of these issues. We must put guidelines in place so the provinces can review them. Then, we must work with all stakeholders to do everything we can to better protect farmers.

• (1845)

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member will have two minutes to finish his speech the next time this matter is before the House.

[English]

The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired and the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

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## ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[English]

### HOUSING

**Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC):** Mr. Speaker, the last time I was here, I asked a question about housing, talking about the Liberal government's absolutely abysmal record on housing. When one looks at the problem with housing, what one sees is that there are actually two elements. There is the building of units, and we know that building starts are down. They have announcements where they say they are going to build something, but no one can actually live in an announcement.

What they actually do at these announcements is find homes that are already going to be built and say that they will partner with the municipality and that the municipality will get a little extra money if it says they somehow contributed.

Their building homes strategy is a big nothing burger. It is an absolute failure.

Let us look at cost because cost is the other part that is making housing so unaffordable. We know that housing prices have doubled under the government, but let us look at interest rates. We know that interest rates are sky-high. The Governor of the Bank of Canada has said, many times, that the government's inflationary spending is like putting the foot on the gas pedal, as the Governor of the Bank of Canada tries to ease inflation by raising interest rates.

Interest rates are at absolute highs and this has tragic consequences for builders; they cannot build the units because interest rates are so high. It makes the cost of building them even higher. It drives up the cost of building and makes it even less affordable for Canadians to buy them.

Let me just give one little example. Right now, we have \$186 billion worth of mortgages coming up for renewal in 2024. Let us say that one had a \$600,000 mortgage coming up for renewal and an interest rate of 3%, which was not a great interest rate up until recently but is a very good rate compared to now. On a \$600,000 mortgage, one's monthly payment until now would have been \$2,500. Today, it is almost \$4,000. That is a \$1,500-a-month increase. These are the kinds of things that are crushing Canadians.

This Liberal government has done the impossible on incompetence. If one does not have a home, one cannot afford a home because the cost of a home has doubled. If one is renting or looking to rent, one cannot afford that either, because rent has doubled. If one has a home and one works so hard to save and actually have a home, when one's mortgage comes up for renewal, one cannot afford to keep one's home.

This government has somehow had the amazing incompetence to do two things: make it impossible for young buyers to buy a home and make it virtually impossible for people who have a home to keep the home. This is stunning incompetence on housing.

What makes it worse is that household debt in Canada is the highest in the G7. Remember that the Prime Minister said that they were taking on borrowing money so that Canadians did not have to? Well, they have had to because their inflationary spending has driven up interest rates so high that Canadians now have to borrow just to survive.

The most frightening stat I have seen just came out: 31% of Canadian households are having to find extra income just to make ends meet.

Look at what is going on in this country after eight years of this absolutely incompetent Liberal government. One cannot buy a home. One cannot keep one's home. One cannot make ends meet. People are actually having to take on side hustles to pay the bills. This is the catastrophic record of a tired, corrupt Liberal government after eight years.

I do not have time to get into the corruption. That would be an entire other late show, but let me say that housing and affordability is a disaster.

The government is responsible. Why does it not, instead of puffing up its chest and saying what a great job it has done, just apologize to Canadians for the mess it has made?

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague, and with all due respect, it is rather difficult to take him seriously here tonight.

First of all, he made the mistake of not reading the most recent CMHC report on housing starts. In fact, housing starts are up. However, let us move to the matter at hand, which is really cost. I do agree with him that, whether it is renting or buying, costs are too high. However, all of that is a function of supply, or the lack thereof.

The housing crisis in Canada is a reflection of the supply crisis. There are not enough homes, period. That is the result of successive failures of the past. Both Liberal and Conservative governments at

### *Adjournment Proceedings*

the federal level did not do enough to prepare for the future. That is true of provincial governments writ large. It is true of municipal governments.

What are we doing on the federal side to make up for that? First, we have lifted the GST, waived it, on the construction of apartments. That is to incent builders. In fact, as we have heard widely from the private sector, including builders specifically, and from organizations like the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and others, this measure alone will lead to thousands of more units being built across the country. Rental units are particularly important in this context. We need to provide more affordable options, and apartments do that.

We are also working with municipal governments through the housing accelerator fund. More important than the name of the program are the details. The \$4 billion in that fund allows us to work with municipalities to see impediments to building at the local level dealt with. These impediments include exclusionary zoning, among other things. Exclusionary zoning is tremendously important in this discussion. We have to find ways to build more, as I said. We have to find ways to address the "not in my backyard", or NIMBY, attitude that has prevented building in the past.

This focuses the attention on missing middle housing. We need duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, row houses and mid-rise apartments across Canada. We do not have enough of them. We are seeing various communities step up to the plate and do their part. London was first, my own community, and we are seeing Vaughan, Hamilton, Halifax, now Kelowna and others do that. We will continue to work with those municipalities in a very fruitful and healthy back-and-forth. I think it is a great characteristic of Canadian federalism to see this at work, where we have the federal government incenting municipalities to make changes, and in return there is funding available for housing, infrastructure and other related items.

The hon. member has voted against all of those measures and in fact is championing a private member's bill that would put a tax on the construction of middle-class apartments. The construction of those apartments for individuals and families in the middle class would be taxed under the private member's bill presented by the Conservative Party leader. It is not an acceptable approach. It needs to change. We are not hearing enough on the other side about what they are willing to do to address housing.

● (1850)

**Mr. Kyle Seebach:** Mr. Speaker, our leader has made very clear what our plan is on housing. It is going to get units built, unlike these announcements the Liberals are making.

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The member said he found it hard to take me seriously with my question. What is amazing to me is that he talked about how there are going to be thousands of units built. It is hard to take him and his entire government even remotely seriously, because everyone knows we need 3.5 million homes built by 2030 to address the housing shortage. The Liberal plan comes up with a few thousand.

We had the housing minister at committee. He talked about all the levers he is pulling. When he added up the sum total of housing he thought his plans would build, it is a couple of hundred thousand. I am not great at math. That is why I became a lawyer. However, a couple of hundred thousand units is really far from being 3.5 million units.

The member is saying the Liberals have a great plan when they do not acknowledge how far behind they are. We need 3.5 million units. Their plan for a couple of hundred thousand does nothing for Canadians. They are out of gas and have no plan and no future. They should just apologize to Canadians.

**Mr. Peter Fragiskatos:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the member is very good at math; he is just not looking at all the numbers.

The national housing strategy has resulted in 113,000 new units that are either built or will be built, and 126,000 units that have been repaired or are scheduled for repair. In the member's community, or at least in a portion of his community, because he does represent a portion of the Peel region, in June 2021, over \$32 million led to the construction of 77 affordable units. They helped victims of domestic violence and helped those who were on the street, homeless individuals and fellow citizens who are no longer on the street. In August 2020, there was \$276 million through the national housing strategy for the construction of 2,200 rental units for people in need, members of that community, fellow Canadians.

The national housing strategy is an innovative program. There is more to do through it, but we will continue to get there through co-operation with municipalities, not-for-profits and others. The hon. member needs to step up. He voted against all those measures for his community.

• (1855)

## IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

**Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.):** Mr. Speaker, on October 20, I thought I had asked a simple but serious question of the government. It had to do with refugees and asylum seekers who come to this country to escape persecution and possibly death in their homelands.

They come here legally. They are accepted by Canada, a signatory to the 1951 UN treaty on refugees. This is all marvellous; however, as last summer proved, the reception these refugees and asylum seekers received then was anything but compassionate. Hundreds were forced to spend their nights on the street, with no place to go and little hope of beginning safe new lives in what they thought was a welcoming and caring country.

Aside from the federal government eventually having to be shamed into providing the City of Toronto with obligated funding to look after the refugees and asylum seekers, Toronto itself, frankly, did not provide much in the way of stellar service when it came to finding adequate shelter for the refugees and looking after

them. In fact, Toronto is now the subject of an investigation by the city's ombudsman for the way the city cast these people adrift on the streets or tried to pawn them off on non-existent federal programs.

In my question last week, therefore, I asked if the federal government is still suffering from financial amnesia. Has it forgotten its election promise to Toronto to help the city with its budget shortfall and its obligation to uphold the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees?

Indeed, under the IRCC's resettlement assistance program, the federal government is supposed to help refugees get essential services and help with basic needs. Given last summer's debacle, I asked if the IRCC minister could confirm this time around that the government will provide Toronto with financial support to avoid a repeat of its own non-performance, or if it wanted to see refugees sleeping on snow-covered streets.

The Liberal government's failure has repercussions that reverberate far. For example, the City of Toronto is now undemocratically forcing a community to host a 24-7, low-barrier respite site with no central intake at 629 Adelaide Street West. It is right beside an elementary school, sandwiching it with a drug injection site. This community has already done so much and hosts so many shelters. They are not NIMBYs, or "not in my backyards", but their yard is full.

The response that I received from the government on my original question was not very promising. Furthermore, it was not reassuring in terms of saying that things are not going to get worse or that this past summer's disaster will not be repeated with even greater consequences this winter. The parliamentary secretary to the IRCC minister did not answer my question. Instead, he waxed poetic with a bunch of stats starting in 2020, before finally making his way to 2023. It was as if he was just trying to burn as much time as possible, still seeming as though he was saying something, but, in reality, saying nothing.

Worst of all, these glowing figures are nothing but self-imposed platitudes for a government that must do its job. Its members pat themselves on the back for doing their own job, and they leave out any reference to the continuous outside sleepover that is happening on Toronto streets and the price that our local communities must pay for their failure.

I ask the government again tonight: Will it be providing sufficient funding for key shelter and support services as the weather gets colder, or will someone have to freeze to death before it finally acts?

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, Canada remains committed to upholding a fair and compassionate refugee protection system. With 100 million people displaced globally, the world is undergoing a global migration crisis, and Canada has a moral obligation to step up.

Canada is not alone in facing a rising number of asylum claims. The world is facing an unprecedented flow of migrants and refugees, with nearly 4.9 million asylum seekers in 2022. This is a global challenge driven by war, persecution, political and economic instability, and discrimination. Solving this challenge will require a global response.

In response to a higher volume of asylum seekers, our officials have been in regular contact with provincial and territorial counterparts, municipal leaders and partner organizations. In fact, the minister has met with the mayors and stakeholders recently to discuss these issues in Toronto and here in Ottawa.

Welcoming newcomers to Canada and ensuring their success requires a whole-of-government approach. That means working with municipalities, as well as with provincial and territorial partners, to ensure refugees and asylum seekers have the resources and support they need. The federal government has been providing support to provinces and municipalities to respond to the rising number of asylum claims. In July, the Government of Canada announced an extension of the interim housing assistance program with an additional \$212 million in funding, which included \$97 million for the City of Toronto. Since 2017, the federal government has provided nearly \$700 million in funding to provinces and municipalities on a cost-sharing basis to address extraordinary interim housing pressures resulting from an increased volume of asylum claimants.

In addition to the IHAP, and in response to higher volumes of asylum claims, IRCC has been working closely with provinces and municipalities that are the most impacted to provide basic support services to asylum claimants who are temporarily accommodated in IRCC-contracted hotels. As of September 25, 2023, IRCC has almost 3,500 hotel rooms in six provinces to provide temporary housing to asylum claimants.

The federal government has been there every step of the way and continues to be. It continues to work closely with the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario to best support displaced people and asylum seekers, and ensure that they are supported. In addition, we have provided expedited work permits for claimants so that claimants can start to build their new lives in Canada and support their family.

In conclusion, we understand that those who are feeling persecution, oppression and conflicts have made great sacrifices to come to Canada. We continue to work with provinces and municipalities, including the City of Toronto, to support housing for asylum claimants, as well as any other supports they need.

• (1900)

**Mr. Kevin Vuong:** Mr. Speaker, this is not rocket science, but it is a profoundly significant issue. I assure the parliamentary secretary that most Canadians know that our winters are cold and dark. Therefore, is the government prepared to honour its obligations to

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refugees, human beings and people, as well as honour its financial responsibilities with the City of Toronto, or are we going to see a much more deadly consequence from its failed resettlement program and the consequences of its decisions? Does someone have to die before the government finally wakes up to the seriousness of this issue and finally acts?

**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Mr. Speaker, Canada has committed to support those fleeing persecution, oppression and war. We continue to support provinces, territories and municipalities, including the City of Toronto, with these challenges and do our part. That is why we extended the interim housing assistance program for asylum claimants across Canada for 2023. In particular, we have set aside \$97 million just for Toronto alone. We have also provided direct support for providing temporary accommodation in IRCC-contracted hotels. We continue to maintain a constant line of communication with the City of Toronto and, as the world continues to face a global migration crisis, we have an obligation to step up and work alongside our provincial and territorial partners.

### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP):** Mr. Speaker, I am glad to be back again tonight, pressing on the need for a windfall profit tax on the oil and gas industry, the context for which begins with recognizing the extent of the climate crisis we are in.

These are the words of the UN secretary general: “We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator.” He also says, “We are in the fight of our lives. And we are losing...our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible.” He goes on to say, “The global climate fight will be won or lost in this crucial decade—on our watch.”

In Canada, we need to look no further than this past summer, when climate-fuelled wildfires burned over 184,000 square kilometres of forest, more than double the previous record from 1995. It was 5% of our total forest cover across the country. We can also look to 20 medical journals that, just last week, urged the World Health Organization to deem both the climate crisis and biodiversity loss to be global health emergencies.

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In the midst of this crisis, the industry most responsible for accelerating the climate crisis is making off like bandits. The industry's profits in 2022 alone from the five biggest oil and gas companies were \$38 billion. That is after it paid shareholders \$29 billion in increased dividends and share repurchases. How is this possible? Some, particularly in this place, will talk a lot about increases to the carbon tax, but let us return to the facts. In 2022, the carbon tax went up 2¢ per litre of gasoline. The profits of oil and gas companies went up 18¢ per litre. This is not only about the worsening climate crisis and the gouging by the oil and gas industry; it is also about how life is becoming less affordable for people in my community as those very same companies are worsening inflation.

It is imperative that parliamentarians step up and take reasonable measures, at the very least. The government already introduced a windfall profit tax, which it calls the Canada recovery dividend, on banks and life insurance companies in the pandemic. With Motion No. 92, all we are putting forward is to say to now do the same with the oil and gas companies. It is supported by groups like Environmental Defence, the David Suzuki Foundation and Canadians for Tax Fairness. As of last week, it has now been studied by the Parliamentary Budget Officer. A one-time 15% tax on profits above \$1 billion would raise \$4.2 billion, all of which could go directly to funding the proven climate solutions we need that would make life more affordable for Canadians, like public transit and retrofitting homes.

The fall economic statement is due in the coming weeks. Will the parliamentary secretary advocate a windfall profit tax on the oil and gas industry to be included in the statement?

• (1905)

**Mr. Paul Chiang (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, between the unprecedented floods, wildfires and storms we witnessed across the country this summer, there is no doubt that the impacts of climate change on Canada are quite real and serious. Just as we know that climate change is real, the path forward is clear. To protect our planet and to build a stronger economy, we must endeavour to do even more when it comes to climate action.

It is quite simple: Canada cannot afford to miss the boat. We must act and move forward with a green economy. That is why in budget 2023 we announced historic investments in clean technologies to ensure that Canada's economy can generate prosperous, middle-class jobs and more vibrant communities across the country. For example, we are implementing a set of clear and predictable investment tax credits, low-cost strategic financing, targeted investments and programming, where necessary, to respond to the unique needs of sectors or projects of national economic significance.

When it comes to the windfall tax, our government has been and remains committed to making sure everyone pays their fair share of taxes. We know that the programs and services that Canadians rely on are dependent on a robust national tax base and our actions speak for themselves.

Since 2015, we have pushed forward several measures to ensure that everyone pays their fair share. For example, we took actions to close loopholes, to crack down on tax avoidance and to ensure that the wealthiest pay their fair share. We moved forward with a per-

manent increase of the corporate income tax by 1.5 percentage points on the largest, most profitable banks and insurance companies in Canada and went ahead with the Canada recovery dividend of 15% on banks and insurance companies to help support Canada's broader recovery.

We are also raising the alternative minimum tax rate from 15% to 20.5% and further limiting the excessive use of tax preferences. This measure will generate an estimated \$3 billion in revenue over five years, starting with the 2024 tax year. Tens of thousands of middle-class Canadians will benefit from a tax reduction, while the very wealthy will be targeted.

In addition, we also remain committed to phasing out or rationalizing inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that give fossil fuels an unfair advantage over cleaner solutions. Our government has committed to this phase-out by 2023. We know that eliminating inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and redoubling our focus on clean energy is a key step in building Canada's net-zero economy by 2050 and a strong future for workers in the industry.

Finally, we are no longer allowing expenditures related to oil, gas and coal exploration and development to be renounced to flow-through share investors for flow-through share agreements entered into after March 2023.

• (1910)

**Mr. Mike Morrice:** Mr. Speaker, in the limited time I have, I am going to put to the side the mention by the parliamentary secretary about so-called inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, which is one way of saying that the government is going to continue to subsidize the very industry that is making these record-breaking profits. Instead, I will focus on our point of alignment, that is, his mention of the Canada recovery dividend. As we heard from the parliamentary secretary, this is a measure that the government has already taken. It has done so with banks and life insurance companies already, recognizing that there was over-the-top profiteering happening there.

As I mentioned earlier, we know the same thing is happening with oil and gas, amounting to \$38 billion a year among the five largest companies alone. At this time, in the midst of a climate crisis when these companies are gouging Canadians at the pumps, why would we not apply that same Canada recovery dividend to them?



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**Mr. Paul Chiang:** Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to both fighting climate change and addressing tax fairness. We have already taken actions to build our green economy and to ensure that all pay their fair share of taxes. We have taken steps to close loopholes, combat tax evasion and ensure that the wealthiest pay their fair share.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before I close here today, I just want to thank everyone for wishing me a happy birthday. I also want to

wish a happy birthday to the hon. member for Etobicoke North. I know we share a birthday and I am looking forward to seeing her very soon.

The motion that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 7:13 p.m.)

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